

GET OUT THE VOTE

*Alice at a
Glance
Curriculum
Packet*



**ALICE PAUL
INSTITUTE**

Education. Empowerment. Equality.

Get out the Vote

Grades: 9-12

Duration: 2-3 class periods

OBJECTIVES:

Students will examine and analyze sources about voter registration and turnout and make connections between this information and the history of suffrage in the United States.

Students will demonstrate an appreciation for the importance of exercising one's right to vote by creating a "Get out the Vote" campaign poster targeted at a group of con voters.

CURRICULUM STANDARDS:

State standards may include the following strands/topics:

Active Citizenship in the 21st Century; Civics, Government, and Human Rights; History, Culture, and Perspectives

MATERIALS:

- A Brief History of Voting Rights in the U.S. (included)
 - Table 6, Reasons for Not Registering and Voting (included)
 - Dissecting the 2008 Electorate: Most Diverse in U.S. History (included)
 - Paper/posterboard and additional art supplies for "Get out the Vote" campaign posters
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PROCEDURE:

After watching the Alice at a Glance presentation, discuss with students what they already know about voting and the democratic process in the U.S. How do people vote? Who is allowed to vote? Encourage students to share their own experiences and knowledge about voting and elections.

Remind students that many Americans, including women, have had to fight a long political struggle in order to have their right to vote recognized. As a class, review the handout “A Brief History of Voting Rights” in the U.S.

Introduce students to their task: they are nonprofit workers developing a “Get out the Vote” campaign aimed at encouraging Americans to register and vote in an upcoming election. Before they begin, they need some background on what voter turnout looked like in a past major election. Students should read the Pew Research Center Report “Dissecting the 2008 Electorate: Most Diverse in U.S. History” and answer the related questions. Depending on the class time available, instructors may wish to assign this as homework. When students have completed the article and related questions, discuss them as a class.

In groups, students should then consider Table 6: Reasons for Not Registering and Voting, as released by the U.S. Census Bureau. Assist students as they work in groups to identify an area of concern: for example, they may notice that white non-Hispanic Americans were the most likely to state that they did not vote because they had no interest in the candidates, while a large percentage of citizens aged 18-24 claimed that they were too busy or had conflicting schedules.

Once students have identified their target audience and the issue they wish to confront, students should develop a poster or advertisement designed to reach this target audience and persuade them to register and vote. You may wish to share with students examples of other campaigns, such as MTV’s 2008 “Choose or Lose” campaign.

Students should present their work to the class and share what evidence led them to create this campaign. Afterwards, engage the class in a discussion: why don’t people vote? Historically, how have voting rights changed in the U.S.? Why is it important that citizens exercise their right to vote?

EVALUATION:

Students will be evaluated based on their participation in small-group and whole-class discussion, their analysis of the resources provided, and their creation of a mini-campaign aimed at a group of nonvoters.

ADAPTATIONS:

- Consider preceding this lesson with the introductory activities "Cast Your Ballot" or "Your Voice, Your Rights" from this curriculum.
- After analyzing the data, the instructor may wish to assign students the same group for added support in the class. For example, the instructor may choose to assign all students the target audience of 18-24 year olds. Consider posting the students' campaigns in the school to display them to the rest of the school community.

NOTES & ASSESSMENT:

Notes or modifications to remember when using this lesson again:

Table 6.

Reasons for Not Registering and Voting, by Selected Characteristics: 2008

(Numbers in thousands)

