



THE IMPACT OF THE AMENDMENTS

1. There are so many amendments that had a huge impact on our ability to vote. Remember that the 13th Amendment outlawed slavery. The 14th Amendment said that anyone born or naturalized in the U.S. was a citizen, and the Equal Protection Clause of the 14th means that states cannot limit the rights of citizens.
2. The 15th Amendment said that you cannot deny someone the right to vote just because of their race. The 19th Amendment gave women the right to vote. The 24th Amendment outlawed poll taxes, or having to pay to vote.
3. The 26th Amendment lowered the voting age to 18. After the 26th Amendment, all citizens, regardless of race or gender, could vote if they were at least 18 and registered where they lived. In this video, we're going to explore how these amendments impacted political participation.
4. After watching this video, you'll be able to:
 - ◆ Evaluate the impact these amendments have had on American society.
 - ◆ Examine how these amendments increased participation in the political process.
5. But be sure to watch the video on the voting rights amendments to make sure that you understand them.
6. So let's dive in, by reminding ourselves of the important question. How did the amendments impact citizens' involvement in the political process? And we'll begin where we began before, with the 13th, 14th, and 15th Amendments.
7. Some states opposed the outcome of the 13th, 14th and 15th Amendments, and tried to use state laws to keep African-Americans from voting and participating in political life. And it begins with what are called literacy tests.
8. Literacy tests were often-used ways to keep African-Americans and poor people from voting. For example, in Alabama, people had to take a test that had to be answered completely and perfectly in a short time. If African-Americans taking the test missed even one question, they could not register to vote.
9. In Mississippi, African-Americans were asked questions that had no correct answer, such as "How many bubbles are in a bar of soap?" Ridiculous isn't it? When you couldn't answer correctly, you couldn't vote.
10. These violations of the 14th and 15th Amendments led to a great deal of political participation on the part of citizens. Individuals and interest groups sued states for their rights as citizens.

11. Citizens and interest groups also organized marches and took part in civil disobedience to protest these state laws that infringed on their rights. These especially picked up around the 1950s.
12. By the late '50's, many Americans realized that literacy tests, to keep African Americans from voting, were unfair, and several laws were passed during the 1960s to protect the civil rights of minority groups, including African-Americans and Hispanics.
13. The Civil Rights Act of 1964 prohibited employment discrimination based on race or sex, and the Voting Rights Act of 1965 made racial discrimination illegal in voting laws, and banned those horrible literacy tests. The Civil Rights Act of 1968 banned discrimination based on race or sex in the sale or rental of housing. This made sure that people were treated fairly when they wanted to live someplace.
14. Let's check in- try to answer the following in your own words.
15. What was the purpose of the Civil Rights Acts of 1964 and 1968 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965?
→ ANSWER TO QUESTION
16. Let's recap what we've learned so far. Literacy tests were used in some states to try and get around the 14th and 15th Amendments. But individuals and interest groups advocated for their rights under the 14th and 15th Amendments.
17. The Civil Rights Act of 1964 prohibited employment discrimination based on race or sex. The Voting Rights Act of 1965 made racial discrimination illegal in voting laws and outlawed literacy tests. And the Civil Rights Act of 1968 banned housing discrimination.
18. And the 19th Amendment, you'll remember, gave women the right to vote, and eventually these women, now active voters, started pushing for an Equal Rights Amendment, which prohibited laws from discriminating based on sex.
19. Now it's important to note, the Equal Rights Amendment has not been ratified by enough states for a variety of reasons. So the Equal Rights Amendment is NOT part of our Constitution, at least not yet.
20. Now the Equal Rights Amendment is NOT part of our Constitution, but the 19th Amendment of course is! And as a result, women continue to push for equal rights, and run for elected office in incredibly high numbers.
21. Remember that the 26th Amendment lowered the voting age to 18. This meant that young people could be more involved in campaigns, and politicians would listen more to the concerns of young people because now they can vote when they're 18.
22. Let's check in- try to answer the following in your own words.
23. What was the impact of the 19th and 26th Amendments?
→ ANSWER TO QUESTION

24. Alright! Let's recap what we've learned so far:

- ◆ The 19th Amendment gave women the right to vote and led to their greater political participation.
- ◆ The Equal Rights Amendment would keep state and federal laws from discriminating based on sex, but it hasn't been ratified yet and so isn't in our Constitution.
- ◆ And as a result of the 26th Amendment, younger people are more engaged in the political process.

25. Alright, we've learned quite a bit, so let's think about some scenarios.

26. Alright, let's do some scenarios that are based on some of the history and information that you've learned. Try to answer the question at the end of each scenario.

27. On your 18th birthday, you go to register to vote. They tell you you have to take a literacy test. What do you tell them and why?

→ ANSWER TO QUESTION

28. Let's do another one. You find out that a friend has been denied a job by a government agency simply because of who they are. They don't know what to do. What do you tell them?

→ ANSWER TO QUESTION

29. Let's try one more. A friend argues with you that there really is nothing that has encouraged people to participate in the political process or to protect their rights. Based on what you have learned, how can you convince her otherwise?

→ ANSWER TO QUESTION

30. Amendments, and laws passed to support those amendments, had a huge impact on political participation and what people could participate in our political process. These amendments that we've learned about in this module protect our rights and our access to those rights.

34. You can learn more about the amendment process, your rights, and court cases that impacted these amendments and your rights in other topic areas here on Civics360! And be sure to watch the other video in this module to make sure you know about the amendments discussed in this one!