

## GAPS IN VOTING DEMOGRAPHICS (7-8)

**OBJECTIVE:** Students will be able to identify gaps in voter demographics and create a plan to increase voter turnout.

**STANDARDS:**

- **7.SP1.4** Use questions generated about individuals and groups to analyze why they, and the developments they shaped, are historically significant.
- **7.SP4.1** Explain the multiple causes and effects of events and developments in the past and present.
- **7.SP4.3** Organize applicable evidence into a coherent argument.
- **7.C4.3** Analyze the purpose, process, implementation, and consequences of decision making and public policies in multiple settings.
- **7.C4.4** Explain challenges people face and opportunities they create in addressing local, regional, and global problems at various times and places.
- **7.H3.4** Explain the influence of individuals, groups, and institutions on people and events in historical and contemporary settings.
- **7.H4.1** Evaluate how the diversity of a society impacts its social and political norms.
- **8.SP1.4** Use questions generated about individuals and groups to analyze why they, and the developments they shaped, are historically significant.
- **8.SP4.1** Explain the multiple causes and effects of events and developments in the past.
- **8.SP4.3** Organize applicable evidence into a coherent argument about the multiple causes and effects of events and issues.
- **8.C2.2** Explain specific roles, rights and responsibilities of people in a society.
- **8.C4.3** Analyze the purpose, process, implementation, and consequences of decision making and public policies in multiple settings and at different levels including the national, state, local (county, city, school board), and tribal.

**CIVICS EXAM QUESTION(S):**

- Which of the following includes two ways that Americans can participate in their democracy? **A:** vote and run for office

**TIMELINE:** This lesson fits best while preparing for your Vote Day.

**APPROXIMATE LESSON LENGTH:** 60 minutes

## SUPPORTING MATERIALS:

- [Voting and Registration in the Election of November 2024](#)
- [Pew Research Center Voter Turnout](#)
- [Student Note Taking Resource](#)
- [Student Note Taking Resource Answer Page](#)
- [Voter Registration Form](#)
- Four large anchor charts labeled: Lowest Percentage Voting, Highest Percentage, Most Shocking (high or low), and Other
  - 2-3 sticky notes per student
- Poster making materials (large paper, markers, etc.)

## VOCABULARY:

- **Census:** Survey conducted every ten years as a comprehensive count of the U.S. population as mandated by the U.S. Constitution
- **Demographic:** Specific information, such as age, income, race, and other characteristics, about a particular population,

## INSTRUCTIONS:

### 1. Engage

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- Have **Table 1** from the *Voting and Registration in the Election of November 2024* webpage open before class.
- Begin the class by sharing the following prompt: “Today, we’re going to explore who is registered to vote and who actually votes in the U.S. and in Arizona, and why it matters for our democracy.”
- **Display Table 1.** Ask students:
  - What percentage of the U.S. population is registered to vote? (Wait for responses)
  - What percentage of the U.S. population voted in the 2024 presidential election? (Answer: 59.3% voted, 66.8% registered)
- **Display Table 4a.** Ask:
  - What percentage of Arizona’s population is registered to vote?
  - What percentage of Arizona’s population voted in the 2024 election?
  - What stands out when comparing Arizona’s numbers to the national numbers? (Encourage students to look for trends, gaps, or unexpected patterns)

## 2. Explore

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- Provide students access to the *Pew Research Center Voter Turnout* website. Ask students to read the article and write down
  - Why do more people vote?
    - Important issues, strong candidates, convenient voting options, high-stakes campaign.
  - Why do new voters matter?
    - They may decisively shift election results; campaigns try to reach them.
  - Why do shifting voter groups matter?
    - It can change long-term political balance and how future campaigns speak to diverse communities.
- Distribute the *Student Note-Taking Resource* handout. Instruct the class to work independently or in small groups to complete the handout using data found on the *Voting and Registration in the Election of November 2024* website.
- Circulate the classroom and monitor the students' progress, checking in with individuals or groups to share reactions regarding the data or to answer questions about how to read the charts.
- Bring the class back to whole group and ask students to share initial thoughts, reactions, or comments about the findings on their notes page
- Hand out 2-3 sticky notes per student and reference the four anchor charts on the wall
  - Students will record a demographic and the table reference on a sticky note and put it on the appropriate heading (i.e. they will write the lowest demographic they can find, put it on a sticky note, and put that sticky note on the Lowest poster)

## 3. Explain

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- Display and read Abraham Lincoln's quote: "Government of the people, by the people, for the people."
- Ask students: "How does voting connect to this idea? Why does it matter if some people don't vote?"
- Display the *Voter Registration Form* and explain:
  - Who is eligible to register.
  - How to register by mail or online.
- **Anchor Chart Discussion:** Select 2-3 sticky notes from the Lowest Percentage and Highest Percentage charts.

- Ask the class:
  - “Why do you think this group’s turnout is so low?”
  - “Why do you think so many in [chosen demographic] vote?”
  - “How could these turnout patterns affect election results?”

## 4. Elaborate

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- Distribute poster paper and markers.
- Instruct students: “Now you’ll work in pairs or small groups to create a poster encouraging a low-turnout group to vote. The poster should speak directly to that group’s identity and interests.”
- Instruct students to also ideate three reasons why the voter turnout for their selected demographic is low. Encourage students to incorporate possible solutions to these reasons in their poster (i.e., not knowing where a polling place is, so providing a link to locations; not having a ride to the polls, so providing resources for free transportation on elections day; etc.)
- Provide examples:
  - For 18–25-year-olds: College campus theme poster, links to online voter tools.
  - For veterans: Military theme poster, info about absentee ballots.
- Circulate the classroom and monitor student pairs or groups, in case they may need support to determine a likely possibility for the lack of voting turnout.

## 5. Evaluate

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- In an exit ticket, have students individually write 3-5 sentences reflecting on the data found today and the demographic they chose to target for their poster.

### EXTENSION ACTIVITIES:

- **Interview Assignment:** Students interview one person from a specific demographic about their reasons for voting or not voting. Encourage them to ask follow-up questions and bring their findings back to share with the class.