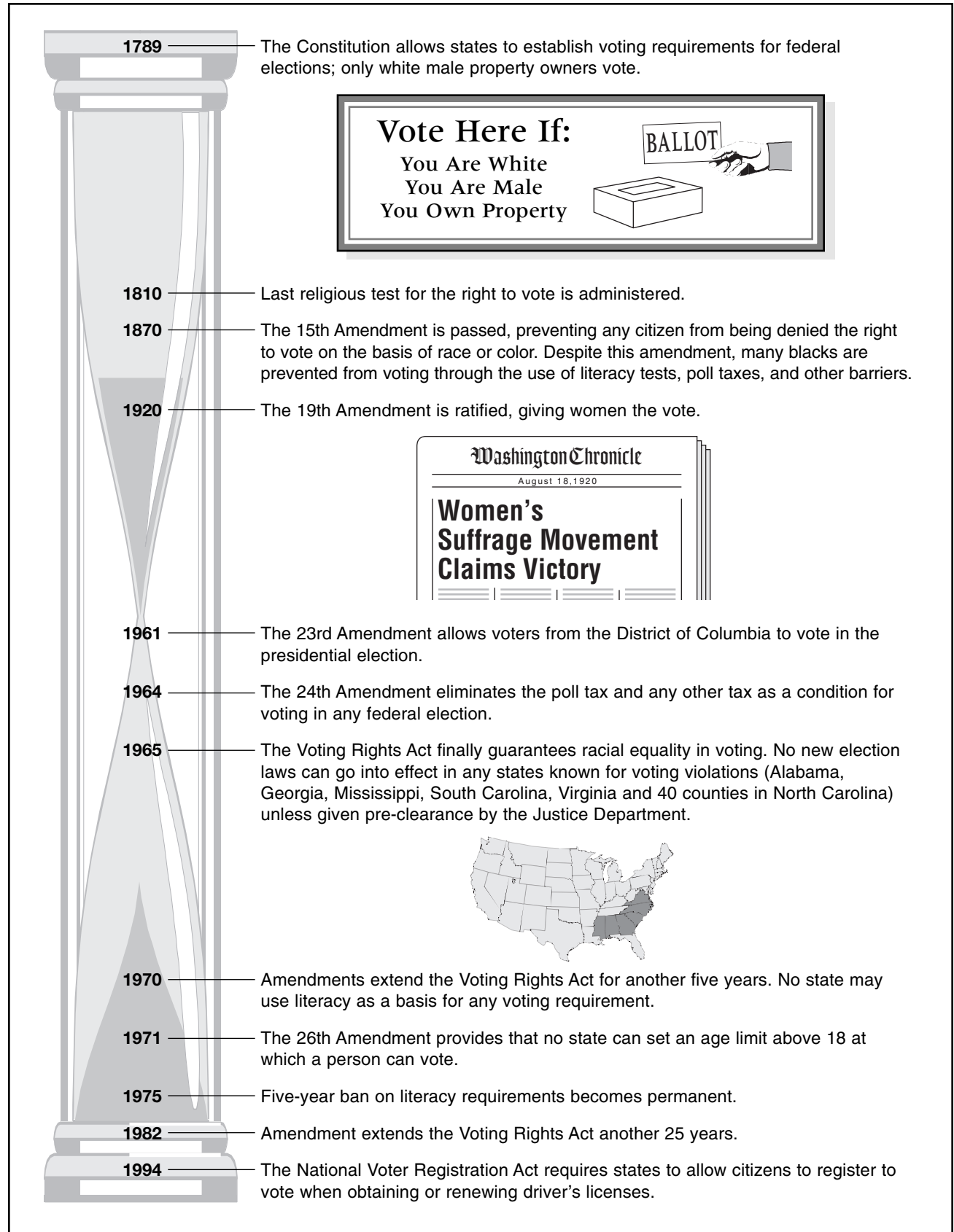
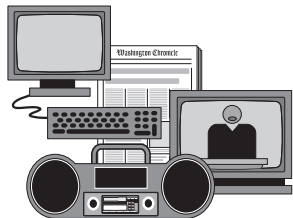


