

Voices Then Today

Compare how people took part in government in two time periods.

SS.5.CG.2.2 "Compare forms of political participation in the colonial period to today."

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline each way people participated in colonial times, circle each way people participate today, and write matching numbers beside forms that are alike.

Taking Part in Government

- ① In the colonial period, many people wanted a say in local decisions. In New England towns, eligible voters gathered at town meetings to discuss roads, schools, and taxes, then voted. However, voting rights were limited. In many colonies, only white men who owned property could vote. Women, enslaved people, Indigenous people, and many poor men had little or no political voice.
- ② Colonists also participated without voting. They signed petitions asking leaders to change a law. Some joined boycotts, refusing to buy certain British goods to protest taxes. Groups such as the Sons of Liberty organized protests and shared political news. These actions let people show their views, although they could be risky and did not give everyone equal power over government decisions.
- ③ Today, citizens can vote in local, state, and national elections if they meet legal requirements, and voting rights are much broader than in colonial times. People also sign petitions, attend public meetings, contact elected officials, join peaceful protests, volunteer for campaigns, and share ideas online. A modern public meeting can be like a colonial town meeting because people discuss community choices. Both periods include voting and speaking out, but today's participation includes more people.

2

ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1

How were voting rights in many colonies different from voting rights today?

2

What is one way colonists spoke out without voting? Name a similar way people can participate today.

3

How is a modern public meeting like a colonial town meeting?

4

What is one important difference between political participation in the colonial period and today?

3

YOUR TURN

Your own words

Choose two community or government concerns. Complete the table to compare one possible colonial action and one possible action people could take today for each concern. In the last column, explain one similarity or difference for each row.

CONCERN	COLONIAL ACTION	TODAY ACTION	SIMILARITY OR DIFFERENCE

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Underline each way people participated in colonial times, circle each way people participate today, and write matching numbers beside forms that are alike. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How were voting rights in many colonies different from voting rights today?	In many colonies, voting was limited mostly to white men who owned property. Today, voting rights are much broader for citizens who meet legal requirements.
2	What is one way colonists spoke out without voting? Name a similar way people can participate today.	Colonists signed petitions, joined boycotts, or organized protests. People today can sign petitions or join peaceful protests.
3	How is a modern public meeting like a colonial town meeting?	In both, people discuss choices or decisions that affect their community.
4	What is one important difference between political participation in the colonial period and today?	Today, participation, especially voting, is open to more people than it was in the colonial period.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

CONCERN	COLONIAL ACTION	TODAY ACTION	SIMILARITY OR DIFFERENCE
Road repair	An eligible voter speaks and votes at a town meeting.	Attend a public meeting and contact an elected official.	Both let people share ideas, but voting today is open to more people.
A new tax	Sign a petition or boycott certain British goods.	Sign a petition or join a peaceful protest.	Both use speaking out, but colonial voting rights were limited.

Accept any accurate comparison using participation described in the passage. For the table, accept reasonable community concerns and actions that correctly distinguish broader participation today from limited colonial voting rights.