

Suffrage Amendment
Grades K-3
TN History for Kids Lesson 1

Voting

In the United States, we pick leaders by choosing between candidates in an election. This process is known as **voting**.

To vote means to choose in an election.

No law says you must vote. But people should vote. It is a **responsibility** of being a citizen.



People voting in Tennessee (THFK photo)

Today in the U.S., all people who are older than 18 years old and who have not been found **guilty** of a serious crime can vote.

It doesn't matter whether you are a man or a woman. It doesn't matter what color your skin is. It doesn't matter whether you own property or not.

It has not always been like this.

The right to vote is known as **suffrage**. When Tennessee first became a state, only men who owned property had the right of suffrage. The Tennessee

Constitution of 1834 changed this. Since that time, you haven't had to own property to vote.

The American Civil War was fought between 1861 and 1865. One the reasons this war took place was that many parts of the United States, including Tennessee, had **slavery**. Most African Americans who lived in the United States before 1865 were kept in slavery.

After the Civil War, the **Thirteenth Amendment** to the U.S. Constitution made slavery illegal, and the **Fifteenth Amendment** made it illegal to keep a person from voting because of his race or color.

However, even after the Civil War, women still weren't allowed to vote!

In the late 1800s, many women (and some men) argued that women should be allowed to vote. It took a long time. In 1920, the **Nineteenth Amendment** was added to the U.S. Constitution. This amendment made it illegal for a state to deny the right to vote to women.

Tennessee played an important part in the passage of the Nineteenth Amendment. This year we will learn more about how this happened.

Questions:

1. To _____ means to choose in an election.
2. Before 1834, men had to _____ to vote in Tennessee.
3. Which amendment to the U.S. Constitution made slavery illegal?
4. Which amendment made it clear that women could vote?