



SOCIAL STUDIES & THE JUICE

TOPIC: VOTING RIGHTS & GERRYMANDERING

FOR TEACHERS

The way voting districts are drawn has shaped American democracy for centuries. From the Reconstruction Era to the Voting Rights Act of 1965, to today's redistricting fights, questions of fairness and representation remain central to our political system. Current events around redistricting and gerrymandering help students connect the abstract idea of "fair elections" to real-life struggles that impact whose voices are heard.

This Classroom Kit is specifically designed to help students understand how gerrymandering connects to broader themes of voting rights, political power, and the ongoing tension between change and continuity in US history.

STANDARDS ALIGNMENT SUPPORTED IN THIS KIT

C3 FRAMEWORK: CIVICS & HISTORY

D2.Civ.2.9-12 — Analyze the role of citizens in the US political system, with attention to the various ways people influence government and public policy.

D2.His.14.9-12 — Analyze multiple and complex causes and effects of events in the past.

D2.His.16.9-12 — Integrate evidence from multiple relevant historical sources and interpretations into a reasoned argument about the past

THE JUICE ARTICLES USED

Texas House Passes New Political Map, Igniting Map Battles Nationwide

August 22, 2025

Texas, California Launch Nationwide Battle to Reshape Congress

August 19, 2025

Redistricting or "Gerrymandering"

Extra Juice

BIG QUESTION

How has the struggle for fair voting or representation changed — and stayed the same — over time in the United States?



BEFORE YOU READ

WHAT DOES IT MEAN FOR AN ELECTION TO BE “FAIR”? WRITE 2–3 SENTENCES IN YOUR OWN WORDS.

WHAT HISTORICAL EXAMPLES OF UNFAIR VOTING PRACTICES (E.G., POLL TAXES, LITERACY TESTS, RESTRICTIONS ON MINORITY VOTERS) HAVE YOU LEARNED ABOUT? HOW DID PEOPLE FIGHT BACK AGAINST THEM?

IMAGINE YOU LIVE IN A TOWN WHERE ONE NEIGHBORHOOD GETS TO CHOOSE 6 CITY COUNCIL MEMBERS AND ALL OTHER NEIGHBORHOODS TOGETHER ONLY GET TO CHOOSE 2. HOW MIGHT PEOPLE FEEL ABOUT THAT SYSTEM? WHY?

DURING THE READING

TEXAS HOUSE PASSES NEW POLITICAL MAP, IGNITING MAP BATTLES NATIONWIDE

WHY DID DEMOCRATS SAY THE TEXAS REDISTRICTING PROCESS WAS UNFAIR?

WHAT UNUSUAL STEP DID TEXAS DEMOCRATS TAKE TO PROTEST THE VOTE?

WHY DID REPUBLICANS IN TEXAS WANT TO PASS NEW MAPS BEFORE THE NEXT CENSUS CYCLE?

DURING THE READING

TEXAS, CALIFORNIA LAUNCH NATIONWIDE BATTLE TO RESHAPE CONGRESS

HOW DID CALIFORNIA RESPOND TO TEXAS'S REDISTRICTING EFFORT?

CRITICS ARGUE THAT GERRYMANDERING "HURTS VOTERS THE MOST." BASED ON THE ARTICLE, WHAT DOES THIS MEAN?

HOW DO THE EXAMPLES FROM TEXAS AND CALIFORNIA SHOW THAT **BOTH PARTIES** HAVE USED GERRYMANDERING?

 **COMPLETE THE EXTRA JUICE ON REDISTRICTING OR 'GERRYMANDERING':**

IN YOUR OWN WORDS, EXPLAIN THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN REAPPORTIONMENT AND REDISTRICTING.

WHY IS GERRYMANDERING CONTROVERSIAL? PROVIDE TWO REASONS FROM THE READING.

