



Voting in America

“Let us never forget that government is ourselves. The ultimate rulers of our democracy...
are the voters of this country”
-Franklin D. Roosevelt

Voting is the civic responsibility of all citizens who qualify. Our democracy depends upon citizens to educate themselves about the candidates and to vote in each election. Yet, only sixty-three percent of American citizens participated in the elections of 2008, despite the fact that this was one of the most historic elections ever held. Even less than that participate in state and local elections that occur more frequently.

Qualifications To Vote In Virginia

- A resident of Virginia
- A U.S. citizen
- 18 years old, or 18 by the next general election
- You do not claim to vote in any other state
- Cannot be currently declared mentally incompetent by a court of law
- If a convicted felon, your right to vote must be restored by the Governor or other appropriate authority

How to Register in Virginia

- In person at the registrar's office
- At the Division of Motor Vehicles: (The National Voter Registration Act of 1995 is nicknamed the “Motor Voter Act” because it allows people to register to vote when they renew their drivers' licenses.)
- At other designated sites. This could be at the Farmer's Market or in front of the grocery store. Remember that is a function of political parties to try to make sure that as many voters as possible are registered.
- By mail

Amendments to the United States Constitution about voting

Fifteenth Amendment- Extends the right to vote to black males who are considered citizens according to the Fourteenth Amendment.

Nineteenth Amendment- Extends the right to vote to women.

Twenty-Fourth Amendment- Abolishes the poll tax that prevented many poor blacks in the south from taking part in the electoral process.

Twenty-Sixth Amendment- Extends the right to vote to eighteen year olds.

Using the data from the 2004 & 2008 presidential elections, answer the following questions:

1. In each category, identify which group had the highest voter turnout:

- Gender:
- Race:
- Age:
- Level of Education:
- Employment:
- Annual Family Income:

2. In each category, identify which group had the lowest voter turnout:

- Gender:
- Race
- Age:
- Level of Education:
- Employment:
- Annual Family Income:



Let's stop and think for a moment:
Who is eligible to vote in the United States of America?

3. How might the data collected in this study of demographics affect political campaigns?

4. Taking this census information into account, what conclusions can you make about representation in our federal government?