

Oh, yes, we will.



**You{th} vote =
You{th} power.**

Voting Rights Basics:

Citizens of the United States have voting rights protected by the US Constitution.

We are also protected by our state constitution's bill of rights.

You are eligible to vote in Wisconsin if:

⇒ You are a US citizen

⇒ You have lived in Wisconsin for at least 28 days prior to the election

⇒ You are at least 18 years old or will be before the next election

⇒ You are not serving a sentence for a felony conviction, including parole (“on paper”)

How to vote in Wisconsin:

Step 1: **Register** to vote. You may register online at MyVote.wi.gov if you have a Wisconsin driver license or Wisconsin DMV-issued ID card. Otherwise register at your city or village hall up to the Friday before election day or register at your polling place on election day. Unless you are registering online, you'll need proof of residence (a document that has your current name and address).

Step 2: Make sure you have an **ID** that works for voting.

Step 3: **Educate yourself!** This web site will show you what's on your ballot: myvote.wi.gov

Step 4: **VOTE!**

Remember Wisconsin has as many as **four** elections per year: spring primary in February, spring election for local offices in April, fall primary in August, and fall general election in November.

US Voting Rights Timeline



1776: Although the Declaration of Independence has just been signed and the United States' independent status has not yet been recognized by many countries, the right to vote begins in America as a legal privilege almost exclusively available to white, property-owning, Protestant men.

1788: With the ratification of the Constitution, all slaves are counted as 3/5's of a single person on the national census.

1790: The Naturalization Act bars all persons of Asian descent from becoming naturalized. Only "free white" immigrants are recognized as eligible for naturalization.

1792: New Hampshire becomes the first state to eliminate its property requirements, thereby extending the right to vote to almost all white men.

1807: Women lose the right to vote in every state in the US for the next 113 years.

1828: Maryland becomes the last state to remove religious restrictions when it passes legislation enfranchising Jews. White men can no longer be denied the right to vote on the basis of their religion.

1848: The Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo renders the lands now known as Arizona, California, New Mexico, Texas, and Nevada US territory. All Mexican persons within these territories are declared US citizens, but simultaneously denied the right to vote by English proficiency, literacy, and property requirements along with violence, intimidation, and racist nativism.

1856: North Carolina becomes the last state to eliminate its property requirements.

The right to vote is extended to all white men in America.

1857: In the landmark case Dred Scott v. Sandford, the US Supreme Court rules that "a black man has no rights a white man is bound to respect." African Americans are further deprived of the right to citizenship and, by extension, the right to vote.

1866: The first Civil Rights Act grants citizenship, but not the right to vote, to all persons born in the USA.

1869-70: The Fifteenth Amendment is passed in Congress and ratified by the states. The right to vote is now legally guaranteed to all male citizens regardless of "race, color, or previous condition of servitude."

1882: Congress passes the Chinese Exclusion Act, which establishes restrictions and quotas on Chinese immigration while legally excluding Chinese persons from citizenship and voting.

1889-1890: Poll taxes and literacy tests specifically designed to reduce African American voting power are introduced in Southern states for the first time.

1890: The Indian Naturalization Act allows Native Americans to acquire citizenship.

1896: Louisiana is the first state to implement a grandfather clause in its election policy. No male citizen whose grandparent was deprived of the right to vote may exercise that right himself.

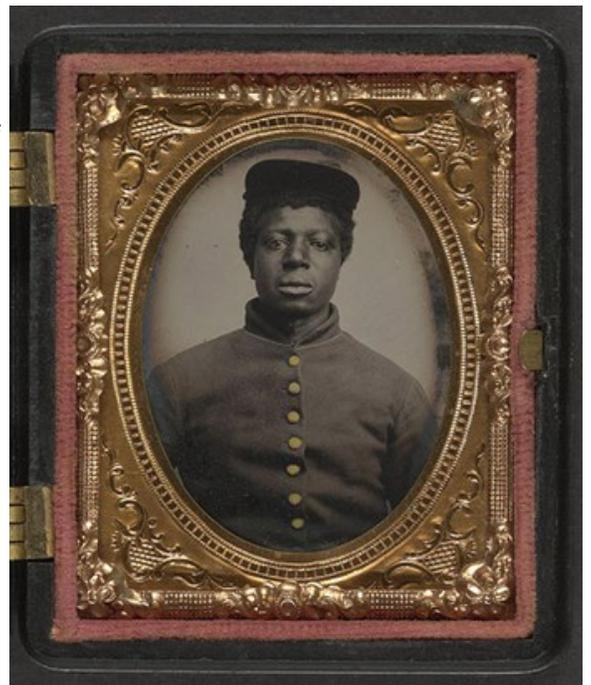
1915: The US Supreme Court finds Oklahoma's grandfather clause unconstitutional in *Guinn v. United States*.

