

Votes Shape Representation

How constitutional amendments widened citizens' role in choosing leaders.

SS5CG3 "Explain how amendments to the U. S. Constitution have maintained a representative democracy/republic."

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK _____ Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline each amendment named in the passage. Circle the words that explain how each amendment helped more citizens choose representatives or made representatives more answerable to voters.

Changing Who Can Choose Leaders

- ① The Constitution created a republic, a government in which people choose representatives to make laws. Later amendments helped more people take part in choosing those representatives. The Fifteenth Amendment, ratified in 1870, said voting rights could not be denied because of race, color, or previous condition of servitude. This rule aimed to protect Black male citizens' right to vote after the Civil War.
- ② In 1913, the Seventeenth Amendment changed how U.S. senators were chosen. Before it, state legislatures selected senators. After it, voters in each state elected their senators directly. This gave citizens a clearer voice in choosing members of Congress. In 1920, the Nineteenth Amendment barred denying voting rights because of sex, expanding the electorate to women.
- ③ Other amendments removed barriers to voting. The Twenty-Fourth Amendment, ratified in 1964, banned poll taxes in federal elections. The Twenty-Sixth Amendment, ratified in 1971, lowered the voting age from 21 to 18. By protecting voting access and letting more citizens choose leaders, these amendments help representatives answer to a broader group of people. The republic can change while keeping elected representation.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE _____ Use the passage

1 How did the Fifteenth Amendment help maintain a representative republic?

2 What changed when the Seventeenth Amendment was ratified, and why did that change give citizens more voice?

3 How did the Twenty-Fourth and Twenty-Sixth Amendments each remove a barrier to voting?

4 According to the passage, why does letting more citizens vote help representatives answer to the people?

3 YOUR TURN _____ Your own words

Imagine that some eligible citizens cannot vote because polling places are hard for them to use. Write three sentences for an imagined amendment that would help. Name the amendment, explain who would gain voting access, and tell how it would strengthen representative government.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Underline each amendment named in the passage. Circle the words that explain how each amendment helped more citizens choose representatives or made representatives more answerable to voters. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did the Fifteenth Amendment help maintain a representative republic?	It protected voting rights from being denied because of race, color, or previous condition of servitude, helping Black male citizens vote for representatives.
2	What changed when the Seventeenth Amendment was ratified, and why did that change give citizens more voice?	Voters, instead of state legislatures, began electing U.S. senators directly. Citizens therefore had a clearer voice in choosing members of Congress.
3	How did the Twenty-Fourth and Twenty-Sixth Amendments each remove a barrier to voting?	The Twenty-Fourth Amendment banned poll taxes in federal elections. The Twenty-Sixth Amendment lowered the voting age from 21 to 18.
4	According to the passage, why does letting more citizens vote help representatives answer to the people?	More citizens can choose leaders, so representatives must answer to a broader group of people.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

The Community Access Amendment would require all federal elections to offer accessible voting locations for citizens with disabilities. It would help more eligible citizens cast ballots and choose representatives. Representatives would need to listen to a broader group of voters.

Accept answers that accurately connect expanded or protected voting access to citizens choosing representatives. For the open response, accept reasonable imagined amendments that identify a group, remove a voting barrier, and explain the effect on representation.