

UNIT OVERVIEW

Unit Length	3-4 weeks, or approximately 17 lessons
Grade Level(s)/Subject(s)	12th grade American Government and Politics
Unit Overview	<p>In the U.S.'s complex and messy democracy, students may be understandably frustrated and cynical about the rate of change. Our public sphere is a hotly contested space in which the battle for the hearts and minds of voters takes center stage. Sadly, access to this sphere has been limited for many on the outskirts of the American dream. This unit seeks to explore the historical underpinnings of this contested space by examining how, in the past and the present, U.S. citizens have been denied the right to participate in this arena. As a means of celebrating and acknowledging the precarious path forward, students will highlight a story of resistance in their own community in a narrative format. The process of identifying a subject, developing a line of questioning and interviewing a subject, and composing a narrative to showcase academic work will be emphasized.</p> <p>Prior to this unit, students should be familiar with the broader arc of U.S. history, including the long and impactful battles of those most marginalized to obtain the franchise. Generally, most students will have already taken 20th Century American History.</p> <p>This unit will cover some of the earliest ways in which disenfranchisement occurred during Reconstruction and will bring us to the present day. Ultimately, students will be able to see a threadline to the present day while critically examining underreported stories of the past and present. As a means of resistance and liberation, students will compose an underreported story on their own of an activist in their community whose work they want to highlight.</p> <p>Essential Questions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. How have citizens been denied their role in our democracy as voters in the past and today?2. How has our community resisted attempts from institutions to thwart our democracy?3. What is an underreported story and how can I find them in my community?4. How do I practice the reporting skills of identifying a subject, writing clear questions, and asking them?
Objectives & Outcomes	Students will be able to...

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identify ways that voting has been abridged in the past and present United States. 2. Critically evaluate and highlight how members of their own community have resisted attempts to deny participation in our democracy. 3. Explore the concept of an underreported story and examine the factors that cause it to be underreported. 4. Learn the critical skills of questioning, presenting, and interviewing in the context of identifying and exploring an underreported story in their own community.
Standards	<p>Common Core Standards</p> <p>CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.1 Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources, connecting insights gained from specific details to an understanding of the text as a whole.</p> <p>CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.2 Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary that makes clear the relationships among the key details and ideas.</p> <p>CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-10.4 Present information, findings, and supporting evidence clearly, concisely, and logically such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning and the organization, development, substance, and style are appropriate to purpose, audience, and task</p> <p>CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.11-12.2 Integrate multiple sources of information presented in diverse formats and media (e.g., visually, quantitatively, orally) in order to make informed decisions and solve problems, evaluating the credibility and accuracy of each source and noting any discrepancies among the data.</p> <p>CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.11-12.3 Evaluate a speaker's point of view, reasoning, and use of evidence and rhetoric, assessing the stance, premises, links among ideas, word choice, points of emphasis, and tone used.</p> <p>CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.11-12.4 Present information, findings, and supporting evidence, conveying a clear and distinct perspective, such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning, alternative or opposing perspectives are addressed, and the organization, development, substance, and style are appropriate to purpose, audience, and a range of formal and informal tasks.</p>

