

Maggie's Civics Corner

Lesson #41 – Black History Month



*Today's lesson is about **BLACK HISTORY MONTH**. Each year during the month of February, we celebrate Black History Month in the United States. Also known as African American History Month, it provides us the chance to celebrate the contributions of African Americans and recognize the struggles they have had to overcome. President Gerald Ford officially recognized Black History Month in 1976, the 200th year ("bicentennial") of our nation.*

Carter G. Woodson, a renowned African American historian and the man considered to be the "father of Black history," began work to establish a nationwide study of African Americans because he found history textbooks overlooked, undervalued, ignored, or even excluded any mention of them. Once he had that foundation in place, he expanded his efforts and started the first celebration of **Negro History Week** in 1926. He selected the second week of February because of its connection to Abraham Lincoln and Frederick Douglass – they each were born that week – and it traditionally was a time when African Americans held celebrations in honor of emancipation. Just because we celebrate **Black History Month** in February, doesn't mean you can't or shouldn't learn about African American history all year long.

Sticky Situation: I am a golden retriever. At my dog daycare, there is a lot of information about the history of golden retrievers and the most famous golden retrievers that ever lived. But there are other dog breeds, like Labs and Shepherds at my dog daycare, too. They have an important history, too, but throughout the year we hardly learn anything about the history of either breed. Recently, my dog daycare announced it would dedicate a month to Labradors and a month to Shepherds so we can learn about all the things each breed has contributed to dog history. I'm excited about this news. What do you think about it? Be prepared to explain your answer.

Activity: Black History Month is a time when we celebrate the contributions African Americans have made to our country. Do some research to learn more about important Black Americans other than ones you may already know. Now pick one person and answer the following questions:

1. What is this person's full name? When and where were they born?
2. Why is this person noteworthy? What did this person do to benefit the United States?
3. What is the importance or significance of this person's contributions?

Bonus Activity: Tell a friend, teacher, or parent about the historical figure you researched. Note whether or not they had ever heard of this person before.

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Lesson #42 – Martin Luther King, Jr.



***Today's lesson is about MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.** Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. was a prominent civil rights leader who worked to end segregation in America and ensure equal treatment of all citizens. Segregation was a system of separating people by their race. Many places in the United States used to have separate bathrooms, water fountains, and even schools for different races. Dr. King fought against this unfair and unequal treatment all his adult life.*

Martin Luther King was a minister, too, and he used this leadership role in his church to attract people to the **Civil Rights** cause. He was famous for using peaceful protests, such as marches and sit-ins, to convince people that segregation was wrong. Martin Luther King, Jr. organized one of the largest peaceful protests in our nation's history – the [March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom](#) – in August 1968. More than 250,000 people joined him in this protest and heard him deliver his “I Have a Dream” speech in front of the Lincoln Memorial that day. Sadly, five years later, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. met an untimely death, when a white man who did not agree with Dr. King's vision of equal treatment, shot and killed him. On November 2, 1983, President Ronald Reagan signed a bill into law declaring the third Monday in January as a day for our nation to remember and celebrate the many contributions Dr. King made to the *Civil Rights* movement and our country.

Sticky Situation: Imagine you and a friend are playing on the carpet in your classroom. A student from another class walks in and says that you aren't allowed to play on the carpet; only students from his class are allowed to play on the carpet. How would you feel about being told you couldn't play on the carpet in your classroom? How would you respond to this student? What actions could you take so that you would be allowed to play on the carpet?

Activity: Research civil rights granted to citizens of the United States and make a list of them. Now list which rights you believe are the most important. Why do you believe the things you listed are the most important? Be prepared to explain your answer. Do you think all citizens would be treated equally without these rights? Why or why not?

Bonus Activity: Listen to or read Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. his [“I Have a Dream” speech](#) in its entirety. After hearing/reading his speech, how do you think Dr. King would feel about the current state of affairs in the United States? Do you think he would believe that his goals were achieved?

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Lesson #43 – Equal Rights (Civil Rights)



Maggie says ...

In these difficult times, as our nation and the world pull together, it is more important than ever to understand our role as a citizen.

Today's lesson is about EQUAL RIGHTS FOR ALL. Treating everyone with respect is important to us dogs – and to us as Americans! Throughout history, we have had brave Americans stick up for each other to make sure all our neighbors are

One of these heroes is Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Every third Monday in January, the whole country takes a day to remember Dr. King's impact. He stood up for racial equality through peaceful protests and was a driving force behind the Civil Rights Act, which made racial segregation illegal. I think we should all try to respect others and support equality just like Dr. King did.

