Right and Responsibility to Vote

Grade Level: 5-12
Time: 30 min.

Objective:
• Recognize the development of the right to vote and how it is connected to empowerment

Curricular Connections: Civics

Materials: Each student will get an index card. On the back of the cards, place a different sticker or symbol, representing each group (you should make an equal number of each group):
• White man who owns property
• White man who does not own property
• African American man
• Woman
• Native American
• Non-citizen
• Non-voting citizen (by choice)
• Minor 17 or younger
• Imprisoned felon

Procedure:
1) Students will be asked to vote on an issue—class treat, amount of time to complete essay, etc. They should write their vote on the blank side of their card.
2) Collect only the cards from those who have the symbol representing the white man who owns property. Tally those votes.
3) You can then collect the votes from those with the cards for white man who does not own property. Tally those votes.
4) Collect those of the African American men, the women, and the Native Americans, tallying each one by one.
5) Explain to the students what the symbols represent and that their ballots were accepted in the same order as these groups got the right to vote in the US.

Reflection:
• Why did these groups want the right to vote?
• Did getting the right to vote impact their way of life?
• Did those who chose not to vote regret that decision?
• Do you think voting rights will expand further?
• Why do voting rights matter?

Assessment: Students can journal about this experience.