	<p>Learning for Justice Identity Standards 3. Students will recognize that people’s multiple identities interact and create unique and complex individuals.</p> <p>Learning for Justice Diversity Standards 10. Students will examine diversity in social, cultural, political and historical contexts rather than in ways that are superficial or oversimplified.</p> <p>Learning for Justice Anchor Standards 12. Students will recognize unfairness on the individual level (e.g., biased speech) and injustice at the institutional or systemic level (e.g., discrimination).</p> <p>Learning for Justice Action Standards 17. Students will recognize their own responsibility to stand up to exclusion, prejudice and injustice.</p>
Unit Resources	<p>Background Knowledge: Facing History and Ourselves: The Reconstruction Era and the Fragility of Democracy Learning for Justice: The True History of Voting Rights Brennan Center: Vote Suppression Classroom Law Project: The Future of Voting Rights </p> <p>Content Explored in this Unit: Voter Turnout Demographics from the United States Elections Project “An Excitingly Simple Solution to Youth Turnout, for the Primaries and Beyond.” an opinion piece by Charlotte Hill and Jacob Grumbach for the <i>New York Times</i> Alabama Voter Literacy Test (Circa 1965) Primary source documents related to voting rights in the first half of the 20th Century, listed and linked here Fannie Lou Hamer, an introduction from PBS’s American Experience series Speeches by Fannie Lou Hamer: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Fannie Lou Hamer’s 1964 DNC speech - video → Testimony Before the Credentials Committee, Democratic National Convention, 1964 → “I’m Sick and Tired of Being Sick and Tired”, Williams Institution CME Church, 1964 → “I Don’t Mind My Light Shining,” 1963 → “We’re on Our Way,” 1963 “Eighteen Is Too Young.” an opinion piece from the <i>New York Times</i> (1954) “The Right Voting Age.” an opinion piece from the <i>New York Times</i> (1967) </p>

	<p>“Harnessing the Youth Tide,” an opinion piece from the <i>New York Times</i> (1968) “Lower Voting Age Sought for State: New Group Asks Franchise for 18-Year-Olds,” by Clayton Knowles for the <i>New York Times</i> (1967) “In 34 states, you'll need to show ID to vote on Election Day. See what the law requires in each state.” by Grace Panetta and Yuqing Liu for <i>Business Insider</i> OR an updated map of voter ID laws in the United States “The Many Varieties of Voter Suppression” by Brittany Gibson for the <i>American Prospect</i> and the Pulitzer Center Every Native Vote Counts: Fast Facts, a document from the National Congress of the American Indian “How the Native American Vote Continues to be Suppressed” by Patty Ferguson-Bohnee for <i>Human Rights Magazine</i>, a journal of the American Bar Association Voting Discrimination and <i>Shelby County v. Holder</i> (C-SPAN Classroom) “How <i>Shelby County v. Holder</i> Broke America” by Vann R. Newkirk II for the <i>Atlantic</i> “House Democrats’ massive voting rights bill, explained” by Ella Nilsen for Vox Manchin: Why I am Voting Against For the People Act Biden: For the People Act Excerpt from <i>Our Time is Now</i> by Stacey Abrams “Why Some Black Puerto Ricans Choose ‘White’ on the Census” by Natasha S. Alford for the <i>New York Times</i> and the Pulitzer Center</p> <p>Skills Development Resources Explored in this Unit: “What Are Underreported Stories?” a video from the Pulitzer Center “How to Find Underreported Stories,” a video from the Pulitzer Center “Interviews,” a video from the Pulitzer Center featuring journalist Natasha S. Alford Finding Story Ideas, a lesson plan from PBS Student Reporting Labs</p>
Performance Task	<p>Students will identify, interview, and compose a narrative about a freedom fighter in their community who is resisting the subversion of American democracy in the present. The interviewed subject, likely an underreported actor, can be an activist, a voter or future voter, an educator, or anyone committed to democracy in their community. This task will highlight and draw a bridge between the skills of interviewing and formulating good questions with our school’s emphasized learning habits of reflecting and making authentic connections. Students will be asked to present their final work product in an academic showcase that provides an authentic moment to come together as a community to celebrate their shared learnings.</p>
Assessment/Evaluation	<p>Students will be evaluated for participation and completion of work throughout the unit. While students will be given feedback based on their mindfulness, engagement, and quality of work, this will be done on a holistic basis and only as a</p>

	<p>mechanism to provide feedback. As part of our school’s community to standards based-group, the only assessment that will be counted for a full grade is the summative assessment and their reflective writing exercise.</p> <p>A student-created rubric will be utilized to evaluate student end products.</p> <p>Students will complete a reflection on their learning process to explore their learning and to better help their teachers evaluate the larger learnings throughout the unit.</p>
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UNIT PACING / DAILY LESSONS AND RESOURCES