## Development of Voting Rights

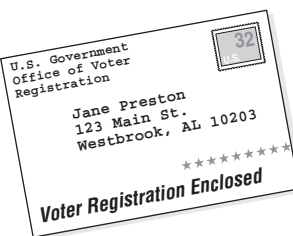


## A Guide to Responsible Voting



### Preparing for the Election

You can get information on the issues and candidates from a variety of sources. These include newspapers, television, radio, and the internet, local chapters of the League of Women Voters, brochures and pamphlets from political parties, and interest groups such as the Sierra Club, the National Rifle Association, and teachers' unions.



### Registering to Vote

Each state sets its own requirements. Usually you must register to vote 1-30 days prior to an election. Most registration forms require name, address, social security number, place and date of birth, sex, and date of registration. A signature is also required and verification of residence is often needed.

In many states, you may register by mail. Get registration forms from the city or county clerk's office, the local board of elections, or the secretary of state's office. To register in person, go to a city or county clerk, the board of elections, or a special office. You might be able to register at local libraries, motor vehicle departments, etc., during special times.



### Arriving at the Polling Place

Review the sample ballot near the entrance. You may have received a copy of the ballot in the mail.

Sign in at the clerk or election judge's table. The clerk or judge will pass the signature to a local election official who compares the signature to the voter registration form. If it matches, the paper is initialed. The clerk then allows you to enter the voting booth.



### In the Voting Booth

#### Voting machines usually come in two forms

**The lever machine:** Pull the large lever to close the curtain behind you. Make your selection by pushing down the small levers next to your candidates. You can change your vote by resetting the levers. Pull back the large lever which records your vote, opens the curtain, and resets the machine. (See illustration at left.)

**Punch card ballot:** Enter the booth and insert the card into the voting machine. The card lines up with the names of the candidates. Make your selection with the stylus provided. Once you make your choices, you can't change them. Remove the card from the machine, place it in the envelope, and return it to the clerk or judge. They place the card in a ballot box.



## Voting Influences and Patterns

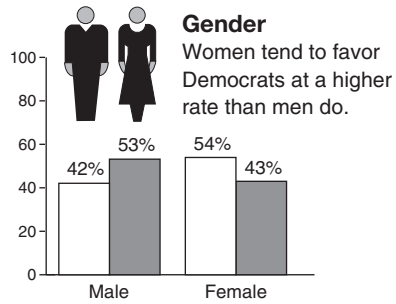
### Factors that Influence Voters

**Personal Characteristics.** Many things influence how a person votes: gender, age, income and occupation, education, and religious and ethnic background. Below are examples of how these characteristics translate into voting patterns.

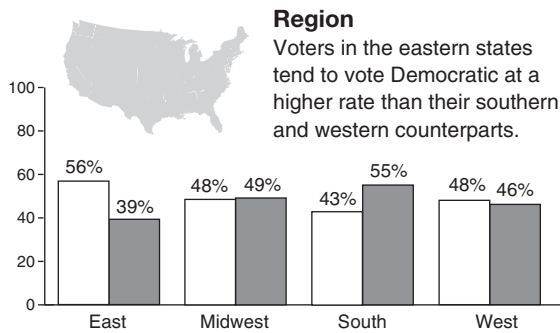
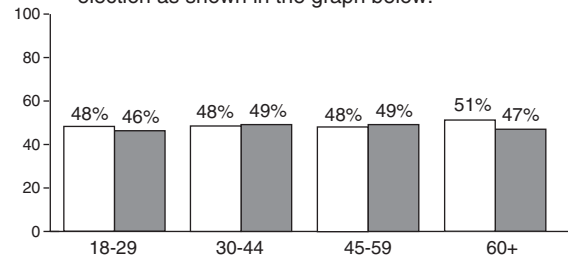
All Graphs:

