A Change Will Do You Good

**Adapted from National Endowment for the Humanities.**

**Essential Question:**
How did democracy develop in the United States?

**Enduring Understanding:**
In the early years of the New Republic, very few people could vote and very few people did vote. Much of the ideas about voting began to change with the election of Andrew Jackson.

**TEK/SE:**
5C-Explain the origin and development of American political parties. (Readiness)
5F-Explain the impact of the election of Andrew Jackson, including expanded suffrage. (Supporting)
19D-Identify examples of responsible citizenship, including obeying rules and laws, staying informed on public issues, voting, and serving on juries. (Supporting)
29B-Analyze information by sequencing, categorizing, identifying cause-and-effect relationships, comparing, contrasting, finding the main idea, summarizing, making generalizations and predictions, and drawing inferences and conclusions.
29C-Organize and interpret information from outlines, reports, databases, and visuals, including graphs, charts, timelines, and maps.

**Instructional Activities**

**Hook:**
- Pass out the election charts that detail the information from the 2004 and 2008 elections. Individually, have students write down 3 observations about the data. At least one of the observations should compare the data from the 2 charts. The teacher may need to model how to do this before allowing students to complete the activity on their own.
- Once students have written down their answers, allow them to move around the room and tell 2 other people their observations.
- Short class discussion: Based upon the data, why was Barack Obama about to win the 2008 election?

The key to this activity is to get students to look at the data and draw conclusions. Students should use the data to support their answers. If, for example, a student says that Obama won because he got a larger percentage of first time voters. Ask what evidence there is to support that claim.

**Vocabulary Acquisition:** Squatter, Aristocrat, Ballot, Watershed, Disdain, Impediment
- In pairs or groups of 3, have students find the definition of each word and write it down.
- Each group needs to come up with two synonyms for each word.
- Each group needs to come up with one antonym for each word.
- Use each word in a sentence to show understanding of the meaning of the word.
- Each person will then find a new partner. Each student will listen as his or her partner reads the definition, synonyms, antonyms and sentences. Once one student has finished, the other will read his or her work.
- Students will comment on each other’s work, checking for proper usage and understanding of the terminology.

**Guided Practice:**
- Hand out the constitutional excerpts from Massachusetts and New York. As a class, read through those excerpts together.
- How did these two constitutions help to extend voting rights?
- Now pass out the excerpt from New Jersey.
- How did New Jersey change its constitution over the years? Who could vote in 1776? In 1807? In 1844?
• Place students in small groups of 3-4 for the next part of the activity.
• Pass out a scenario to each group. As a group, they must decide whether or not this person would have the right to vote in 1828. Students must be able to defend their response using the constitutional excerpts from Massachusetts, New York or New Jersey.
• Once each group has come to a conclusion, they should read their scenario and provide their response to the class.

Independent Practice:
• Pass out the handout Percent of Voters that Voted in Each Election and the questions that go with it.
• As a group, students should discuss and answer each question.
• Once all groups have finished, conduct a short class discussion over the results.
• Pass out the handout The Election and Presidency of Andrew Jackson. In their groups, students will read over the passage and answer the questions that follow.
• Once all groups have finished, conduct a short class discussion over the results.
• After the discussion is complete, the groups should be disbanded for purposes of the assessment.

Assessment:
• Individually, students will answer the following question in writing. They should use all the information collected today to support their conclusion. Providing evidence is to support conclusions is a key element of this writing.
  How did Andrew Jackson’s election and Presidency encourage voter participation?
Massachusetts

Constitution of 1780, Section III. House of Representatives
IV. Every male person, being twenty-one years of age, and resident in any particular town in this Commonwealth for the space of one year... having a freehold estate (that is, property owned outright) within the same town, of the annual income of three pounds, or any estate of the value of sixty pounds, shall have a right to vote....

Amendment of 1821
Article III. Every male citizen of twenty-one years of age and upwards... who shall have resided within the commonwealth one year, and within the town or district in which he may claim a right to vote, six calendar months... and who shall have paid, by himself or his parent, master or guardian, any state or county tax...; and also, every citizen who shall be, by law, exempted from taxation, and who shall be, in all other respects, qualified as above mentioned, shall have a right to vote...; and no other person shall be entitled to vote in such election.

New York

Constitution of 1777
VII. That every male inhabitant of full age, who shall have personally resided within one of the counties of this State for six months immediately preceding the day of election, shall... be entitled to vote for representatives...; if, during the time aforesaid, he shall have been a freeholder, possessing a freehold of the value of twenty pounds, within the said county, or have rented a tenement therein of the yearly value of forty shillings, and been rated and actually paid taxes to this State... shall be entitled to vote...

