

Votes Growing Wider

Trace how constitutional amendments protected more citizens' voting rights.

SS.5.CG.2.3 "Analyze how the U.S. Constitution expanded civic participation over time."

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK _____ Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline the name of each amendment. Write 1, 2, 3, or 4 beside the sentence that explains how each amendment expanded voting participation.

More Citizens Take Part

- ① When the Constitution was written in 1787, it created a national government and elections, but it did not give every person the right to vote. States made many voting rules. In most states, voting was limited mainly to white men who met state requirements, such as owning property. Over time, constitutional amendments changed who could take part in choosing government leaders.
- ② After the Civil War, the Fifteenth Amendment said that a citizen's right to vote could not be denied because of race, color, or previous condition of servitude. This was a major expansion, especially for Black men. Later, the Nineteenth Amendment prohibited denying citizens the right to vote because of sex. Women gained constitutional protection for voting in 1920.
- ③ Other amendments removed more barriers. The Twenty-Fourth Amendment banned poll taxes in federal elections. A poll tax was a fee required before voting, and it kept some citizens from voting. The Twenty-Sixth Amendment lowered the voting age from 21 to 18. Each change increased the number of citizens protected by the Constitution. These amendments did not make voting automatic, because citizens still must meet lawful requirements, such as registering where required.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE _____ Use the passage

1 How was voting participation different when the Constitution was written than it was after the amendments described in the passage?

2 Compare the Fifteenth and Nineteenth Amendments. Which barrier did each amendment address, and how did each one expand participation?

3 Why could a poll tax keep citizens from participating in elections? Explain how the Twenty-Fourth Amendment changed that barrier.

4 What pattern do the four amendments show about how the Constitution expanded civic participation over time? Use at least two amendments as evidence.

3 YOUR TURN _____ Your own words

Write a four-sentence explanation of how the Constitution expanded voting participation over time. Name at least two amendments, explain the barrier or group connected to each one, and end with a sentence that states the overall change.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Underline the name of each amendment. Write 1, 2, 3, or 4 beside the sentence that explains how each amendment expanded voting participation. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How was voting participation different when the Constitution was written than it was after the amendments described in the passage?	At first, states limited voting mainly to white men who met state requirements. Later amendments protected more citizens from being denied the right to vote.
2	Compare the Fifteenth and Nineteenth Amendments. Which barrier did each amendment address, and how did each one expand participation?	The Fifteenth Amendment addressed denial of voting because of race, color, or previous condition of servitude, expanding protection especially for Black men. The Nineteenth Amendment addressed denial because of sex, protecting women's voting rights.
3	Why could a poll tax keep citizens from participating in elections? Explain how the Twenty-Fourth Amendment changed that barrier.	A poll tax was a fee required before voting, so people who could not pay could be kept from voting. The Twenty-Fourth Amendment banned poll taxes in federal elections.
4	What pattern do the four amendments show about how the Constitution expanded civic participation over time? Use at least two amendments as evidence.	The amendments removed barriers and protected more citizens' voting rights over time. For example, the Fifteenth Amendment addressed race-based denial, and the Twenty-Sixth Amendment allowed citizens ages 18 to 20 to vote.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

The Constitution expanded voting participation over time by adding protections through amendments. The Fifteenth Amendment protected citizens from being denied the vote because of race, color, or previous condition of servitude. The Twenty-Fourth Amendment banned poll taxes in federal elections, removing a fee that kept some citizens from voting. Together, these changes protected more citizens as they took part in choosing leaders.

Accept equivalent explanations that accurately connect an amendment to a barrier removed or a group newly protected. Students may use any two or more of the four amendments in the open response.