1919-20: The Nineteenth Amendment is adopted by Congress and ratified by the states into law. The right to vote is now guaranteed to all citizens regardless of gender.

1922: The US Supreme Court rules that persons of Japanese origin are insufficiently white to qualify for citizenship in *Takao Ozawa v. United States*.

1923: The US Supreme Court declares persons of Indian descent, even "high caste Hindus", as ineligible for citizenship because they cannot be legally recognized as "white" persons.

1924: The Indian Citizenship Act of 1924 declares all non-citizen Native Americans born in the USA to be citizens with the right to vote.



1937: Georgia's poll taxes are found constitutional by the US Supreme Court in *Breedlove v. Suttles*.

1943: The Chinese Exclusion Act is repealed, and Chinese persons are now eligible for naturalization.

1946: Filipinos receive the right to naturalization after almost 50 years of colonialism.

1946: Federal courts find white primary systems in Georgia unconstitutional in *King v. Chapman*.

1948: The last state laws denying Native Americans the right to vote are overturned.

1952: The McCarran-Walter Act recognizes the right to citizenship of first-generation Japanese Americans.

1957: The Civil Rights Act of 1957 authorizes the US Attorney General to file lawsuits on behalf of African Americans denied the right to vote.

1960: The Civil Rights Act of 1960 is passed, making collection of state voter records mandatory and authorizing the Justice Department to investigate and access the voter data and history of all states in order to carry out civil rights litigation.

1964: The passage and ratification of the 24th Amendment outlaws poll taxes nationwide.

1964: The concept of one person, one vote is upheld by the US Supreme Court as the national standard applying to all legislative bodies in *Reynolds v. Sims*.

1964: The Civil Rights Act of 1964 is passed, making discrimination on the basis of race, national origin, gender, or religion in voting, public areas, the workplace, and schools illegal.

1965: The Voting Rights Act is signed into law, prohibiting any election practice that denies the right to vote to citizens on the basis of race and forces jurisdictions with histories of voter discrimination to submit any changes to its election laws to the government for federal approval prior to taking effect.

1966: The Supreme Court affirms the Voting Rights Act's constitutionality in *South Carolina v. Katzenbach*.

1970: Temporary provisions of the Voting Rights Act are renewed for the next five years.

1971: The 26th Amendment sets the national voting age to 18 and over.

1974: The Supreme Court rules that states may deny convicted felons the right to vote in *Richardson v. Ramirez*.

1975: The Voting Rights Act's special provisions are once again extended. New amendments permanently banning literacy tests and mandating assistance to language minority voters are also added.

1975: The US Supreme Court finds Texas redistricting in Bexar County unconstitutional due to its enervating effects on minority voting power in *White v. Regester*.

1976: The Supreme Court rules in *Beer v. United States* that preclearance of election changes deemed unfair to minority voters are in compliance with the Voting Rights Act so long as "retrogressive" changes do not occur.

1982: The Voting Rights Act is extended for 25 years.

1986: Voting rights for people of color are strengthened by the US Supreme Court's decision to declare multi-member state legislative districts in North Carolina unconstitutional in the *Thomburg v. Gingles* case.

1990: The passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act ensures that election workers and polling sites provide a variety of services designed to ensure the possibility of persons with disabilities to vote.

1992: The language minority provisions of the Voting Rights Act are extended for the next 15 years.

1993: The National Voter Registration Act requires states to permit mail-in registration, and make registration services available at DMVs, unemployment offices, and other state agencies.

1995: The Supreme Court rules that race may not be the "predominant factor" in redistricting in *Miller v. Johnson*.

2002: The Help America Vote Act creates minimal standards of election administration, provides for provisional ballot voting, and sets aside funds to help states improve outdated voter systems.

2004: The Supreme Court found claims of partisan gerrymandering nonjusticiable in *Vieth v. Jubelirer*.