Constitution of 1821, Article II
Section 1. [Qualifications of voters.]—Every male citizen of the age of twenty-one years, who shall have been an inhabitant of this state one year preceding any election, and for the last six months a resident of the town or county where he may offer his vote; and shall have, within the next year preceding the election, paid a tax to the state or county, assessed upon his real or personal property; or shall by law be exempted from taxation; or...shall have performed, within that year, military duty...; and also, every male citizen of the age of twenty-one years, who shall have been, for three years...an inhabitant of this state...shall be entitled to vote in the town or ward where he actually resides...but no man of colour (color), unless he shall have been for three years a citizen of this state, and for one year next preceding any election, shall be...possessed of a freehold estate of the value of two hundred and fifty dollars...shall be entitled to vote at any such election. And no person of colour shall be subject to direct taxation unless he shall be...possessed of such real estate as aforesaid.
**New Jersey**

**Constitution of 1776**
All inhabitants of this colony of full age, who are worth fifty pounds (basic unit of currency in use at the time)…and have resided within the county in which they claim to vote for twelve months immediately preceding the election, shall be entitled to vote.

**1807 New Jersey Legislature’s “Act to regulate the election of members of the legislative council and general assembly, sheriffs and coroners in this state”**
…no person shall vote in any state or county election for officers in the government of the United States, or of this state, unless such person be a free, white male citizen of this state, of the age of twenty-one years, worth fifty pounds…., and have resided in the county where he claims a vote, for at least twelve months immediately preceding the election.

**1844 New Jersey Constitution**
Every white male citizen of the United States, of the age of twenty-one years, who shall have been a resident of this state one year, and of the county in which he claims to vote five months…shall be entitled to vote.
• A New Jersey widow whose husband left her a small fortune and a successful shipbuilding business.

• A New Jersey tradesman who makes inexpensive chairs by hand in a home-based manufacturing business. His clients often pay with goods and/or services. The tradesman rents his modest home very inexpensively.

• A wealthy New Jersey male who owns a profitable shipbuilding business after inheriting it from his father five years ago.

• A New Jersey tradesman whose home-based blacksmithing business finally turned highly profitable six years ago, at which time he began to buy up property.

• A free African-American male from Massachusetts who owns a successful lumber yard.

• A farmer from Massachusetts who does very little cash business, instead relying on barter and self-sufficiency.

• A hunter and trapper who has lived in the same squatter’s cabin in northwestern New York for 10 years.

• A sergeant who has served in the New York militia for 20 years.

• A free African American who sold his lumber yard in Massachusetts for a large profit and recently moved to New York City to buy a successful cabinet-making shop.
## Percent of Eligible Voters that Voted in Each Election

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STATE</th>
<th>1824</th>
<th>1828</th>
<th>1832</th>
<th>1836</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Alabama</td>
<td>49.1</td>
<td>54.6</td>
<td>31.5</td>
<td>64.9</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Connecticut</td>
<td>14.9</td>
<td>27.2</td>
<td>46.0</td>
<td>52.3</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Delaware</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>67.1</td>
<td>69.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Georgia</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>31.8</td>
<td>29.0</td>
<td>61.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Illinois</td>
<td>24.3</td>
<td>52.4</td>
<td>46.0</td>
<td>43.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Indiana</td>
<td>37.1</td>
<td>68.7</td>
<td>71.9</td>
<td>69.2</td>
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<tr>
<td>7. Kentucky</td>
<td>25.4</td>
<td>70.7</td>
<td>74.0</td>
<td>61.1</td>
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<tr>
<td>8. Louisiana</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>36.2</td>
<td>22.3</td>
<td>19.2</td>
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<tr>
<td>9. Maine</td>
<td>19.1</td>
<td>42.7</td>
<td>66.2</td>
<td>37.7</td>
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<tr>
<td>10. Maryland</td>
<td>53.7</td>
<td>70.3</td>
<td>55.7</td>
<td>67.6</td>
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<td>11. Mass.</td>
<td>29.0</td>
<td>25.7</td>
<td>39.4</td>
<td>43.4</td>
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<tr>
<td>12. Mississippi</td>
<td>41.3</td>
<td>56.6</td>
<td>28.0</td>
<td>64.4</td>
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<tr>
<td>13. Missouri</td>
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<td>54.0</td>
<td>41.0</td>
<td>36.1</td>
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<tr>
<td>14. N.H.</td>
<td>18.0</td>
<td>74.3</td>
<td>70.1</td>
<td>38.2</td>
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<td>15. New Jersey</td>
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<td>71.0</td>
<td>68.8</td>
<td>69.2</td>
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<td>16. New York</td>
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<td>84.2</td>
<td>70.5</td>
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<td>56.9</td>
<td>31.3</td>
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<td>18. Ohio</td>
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<td>73.9</td>
<td>75.5</td>
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<td>19. Penn.</td>
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<tr>
<td>20. R.I.</td>
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<td>17.1</td>
<td>26.3</td>
<td>23.8</td>
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<tr>
<td>21. S.C.</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>L</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22. Tennessee</td>
<td>28.3</td>
<td>55.0</td>
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<td>57.3</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