GIVE ONE EXAMPLE FROM RECENT ELECTIONS WHERE GERRYMANDERING CHANGED THE BALANCE OF POLITICAL POWER.

AFTER READING

WRITING & INFOGRAPHIC PROJECT

STEP 1: CHANGE & CONTINUITY WRITING PROMPT

WRITE A SHORT ESSAY (AT LEAST 1–2 PARAGRAPHS) ANSWERING THE FOLLOWING QUESTION:

HOW HAS THE STRUGGLE FOR FAIR VOTING AND REPRESENTATION **CHANGED** SINCE THE CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT (1960S) AND HOW HAS IT **REMAINED THE SAME** IN TODAY’S FIGHTS OVER GERRYMANDERING?

YOUR ESSAY MUST:

- USE EVIDENCE FROM AT LEAST **TWO JUICE ARTICLES** PROVIDED.
- INCLUDE ONE HISTORICAL EXAMPLE (VOTING RIGHTS ACT OF 1965, PAST GERRYMANDERING CASES, ETC.).
- EXPLAIN BOTH **CHANGE** (WHAT IS DIFFERENT TODAY) AND **CONTINUITY** (WHAT HAS STAYED THE SAME).

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

STUDENT WRITING PROMPT (MODEL)

HISTORIANS OFTEN LOOK AT THE PAST TO UNDERSTAND HOW THINGS HAVE **CHANGED** AND WHAT HAS **STAYED THE SAME** (CONTINUITY). AFTER READING THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND AND THE CURRENT EVENT ARTICLE, WRITE A SHORT RESPONSE THAT EXPLAINS:

1. **WHAT HAS CHANGED** BETWEEN THE HISTORICAL EVENT AND THE MODERN ISSUE.
2. **WHAT HAS STAYED THE SAME** OR CONTINUED ACROSS TIME.
3. **WHY THIS CONNECTION MATTERS** TODAY.

AFTER WRITING, CREATE AN **INFOGRAPHIC** THAT SHOWS YOUR COMPARISON. YOUR INFOGRAPHIC SHOULD INCLUDE:

- A SHORT TITLE THAT EXPLAINS THE CONNECTION.
- AT LEAST ONE “CHANGE” AND ONE “CONTINUITY” IN YOUR OWN WORDS.
- IMAGES, SYMBOLS, OR ICONS TO REPRESENT YOUR IDEAS.
- A SHORT TAKEAWAY MESSAGE (WHY SHOULD PEOPLE CARE?).



AFTER READING

WRITING & INFOGRAPHIC PROJECT

STEP 2: CREATE AN INFOGRAPHIC

TRANSFORM YOUR ESSAY INTO A **VISUAL INFOGRAPHIC** THAT COULD BE SHARED WITH THE PUBLIC. YOUR INFOGRAPHIC SHOULD:

- INCLUDE A TITLE AND 2–3 MAIN POINTS.
- USE VISUALS SUCH AS ARROWS, TIMELINES, OR CHARTS TO COMPARE PAST AND PRESENT.
- SHOW AT LEAST **ONE EXAMPLE OF CHANGE** AND **ONE EXAMPLE OF CONTINUITY**.
- BE DESIGNED TO HELP SOMEONE NEW TO THE ISSUE QUICKLY UNDERSTAND THE BIG IDEAS.

A large, empty rectangular area defined by a dashed black border, intended for students to create their infographic.



FOR TEACHERS

BEFORE THE READING

- Review key vocabulary (gerrymandering, redistricting, representation).
- Prompt students to brainstorm other examples in US history where access to voting has been restricted or expanded.

DURING THE READING

- Encourage students to annotate the text and highlight evidence related to fairness and power.
- Check that students distinguish between redistricting (normal, every decade) and gerrymandering (politically motivated).

AFTER THE READING

- Students complete the “Change & Continuity” writing piece and then move into infographic creation.
- Consider having students present their infographics in a gallery walk.