#### Percent of Votes in 2000 Presidential Election

 Democrat  
 Republican

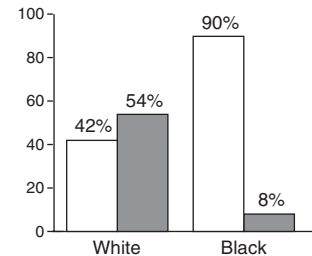
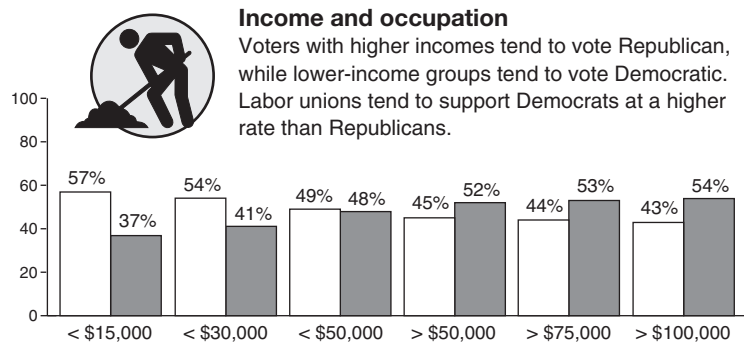


**Age**  
 By the end of the 1980s, younger voters began to vote more for Republicans than Democrats, reversing a trend prevalent since the 1960s. However, this pattern reversed itself again in the 1992 presidential election as shown in the graph below.



#### Religious and ethnic background

Protestants in the north tend to vote Republican; Catholics and Jews tend to vote Democratic. African Americans have moved toward the Democratic Party since the 1930s and vote overwhelmingly Democratic today.



### Other Factors

#### Family and other group affiliations

Members of a family tend to vote similarly. Nine out of ten married couples share the same partisan tendencies. Co-workers and friends also can influence a person's voting behavior.

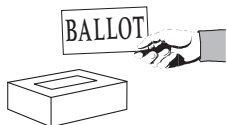
#### Party identification

A person's political party affiliation—whether Republican, Democratic, or Independent—is a very important factor in determining how he or she votes. Some people support a party with little regard for candidates or issues.

#### Candidates and issues

Voters are concerned with the way candidates present themselves and the way they address certain key issues, especially emotionally charged issues such as abortion.

## Elections and Election Cycles



The success of democratic government is based on free, honest, and accurate elections. Specific terms of office and regularity of election schedules help to ensure fairness in our political system.

### Congressional Elections

#### Term

House of Representatives = 2 years

*Art. I, Sec. 2.*  
*The House of Representatives shall be composed of members chosen every second year by the people of the several states.*

Senate = 6 years

*Art. I, Sec. 3.*  
*The Senate of the United States shall be composed of two senators from each state . . . for six years, and each senator shall have one vote.*

### Presidential Elections

4 years

*Art. II, Sec. 1.*  
*The executive power shall be vested in a President of the United States of America. He shall hold his office during the term of four years, and, together with the Vice-President, chosen for the same term, be elected as follows:*

#### Timing

First Tuesday following the first Monday in November of every even-numbered year.

First Tuesday following the first Monday in November of every even-numbered fourth year.

### State and Local Elections

Are often held on the same day as congressional and presidential elections. However, some state and local elections take place in “off years.”



Americans elect some 500,000 officeholders in an average election year.

The “coattail effect” occurs when a strong candidate at the top of the ballot helps other candidates on the same party ticket gain votes. Example: The popularity of Ronald Reagan in the 1984 presidential election helped many other Republicans win office.

### Election Schedule 2000 to 2007

November	November	November	November	November	November	November	November
2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
President				President			
Congress		Congress		Congress		Congress	
State & Local	State & Local	State & Local	State & Local	State & Local	State & Local	State & Local	State & Local