Sticky Situation: Dogs come in all shapes, sizes, and colors. One day, my favorite dog park put up a sign saying that dogs with floppy ears are no longer allowed to play in the park. Does this seem fair to you? How would you explain to the dog park owners that all dogs should be allowed to play in the park, no matter what their ears look like?

Martin Luther King, Jr., once said, "I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character." In your own words, explain what you think Dr. King meant when he said this.

Activity: Equality means that everyone is treated the same, no matter what their gender, ability, or race is. Look at the 5 sentences below and circle all the sentences where people are treated equally.

Only boys can play at recess

Everyone is allowed to join the soccer team

Maggie loves playing with ALL kids!

Boys and girls can learn the same things at school

Only kids with blue eyes are allowed to join the dance class

Civics Resources: Watch this video of Martin Luther King, Jr. delivering his ["I Have a Dream" speech](#) to better understand his fight for equal rights for African Americans.

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Lesson #44 – Harriet Tubman



Today's lesson is about HARRIET TUBMAN. Harriet Tubman was born a slave but escaped slavery and became a famous abolitionist and social activist. After struggling to escape slavery herself, she helped other slaves to get to the North (and freedom) via the **Underground Railroad**. The Underground Railroad wasn't an actual railroad, but rather a network of homes where slaves could hideout safely, for you see these people were risking their lives to journey to freedom. Harriet Tubman also played a vital role during our country's Civil War. Through her running of

the [Underground Railroad](#), Harriet quickly learned about the South's geography and was able to provide valuable information about it to the Union Army. She even acted as a spy for the North. Later in her life, [Harriet Tubman](#) turned her efforts to the fight for women's equality, working alongside renowned suffragists Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony.

Sticky Situation: Imagine that your sister, brother, or friend, wants a new bike. You want to help them get a new bike, but the only way to do that would be to give up your own bike or one of your favorite toys or books. Would you give up your favorite toy or book to help a friend? Why or why not? What do you think Harriet Tubman would do if she were faced with a similar situation?

Activity: Harriet Tubman mapped a specific course for her to take to lead fellow slaves to freedom via the *Underground Railroad*. She had to make this map without any modern technology, such as Google maps or Waze. Do you think you could remember a long route to get somewhere without the assistance of technology? Research what the *Underground Railroad* looked like during the time of Harriet Tubman. Then, on a poster, map out her course, noting the various stops she made along the way.

Interesting Facts: Here are some interesting facts about Harriet Tubman that you may not know:

- Harriet Tubman was born Araminta "Minty" Ross.
- Harriet never learned to read or write.
- In the late 1890s, Harriet had brain surgery, for which she chose not to use any medication to alleviate the pain. (Can you imagine that???)
- Harriet Tubman is scheduled to replace Andrew Jackson on the \$20 bill.

I was the conductor of the Underground Railroad for eight years, and I can say what most conductors can't say — I never ran my train off the track and I never lost a passenger.

- Harriet Tubman, 1896

Maggie's Civics Corner

Lesson #45 - Voting



Maggie says ...

In these difficult times, as our nation and the world pull together, it is more important than ever to understand our role as a citizen.

Today's lesson is about VOTING. Today's lesson is about Voting. As many of you know, my dad was elected Governor of Pennsylvania, Mayor of Philadelphia, and District Attorney of Philadelphia. He was also head of the Democratic National Committee. He knows a lot about voting and running in elections. Voting is one of the most important rights we have as a Citizen. It is one of the ways you can exercise your voice in our country.

Sticky Situation: Your principal decided that your school should have a student council, a group of student leaders who meet regularly to discuss school issues such as fundraising ideas, special events, environmental issues, dress codes for students, and more. The principal suggested that the student council should have representatives from each classroom as well as officers including a president, vice president, and secretary. Although there will be student council representatives from all of the classes including kindergarten, first and second grades, your friends feel that only third graders on up should be able to vote for the officers of your student council. Would you support this idea?

Activity: The adults that I live with always talk about the importance of voting. It is their rule that they always vote in every election. However, some people feel like their vote does not matter and so they do not vote. Think about at least three ways you might encourage people in your community to vote. **Create a Get Out the Vote Campaign!**

Civics Resources: Check out the websites below for additional information:

[Junior Scholastic Lesson Plan – Every Vote Really Counts](#)

[Junior Scholastic Lesson Plan – Old Enough to Vote](#)

[PBS Learning Media – The Election Collection](#)

(includes Teacher Toolkit)

[PCNTV.com – Civics 101](#)

Maggie's Civics Corner

Lesson #46 – Voting Age



Maggie says ...

In these difficult times, as our nation and the world pull together, it is more important than ever to understand our role as a citizen.