| Characteristic | Percent distribution of reasons for not voting and registering | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|--|--------------------------|---------------------------|--------------|--------------|---------------------|--------------|---------------|--------------|--------------------|--------------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| | Total | Race and Hispanic origin | | | | | Age | | | | Educational attainment | | | |
| | | White alone | White alone, non-Hispanic | Black alone | Asian alone | Hispanic (any race) | 18-24 years | 25-44 years | 45-64 years | 65 years and older | Less than high school graduate | High school graduate or GED | Some college ³ | Bachelor's degree or more |
| Total nonvoters | 15,167 | 12,920 | 11,172 | 1,242 | 543 | 1,862 | 2,567 | 5,819 | 4,201 | 2,581 | 2,556 | 6,015 | 4,427 | 2,169 |
| Reasons for not voting¹ | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Too busy, conflicting schedule | 17.5 | 17.3 | 16.2 | 16.9 | 26.9 | 24.8 | 21.0 | 24.3 | 14.9 | 3.0 | 12.2 | 18.0 | 20.2 | 16.9 |
| Illness or disability | 14.9 | 15.0 | 15.6 | 20.3 | 6.8 | 10.8 | 3.2 | 6.8 | 14.8 | 45.3 | 25.6 | 14.3 | 10.9 | 12.5 |
| Not interested | 13.4 | 14.1 | 14.1 | 8.5 | 9.4 | 14.0 | 12.1 | 14.2 | 15.2 | 9.9 | 13.8 | 15.6 | 11.4 | 10.8 |
| Did not like candidates or campaign issues | 12.9 | 14.2 | 15.2 | 4.3 | 4.5 | 7.6 | 8.0 | 12.7 | 16.5 | 12.5 | 13.6 | 14.0 | 11.9 | 11.4 |
| Other reason | 11.3 | 11.0 | 10.9 | 12.7 | 11.8 | 11.7 | 11.6 | 11.7 | 12.5 | 8.0 | 10.8 | 10.9 | 11.6 | 12.4 |
| Out of town | 8.8 | 8.9 | 9.1 | 6.4 | 12.0 | 7.8 | 14.2 | 8.4 | 8.3 | 5.1 | 4.0 | 6.8 | 11.1 | 15.3 |
| Don't know or refused | 7.0 | 6.3 | 6.1 | 13.0 | 11.0 | 7.3 | 11.2 | 7.2 | 5.8 | 4.6 | 5.3 | 6.6 | 8.7 | 6.8 |
| Registration problems | 6.0 | 5.7 | 5.6 | 5.6 | 7.9 | 7.0 | 9.0 | 7.3 | 4.3 | 2.6 | 3.2 | 5.8 | 7.2 | 7.4 |
| Inconvenient polling place | 2.7 | 2.5 | 2.3 | 3.3 | 5.5 | 4.1 | 2.6 | 3.0 | 2.6 | 2.3 | 3.1 | 2.6 | 2.5 | 3.0 |
| Transportation problems | 2.6 | 2.4 | 2.4 | 4.8 | 1.7 | 2.5 | 2.4 | 1.4 | 3.4 | 4.5 | 4.7 | 2.8 | 1.9 | 1.4 |
| Forgot to vote | 2.6 | 2.4 | 2.4 | 3.1 | 2.6 | 2.4 | 4.5 | 2.8 | 1.8 | 1.3 | 3.0 | 2.5 | 2.7 | 1.9 |
| Bad weather conditions | 0.2 | 0.2 | 0.2 | 1.2 | - | - | 0.2 | 0.1 | 0.1 | 0.8 | 0.7 | 0.2 | 0.0 | 0.3 |
| Total not registered | 30,402 | 24,848 | 20,524 | 2,961 | 1,646 | 4,663 | 6,294 | 11,882 | 8,464 | 3,763 | 7,614 | 12,799 | 7,043 | 2,947 |
| Reasons for not registering² | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Not interested in the election/not involved in politics | 46.0 | 48.1 | 50.5 | 33.7 | 35.5 | 36.2 | 42.2 | 45.4 | 50.1 | 44.9 | 43.9 | 48.9 | 45.6 | 39.9 |
| Did not meet registration deadlines | 14.7 | 14.6 | 14.4 | 17.7 | 12.2 | 15.8 | 21.3 | 16.0 | 11.2 | 7.0 | 10.3 | 13.8 | 18.3 | 20.7 |
| Not eligible to vote | 8.6 | 7.6 | 5.6 | 14.0 | 12.2 | 17.2 | 7.6 | 10.1 | 8.5 | 5.6 | 11.4 | 8.2 | 6.6 | 7.9 |
| Other | 6.1 | 5.9 | 6.3 | 7.4 | 6.1 | 4.3 | 6.1 | 6.0 | 6.0 | 8.2 | 5.1 | 5.9 | 6.9 | 7.2 |
| Permanent illness or disability | 6.0 | 5.8 | 6.0 | 8.6 | 3.2 | 4.7 | 2.8 | 3.3 | 6.8 | 17.7 | 10.4 | 5.7 | 2.7 | 3.5 |
| Don't know or refused | 5.7 | 5.4 | 5.5 | 7.0 | 6.3 | 5.3 | 8.3 | 5.6 | 4.8 | 3.6 | 4.9 | 6.1 | 6.4 | 4.1 |
| Did not know where or how to register | 4.2 | 3.9 | 3.7 | 4.6 | 6.8 | 5.3 | 6.2 | 4.2 | 2.9 | 3.5 | 4.7 | 4.0 | 4.4 | 3.2 |
| My vote would not make a difference | 4.0 | 4.2 | 4.6 | 3.4 | 2.7 | 2.1 | 3.6 | 3.7 | 4.8 | 4.1 | 4.0 | 3.8 | 4.4 | 4.2 |
| Did not meet residency requirements | 3.5 | 3.5 | 2.9 | 2.7 | 5.6 | 5.8 | 3.0 | 4.5 | 3.0 | 2.0 | 2.9 | 2.8 | 3.7 | 7.8 |
| Difficulty with English | 1.4 | 0.9 | 0.5 | 0.7 | 9.3 | 3.0 | 0.4 | 1.1 | 1.5 | 3.6 | 2.5 | 0.8 | 1.1 | 1.5 |

