



ESSENTIAL QUESTION:

How easy is it to vote in Pennsylvania?

LESSON OBJECTIVES:

- Students will be able to explain the requirements for registration and voting in PA and compare them to other states.
- Students will be able to propose measures to make voting easier and more accessible in PA.

STANDARDS ADDRESSED:

- PA 5.2.12.A. Evaluate an individual's civil rights, responsibilities and obligations in various contemporary governments.
- PA 5.3.C.E. Compare and contrast the different election processes for local, state, and national offices.

LESSON DURATION:

50-60 minutes

TYPE OF ACTIVITIES:

- ✓ Comparing and evaluating information on voting requirements for different states
- ✓ Analyzing a voter registration form to identify requirements and barriers to voting
- ✓ Proposing policy solutions based on comparative analysis

MATERIALS:

- Student handout (pp. 3-4)
- Computers with laptops OR print-outs of state voting requirements (pp. 5-7) and PA voter registration form (pp. 8-11)

Lesson 4: Voting in Pennsylvania

HOOK/DO-NOW (5 MINUTES)

Have students complete the do-now prompt in their handout: "Your 20-year-old older sibling says they're not going to vote in the upcoming elections because their vote doesn't matter and voting is a waste of time. What will you say to your sibling to change their mind?" Give students 3 minutes to write on their own, then 2 minutes to share with a partner.

Introduce today's essential question and lesson objectives.

HOW EASY IS IT TO VOTE IN PENNSYLVANIA? (20 MINUTES)

Tell students that in order to explore today's first essential question, they are going to compare the requirements to vote in different states using the Washington Post's [State Election Comparison Tool](#). *Note: If you have laptops or computers available for student use, students can explore the interactive website; if not, the selected states' information is captured on pp. 5-7.*

Students will have 12 minutes in pairs to look up and read the voting requirements for Pennsylvania, Oregon, D.C., Virginia, New Jersey, and Mississippi and rank the states in order from easiest to harder to vote, explaining their rationale for their ranking.

Student responses may vary based on how they weigh different factors, but a suggested ranking is:

1. Oregon – no ID required, early voting and vote by mail, automatic voter registration, no wait to vote.
2. New Jersey – no ID required, must register earlier, long early voting period and vote by mail, 7 minute wait to vote.
3. DC – no ID required, same-day registration, early voting and vote by mail, 16 minute wait to vote.
4. Pennsylvania – no ID required, early registration deadline, no early voting and restricted vote by mail, 11 minute wait to vote.
5. Virginia – ID required, must register earlier, no early voting and restricted vote by mail, 10 minute wait to vote.
6. Mississippi – ID required, early registration deadline, no early voting and restricted vote by mail, 8 minute wait to vote.

Give students 8 minutes to share and justify their rankings, pushing them to explain why they weighed certain factors more heavily.



PENNSYLVANIA VOTER REGISTRATION (15 MINUTES)

Tell students that now we're going to dive deeply into the [Pennsylvania voter registration form](#). *Note: If you have laptops available for student use, students can visit bit.ly/PAvote70; otherwise, use the paper form on pp. 8-11.*

Students should work in pairs to complete the PA Voter Registration Scavenger Hunt using the voter registration form.

Note: If you have students who are citizens and will be 18 by the next election, encourage them to register now rather than completing the scavenger hunt—the deadline is 30 days before the next election. Many students may not know the last four digits of their social security numbers or their driver's license number, which are required to register; if possible, give them a few days' notice to gather these items or for you to help them access the information from their school files.

Give students 10 minutes to complete the scavenger hunt in pairs, and then 5 minutes to review answers as a class.

Answers:

1. April 22 (30 days before May 21)
2. U.S. citizens, residents of PA at least 30 days before next election, at least 18 years of age on Election Day
3. Only Democrats and Republicans are allowed; Green, Libertarian, Independent, and Other are not
4. Name change, change of address, change of party, federal or state employee registering in county of last residence
5. Answers may vary but include: Not having a consistent address, not having access to or knowing one's SSN, difficulties with reading, lack of Internet access, not identifying as male or female, not having a driver's license

RECOMMENDED VOTING REFORMS

Have students think, pair, share around the following question: "Based on the voting requirements you reviewed today, what changes would you suggest that Pennsylvania or Philadelphia adopt to remove barriers to voting and encourage more eligible voters to register and vote?" Encourage students to consider other states' voting requirements for ideas of ways to make voting accessible.

Give students 3 minutes to brainstorm on their own, 4 minutes to share with a partner, and 8 minutes to discuss as a group.

Suggestions may include same-day voter registration, open primaries, early voting, unrestricted voting by mail, more voting machines (or other measures to reduce voting wait times).

EXIT TICKET (5 MINUTES)

Give students a few minutes to respond to the exit ticket prompt: "What are three factors that impact how easy voting is in a particular state?" If time allows, ask volunteers to share their responses.

Possible responses: Whether a state offers early voting or vote by mail, the voter registration deadline, whether ID is required to vote, wait times to vote.



Name _____

Date _____

Period _____

Day 3: Voting in Pennsylvania

Do-Now

Your 20-year-old older sibling says they're not going to vote in the upcoming Philadelphia primary elections because their vote doesn't matter and voting is a waste of time. What will you say to your sibling to change their mind?

