Title of Lesson:

# Why Some Votes Have Counted Less Than Others - American Government 11

Constitutional amendments have provided for civil rights such as suffrage for disenfranchised groups.

**Grade Level**: 11th grade

**Origins Article:**

[A History of Stolen Citizenship](http://origins.osu.edu/article/voting-crime-and-race-history-stolen-citizenship-disenfranchisement-felony)

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## Description:

This lesson plan studies the history of African-American disenfranchisement in the United States. The lesson plan pairs with the Origins article written by Pippa Holloway, who details how the disenfranchisement of criminal offenders was common before the Civil War. Following the 13th and 14th Amendments, states enacted poll taxes and other measures to attempt to suppress African-American votes. The article explores how voting rights are still under duress today through mass incarceration and drug offenses that unequally target black voters. After reading the Origins article for homework, students will begin class by interacting with the main points from the article. Students will be introduced to the major vocabulary from the article and the lesson’s compelling question, “How do some votes count less than others?” Following this introduction, students will participate in a Mini-Lecture discussing the historical, political, and social implications of disenfranchisement in U.S. history. Students will complete a 3-2-1 Handout focusing on the key disenfranchisement laws and modern examples of the practice. Following the Mini-Lecture, students will participate in a Silent Discussion. The activity allows students to examine primary source images related to disenfranchisement. Students will use their understandings from the article and from lecture to discuss higher-level questions with their classmates. After this activity, students will share their thoughts aloud in a whole class debrief. Students will discuss the tactics used to suppress the black vote and how disenfranchisement has evolved throughout our history. To end class, students will individually answer: *Reflect on one of the images you examined during the Silent Discussion activity. How can you connect a historical disenfranchisement law and a modern form of voter suppression?*

## Instructional Strategies:

* Whole Class Prior Knowledge Review
* Mini-Lecture
* 3-2-1 Partner Work
* Big Paper Whole Class Activity
* Whole Class Debrief
* Individual Exit Ticket

## Key Words:

* Disenfranchisement
* Poll Tax
* Mass Incarceration

## Materials:

* PowerPoint
* Article Copies
* Sentence Starters
* 3-2-1 Handout
* Big Paper Poster sheets
* Exit Ticket
* Primary Source Images:
  + “Felony Disenfranchisement by State”
  + “Ex-Felon Voting”
  + “Shall St. Louis Be the Slave Master?”
  + “Everything Points to a Democratic Victory