- Represents zero or rounds to zero.

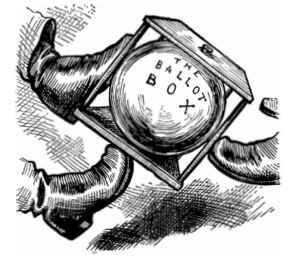
¹ Only individuals who reported being registered and also reported not voting were asked the question about reason for not voting.² Includes only those respondents who answered "no" to the question, "Were you registered in the election of November 2008?"³ Includes individuals reporting an associate's degree.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, November 2008.

A Brief History of Voting Rights in the U.S.

1776

White men with property can vote. In New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and Connecticut, free African American men can vote.



1770-1790

States have their own naturalization laws to determine when immigrants become citizens and therefore have the right to vote.

1856

North Carolina is the last state to repeal property requirements related to voting. All white males may vote even if they do not own property. However, they must pay a poll tax. Literacy tests and religious tests also apply in some areas.

1870

The 15th Amendment is ratified, recognizing former slaves' right to vote. However, African Americans are frequently discouraged from voting or intimidated at polling places.

1920

The 19th Amendment recognizes American women's right to vote. Prior to 1920, women's suffrage was recognized only on a state-by-state basis.

1924

Native Americans can vote, as Congress passes the Indian Citizenship Act and grants full citizenship to Native Americans.

1961

The 23rd Amendment grants residents of Washington, D.C. the right to vote.

1964

The 24th Amendment prohibits poll taxes. This guarantees that Americans cannot be denied their right to vote because they are unable to pay a poll tax.

1965

Congress passes the Voting Rights Act, which prohibits discrimination related to voting rights.

1971

The 26th Amendment guarantees that all U.S. citizens can vote at the age of eighteen. In the past, Americans had to be twenty-one years old to vote.