L = The presidential electors in these states were chosen by state legislatures.

[Source: U.S. Census Bureau]

### Questions to answer:

1. What is the general trend in voting between 1824 and 1828? What evidence is there to support your conclusion?

2. What is the general trend in voting between 1828 and 1832? What evidence is there to support your conclusion?

3. In what ways does the chart support the theory that Andrew Jackson’s 1828 run for presidency increased voter participation?

4. Since voting trends in the United States tended to extend the right to vote to less privileged white males, does the chart support the theory that Jackson appealed to the “Common Man?” What evidence supports your conclusion?

5. In Jackson’s run increased participation in 1828, how do you explain the drop off in participation in 1832?
The Election and Presidency of Andrew Jackson

“J. Q. Adams who can write” squared off against “Andy Jackson who can fight” in the election of 1828, one of the most bitter campaigns in American history. Jackson’s followers repeated the charge that Adams was an “aristocrat” who had obtained office as a result of a “corrupt bargain.” Jackson forces also alleged that the president had used public funds to buy personal luxuries and had installed gaming tables in the White House. They even charged that Mrs. Adams had been born out of wedlock. Adams’s supporters countered by digging up an old story that Jackson had begun living with his wife before she was legally divorced from her first husband (which was technically true, although neither Jackson nor his wife Rachel knew her first husband was still living). They called the general a slave trader, a gambler, and a backwoods buffoon who could not spell more than one word out of four correctly. One Philadelphia editor published a handbill picturing the coffins of 12 men allegedly murdered by Jackson in numerous duels.

For the first time in American history, a presidential election was the focus of public attention, and voter participation increased dramatically. Twice as many voters cast ballots in the election of 1828 as in 1824, four times as many as in 1820. As in most previous elections, the vote divided along sectional lines. Jackson swept every state in the South and West and Adams won the electoral votes of every state in the North except Pennsylvania and part of New York.

Contemporaries interpreted Jackson’s resounding victory as a triumph for political democracy. Jackson’s supporters called the vote a victory for the “farmers and mechanics of the country” over the “rich and well born.” Even Jackson’s opponents agreed that the election marked a watershed in the nation’s political history, signaling the beginning of a new democratic age. One Adams supporter said bluntly, “a great revolution has taken place.”

In office, Jackson greatly enhanced the power and prestige of the presidency. While each member of Congress represented a specific regional constituency, only the president, Jackson declared, represented all the people of the United States.

Jackson convinced many Americans that their votes mattered. He espoused a political ideology of “democratic republicanism” that stressed the common peoples’ virtue, intelligence, and capacity for self-government. He also expressed a deep disdain for the “better classes,” which claimed a “more enlightened wisdom” than common men and women.

Endorsing the view that a fundamental conflict existed between working people and the “nonproducing” classes of society, Jackson and his supporters promised to remove any impediments to the ordinary citizen’s opportunities for economic improvement. According to the Jacksonians, inequalities of wealth and power were the direct result of monopoly, favoritism, and special privileges, which made “the rich richer and the powerful more potent.” Only free competition in an open marketplace would ensure that wealth would be distributed in accordance with each person’s “industry, economy, enterprise, and prudence.” The goal of the Jacksonians was to remove all obstacles that prevented farmers, artisans, and small shopkeepers from earning a greater share of the nation’s wealth.

Questions to answer:

1. In the election of 1828, Jackson accused Adams on many things. How would the “common man” see these things as faults in a potential President?
2. Why was the vote split on sectional lines?
3. How did Jackson’s views represent the “common man” while President?
4. Do you think Jackson’s views would encourage people to vote today? Why or why not?