Pacing	Focus text(s) / resource(s) for today's lesson	Lesson Objective(s) or Essential Question(s)	Lesson / Activities
<p style="text-align: center;">Week 1 The Recent Past</p>			
Day 1	<p>“What Are Underreported Stories?”, a video from the Pulitzer Center</p> <p>Several underreported news stories from the Pulitzer Center; students may choose which to explore. Suggested stories here, or students may explore any story here.</p> <p>*This lesson is adapted from the Pulitzer Center's lesson How to find and analyze underreported stories: Critical thinking, text analysis and writing.</p>	<p>Focus: Introduction to Underreported Stories</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → What are underreported stories? → How can we find underreported stories? 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Do Now: Discussion of what is and isn't news. (How does something become “newsworthy”?) 2. Students watch a Pulitzer Center video defining underreported stories. 3. Students read an underreported story of their choice. (Options provided in this lesson.) 3. Shareout of underreported stories in small groups. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Summarize the story briefly. What details stood out to you? → Why do you think this qualifies as an underreported story? → What connections can you make between this story and issues/people/places in your own community? 4. Formative Assessment (independent writing): <i>Why is this story important? What connections can you make between this story, and issues/people/places in your own community?</i>
Day 2	<p>Voter Turnout Demographics from the United States Elections Project</p>	<p>Focus: Voter Turnout Data</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Who votes in the U.S.? → Why does it matter who 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Do Now: Why do you think voter turnout has ebbed and flowed over the years? 2. Class discussion: To what extent do you think voting is the most

	<p>“An Excitingly Simple Solution to Youth Turnout, for the Primaries and Beyond,” an opinion piece by Charlotte Hill and Jacob Grumbach for the <i>New York Times</i></p>	<p>does and does not vote?</p>	<p>important way to participate in a democracy?</p> <p>3. Students analyze voter turnout data historically (1984-2020), using these graphs. Students will be asked to generate two observations based on the data and generate two hypotheses for why these trends occur.</p> <p>4. Students share their observations and hypotheses in small groups or as a class, and compare among the ideas presented. (Encourage students to focus on historical and structural explanations, which will be discussed in depth in future class periods.)</p> <p>5. Students read an editorial on the lack of youth voter turnout independently or as a whole class and share their thoughts, feelings, and reactions.</p> <p>6. Formative Assessment: What is one thing we could do to encourage youth turnout? Why do you think this would be useful?</p>
Day 3	<p>Alabama Voter Literacy Test (Circa 1965)</p> <p>Primary source documents related to voting rights in the first half of the 20th Century, listed and linked here</p> <p>*This lesson is adapted from the Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History’s lesson Securing the Right to Vote: The Selma-to-Montgomery Story</p>	<p>Focus: Jim Crow South and the Voting Rights Act of 1965</p> <p>→ What conditions created the need for a protest march from Selma to Montgomery, Alabama, in 1965, and what did that march achieve?</p>	<p>1. Do Now: What tools were used to deny Black Americans the franchise in the first half of the 20th Century?</p> <p>2. Explore this introduction to the Alabama Voter Literacy Test (Circa 1965) as a class. Give students an opportunity to share and affirm their thoughts, feelings, and reactions. Then, ask students to explore parts B and C of the test independently or in pairs, while reflecting on the fairness of the test. They may respond to questions such as: To what extent do you find this test relevant to the task of voting in a U.S. election? Why?</p> <p>3. Jigsaw Activity: Place students in small groups and assign each group to explore a different primary source document from the period, listed under “Document Analysis” here. The group should complete a document analysis worksheet while they work.</p>