Dissecting the 2008 Electorate: Most Diverse in U.S. History

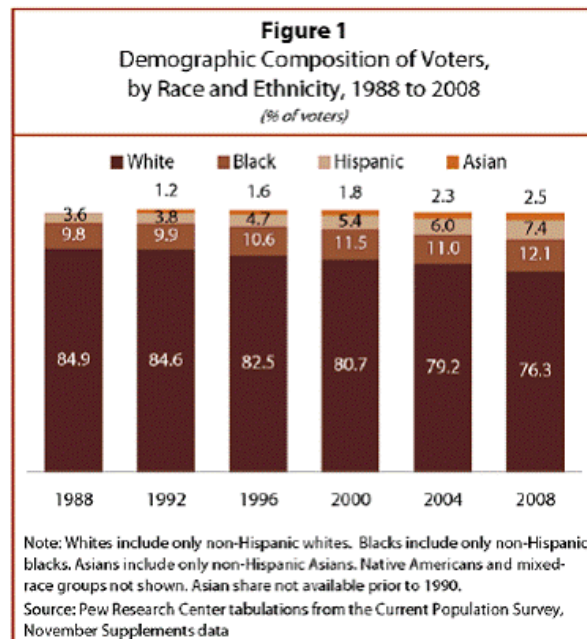
Black women had the highest voter turnout rate in November's election -- a first.

By Mark Hugo Lopez, Associate Director, Pew Hispanic Center, Paul Taylor, Executive Vice President, Pew Research Center

April 30, 2009

The electorate in last year's presidential election was the most racially and ethnically diverse in U.S. history, with nearly one-in-four votes cast by non-whites, according to a new analysis of Census Bureau data by the Pew Research Center.¹ The nation's three biggest minority groups -- blacks, Hispanics and Asians -- each accounted for unprecedented shares of the presidential vote in 2008.

Overall, whites² made up 76.3% of the record 131 million people³ who voted in November's presidential election, while blacks made up 12.1%, Hispanics 7.4% and Asians



¹ The measurement of race in the Current Population Survey changed between November 2000 and November 2004. Prior to 2003, survey respondents could only pick one race, either white, black, American Indian or Alaska Native, or Asian or Pacific Islander. Beginning with all Current Population Surveys in January 2003, survey respondents could identify multiple race categories. As a result, demographic shares based on race for 2000 and earlier are not directly comparable with demographic shares for whites, blacks and Asians in 2004 and 2008. White, black and Asian demographic shares in 2004 and 2008 are for white only, black only, and Asian only populations, and do not include those of mixed race. These changes in the measurement of race do not affect the definition and measurement of the share Hispanic across all years ([Suro, Fry and Passel, 2005](#)).

² In this report, "whites" refer to non-Hispanic whites, "blacks" refer to non-Hispanic blacks and "Asians" refers to non-Hispanic Asians. Hispanics can be of any race.

³ According to the Current Population Survey November 2008 Voting and Registration Supplement, 131.1 million U.S. citizens say they voted in the 2008 presidential election, slightly lower than the 131.3 million votes cast for president as reported by the Center for the Study of the American Electorate.

2.5%.⁴ The white share is the lowest ever, yet is still higher than the 65.8% white share of the total U.S. population ([Pew Hispanic Center, 2009](#)).

The unprecedented diversity of the electorate last year was driven by increases both in the number and in the turnout rates of minority eligible voters.

The levels of participation by black, Hispanic and Asian eligible voters all increased from 2004 to 2008, reducing the voter participation gap between themselves and white eligible voters. This was particularly true for black eligible voters. Their voter turnout rate increased 4.9 percentage points, from 60.3% in 2004 to 65.3% in 2008, nearly matching the voter turnout rate of white eligible voters (66.1%). For Hispanics, participation levels also increased, with the voter turnout rate rising 2.7 percentage points, from 47.2% in 2004 to 49.9% in 2008. Among Asians, voter participation rates increased from 44.6% in 2004 to 47.0% in 2008. Meanwhile, among white eligible voters, the voter turnout rate fell slightly, from 67.2% in 2004 to 66.1% in 2008.

