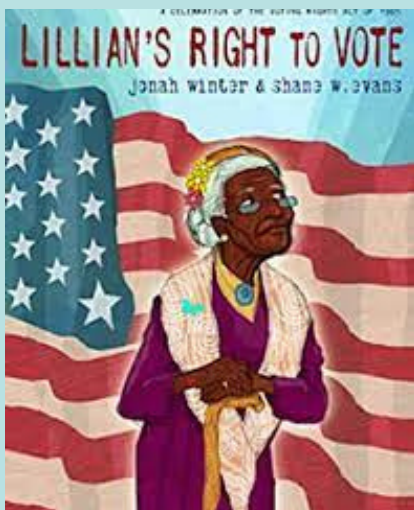


Women's Suffrage 100th Anniversary

TEACHER'S GUIDE

UTK Center for Children's and Young Adult Literature

City of Knoxville Suffrage Seed Fund • East Tennessee Historical Society • Knox County Schools



Lillian's Right to Vote: A Celebration of the Voting Rights Act of 1965

Written by Jonah Winter

Illustrated by Shane W. Evans

Synopsis

As Lillian, a one-hundred-year-old African American woman, makes a “long haul up a steep hill” to her polling place, she sees more than trees and sky—she sees her family’s history. She sees the passage of the Fifteenth Amendment and her great-grandfather voting for the first time. She sees her parents trying to register to vote. And she sees herself marching in a protest from Selma to Montgomery. Veteran bestselling picture-book author Jonah Winter and Coretta Scott King Illustrator Award winner Shane W. Evans vividly recall America’s battle for civil rights in this lyrical, poignant account of one woman’s fierce determination to make it up the hill and make her voice heard.

ABOUT THE BOOK

Genre: **Nonfiction Picture Book Biography**
Grade Level: **2-5**
Age range: **7-10 years**
Lexile: **1030L**
Publisher: **Schwartz & Wade, 2015**

Content Specific Vocabulary

Bigotry (n.): prejudice against a person or people

Equal (adj.): being the same; having the same things

Protest (v.): express your dislike to something

Vote (v.): express your choice or opinion

Tax (n.): something you are required to pay to the government



Tennessee Social Studies Standards and Practices

Standard 5.09

Analyze the major goals, struggles, and achievements of the Progressive Era, including: Prohibition (18th Amendment), women’s suffrage (19th Amendment), and the lack of child labor laws.

Essential Questions:

What were the major goals, struggles, and achievements of the women’s suffrage movement? What did suffragists hope to achieve? What obstacles stood in their way? What are some milestones in the movement?

Sub-questions:

- **Who is Lillian and how does her climb up the hill and visions of history describe the obstacles her family and she faced in order to gain the right to vote?**
 - Lillian is 100 years old and is going to vote. (Based on Lillian Allen, a resident of Pittsburgh’s Hill District who was born in Alabama in 1908, the granddaughter of a slave.)
 - She sees generational struggle to gain freedom—
 - Great-great grandparents Elijah and Sarah sold in auction as slaves.
 - Great Grandpa Edmund forced to pick cotton--still owned by another man.
 - 1870 passage of 15th amendment--Edmund can vote but Great Grandma Ida is not allowed.
 - Grandpa Isaac being charged a poll tax that he can’t pay; Uncle Levi being forced to take a test he can’t pass so they cannot vote despite the 15th amendment.
 - 1920-Lillian and her family are chased away from the voting booth by a mob because her parents tried to vote.
 - Her own registration process, another test, writing a section of the Constitution--she cannot pass the test; she cannot vote.



THE UNIVERSITY OF
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CENTER FOR CHILDREN'S AND
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After Reading Extension Activities

Dear Grandchild

Lillian cares a lot about family as well as about voting rights. Have students, working alone or in pairs, write a letter from Lillian to her grandchild about the importance of voting. Students can have her relate some of the information from the book and add thoughts of their own about what Lillian would say.

Exercise Your Right to Vote

Read the books "What's the Big Deal About Elections," by Ruby Shamir and illustrated by Matt Faulkner, and "Vote for Our Future!" by Margaret McNamara and illustrated by Micah Player to students (they are in this lit kit). Ask students to discuss why so many Americans choose not to vote. Ask students: What would you say to adults to convince them to exercise this right? Start writing your argument!

Climbing the Hill

On a long piece of butcher paper, draw a diagonal line to represent the hill that Lillian climbs. As a group, label the hill with years that correspond to the story. Then have each student draw a picture of a character in the book, including those in the marches. Students should place their picture at the right place in the story's sequence.

Standards and EQ's continued

- **Even with the passage of the 15th and 19th amendments, what struggles did citizens face in their journey to vote?**
 - Despite legal "protection" there was still racial and gender discrimination. People were required to pay poll taxes, take literacy tests, and faced threats of violence and harm.
- **How did the Civil Rights movement progress the work of the Voting Rights Act of 1965?**
 - John Lewis, Martin Luther King Jr., and thousands of other ministers, rabbis, teachers, leaders, and community members marched for equal rights under the law. Their work led Lyndon B. Johnson to pass the Voting Rights Act in 1965 which allowed Lillian the right to vote and inspired her to keep walking up the hill no matter the obstacles.

Teaching with Primary Sources

• The Fifteenth Amendment

- The Voting Rights Act of 1965 prohibits racial discrimination in voting. The Act enforces the 15th Amendment of the United States Constitution. The 15th Amendment — the third and final amendment to the U.S. Constitution during the Reconstruction Era — was adopted to protect the freedoms outlined in the 13th and 14th Amendments, which were added to the Constitution in order to free enslaved persons. The 13th Amendment abolished slavery and the 14th Amendment gave former slaves rights of US citizens. However, voting laws were still enforced at the state level. The 15th Amendment was added to protect the voting rights of all citizens, with the power of the federal government to enforce.
 - Read the 15th Amendment with your students:
 - Section 1: "The right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of race, color, or previous condition of servitude."
 - Section 2: "The Congress shall have power to enforce this article by appropriate legislation."
 - Discuss with students what the words "denied" and "abridged" mean. Why would these words need to be included this amendment? Also make sure students understand the word "servitude." What were some ways states still tried to find ways around the amendment? (e.g., poll taxes, literacy tests, intimidation).
- ### • What is a Poll Tax?
- Poll taxes were laws that required payment of a fee in order to vote, and were implemented in southern states like Tennessee in order to restrict the political power of African American communities. By the 1880s, Tennessee began enforcing poll taxes, which remained active until the 1960s. In many places, poll taxes were combined with other voting restrictions such as literacy tests. Begin by asking students if they think voting is a right or a privilege for US citizens. What would it mean to citizens if voting is a right? What would it mean to citizens if voting is a privilege?
 - Show students the poll tax receipt for Mr. Robert S. Anderson in Tennessee at the Tennessee Virtual Archive: <https://bit.ly/3wQJg2v>

