



*My Rights & Liberties: SS.7.CG.2.3*  
**The Bill of Rights and Other Amendments**  
**VIDEO #3 SCRIPT**



---

**The 13th, 14th, 15th, 19th, 24th, and 26th Amendments**

1. You've learned a great deal about the rights contained in the Bill of Rights, but what about other amendments? What are some important ones, and what do they say?
2. After watching this video, you'll be able to
  - recognize the rights in the 13<sup>th</sup>, 14<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup>, 24<sup>th</sup>, and 26<sup>th</sup> Amendments, and
  - recognize how these amendments expanded civil rights to African Americans, women, and young people.
3. Be sure to watch this video again when you get to Benchmark SS.7.CG.3.6 so that you can then get deeper into how these amendments impacted the United States!
4. So the majority of these amendments address the expansion of the right to vote beyond the older, white, male landowner that existed under the Constitution as it was drafted.
5. We'll start with the 13<sup>th</sup> Amendment. The 13<sup>th</sup> Amendment, ratified in 1865, prohibited slavery. While this amendment did not give freed slaves the right to vote, it did give them their freedom and this was the first step on the road toward voting rights for former slaves.
6. In 1868, the 14<sup>th</sup> Amendment was ratified. This amendment established that anyone who has been born or naturalized in the United States was a citizen of the United States and that state governments could not pass laws that limited the rights of US citizens. It also defined voters as males, at least 21 years old, and citizens of the United States. No longer did they have to own land or be white.
7. The U.S. Constitution now protected the rights of all U.S. citizens under the 14<sup>th</sup> Amendment's Equal Protection Clause. State laws, theoretically, could not deny US citizens equal protection, but sometimes there were problems with this, so we'd need more amendments.

9. Despite the equal protections of the 14<sup>th</sup> Amendment, some states were still trying to deny African-American males the right to vote. So in 1870, the 15<sup>th</sup> Amendment was ratified. This prohibited the states and the federal government from denying citizens the right to vote based on their race or having previously been a slave. The 15<sup>th</sup> Amendment, then, tried to protect the right to vote for any male citizen who was at least 21 years old. Again though, we'd have some problems, and we'd need more work, more amendments, more laws.

10. Let's Check In. Try to answer the following in your own words using what you've learned.

11. If an election was held after the 15<sup>th</sup> Amendment was ratified, which groups of people could NOT vote in that election?

12. ANSWER TO QUESTION

13. Let's recap what we've learned so far about these amendments. Originally only white, male, citizen, property owners 21 or older could vote. The 13<sup>th</sup> Amendment outlawed slavery, while the 14<sup>th</sup> Amendment said that anyone born or naturalized in the United States was a citizen. The Equal Protection Clause of the 14<sup>th</sup> Amendment means that states cannot limit the rights of citizens. The 15<sup>th</sup> Amendment said you cannot deny someone the right to vote because of their race, and after the 15<sup>th</sup> Amendment, all male citizens at least 21 years of age could vote.

14. So men have the right to vote, but we have to "remember the ladies!" So let's talk about the 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment. In 1920, this amendment was ratified, and it prohibited states and the federal government from denying women the right to vote based on sex. So this amendment gave women, 21 years and older, the right to vote. But we still have some problems, so we're gonna need another amendment.

15. In 1964, the 24<sup>th</sup> Amendment was ratified. This prohibited states and the federal government from charging what are called poll taxes. A poll tax is just what it sounds like. It's money you had to pay to actually exercise your right to vote. This often kept people, particularly poor people, from voting. And so the 24<sup>th</sup> Amendment allowed more people to vote.

16. Our final amendment here is the 26<sup>th</sup> Amendment, ratified in 1971. This amendment lowered the national voting age from 21 to 18. The argument for this amendment is that if you were 18, old enough to live on your own, to pay taxes, to serve in the military, you should have the right to vote.

17. So now, all men, all women, as long as they are citizens and at least 18 and registered could vote.

18. Let's Check In. Try to answer the following question in your own words.

19. If an election was held after the 26<sup>th</sup> Amendment was ratified, which groups of people could vote in that election?

20. ANSWER TO QUESTION

21. Let's recap some of what we've learned recently. The 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment gave women the right to vote. The 24<sup>th</sup> Amendment outlawed poll taxes (having to pay to vote). The 26<sup>th</sup> Amendment lowered the national voting age to 18.

22. And remember too that after the 26<sup>th</sup> Amendment, all citizens of the United States, regardless of race or gender, could vote if they were at least 18 years old and registered.

23. Voting is one of the most important rights, but not just a right, a responsibility, that a citizen has. The right to vote expanded through amendments, and it's important that we know these amendments to know our right to vote. There's still more to learn though, so be sure to watch the videos in Benchmark 3.6 on the impact the amendments had on the political process to really understand the expansion of our right to vote. And don't forget that we need to know ALL of our rights to ensure that we can protect them!