Today's lesson is about the VOTING AGE. When I was a puppy, I wanted to do things that older dogs could do. First, I had to learn to walk, obey orders, and then, keep up with whoever was walking me. Young people have the same dilemma. Many want to know when they will be able to vote for President.

Sticky Situation: Dogs and people often have a problem when others think they are too young to play with them. I remember watching a group of 3rd and 4th graders playing softball. I was with a 2nd grader who happened to be a very good athlete, and he wanted to play with the “big” boys. They said, “No!” If I could have talked, I would have helped him. What would you have done to help my friend? Explain your answer.

Activity: In 1971, the 26th Amendment changed the age that a citizen is eligible to vote for president from 21 to 18. Young citizens had argued that they could be drafted to fight a war when they were 18, but they could not vote for president, and they didn't think that was right. Would you like to see the current age at which you can vote to stay the same – 18; be lowered; or, be raised? Be prepared to give at least three (3) good reasons for your answer. Consider writing a letter expressing your opinion to one of your local officials. That is a way to have your voice heard, even at a young age!

Civics Resources: View a video to learn more about the [26th Amendment & Voting Age](#)

Maggie's Civics Corner

Lesson #47 – Choices & Voices - Elections



Maggie says ...

In these difficult times, as our nation and the world pull together, it is more important than ever to understand our role as a citizen.

Today's lesson is about the PURPOSE OF ELECTIONS. When I was laying in my doggy bed at home, my ears perked up as I heard my family talking about who they should vote for in an upcoming election. An election is the process of voting to select a person to serve as a leader or representative in the

government. Elections are very important because they allow citizens to vote and have their voices heard. When citizens vote in elections, they can choose leaders that can best represent the citizens' interests in the government and promote the common good for all people.

Sticky Situation: Every year, the 5th grade class at Ferguson Elementary School must decide which student will serve as the Class President. This year, two 5th-grade students want to campaign for Class President – John and Elizabeth. John believes that he would be the best person for the job and should automatically be declared Class President, without holding a class vote. Elizabeth thinks the only fair way to determine who should be Class President is to allow ALL 5th-grade students a chance to vote in an election. This way each student would have the opportunity to cast a ballot for the candidate they believe would be best.

Do you agree with John or Elizabeth regarding elections? Why do you think it is important to have a fair process for people to select their government leaders? What do you think would happen if a person came along and declared themselves the leader of your city/town? No election was held; no town halls were assembled for citizens to have their voices and opinions heard. How do you think your fellow citizens would respond?

Activity: Imagine that your class at school is having an election for Class President next month. Make a list of issues that would be important to you when you vote in the upcoming election. For example, maybe you think that students should be given more time to play at recess. Next, think of the characteristics of your ideal Class President. What traits does this Class President have? Make a list of which traits you think are most important for a person serving as the Class President. For example, you may think that the Class President should be honest, kind, and trustworthy.

Civics Resources: Check out this Kids Academy video [Voting for Kids | Why Voting is Important? – Election day](https://www.kidsacademy.com/why-voting-is-important/)

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Lesson #48 – Election Campaigns



Maggie says ...

In these difficult times, as our nation and the world pull together, it is more important than ever to understand our role as a citizen.

Today's lesson is about ELECTION CAMPAIGNS. We love playing games at the dog park! Each day, my friends and I decide who gets to choose and lead which game we play. Everyone loves to be a leader. To make things fair, we each get

one minute to tell the other dogs why we should be the leader, then we ALL vote for whose turn it will be that day. Yesterday, I told them that they should vote for me because I am friendly, and I have good ideas for games. This is called an election campaign. American politicians - like my dad, former Governor Rendell! - run campaigns before every election.

Sticky Situation: Imagine your class is having an election to pick the Class President. One of the candidates chooses not to campaign – meaning, they don't tell the class their ideas or what would make them a good Class President. The other candidate campaigns for the position – hanging posters and telling their classmates why they should vote for them. Which candidate would you vote for, and why? What do you think are the benefits of telling people your ideas before an election?

Activity: Imagine you are running for Class President. Come up with 2 or 3 reasons that you believe show why you would be a good leader for the class. Use those reasons to convince your friends and family why they should vote for you to be Class President. Good luck!

Civics Resources: Check out this video – which follows candidate Huey Long on the campaign trail – to learn a little more about campaign decisions, fundraising rules, opinion polling, etc.

[PBSLearningMedia – On the Campaign Trail: Analyzing the Political Evolution of Huey Long](#)

Craft: Campaign posters – notices that usually include a picture of the candidate and a slogan, like Vote for Maggie! – are designed to catch citizens' attention and convince them to vote for that candidate. Now design your campaign poster as if you are running for President. What does it look like? Let us see it!