2006: The Voting Rights Act is extended for another 25 years.

2009: The Military and Overseas Empowerment Act establishes more efficient means for troops stationed overseas and expatriates to request and receive absentee ballots through the mail or electronically.

State of Louisiana Literacy Test

Do what you are told to do in each statement, nothing more, nothing less. Be careful as one wrong answer denotes failure of the test. You have 10 minutes to complete the test.

Draw a line around the number or letter of this sentence.

Draw a line under the last word in this line.

Cross out the longest word in this line.

Draw a line around the shortest word in this line.

Circle the first, first letter of the alphabet in this line.

In the space below, draw three circles, one inside (engulfed by) the other.

Above the letter X make a small cross.

Draw a line through the letter below that comes earliest in the alphabet.

Z V S B D M K I T P H C

Draw a line through the two letters below that come last in the alphabet.

Z V B D M K T P H S Y C

In the first circle below write the last letter of the first word beginning with "L."



Cross out the number necessary, when making the number below one million.

1000000000

Draw a line from circle 2 to circle 5 that will pass below circle 2 and above circle 4.



In the line below cross out each number that is more than 20 but less than 30.

31 16 48 29 53 47 22 37 98 26 20 25

Draw a line under the first letter after “h” and draw a line through the second letter after “j.”

a b c d e f g h i j k l m n o p q

In the space below, write the word “noise” backwards and place a dot over what would be its second letter should it have been written forward.

Draw a triangle with a blackened circle that overlaps only its left corner.

Look at the line of numbers below, and place on the blank, the number that should come next.

2 4 8 16 _____

Look at the line of numbers below, and place on the blank, the number that should come next.

3 6 9 _____ 15

Draw in the space below, a square with a triangle in it, and within that same triangle draw a circle with a black dot in it.

Spell backwards, forwards.

Print the word vote upside down, but in the correct order.

Place a cross over the tenth letter in this line, a line under the first space in the sentence, and a circle around the last the in the second line of this sentence.

Draw a figure that is square in shape. Divide it in half by drawing a straight line from its northeast corner to its southwest corner, and then divide it once more by drawing a broken line from the middle of its western side to the middle of its eastern side.

Print a word that looks the same whether it is printed frontwards or backwards.

In the third square below, write the second letter of the fourth word.

Write right from the left to the right as you see it spelled here.

Divide a vertical line in two equal parts by bisecting it with a curved horizontal line that is only straight at its spot bisection of the vertical.

Write every other word in this first line and print every third word in the same line, [*original type smaller and first line ended at comma*] but capitalize the fifth word that you write.

Draw five circles that one common inter-locking part. [*sic*]

Grading the Louisiana Literacy Test

The Louisiana Literacy Test was designed so that the test-takers would pass or fail simply at the discretion of the registrar who administered the test. The questions were so imprecisely written that the examiner could decree almost any answer correct or incorrect, at his whim. The reality was that registrants the county commissioners wanted to prevent from voting – primarily black applicants, but also certain lower-class whites in disfavor with county officials – were destined to fail the test, regardless of the answers they gave.

Black applicants could be failed for something as simple as a single spelling or punctuation error. However, many examiners chose to deceive test-takers by changing the rules or interpreting paradoxical questions in different ways.

For example, although question 5 says to “circle” something, questions 1 and 4 say to “draw a line around” something. If the examiner insisted a circle was not a line, the applicant failed.

Question 10 asks for something to be done to “the first word beginning with ‘L’” – does it mean the first word in this sentence, or the first word on the page?

Question 24 wants the applicant to “print a word that looks the same whether it is printed frontwards or backwards.” One would assume that a word like BOB would work just fine, but if the examiner expected “backwards” to be in mirror-writing, the B’s would be inverted and thus incorrect.

The solution to question 25, in spite of the trick question in the triangle, could be that the examiner expected the word “down” to be written on the line!

In question 27, does the examiner expect only the word *right* to be written, or does he want the word *right* plus all the words that follow it? And if the test-taker printed his answer instead of using cursive (“I said *write*, not *print*!”), he would fail.

Another factor in passing or failing the test was the time requirement – registrants had to respond to 30 complicated questions in 10 minutes, a time frame which could easily be waived for white voters.

There were limitless ways to fail this test, and the registrar, with the blessings of a white- controlled county government, exercised complete power over the success or failure of every applicant.