EXTENSION

- Organize a debate: Should all states be required to use independent commissions to draw voting maps?
- Have students research a historical Supreme Court case about gerrymandering or voting rights (e.g., *Baker v. Carr*, *Shelby County v. Holder*) and connect it to the modern fight.

SOCIAL STUDIES & THE JUICE

ANSWER KEY: VOTING RIGHTS & GERRYMANDERING

OVERVIEW

This activity asks students to compare a historical event with a current event through the lens of **change and continuity**. Students write a short response and then create an infographic to visualize their thinking. The goal is not for students to produce a single “right” answer, but for them to demonstrate historical reasoning, make evidence-based claims, and connect the past to the present.

POSSIBLE STUDENT RESPONSES

When comparing the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s to current debates around voting rights today, students might identify:

Examples of Change (then → now):

- Passage of the Voting Rights Act (1965) outlawed discriminatory practices like literacy tests and poll taxes.
- Today, more Americans of diverse backgrounds are registered to vote than in the 1960s.
- Federal laws protect voting rights for women, people of color, and multilingual voters.

Examples of Continuity (then → now):

- Voter suppression remains an issue, though it takes new forms (e.g., voter ID laws, redistricting, reduced polling access).
- Communities of color are still disproportionately affected by voting restrictions.
- Grassroots movements and community leaders continue to organize for equal voting access.

Why It Matters (student synthesis):

- Democracy depends on equal access to voting.
- Historical struggles highlight the importance of vigilance in protecting rights.
- Understanding history helps explain why current debates are so significant.

MODEL STUDENT RESPONSE (FOR TEACHERS TO REFERENCE)

Topic: Civil Rights Movement (1960s) & Voting Rights

Today During the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s, leaders like John Lewis and Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. fought for equal access to the ballot, especially in the South where discriminatory laws and practices prevented many Black Americans from voting.

Change: Since that time, major laws like the Voting Rights Act of 1965 have expanded protections, and today, more people of different races and backgrounds are registered to vote than ever before.

Continuity: However, some voting restrictions still exist. Recent debates about voter ID laws, redistricting, and access to early voting echo the struggles of the past. Communities of color are still disproportionately impacted.

Why it matters: Understanding both the progress that has been made and the challenges that remain helps us see that the fight for voting rights is ongoing. History shows us that protecting democracy requires constant attention.

SCORING RUBRIC

Score	Focus & Claim	Use of Evidence	Analysis of Change & Continuity	Organization	Language & Conventions
5	Clear, precise claim that identifies both change and continuity	Multiple, well-chosen pieces of evidence from both historical and current sources	Insightful analysis showing nuanced connections between past and present	Logical, well-structured with smooth transitions	Consistently clear, academic language; few or no errors
4	Clear claim that identifies change and continuity	Relevant evidence from both historical and current sources	Thoughtful analysis with clear connections, some nuance	Generally well-organized with effective transitions	Mostly clear language; minor errors that don't affect meaning
3	Basic claim that addresses change and/or continuity, but may be uneven	Some evidence from both sources, may be general or partially relevant	Some analysis, but connections may be simplistic or underdeveloped	Organization is present but may be inconsistent	Language is adequate but may include distracting errors
2	Vague or partial claim, may only address change or continuity	Limited evidence, often general or weakly connected	Minimal analysis; mostly summary with weak connections	Weak or confusing organization	Frequent errors that interfere with clarity
1	No clear claim about change or continuity	Little to no relevant evidence	No real analysis; little attempt to connect past and present	Disorganized, hard to follow	Persistent errors that make meaning unclear



TEACHER NOTES

- Encourage students to focus on big-picture trends rather than small details.
- Some students may need a word bank of terms (e.g., “suppression,” “activism,” “legislation”).
- Allow flexibility in infographic design — drawings, digital tools (Canva, Google Slides), or handouts are all appropriate.
- If time allows, students can share their infographics in small groups or as a gallery walk to compare interpretations.