

How We Vote



Image courtesy Saint Louis Art Museum, gift of the Bank of America

Mini Fact:

This painting from 1852 is called "The County Election." It shows a group of men voting out loud.

With the midterm elections coming up on Tuesday, Nov. 6, The Mini Page explores the history of voting and how our Constitution protects our right to vote.

What are midterms?

Citizens of the United States elected a new president in 2016. Our next presidential election will be in 2020.

But every two years, there are **midterm elections**, which select members of the House of Representatives, some senators and some state officials, such as governors.



Image courtesy Architect of the Capitol

Representatives are elected to two-year terms, so every two years, all 435 seats are part of the election. We will vote for House members in 2020, too.

Senators are elected to six-year terms. This year, we'll vote on 35 Senate seats.

Midterms are important because they can change the power in Congress. Right now, the Republican Party has a majority of members of both houses of Congress. But if Democrats gain a majority on Nov. 6, they may have different ideas about what is important and try to change the laws to reflect that.

Our voting history

✓ In the 1800s, only white, male property owners were allowed to vote. Some voted by voice, calling out the name of the candidate they supported.

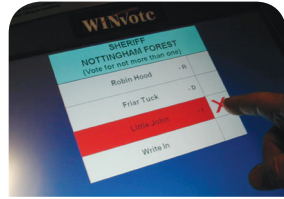
✓ Voters also used **paper ballots** to vote. They wrote their choice for an election on a piece of paper, which was put into a box for counting later. Although ballot boxes were usually locked, it was easy for politicians to "stuff" the boxes with false votes. In 1884, a glass ballot box was introduced to help prevent this fraud.



✓ The first private **voting booth** was invented in the 1890s. A voter would enter and pull a large lever to close the curtain, which would also unlock smaller levers that could be pulled down when voting for each candidate.



✓ In the 1960s, voters used **punched card** systems to cast their ballot. Using a special tool, they would mark or punch a hole next to the candidate they chose, then put the card in a ballot box. The cards were **tabulated**, or counted, either by people or by computer.



Images courtesy National Museum of American History, Smithsonian Institution

✓ Today, most citizens vote using a **computer**. A screen displays the choices for each office, and the voter makes his or her choice by touching the screen.

Who can vote?

American citizens who are 18 years old or older and who have not been convicted of a **felony**, or serious crime, can vote.

The original Constitution, drafted in 1787, left it to each state to decide who had the right to vote. The struggle for the right to vote has been long and hard for many people.

Gaining our rights

The 15th Amendment, approved in 1870, guaranteed black male citizens the right to vote. But the amendment did not grant equal justice to all citizens.

Some state governments passed laws especially written to keep African-Americans from voting. But between 1957 and 1965, Congress passed laws protecting black voting rights.

Women of all races who fought for the right to vote sometimes marched in parades. The women were called **suffragettes** (suf-ruh-JETS).

Finally, the 19th Amendment to the Constitution, allowing women to vote, was adopted in 1920.

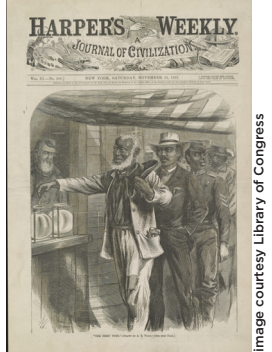


Image courtesy Library of Congress

In 1867, this drawing appeared on the cover of Harper's Weekly magazine, showing black men in line to vote.

Resources



On the Web:

- bit.ly/MPelections

At the library:

- "Around America to Win the Vote" by Mara Rockliff

Try 'n' Find

Words that remind us of voting are hidden in this puzzle. Some words are hidden backward or diagonally, and some letters are used twice. See if you can find:



BALLOT, BOOTH, CARD, CONGRESS, DEMOCRAT, ELECTION, GOVERNOR, MIDTERM, PAPER, PARTY, PUNCHED, REPRESENTATIVE, REPUBLICAN, SENATOR, STATE, SUFFRAGETTE, TABULATE, VOICE, VOTE.

D E H C N U P S E N A T O R E
T A R C O M E D T O L L A B C
R O N R E V O G B H T O O B I
E N P A R T Y M R E T D I M O
T E L E C T I O N W C A R D V
O G S G R R E P U B L I C A N
V J F E F C O N G R E S S A J
R E P R E S E N T A T I V E W
U A F S U F F R A G E T T E R
P T A B U L A T E A E T A T S

Cook's Corner

Strawberry Mini Muffins

You'll need:

- 1 1/2 cups all-purpose flour
- 1 1/2 cups whole-wheat flour
- 3/4 cup sugar
- 4 1/2 teaspoons baking powder
- 2 teaspoons cinnamon

- 3/4 teaspoon salt
- 2 eggs
- 1 egg white
- 1 cup apple cider
- 1/2 cup vegetable oil
- 2 cups strawberries, cut into small pieces



* You'll need an adult's help with this recipe.

What to do:

1. Combine both flours, sugar, baking powder, cinnamon and salt in a large bowl.
2. In a medium bowl, whisk eggs and egg white. Add cider and oil and mix well.
3. Add egg mixture to flour mixture and stir until moist and all the flour is absorbed.
4. Reserve 1/3 cup strawberries. Gently stir in remaining strawberries.
5. Place liners in mini-muffin tins. Coat bottoms with cooking spray.
6. Divide batter among 48 mini muffin cups. Top with reserved strawberries.
7. Bake at 400 degrees for 20 minutes until done. Makes 4 dozen mini muffins.

7 Little Words for Kids

Use the letters in the boxes to make a word with the same meaning as the clue. The numbers in parentheses represent the number of letters in the solution. Each letter combination can be used only once, but all letter combinations will be necessary to complete the puzzle.



1. not in danger (4) _____
2. try to catch (5) _____
3. educational website (8) _____
4. once a year (6) _____
5. little yellow character (6) _____
6. like a distant noise (5) _____
7. occur (6) _____

CHA	HA	OP	FE
NUAL	BRAI	ION	FAI
NT	MIN	SA	EN
NP	PP	AN	SE

Answers: safe, chase, Brainpop, annual, minion, faint, happen.

Mini Jokes



Ernie: Where do polar bears vote?
Emma: At the North Poll!

Eco Note



A Dutch company plans to place 40 cows on a "floating farm" in Rotterdam, the Netherlands, in order to reduce the distance food travels before it reaches the consumer. The cows will be milked by robots. The three-level facility is expected to produce more than 210 gallons of milk each day. Eighty percent of the cows' food will be leftovers from the city's food industry, and the manure will be sold for fertilizer.

adapted with permission from Earthweek.com

For later:

Watch your newspaper for articles about the upcoming midterm elections. Talk to your family about voting, and go along with them to vote if you can.

Teachers: For standards-based activities to accompany this feature, visit: bit.ly/MPstandards. And follow The Mini Page on Facebook!



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