			<p>4. Complete “Activity Three: Mapping Change” as outlined here.</p> <p>5. Formative Assessment (individual writing): What is the legacy of the Voting Rights Act of 1965?</p>
Day 4	<p>Fannie Lou Hamer, an introduction from PBS’s American Experience series</p> <p>Fannie Lou Hamer’s 1964 DNC speech - video</p> <p>Speeches by Fannie Lou Hamer (linked in Lesson / Activities section)</p> <p>*This lesson is adapted from the National Women’s History Museum’s lesson Fannie Lou Hamer and Social Activism</p>	<p>Focus: Women and the Franchise</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Who was Fannie Lou Hamer, and how did she rally supporters amid the Civil Rights Movement? → How did Black women lead the fight for suffrage in the mid 20th Century? 	<p>1. Do Now: Why do you think many parts of the suffrage movement for women in 1920 failed to include Black women in their organizing and protests?</p> <p>2. Introduction to Fannie Lou Hamer (class reading)</p> <p>3. Watch Fannie Lou Hamer’s 1964 DNC speech as a class. Circle discussion: What resonated with you from Fannie Lou Hamer’s testimony?</p> <p>4. Jigsaw Activity: Place students in small groups and assign groups to read one of the following speeches by Fannie Lou Hamer:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Testimony Before the Credentials Committee, Democratic National Convention, 1964 → “I’m Sick and Tired of Being Sick and Tired”, Williams Institution CME Church, 1964 → “I Don’t Mind My Light Shining,” 1963 → “We’re on Our Way,” 1963 <p>Groups should be prepared to share out a summary of the speech they read, and 1-3 especially powerful lines from the speech.</p> <p>5. Formative Assessment: What resonated with you from Hamer’s words? How was she able to gain supporters in the midst of the Civil Rights Movement?</p>
Day 5	<p>“Eighteen Is Too Young.” an opinion piece from the <i>New York Times</i> (1954)</p>	<p>Focus: 18-21 Year Olds and the Crusade to Vote</p>	<p>1. Do Now: Should 16-year-olds be able to vote in local elections, as some communities now allow? Why or why not?</p>

	<p>“The Right Voting Age,” an opinion piece from the <i>New York Times</i> (1967)</p> <p>“Harnessing the Youth Tide,” an opinion piece from the <i>New York Times</i> (1968)</p> <p>“Lower Voting Age Sought for State: New Group Asks Franchise for 18-Year-Olds,” by Clayton Knowles for the <i>New York Times</i> (1967)</p> <p>*This lesson is adapted from the <i>New York Times</i>’ lesson Teaching the 26th Amendment With The New York Times</p>	<p>→ How did voters resist attempts at disenfranchisement during the Vietnam War era?</p>	<p>2. Explore editorials for and against youth suffrage using editorials from the <i>New York Times</i>. Ask students to identify the most poignant argument and what about the argument makes it so persuasive.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → “Eighteen Is Too Young” (May 23, 1954) → “The Right Voting Age” (July 7, 1967) → “Harnessing the Youth Tide” (June 30, 1968) <p>2. In pairs, students examine an article on strategies used by New York youth to win suffrage from 1967. Ask students to identify what makes their arguments effective.</p> <p>3. Concluding Question of the Week: Based on what you have learned this week, why do you think fights for the ballot have been so contentious over time?</p>
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Pacing	Focus text(s) / resource(s) for today's lesson	Lesson Objective(s) or Essential Question(s)	Lesson / Activities
Week 2 Now			
Day 1	"In 34 states, you'll need to show ID to vote on Election Day. See what the law requires in each state." by Grace Panetta and Yuqing Liu for <i>Business Insider</i> OR an updated map of voter ID laws in the United States	Focus: Voter ID Laws in the United States → To what extent are voter ID laws necessary?	1. Do Now: Why do you think states have adapted voter suppression laws in dramatic fashion over the past 20 years? 2. Introduce students to a map of voter ID laws and ask students to jot down any observations or trends they notice. Share out with the whole class. (Note: Map may need to be updated as laws evolve.) 3. Organize students in small groups and have them play both pro and con voter ID law positions. (For more scaffolding on how to structure debates on voter ID laws, see this lesson plan from the Bill of Rights Institute .) 4. Formative Assessment: To what extent are voter ID laws necessary in our messy and complex democracy?
Day 2	"The Many Varieties of Voter Suppression" by Brittany Gibson for the <i>American Prospect</i> and the Pulitzer Center	Focus: State Suppression of Voting Today → To what extent do you see similarities between the past and present with regards to voter suppression?	1. Do Now: Why do you think people are interested in passing laws that will have a negative impact on voter turnout? 2. Individual Reflection: Should states have the discretion to determine election rules for their state? Why or why not? 3. Students read, via a jigsaw model, different portions of an article on voter suppression in the 2020 elections and report back to their classmates. 5. Formative Assessment: "History does not repeat, but it rhymes."

