



North Carolina Constitution, 1971

ESSENTIAL QUESTION

What Are Fair Voting Rights?

Standards

Social Studies

(6-8) I.1.3, I.1.4, I.1.8

(9-12) I.1.3, I.1.4, I.1.5

AH.B.1.3, AH.B.1.6

8.C&G.1, 8.C&G.1.1, 8.C&G.1.2, 8.C&G.1.3, 8.C&G.1.5, AH.C&G.1; AH.C&G.1.1, AH.C&G.1.2, AH.C&G.1.3, AH.C&G.2.3

8.H.1, 8.H.1.1, 8.H.1.2, 8.H.1.3, 8.H.1.4, 8.H.2.2, 8.H.2.3, AH.H.1.1, AH.H.3.1

English Language Arts:

RI.6-12.1, RI.6-12.2, RI.6-12.3, RI.6-12.4, RI.6-12.6, RI.7.7, RI.6-12.8, RI.6-12.9, RI.6-12.10

L.6-12.1, L.6-12.4, L.6-12.6

SL.6-12.1, SL.6-8.5

Standards for Extension Options

(6-8) I.1.6, I.1.7, I.1.8, I.1.10; (9-12) I.1.6

AH.C&G.1.4; AH.H.3.2

RI.6.7; L.6-12.2, L.6-8.3; SL.6-12.4

W.6-12.1, W.6-12.2, W.6-12.3, W.6-12.4, W.6-12.5

Objectives

- Analyze today's state constitution
- Assess the current levels of justice

Lesson Contents

During nearly a century since the 1868 constitution, voters had ratified 69 amendments. Still, the constitution needed further change to govern the growing state more efficiently. The state's population had swelled from one million to over five million, and, with baby boomers coming of age, the proportion of youth was high. Meanwhile, the Vietnam War drafted many young men.

A constitutional study commission determined many changes were necessary, and that the amendment process alone would not be enough. Instead, the commission rewrote the existing constitution. The people of North Carolina approved the new version, along with five new amendments, with an Election Day vote in 1970. The new constitution took effect in 1971. The amendments approved by the General Assembly and ratified by the people reorganized the executive branch, banned poll taxes, simplified the state income tax, and provided for new kinds of local taxes and borrowing by city and county governments. A national constitutional amendment in 1971 reduced the minimum age for voting from 21 to 18 years. The first amendment to the new state constitution in 1972 mirrored that provision for statewide voting.

Primary Sources

North Carolina Constitution, 1971,

ncleg.gov/EnactedLegislation/Constitution/NCConstitution.html

***The News and Observer* “Special State House Edition,” February 3, 1963,**

sites.ncleg.gov/lb60th/wp-content/uploads/sites/14/2023/02/NO-State-House-Edition-Sunday-02-03-1963-1.pdf

Oral histories of **Robeson County Double Voting**:

- **Janie Maynor Locklear**, oral history interview (transcript only), November 1972, University of Florida history department, ufdc.ufl.edu/UF00007021/00001?search=Locklear+=Janie
- **Barry Nakell**, oral history interview (transcript only), October 2003, UNC Southern Oral History Program collection, docsouth.unc.edu/sohp/U-0012/U-0012.html
- **Robert Lee Mangum**, [oral history interview](#), November 2003, UNC Southern Oral History Program collection, docsouth.unc.edu/sohp/playback.html?base_file=U-0008
- **Carnell Locklear**, [oral history interview](#), February 2004, UNC Southern Oral History Program collection, docsouth.unc.edu/sohp/html_use/U-0007.html

Newspaper articles on **Robeson County Double Voting**

- “School Control Sought,” *News & Observer*, March 2, 1973

- Dave Bradley and Chris Sherman, “Governor Dismisses Protest,” *Raleigh Times*, April 16, 1973
- “Indian Leader Urges Robeson Voter Drive,” *News & Observer*, April 24, 1973

Assignment Options

(files on thumb drive)

- **Background: 1971 Constitution**
- **Activity: Expanding Participation**
- **Activity: State House Crossword Puzzle**
- **Activity: Voting Rights Struggles Continue**
- **Exit Ticket**

Supplies

Projector (optional)

Internet (for accessing oral histories)

Lesson Preparation

- Review the primary sources, transcription, related materials, and slides to determine which options are appropriate for your students. Note that this box contains a variety of options from which teachers can select, based on available time, learning goals, and student capacities.
- Access original documents and transcriptions to project for the class and zoom in as needed. These may be found via online links or as files on the accompanying flash drive.
- **Glossary** terms for this lesson may be posted or projected to discuss as a class. If you prefer to distribute an individual handout, copy and modify the relevant list in the **Glossary** (found in **Cross-Folder Activities** folder) to print as a reference for each student or to create a quiz.
- Make copies of any handouts you choose.
 - **Primary Sources:** The 5-page Declaration of Rights and 2 additional selected pages are included in the Primary Sources folder. This document may be printed double-sided for individual or small group work. The full constitution

is 36 pages and, if desired, may be accessed at ncleg.gov/EnactedLegislation/Constitution/NCConstitution.html

