



LITERATURE CONNECTION ACTIVITY

Voting and the Spirit of American Democracy edited by Donald W. Rogers

OBJECTIVE

Students investigate the history of voting rights in America.

MATERIALS

Voting and the Spirit of American Democracy
– Donald W. Rogers, Editor

GET READY

- ✓ Secure eight copies of *Voting and the Spirit of American Democracy*.

INSTRUCTIONS

- ✓ Inform your students that they will be investigating the history of voting rights in America through the text, *Voting and the Spirit of American Democracy*.
- ✓ Explain that the book is comprised of eight essays, each essay detailing one chapter of the history of American suffrage.
- ✓ Break your class up into eight groups, one group for each essay in the book. Assign each group to an essay. (Each essay is about 10-15 pages.)
- ✓ Ask the groups to look at the title of their assigned essay and conjecture what it is about. Give the group members a couple of minutes to consult with each other, and then have them share with the class what they think their essay is going to cover.
- ✓ Have each group read their essay. (This can be assigned for homework.)
- ✓ Tell each group that they need to think of a creative way to relate the information in their essay to the rest of the class. Provide class time for students to brainstorm ideas. (Encourage students to think of all possibilities: video, visual arts, dramatics, etc.)

- ✓ Make sure that each group knows that it needs to include in its presentation the more substantive points made in the essay they were assigned. The groups should determine these points before developing their presentations.
- ✓ Give each group time to practice their presentations.
- ✓ Have each group present in the order in which their essay appears in the table of contents. Each presentation should be followed by a question period from the class.
- ✓ After the last presentation, engage the class in a discussion on the complete *Voting and the Spirit of American Democracy*. (You can use the questions provided, at least in part.)

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- ★ *What are some of the significant changes to suffrage that have been made in America?*
- ★ *Were you surprised by what you read or by what another group presented? If so, what surprised you?*
- ★ *What trends can you detect in the development of the right to vote in the United States?*
- ★ *What are some of the challenges that face suffrage in America today?*
- ★ *The title of the book is "Voting and the Spirit of American Democracy." After studying this book, what do you think is the spirit of American democracy?*