Much of the surge in black voter participation in 2008 was driven by increased participation among black women and younger voters. The voter turnout rate among eligible black female voters increased 5.1 percentage points, from 63.7% in 2004 to 68.8% in 2008. Overall, among all racial, ethnic and gender groups, black women had the highest voter turnout rate in November's election -- a first.

| | 2008 | 2004 | Change (% points) |
|------------|------|------|----------------------|
| All | 63.6 | 63.8 | -0.2 |
| White | 66.1 | 67.2 | -1.1 |
| Black | 65.2 | 60.3 | 4.9 |
| Hispanic | 49.9 | 47.2 | 2.7 |
| Asian | 47.0 | 44.6 | 2.4 |

Note: Whites include only non-Hispanic whites. Blacks include only non-Hispanic blacks. Asians include only non-Hispanic Asians. Native Americans and mixed-race groups not shown.
Source: Pew Research Center tabulations from the Current Population Survey, November Supplements data

Blacks ages 18 to 29 increased their voter turnout rate by 8.7 percentage points, from 49.5% in 2004 to 58.2% in 2008, according to [an analysis by the Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement \(CIRCLE\)](#) at Tufts University. The voter turnout rate among young black eligible voters was higher than that of young eligible voters of any other racial and ethnic group in 2008. This, too, was a first.

⁴ The remaining share of voters in 2008 was of other racial or ethnic heritage. This group includes Native Americans and mixed-race voters. In 2008, 1.7% of all voters were of other race or ethnicity, up from 1.5% in 2004.

The increased diversity of the electorate was also driven by population growth, especially among Latinos. Between 2004 and 2008, the number of Latino eligible voters rose from

16.1 million in 2004 to 19.5 million in 2008, or 21.4%. In comparison, among the general population, the total number of eligible voters increased by just 4.6%.

In 2008, Latino eligible voters accounted for 9.5% of all eligible voters, up from 8.2% in 2004.

Population Definitions Based on the Current Population Survey, November Supplement

Voting Age Population: The population of persons ages 18 and older.

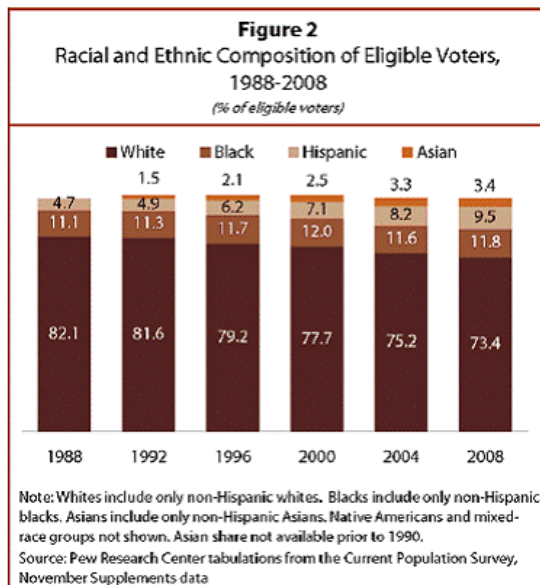
Voting Eligible Population: Persons ages 18 and older who are U.S. citizens.

Registered Voter Population: Persons who say they were registered to vote in their state in the 2008 election.

Voter Population or Voter Turnout: Persons who say they voted in the November 2008 election.

Voter Turnout Rate: Share of the voting eligible population who say they voted.

Similarly, the share of eligible voters who were black increased from 11.6% in 2004 to 11.8% in 2008. The share of eligible voters who were Asian also increased, from 3.3% in 2004 to 3.4% in 2008. In contrast, the share of eligible voters who were white fell from 75.2% in 2004 to 73.4% in 2008.



With population growth and increased voter participation among blacks, Latinos and Asians, members of all three groups cast more votes in 2008 than in 2004. Two million more blacks and 2 million more Latinos reported voting in 2008 than said the same in 2004. Among Asians, 338,000 more votes were reported cast in 2008 than in 2004. The number of white voters in 2008 was also up, but only slightly -- increasing from 99.6 million in 2004 to 100 million in 2008.

