

History of Voting Rights for Americans with Disabilities

Objective: This lesson will provide a timeline for the history of civil rights and voting rights for Americans with disabilities. It will also provide an opportunity for students to conduct their own research of ways Americans with disabilities still face obstacles to vote.

Procedure:

1. READ & WATCH - Have students visit the following online resources (1,3, & 4) and complete the provided worksheet.
 - OPTIONAL: Assign students to watch the Crip Camp Documentary Film at home or show during class. This film is available on Netflix and YouTube.
2. RESEARCH - Have students conduct research on ways American's with disabilities still face obstacles in our voting process today and record their findings.
3. DISCUSS – Host a class wide discussion or have students break into smaller groups.
 - Have students share what they learned during the assignment (readings, videos, documentary film and individual research).
 - Have each student write (on a white board/poster) one obstacle Americans with disabilities face today in the voting process.
 - Have students discuss why these obstacles exist. Is it an enforcement issue? Are there protections that still do not exist? Is it a funding or resource issue? Etc.
 - Have students brainstorm ways these issues can be resolved at the local/state/federal level(s).

Resources:

- (1) Ed Roberts, the Disability Rights Movement and the ADA Google Arts Exhibit
https://artsandculture.google.com/exhibit/VwLy4PBo_Ty9Jg
- (2) Crip Camp: A Disability Revolution – Netflix Documentary Film (1hr 46 minutes) – available for free on YouTube
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OFS8SpwioZ4>
- (3) The Right to Vote from Disability Justice
<https://disabilityjustice.org/right-to-vote/>
- (4) The Right of People with Disabilities to Exercise Their Right to Vote Under the Help America Vote Act by Arlene Kanter and Rebecca Russo. This is a Jstor article and requires a login (it is a free resource for Ohio students and teachers)
<https://www.jstor.org/stable/20786910?seq=1>

Necessary Vocabulary:

Ableism - Ableism is the intentional or unintentional discrimination or oppression of individuals with disabilities. For more information visit: <https://www.nccj.org/ableism>

Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) - The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) became law in 1990. The ADA is a civil rights law that prohibits discrimination against individuals with disabilities in all areas of public life, including jobs, schools, transportation, and all public and private places that are open to the general public. The purpose of the law is to make sure that people with disabilities have the same rights and opportunities as everyone else. The ADA is divided into five titles (or sections) that relate to different areas of public life including: Employment, Public Services: State and Local Government, Public Accommodations and Services Operated by Private Entities, Telecommunications, Miscellaneous Provisions, and Transportation. For more information visit: <https://adata.org/factsheet/ADA-overview>

Help Americans Vote Act of 2002 (HAVA) - HAVA creates new mandatory minimum standards for states to follow in several key areas of election administration. The law provides funding to help states meet these new standards, replace voting systems and improve election administration. For more information visit: https://www.eac.gov/about_the_eac/help_america_vote_act.aspx