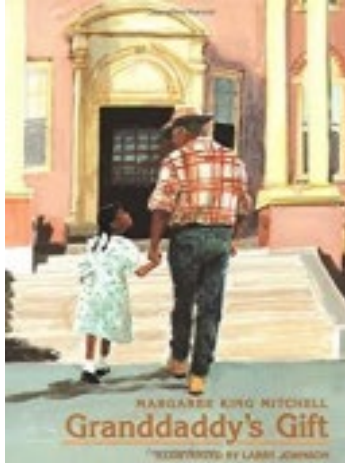


# Granddaddy's Gift



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Topics: Constitution, legislation, rules, building community, what it means to be an American, rights and responsibility

Genres: Picture book, historical fiction

**Most American citizens who are 18 and older are entitled to vote. Unfortunately, there are still eligible voters who choose not to exercise their right to vote. In the 2016 election, 61.4 percent of the U.S. voting-age population voted. That means that 38.6 percent did not vote at all; that is, they did not choose to have their voices heard.**

**Because our Constitution did not say who could vote, originally only white men who owned land could vote. The 15<sup>th</sup> amendment granted Black men the right to vote in 1870, and women were granted the right to vote in 1920 with the 19<sup>th</sup> amendment. The 24<sup>th</sup> Amendment allowed Black men to vote without facing poll taxes, literacy tests and more. However, there was and still are ongoing attempts to suppress the voices of those in our minority communities.**

**Why is there so much attention paid to voting? Voting is one of the most important ways to demonstrate that we are active, engaged citizens. In the book *Granddaddy's Gift* it was very important to Granddaddy to become the first Black man in his small town in Mississippi to register to vote. He gathered the courage and persevered so he could overcome the prejudice he faced. Voting was and is the most important thing an American citizen can do.**

# **Granddaddy's Gift**

## **During the Read Aloud:**

1. Granddaddy fought very hard to be able to register to vote. Today some people say they do not like either candidate and, therefore, do not think it is important to vote. Some people say that going to the polls is inconvenient and don't vote. How would you encourage a person like this to vote?
2. Some polling places in Black communities have been relocated so that voters have to drive much further and wait in much longer lines in order to vote. What do you think you could do to help those in your community for whom voting is too challenging? What could you do to call attention to this practice of voter suppression so that it doesn't happen in the next election? Be prepared to share your ideas.
3. Granddaddy told his grandchildren how segregation laws had been passed in the South to keep Black people from having the same rights as white people. He said it was important to vote; it was a way for our voices to be heard. Do you think it is important for every voice to be heard? Why or why not?
4. When Granddaddy went to the courthouse to register to vote, he was told that he would have to pass a test on the Mississippi Constitution before he was allowed to register. How is this an example of voter suppression? Why do you think Granddaddy was willing to take the test?
5. When Granddaddy told his grandchildren about voting, none of them were old enough to vote. Why was it important to talk about voting with the kids in his family? Do you think it is important today to talk about voting with young people like yourselves? Why or why not?
6. Think about what Granddaddy did when he volunteered to be the first Black person in his town to register to vote. Would you describe him as a leader, a hero, both, or neither? Be prepared to support your answer.
7. Why do you think so many people were angry at Granddaddy for volunteering to register to vote? Why do you think people didn't want their children playing with Joe Morgan?