Ask your teacher to share it with us on social media:



@TheRendellCtr



<https://www.instagram.com/rendellcenter>



<https://www.facebook.com/RendellCenter/>

Maggie's Civics Corner

Lesson #49- Campaign Finance



Maggie says ...

Elections sure can be exciting! It looks like there is a whole lot that happens with an election. Television ads, campaigning, bumper stickers, and lawn signs – who pays for all that stuff? Where does the money for that stuff come from?

Today's lesson is about CAMPAIGN FINANCE. Running a political campaign sure is hard work. It takes months of hard work and lots of people to run a campaign for a big job like

trying to become the next President of the United States. If I wanted to be President of all the dogs in the USA, I would need to run a campaign. I would need some other dogs to help me convince dogs all across the country to vote for me. But how am I going to pay all my doggy friends to help me with my campaign?

Sticky Situation: Let's say that your school decides to hold an election. Both you and your friend decide to run to be the Class President. You each have five (5) dollars to spend on supplies to make posters that explain to your classmates why they should vote for you. But then, the principal gives your friend an extra 100 dollars!

Do you think it is fair for the Principal to offer additional money to only one candidate?

What do you think might happen if your friend can spend so much more money than you on the election?

What if instead of giving only one candidate additional money, the Principal allowed each candidate to host a fundraiser to generate money for their campaign?

What if one of those fundraisers produces more money than the other?

Activity: Visit the [FollowTheMoney.org](https://www.followthemoney.org) website and click around on the different states to learn about how much money candidates are raising for their election campaigns. Try finding your state – how much money is going into campaign elections in your state? Later, consider what all that money is going to be spent on. Then, list a few different things you think might be top expenses for an election campaign. Then, try talking in small groups at school, or if at home – to a family member – to learn what others think might be done with all that campaign money!

Civics Resources: Check out these websites for additional information about campaign finance:

[Khan Academy – Campaign finance: lesson overview](https://www.khanacademy.org/lesson/campaign-finance-overview/a/campaign-finance-overview/a/lesson-overview)

[U.S. Federal Election Commission](https://www.fec.gov/)

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Lesson #50 – Electoral College



Maggie says ...

Our country elects a president every four years, so it's important for everyone to understand how the election process works!

Today's lesson is about the ELECTORAL COLLEGE. Everyone likes to be heard and voting for the president is one of the best ways to do that! Even though I can't vote because I'm a dog, I know

that choosing the president is important for everyone in this country, including me. So, let's learn about exactly how we do that.

We The People – the citizens of the United States of America – cast our vote for a president and vice president every four years. But in reality, this doesn't complete the process. Having just broken away from a monarchy form of government, the founders of our country wanted a format for electing the president that wasn't just by popular vote. So, the framers of the **Constitution** put forth that U.S. presidents would be elected by an **Electoral College** made up of the people's electors.

Each state is allotted a different number of **Electors** based on how many people live in that state. Once the election is over and all votes are counted, the leaders in each state use the votes cast there during the election to determine whom to select as *Electors* [to represent the votes cast in their state]. Each of these *Electors* then casts a vote for the president and vice president through what is called the *Electoral College*. The candidate who gets the most votes in the *Electoral College* – at least 270 votes – becomes the next President and Vice President of the United States!

Why we have the Electoral College: The *Electoral College* is required by the *Constitution*, and the rules for how it operates come from that document and laws passed by Congress, in accordance with the Constitution. The *Electoral College* is an example of how our country uses a mixed system of government. Although it may seem confusing, or even unfair at times, there are many good arguments for and against using such a system for electing our country's president and vice president. One reason in favor of it is that in the 246+ years of our country's history, there have been only four (4) instances when the vote of the *Electoral College* differed from that of the popular vote in the election.

So why should the adults you know – you must be 18 to vote – vote for president and vice president if the *Electoral College* ultimately determines who it will be? Because it is **their vote** that determines for whom **their state's electors** will vote.

To learn more about *Electors* and the *Electoral College*, visit the [National Archives](https://www.archives.gov) website.

Continued

Sticky Situation: Imagine that when all of the votes across the country are counted, one presidential candidate gets more Electoral College votes and the other candidate gets more votes from the people (the “popular vote”). According to the U.S. Constitution, who will be the next U.S. President?

Activity: Think about when you make decisions that you find hard or challenging. Do you like making decisions by yourself? Do you prefer to make decisions working with others? What do you think are the benefits of each method? What are the disadvantages? By thinking about this problem, you can start to understand why the Electoral College exists and why there are people who like it and those who don’t.

Civics Resources: Visit PBSLearningMedia’s *Election Central* to learn more about [How Voting Works](#).