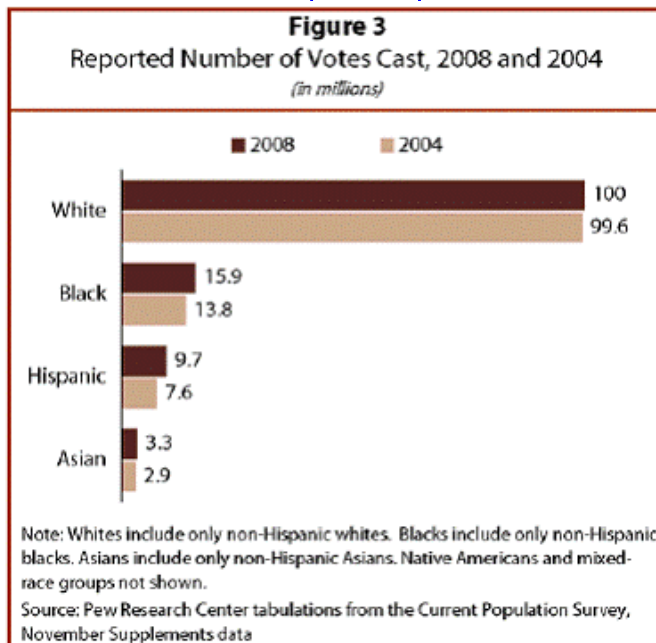
The Pew Research Center analysis of Census

Bureau data also finds a distinct regional pattern in the state-by-state increases in turnout. From 2004 to 2008, the greatest increases were in Southern states with large black eligible voter populations: Mississippi (where the voter turnout rate was up 8 percentage points), Georgia (7.5 points), North Carolina (6.1 points) and Louisiana (6.0 points). It also increased in the District of Columbia (6.9 points).⁵

⁵ According to Pew Research Center tabulations from the Census Bureau's 2007 American Community Survey, blacks constitute 35% of eligible voters in Mississippi, 30% in Georgia, 21% in North Carolina, 31% in Louisiana and 58% in the District of Columbia. Nationally, 12.2% of all eligible voters are black.

According to the exit polls in last year's presidential election, the candidate preference of non-white voters was distinctly different from that of white voters. Nearly all (95%) black voters cast their ballot for Democrat Barack Obama. Among Latino voters, 67% voted for Obama while 31% voted for Republican John McCain. Among Asian voters, 62% supported Obama and 35% voted for McCain. In contrast, white voters supported McCain (55%) over Obama (43%).

This report summarizes the participation of voters in the 2008 presidential election and follows reports from the Pew Hispanic Center, a project of the Pew Research Center, on the [Latino vote](#) and [Latino public opinion](#) about the election and the candidates.

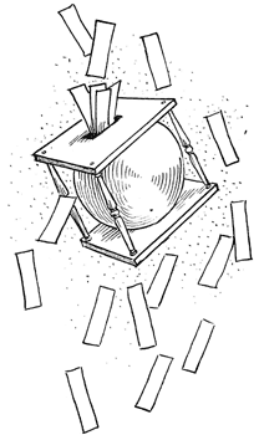


The data for this report are derived from the November Voting and Registration Supplement of the Current Population Survey (CPS). The CPS is a monthly survey of about 55,000 households conducted by the Census Bureau for the Bureau of Labor Statistics. The November Voting and Registration Supplement is one of the richest sources available of information about the characteristics of voters. It is conducted after Election Day and relies on survey respondent self-reports of voting and voter registration.

Name: _____ Date: _____ Class: _____

Voter Turnout in the 2008 Election

1. Briefly summarize the main idea of this article.



2. Consider Figure 1: "Demographic Composition of Voters by Race and Ethnicity, 1988-2008." Between 1988 and 2008, briefly explain the change in voter turnout for each race/ethnicity listed in the chart: White, Black, Hispanic, and Asian.

3. Examine Table 1: "Change in Voter Turnout Rates Among Eligible Voters, 2008 and 2004." After reading this article, make an educated guess about what might have caused the changes in voter turnout. Support your thinking with examples from the article.