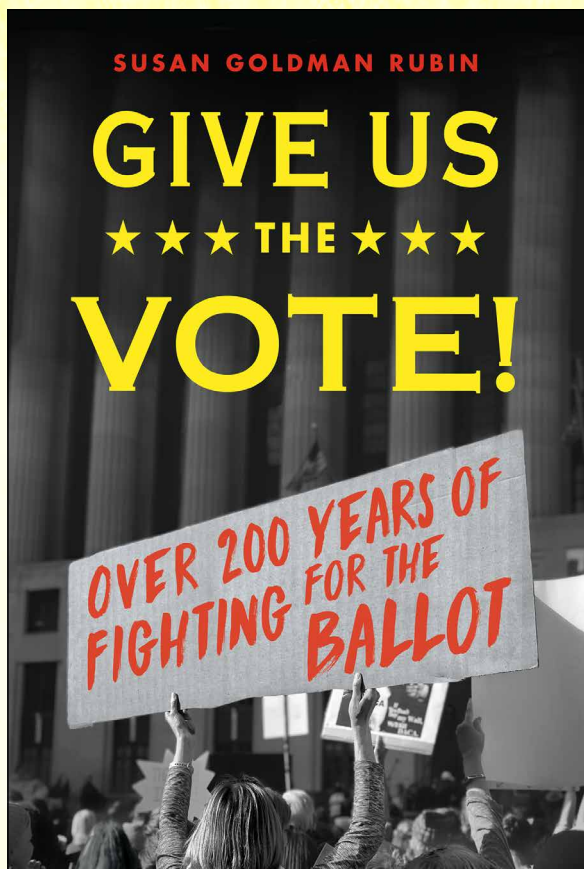


HOLIDAY HOUSE EDUCATOR'S GUIDE



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GIVE US THE VOTE!

by SUSAN GOLDMAN RUBIN

ABOUT THE BOOK

The corruption, activism, heroic efforts, and ongoing struggles for the right to vote are chronicled by award-winning nonfiction author, Susan Goldman Rubin.

The ability to vote is what makes the United States government a democracy. Yet Native Americans, blacks, and women have fought for more than two hundred years to get the right to vote. They marched, engaged in protests, and were jailed in their fight to gain what was denied them by the framers of the United States Constitution. Once these individuals obtained voting rights, local and national politicians used intimidation and violence in an effort to silence them. Even today, efforts are made to suppress the vote. Because of heroes and heroines like Frederick Douglass, John Lewis, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Susan B. Anthony, and Lucretia Mott, young people understand the power of the vote, and their own capacity to make a difference in government. All people are now included in “We the People,” but awareness and vigilance are required to ensure that democracy works. There is still corruption that threatens the ballot box and the government under which we live.



PRE-READING ACTIVITY

“The right to vote is precious and almost sacred.”—Rep. John Lewis (GA)

Read about Rep. John Lewis and his involvement with voting rights for all Americans (johnlewis.house.gov/media-center/press-releases/rep-john-lewis-mandate-restore-voting-rights-america). Then have students write a brief paper that explains the above quote. Why is it important for citizens to stay informed about actions by Congress and the Supreme Court to suppress the vote.

Correlates to Common Core Language Arts Standards in History/Social Studies: Key Ideas & Details RH. 6-8.2; Speaking & Listening: Comprehension & Collaboration SL. 5-8.1, Presentation of Knowledge & Ideas SL. 5-8.2; Writing: Text Types & Purposes W. 5-8.1.