			Drawing on evidence from our lesson today and materials explored last week, to what extent do you agree or disagree with this quote from Mark Twain?
Day 3	<p>Every Native Vote Counts: Fast Facts, a document from the National Congress of the American Indian</p> <p>“How the Native American Vote Continues to be Suppressed” by Patty Ferguson-Bohnee for <i>Human Rights Magazine</i>, a journal of the American Bar Association</p>	<p>Focus: Suppression of Indigenous Populations at the Ballot Box</p> <p>→ How have Indigenous people been denied their rightful place in U.S. democracy?</p>	<p>1. Do Now: Today we are going to examine the challenges Indigenous people face while trying to vote. Before we get into our activities, why do you think this is an underreported story?</p> <p>2. Based on the handout from the National Congress of the American Indian, what can we learn about the voting experience of indigenous people?</p> <p>3. Students will jointly read and critically examine the American Bar Association article on Indigenous voting in order to identify the ways in which the right to vote is contested for Indigenous populations.</p> <p>4. Formative Assessment: Students will generate a cause and effect flow chart for the consequences of policies outlined during their exploration of the American Bar Association article.</p>
Day 4	<p>Voting Discrimination and Shelby County v. Holder (C-SPAN Classroom)</p> <p>“How Shelby County v. Holder Broke America” by Vann R. Newkirk II for the <i>Atlantic</i></p>	<p>Focus: The Roberts Court and Voting Rights</p> <p>→ To what extent has the Roberts court expanded or restricted democracy in the 21st Century?</p>	<p>1. Do Now: It has been over 50 years since the Voting Rights Act of 1965. Should states with a history of discrimination still need to have their changes approved by the federal government? Why or why not?</p> <p>2. Share this handout from C-SPAN Classroom with students. Students will critically examine videos that provide multiple perspectives on the <i>Shelby County v. Holder</i> decision, while providing historical context.</p> <p>3. Students read “How Shelby County v. Holder Broke America” by Vann R. Newkirk II for the <i>Atlantic</i>.</p> <p>4. Formative Assessment: Students write a short editorial explaining</p>

			how they would have ruled in <i>Shelby County v. Holder</i> and why.
Day 5	<p>"House Democrats' massive voting rights bill, explained" by Ella Nilsen for Vox</p> <p>Manchin: Why I am Voting Against For the People Act</p> <p>Biden: For the People Act</p> <p>Excerpt from <i>Our Time is Now</i> by Stacey Abrams</p>	<p>Focus: The For the People Act</p> <p>→ How have people resisted voting suppression in 2020 and beyond?</p>	<p>1. Do Now: What changes would you like to see to our voting system?</p> <p>2. Students read, at their tables, a brief overview of the For the People Act and identify aspects of that they support or do not support and share out.</p> <p>3. Students compare and contrast statements from Senator Joe Manchin, President Joe Biden, and Stacey Abrams on the For the People Act.</p> <p>4. Formative Assessment: Based on what you have learned the past two weeks, why do you think there is so much resistance to the For the People Act?</p>