- **Activity: Document Analysis** (found in the **Cross-Lesson Activities** folder) is an optional assignment for individual work with the **Declaration of Rights and Constitution Selections**. Print double-sided, 1 copy for each student for each document assigned. Note: this activity may also be used with oral history transcriptions and newspaper articles.
- **Background: 1971 Constitution** can be printed double-sided to include **Activity: Expanding Participation**. Note: slides can substitute for background worksheets and may be more appropriate for upper levels. If selecting this worksheet, print 1 copy for each student.
- If completing **Activity: Constitutional Timeline**, found in the **Cross-Lesson Activities** folder, as individual work, students may already have this sheet from the 1920 Constitution lesson. Otherwise, print page 3 for each student. If discussing as a class, replicate the chart on a large piece of paper to tape to the wall.
- **Activity: State House Crossword Puzzle** can be printed double-sided to distribute to each student or small groups. Consider printing several copies of the primary source to share, *The News and Observer* “Special State House Edition,” February 3, 1963. (Most answers are highlighted in that source.)
- **Activity: Expanding Participation** may be printed to distribute to individuals or small groups, or instructions presented as a class discussion.
- **Activity: Voting Rights Struggles Continue** may be printed double-sided for individual distribution or work in pairs. Or, materials and instructions can be covered as a class discussion. The writing activity will be completed on notebook paper or laptops.
- **Exit Tickets**—print single-sided and cut, 4 tickets per page (8 copies for 32 students)

Background Knowledge

(5 minutes)

Ask students: *Why is the vote important? Who decides who can vote?* Student answers will vary but will include that in a democracy, voters decide who can vote.

Procedure

- Ask students *Remembering the constitution of 1868 and amendments of 1946, what needed to change?* Answers will vary but may include modernization of state government. (5 minutes)
- Find the **Glossary** in the **Cross-Lesson Activities** folder. Review, project, or distribute vocabulary terms necessary to understand the document. Discuss any additional terms that cause students comprehension difficulty during the lesson. (10 minutes)
- Distribute the **Declaration of Rights** for individual work. Pass out **Document Analysis** sheets. Allow students to come to their own conclusions about the document. (20 minutes)
- Pass out **Background** worksheets and allow students to complete fact-check questions. Review answers using key. Note that content projected with slides or digital files and class discussion may be more appropriate for advanced students. (15 minutes)
- Complete the large wall chart as a class or allow time for students to complete the 1971 section of **Activity: Constitutional Timeline** individually. This activity is now complete as a set of student sheets or a set of large wall charts. Spread the charts out as a timeline and discuss the change over time as a class.
Ask: *What surprises you? Who is still missing?* Answers will vary but may include un-naturalized immigrants, green-card holders, prisoners, children, etc. Ask: *Should those rules be changed?* (20 minutes)
- Discuss instructions as a class or distribute **Activity: Expanding Participation**. Encourage students to make notes on the sheet to prepare for a possible class debate. (10 minutes, debate will add time)
- Distribute **Activity: State House Crossword Puzzle**. Allow students to look through the “Special State House Edition” (with some highlighted answers) or search online to help find answers. Working in pairs or small groups can help. (30 minutes)
- Distribute, **Activity: Voting Rights Struggles Continue**. If students are able to go online to listen to oral history recordings and/or access transcripts, give them the links provided on this lesson plan in the “Primary Sources” section list. Allow time for students to write 2 paragraphs in response to their chosen prompts. (30 minutes)

- Pass out **Exit Tickets**. Choose an option or use both if lesson extends multiple days:
(5 minutes)
 - *For what new rights would you want to advocate? How would you advocate?*
 - *Do you believe the State House design reflects North Carolina in some way? How?*

Modifications

- Student pages/worksheets could be shared with students needing to take notes individually, with vision issues, or who have issues focusing (even if the slides are being used collectively).
- Students could be paired with a higher-achieving or differently behaving student for extra support.
- Students could be given extension activities if they finish early or are high-achieving and need more challenging or independent work. These can be done independently or collaboratively.

Extension Options

- Write one-page response to the prompt, “What struggles for voting rights have emerged in your lifetime?”
- Have each student present the amendment they drafted to the class and explain why this amendment should be added to the constitution. After all presentations students may then convene as an assembly to decide “or vote” on the amendments.
- Examine the [Lumbee Tribe of North Carolina’s Constitution](#) (largest state-recognized tribe) and [The Constitution of The Occaneechi Band of the Saponi Nation](#) (one of the smallest state-recognized tribes). Compare and contrast each with the 1971 North Carolina Constitution. [3aa0349e-a4c3-4857-8f0a-2e7e416fac87.filesusr.com/ugd/756e16_72e7de6efe2f40549c0c49fcc88c8ad3.pdf](#); [obsn.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/08/NewOBSNConstitution-Web.pdf](#)

Field Trip Connection

North Carolina Legislative Building. Scheduled tours are 30 minutes, ncleg.gov/About/Visitorinfo.

A 10-minute virtual tour is also available, ncleg.gov/About/VirtualTour

Recommended Resources

State Democracy Research Initiative, University of Wisconsin Law School, “**North Carolina’s Constitution**,” 50constitutions.org/nc

Bruce Barton, “**‘Double Voting’ in Robeson County: A Reminder of an Unequal Past**,” *Tar Heel Junior Historian*, v44:1, fall 2004, <https://digital.ncdcr.gov/Documents/Detail/tar-heel-junior-historian-2004-fall-v.44-no.1/3700456?item=5369492>

You Can Vote, “**North Carolina Voting Rights Timeline**,” <https://www.youcanvote.org/latest-news/2024/ncvotingrightstimeline>

State Archives of N.C., “**History of Voting Rights in North Carolina, 1776-1977**,” 6.5-minute video. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b5LqDL6jv48>