CLASSROOM DISCUSSION

- Discuss how it is ironic that Native Americans didn't gain full citizenship until 1924 when the Snyder Act was passed. How have Native Americans continued to be discriminated against at the ballot box? Until 1957, states had the right to determine a person's right to citizenship. How did this affect voting rights? What measures did some states take to deny people the right to vote?
- Discuss how groups and organizations like Four Directions and the Turtle Mountain youth council rallied people to vote. How did the voter ID law propel these groups into action? Explain what Alexis Davis meant when she said, "It made us want to go in there and vote twice as much and make a statement" (p. 3). How does every citizen make a statement when they vote?
- The framers wanted the Constitution to be short with room for growth. The Preamble of the Constitution begins with "We the people". Who were the people the framers had in mind when they wrote the Preamble? Why did they give the states the right to determine who "the people" were?
- What is the significance that George Washington was the first signer of the United States Constitution? Discuss why Benjamin Franklin signed the document when he felt it was so flawed. The Constitution didn't give any individuals the right to vote. How did this leave decision-making in the hands of a few powerful people? How many amendments has it taken to establish voter rights?
- Chapter one begins with a quote by civil rights leader Hosea Williams: "If you can't vote then you're not free; and if you ain't free, children, then you're a slave." Discuss why his words spoke so strongly to the black community. How does this explain why so many people got behind the work of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.? Reverend James Bevel believed that the best way to educate black citizens about the right to vote was through middle and high-school students. Why did he think that people would listen to children and young adults? This led to the Children's Crusade. Discuss how many of these children became activists and leaders.
- Voting rights was at the heart of the civil rights movement. What did the tenant farmer in Dallas County, Alabama mean when he called getting the right to vote "the second emancipation"? Explain why the *New York Times* called what was happening in the Deep South "revolutionary."
- Who was Frederick Douglass? Explain why he was so adamant that women be given the right to vote? Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Lucretia Mott drew a parallel between women being denied the right to vote and slavery. How were women enslaved in their own homes? Discuss their plight to ratify the 19th Amendment. Why did so many women not support women's right to vote?
- Many suffragettes were jailed, just as black citizens were for fighting for the right to vote. Alice Paul is one of the female leaders jailed and victimized by police. Discuss why she thought it was good that women were jailed. Why did the public call her "unwomanly" and "unpatriotic"? How is the right to vote about patriotism?



- Explain why some politicians thought that the family would be destroyed if women were given the right to vote. Some men feared that only the “worst” women would vote. How might these men define “worst”?
- In 2019, many women were elected to the United States House of Representatives. Debate whether their election was a result of the Women’s March that took place in Washington, D.C., and in cities across the nation. Why did they wear white for the State of the Union address?
- Denise Jarnigan-Holt said, “If I don’t stand up for my rights today, that will follow me for the rest of my life” (p. 9). Discuss how the 21st century Women’s March and the Never More Movement are about standing up for one’s rights. Why are some people reluctant to stand up for their rights? Is it fear, apathy, or both?
- New York democrat Emanuel Celler, opposed lowering the voting age to eighteen. He called the years between eighteen and twenty-one the “years of rebellion rather than reflection.” Discuss how the students of Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida “reflected” on their own experience to launch the Never More Movement. What is their “rebellion” about?
- Trace the corruption at the ballot box from the beginning in 1776 to the present day. How is corruption about power? Discuss how technology is used for 21st century voting corruption.

Correlates to Common Core Language Arts Standards in Reading: Informational Text: Key Ideas & Details RI. 5-8.1, RI. 5-8.2, RI. 5-8.3, Craft & Structure RI. 5-8.4, Integration of Knowledge & Ideas RI. 5-8.8; History/Social Studies: Key Ideas & Details RH. 6-8.1, Integration of Knowledge & Ideas RH. 6-8.9; Speaking & Listening: Comprehension & Collaboration SL. 5-8.1, SL. 5-8.3, Presentation of Knowledge & Ideas SL. 5-8.4, SL. 5-8.6; Language: Convention of Standard English L. 5-8.1, Knowledge of Language L. 5-8.3.

CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS

- Ask students to think about civil rights leaders and women activists who worked tirelessly for the right to vote. Then write a poem titled, “Denied but Determined” from the point of view of one of these people.

Correlates to Common Core Language Arts Standards in Writing: Production & Distribution of Writing W. 5-8.4.

- The first women’s rights convention was held in Seneca Falls, New York in July 1848: history.com/topics/womens-rights/seneca-falls-convention. Research the Declaration of Sentiments and the Resolutions of the convention, and write a front-page newspaper article of the event. Include quotes from leaders like Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Lucretia Mott, Mary M’Clintock, Martha Coffin Wright, and Jane Hunt.

Correlates to Common Core Language Arts Standards in Writing: Text Types & Purposes W. 5-8.2; Language: Conventions of Standard English L. 5-8.1, L. 5-8.2, Knowledge of Language L. 5-8.3.

- Carrie Chapman Cart, leader of the National American Woman Suffrage Association, wrote pamphlets to inform women about their rights. Consider information presented in the book. Then write and illustrate a pamphlet that she might have written and distributed.

Correlates to Common Core Language Arts Standards in Writing: Text Types & Purposes W. 5-8.2; Language: Conventions of Standard English L. 5-8.1, L. 5-8.2, Knowledge of Language L. 5-8.3.