Pacing	Focus text(s) / resource(s) for today's lesson	Lesson Objective(s) or Essential Question(s)	Lesson / Activities
<p><i>Weeks 3-4</i></p> <p>Sharing Underreported Stories of Voting Rights and Democracy</p>			
Day 1	<p>“How to Find Underreported Stories,” a video from the Pulitzer Center</p>	<p>Focus: Finding Story Ideas</p> <p>→ How can I find a story idea related to voting?</p>	<p>1. Do Now: What makes a story newsworthy? (Return to week 1 reflections. How has your understanding changed, expanded, or solidified?)</p> <p>2. Students will critically examine any news story on the Pulitzer website and evaluate how it is a) newsworthy and b) why it is often overlooked by some in the media.</p> <p>3. Students watch “How to Find Underreported Stories,” which contains tips for finding underreported stories from Pulitzer Center editors, and take notes on tips they could apply.</p> <p>4. Students begin to brainstorm ideas to pitch about stories in their community related to voting. They should consider whether their ideas would lead to telling underreported stories. (For more scaffolding and resources related to pitching a news story, see Finding Story Ideas, a lesson plan from PBS Student Reporting Labs.)</p> <p>5. Formative Assessment: All students share at least one story idea related to voting in their community.</p>
Day 2	<p>“Interviews,” a video from the Pulitzer Center featuring journalist Natasha S. Alford</p> <p>“Why Some Black Puerto Ricans Choose ‘White’ on the Census” by Natasha S. Alford</p>	<p>Focus: Interview Strategies</p> <p>→ What types of interview techniques do I use for underreported stories?</p>	<p>1. Do Now: What is a good question? What are examples of good questions you have encountered in your life?</p> <p>2. Show this interview techniques video featuring Natasha S. Alford, and ask students to identify key interview strategies presented by the journalist.</p>

	for the <i>New York Times</i> and the Pulitzer Center		<p>3. Have students read Alford's story, referenced in the video, and complete this graphic organizer from the Pulitzer Center to identify who Alford interviews/quotes in her story, and why. (Note: For more scaffolded resources on how to conduct interviews, see Interview Techniques for Telling Underreported Stories, a lesson plan from the Pulitzer Center.)</p> <p>4. Formative assessment: What role do interviews play in telling an underreported story?</p> <p>Optional Extension: To give students an opportunity to practice formulating good questions and conducting interviews, consider inviting guests to the classroom. Guests could include local activists, educators, politicians, or journalists.</p>
Day 3	Example of a student-created rubric for the summative assessment	<p>Focus: Introducing the Summative Assessment</p> <p>→ How can I share the importance of voting with my community and highlight attempts to resist voter suppression?</p>	<p>1. Do Now: How can journalism be a site of resistance in the 21st century?</p> <p>2. Introduce the summative project: "Students will identify, interview, and compose a narrative about a freedom fighter in their community who is resisting the subversion of American democracy in the present."</p> <p>3. Given the minimalist nature of the project description, students will be asked to build a rubric for the class.</p> <p>The whole class will generate the major areas of evaluation, and then students in each group will come up with the criteria by which the summative assessment will be evaluated.</p> <p>Here is an example rubric created by students in Patrick Sprinkle's class in spring 2022.</p>
Days 4-6		<p>Focus: Construction of a News Story</p> <p>→ How can I identify,</p>	<p>1. Teacher individually conferences with students as they identify interviewees, prepare questions, and craft their final product.</p> <p>2. Each period will end with different students sharing a highlight of</p>

		craft, and curate a story about voting and democracy in my community?	their work or something they are proud of in their learning.
Day 7	Students' summative assessments	Focus: Academic Celebration → How can we celebrate our learning about voting, democracy, and the spirit of resistance in our local community?	1. Students present their stories in small groups, including volunteers who are willing to read a portion of their work for the whole community. 2. Students will complete a gallery walk of their peers' work, offering feedback and affirmations.