How Easy Is It to Vote in Pennsylvania?

Explore the Washington Post's [State Election Comparison Tool](#). Based on the requirements to vote in each state, rank the following states in order from easiest to hardest to vote: Pennsylvania, Oregon, D.C., Virginia, New Jersey, and Mississippi.

My Ranking (1 = easiest, 6 = hardest):	My Reasoning
1. _____	
2. _____	
3. _____	
4. _____	
5. _____	
6. _____	

Pennsylvania Voter Registration Scavenger Hunt

Explore the [Pennsylvania voter registration form](#) to complete the following scavenger hunt questions:

1. If the next Pennsylvania election is May 21, what is the deadline for registering in time for the election?
2. Who is eligible to vote in Pennsylvania elections? List all three requirements.
 - a.
 - b.
 - c.



- 3. What political parties are allowed to vote in Pennsylvania primaries? Which are not?
 - a. Allowed:
 - b. Not allowed:

- 4. What are four reasons that would cause someone to have to fill out a new voter registration?
 - a.
 - b.
 - c.
 - d.

- 5. List at least three barriers that might keep an eligible voter from completing this voter registration form based on the questions asked and documentation required.
 - a.
 - b.
 - c.

Recommended Voting Reforms

Based on the voting requirements you reviewed today, what changes would you suggest that Pennsylvania or Philadelphia adopt to remove barriers to voting and encourage more eligible voters to register and vote?

My Ideas:	My Partner's Ideas:	My Class's Ideas:

Exit Ticket

What are three factors that impact how easy voting is in a particular state?

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THESE ARE EXAMPLE INFOGRAPHICS – REFER TO CURRENT ELECTION DATES

How easy it is to vote in Pennsylvania

Select a state to find out



WHEN TO REGISTER BY

You must register by

Oct. 9.



HOW TO VOTE

You can vote in person on Election Day, Nov. 6.

There is no early voting. There are eligibility requirements, such as a disability, to vote by mail. Check with your election officials for specific requirements.



WHAT TO BRING

When you vote **no identification** is required.

If you're voting for the first time at your polling place, identification is required.



WAIT TIMES IN 2016

The typical voter in your state waited **11** minutes in 2016.

How easy it is to vote in Oregon

Select a state to find out



WHEN TO REGISTER BY

You must register by

Oct. 16.



HOW TO VOTE

You can vote early from **Oct. 17** to **Nov. 5** and on Election Day, Nov. 6.

You can vote by **by mail**.

Oregon is a vote-by-mail state. Ballots are mailed starting Oct. 17.



WHAT TO BRING

When you vote **no identification** is required.

If you're a first-time Oregon voter and didn't provide an ID during registration, then identification is required to vote.



WAIT TIMES IN 2016

The typical voter in your state waited **0** minutes in 2016.



How easy it is to vote in D.C.

Select a state to find out



WHEN TO REGISTER BY

You must register by **Nov. 6.**

Applications must be received by Oct. 16 or you can register in person during early voting or on Election Day.



HOW TO VOTE

You can vote early from **Oct. 22** to **Nov. 2** and on Election Day, Nov. 6.

You can vote by **by mail.**



WHAT TO BRING

When you vote **no identification** is required.

If you're a first-time D.C. voter and registered by mail, then identification is required to vote. Identification may also be required to enter a polling place.



WAIT TIMES IN 2016

The typical voter in your state waited **16** minutes in 2016.

How easy it is to vote in Virginia

Select a state to find out



WHEN TO REGISTER BY

You must register by **Oct. 15.**



HOW TO VOTE

You can vote in person on Election Day, Nov. 6.

There is no early voting. There are eligibility requirements, such as a disability, to vote by mail. Check with your election officials for specific requirements.



WHAT TO BRING

When you vote **a photo ID** is required.

You can complete a provisional ballot and will need to take additional steps after Election Day for it to be counted.



WAIT TIMES IN 2016

The typical voter in your state waited **10** minutes in 2016.



How easy it is to vote in New Jersey

Select a state to find out



WHEN TO REGISTER BY

You must register by **Oct. 16**.



HOW TO VOTE

You can vote early from **Sep. 22** to **Nov. 5** and on Election Day, Nov. 6.

You can vote by **by mail**.



WHAT TO BRING

When you vote **no identification** is required.

If you're a first-time New Jersey voter and didn't provide an ID during registration, then identification is required to vote.



WAIT TIMES IN 2016

The typical voter in your state waited **7** minutes in 2016.

How easy it is to vote in Mississippi

Select a state to find out



WHEN TO REGISTER BY

You must register by **Oct. 9**.

You can register in person by Oct. 8 or by mail postmarked by Oct. 9.



HOW TO VOTE

You can vote in person on Election Day, Nov. 6.

There is no early voting. There are eligibility requirements, such as a disability, to vote by mail. Check with your election officials for specific requirements.



WHAT TO BRING

When you vote **a photo ID** is required.

You can complete a provisional ballot and will need to take additional steps after Election Day for it to be counted.



WAIT TIMES IN 2016

The typical voter in your state waited **8** minutes in 2016.