- Have students research the work of the Brennan Center for Justice. (brennancenter.org/). How much of their focus is on voting rights? Select one issue and write a brief summary of why that issue is so important in 21st century politics.

Correlates to Common Core Language Arts Standards in Writing: Text Types & Purposes W. 5-8.2, Research to Build & Present Knowledge W. 5-8.7; Language: Conventions of Standard English L. 5-8.1, L. 5-8.2, Knowledge of Language L. 5-8.3.

- Chapter four, “In the Room Where It Happened,” discusses the writing of the Constitution and why the framers developed the Electoral College. Read about the Electoral College on the following website: history.house.gov/Institution/Electoral-College/Electoral-College/. Both George W. Bush (2000) and Donald Trump (2016) won the Electoral College, but lost the popular vote. Consider how electors are chosen, and stage a class debate that addresses the question: Is the Electoral College an antiquated system?



Correlates to Common Core Language Arts in Writing: Research to Build & Present Knowledge W. 5-8.7, W.5-8.9; Speaking & Listening: Comprehension & Collaboration SL. 5-8.1, SL. 5-8.3, Presentation of Knowledge & Ideas SL. 5-8.4, SL. 5-8.6; Language: Convention of Standard English L. 5-8.1, Knowledge of Language L. 5-8.3.

- Rubin includes a Timeline of Voting Rights in the United States at the end of the book. Divide the class into groups and assign them Timeline Topics:
 - Group 1—1776–1876
 - Group 2—1882–1943
 - Group 3—1951–1993

Have the groups jot down information they learned from the book about the events in the assigned time period. Then have them write and perform a rap that summarizes this historical information. Groups may create subgroups to write and perform stanzas.

Correlates to Common Core Language Arts Standards in Writing: Text Types & Purposes W. 5-8.2, W. 5-8.3; Production & Distribution of Writing W. 5-8.4; Research to Build & Present Knowledge W. 5-8.7, W. 5-8.8, W. 5-8.9; ; Speaking & Listening: Comprehension & Collaboration SL. 5-8.1, SL. 5-8.3, Presentation of Knowledge & Ideas SL. 5-8.4, SL. 5-8.6; Language: Convention of Standard English L. 5-8.1, Knowledge of Language L. 5-8.3.

- Find out the purpose of the League of Women Voters: lwv.org/. One of the activities of the league is to conduct voter registration in high schools. Read about other activities of the league. Call a local chapter and find out their work in the community. Write a letter that the local league may write to new voters about their work and the importance of voting.

Correlates to Common Core Language Arts Standards in Writing: Text Types & Purposes W. 5-8.2, Research to Build & Present Knowledge W. 5-8.7; Language: Conventions of Standard English L. 5-8.1, L. 5-8.2, Knowledge of Language L. 5-8.3.

VOCABULARY/USE OF LANGUAGE

Ask students to jot down unfamiliar words and try to define them by taking clues from context. Such words may include: *affidavit* (p. 1), *disenfranchise* (p. 2), *sentries* (p. 21), *ratification* (p. 24), *inherently* (p. 30), *suppress* (p. 31), *abstained* (p. 41), *meticulous* (p. 47), *reputed* (p. 57), *impediments* (p. 59), *flagrant* (p. 63), *canvassing* (p. 75), *atrocities* (p. 79), *conscripted* (p. 79), and *egregious* (p. 89).

Correlates to Common Core Language Arts Standards in Language: Vocabulary Acquisition & Use L. 5-8.4.

INTERNET RESOURCES

womenshistory.org/

The official website for the Nation Women’s History Museum.

si.edu/museums/african-american-museum

The official website for the National Museum of African American History and Culture.

archives.gov/electoral-college/links

The official website for the National Archives with links to further information on elections.

[youtube.com/watch?v=B_6-8AE7Cao](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B_6-8AE7Cao)

Willie Nelson singing “Vote ‘Em Out.”

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Susan Goldman Rubin is the author of more than thirty-five books for children. Her *Freedom Summer: The 1964 Struggle for Civil Rights in Mississippi* was an ALA Notable Book, a *Booklist* Editors’ Choice, and a Golden Kite Honor Award recipient. Many of her other titles have been named Golden Kite winners and honor books, NCTE Ortis Pictus Honor books, Sydney Taylor winner and honor books, ALA Notable books, and National Jewish Book Award finalists. She lives in Malibu, California.



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