

VOTING AND VOICE

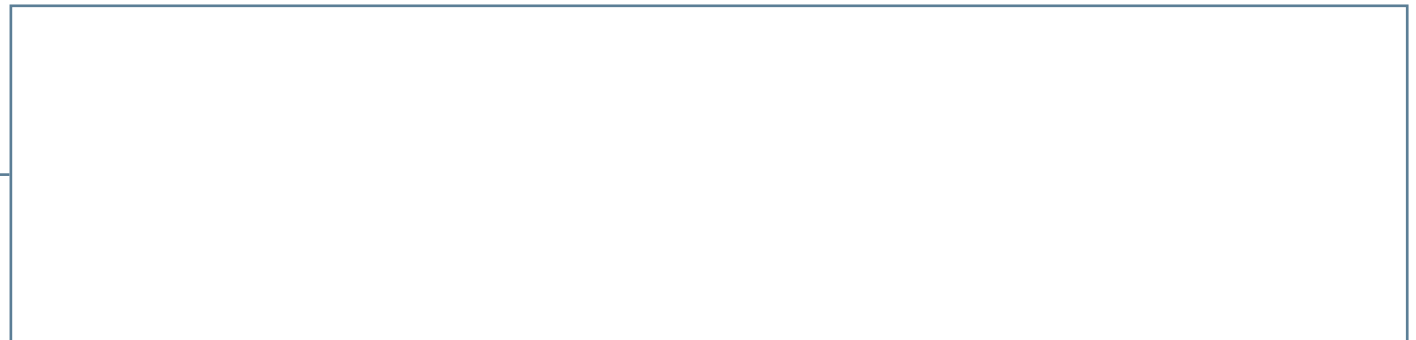
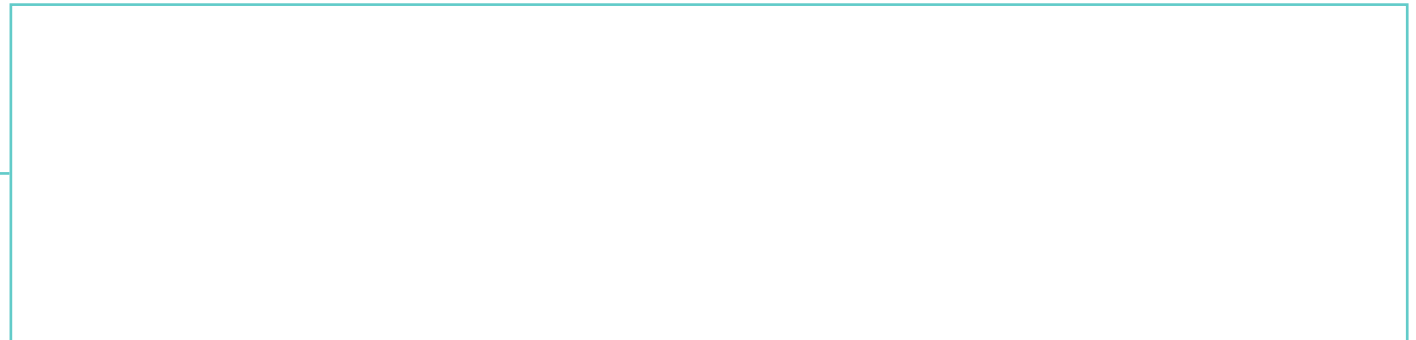
In a more ideal democracy...

All people over a certain age and with enough mental capacity are classed as 'citizens', and able to vote. Factors such as skin colour, being unemployed, homeless or having no driving licence should not stop anybody from voting.

All people vote under the same conditions and rules, with no differences between different classes, genders, abilities or ethnic groups. All votes carry the same weight.

All people are safe from violence or threat of harm when they take part in democratic activities.

South Africa under apartheid...



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In a more ideal democracy...

Citizens from all groups can presume eligibility to stand as a representative in an election.

South Africa under apartheid...

All people have access to fair and accurate information about policies, facts and ideas so that they can make up their own minds.

Other factors?

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Voting and Voice

Under apartheid, many groups of people were unable to express political opinions, to stand as a representative or to vote. They were disenfranchised. In April 1994, millions of Black Africans were able to vote for the first time in their lives and Nelson Mandela was elected president.

Features of enfranchisement

The grid lists some characteristics of ideal enfranchisement. Before, during or after the visit to the exhibition, students can discover what democracy looked like under apartheid. Add to the right-hand column examples they find.

Social media campaigns

Social media today is a widely used tool to raise awareness and gather support for a cause. Current or recent campaigns include:

- #MeToo (against sexual harassment and assault)
- #TakeTheKnee (against racism and police brutality in the USA)
- #HomeToVote and #RepealThe8th (mustered Irish people to vote to repeal the anti-abortion laws)
- #BeatPlasticPollution (the UN's environmental campaign against single-use plastics)

If social media had existed then, how might anti-apartheid campaigners have used it? Students could write a series of tweets focusing on key messages, people and events – such as the boycotts within and outside of South Africa, using a word limit of 280 characters for each tweet. What would make a good hashtag? Who would they tweet 'at' to draw them in to support the campaign?

Further activities

- Find out how decisions were made in any tribe in South Africa, such as the Thembu, and how these practices continue today.
- Find out about the 'Native' Acts of 1936 in South Africa. What impact did they have?
- Explore women and their suffrage in the 20th century. Students could create two timelines of key events in the enfranchisement of women, one for the UK and one for South Africa. How do they compare?
- Students can discuss how disenfranchisement affects their lives as young people. In pairs or groups, they could write a text for a petition to increase their voice and vote. As a class you could vote on the best petition and perhaps improve it together and issue it as a live campaign.
- Students could use improvisational drama to explore the experience of voting for the first time. Develop characters and dialogue of Black South Africans voting in 1994, or perhaps for another situation where people had previously been denied suffrage. How can they introduce tension or dynamism into their scenes? Frustration at waiting, crowd chaos, arguments, or perhaps anticipation, excitement and joy?