



# What will you stand for?

## Video Discussion Guide

Throughout American History, young people have led, influenced, and defined the outcomes of our elections and politics. By organizing, lobbying, advocating, protesting, and voting, young voices supply our democracy with a never-ending source of fresh ideas, concerns, and hopes. This tradition continues today, as voters ages 18 to 24 make up the biggest potential voting bloc in modern elections.

This video is part of a series of short films from the Smithsonian's National Museum of American History that looks at how young people have historically shaped public opinion and outcomes. These brief videos help young people learn from the civic actions of youth in the past to become thoughtful, informed, and active participants in their democracy today. Through historical stories of youth engaged in our elections and politics, these videos show how youth have made history through civic action and challenge today's young people to continue shaping their democracy. This video (02:32) asks viewers to reflect on and discuss the question: What will you stand for?

Find the video and additional resources here: [historyexplorer.si.edu/resource/what-will-you-stand-video](http://historyexplorer.si.edu/resource/what-will-you-stand-video)

### Learning Objectives

The video and accompanying discussion guide, found on the next page, bring awareness to and celebrate the power of young people in shaping electoral and political outcomes throughout American history. Through these resources, students will:

- increase knowledge and understanding of how American democracy has been and continues to be influenced by the ideas, concerns, and hopes of young people;
- analyze specific examples of youth civic impact in the past that serve as examples for taking constructive, positive action today; and
- see themselves as part of an ongoing tradition and movement of youth democratic engagement and identify current public issues that they want to address.

### Aligned Standards

#### College, Career, and Civic Life (C3) Framework for Social Studies State Standards

- D2.Civ.2.9-12. Analyze the role of citizens in the U.S. political system, with attention to various theories of democracy, changes in Americans' participation over time, and alternative models from other countries, past and present.
- D2.Civ.14.9-12. Analyze historical, contemporary, and emerging means of changing societies, promoting the common good, and protecting rights.

#### Common Core Anchor Standards for Speaking and Listening

- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.SL.1  
Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.SL.2  
Integrate and evaluate information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally.

### Additional Resources

Dive deeper into this topic with these resources from the National Museum of American History and the nonpartisan 22x20 Campaign.

- Learning Lab collection: [learninglab.si.edu/q/II-c/Wx9864BskEyyLuC0](http://learninglab.si.edu/q/II-c/Wx9864BskEyyLuC0)
- *American Democracy* exhibition: [americanhistory.si.edu/exhibitions/american-democracy-great-leap-faith](http://americanhistory.si.edu/exhibitions/american-democracy-great-leap-faith)
- History Explorer: [HistoryExplorer.si.edu](http://HistoryExplorer.si.edu)
- 22x20 Campaign and media creation toolkit: [22x20.org](http://22x20.org)



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## Video Discussion Guide

### Discussion Prompts and Strategies

#### Respond

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In small groups, have students critically analyze the video using the questions included below in Rounds 1 through 3. All group members should respond to the questions.

##### Round 1

- What example or story of a young person taking political or electoral action did you find to be the most powerful? Why?
- Why does thinking about the power of young people in a democracy matter?
- Do you think young people can continue to shape our democracy now and in the future? What makes you say that?

##### Round 2

- What does this video ask you to do?
- Are you up to the challenge?
  - If no, why might youth of the past also have felt unprepared or uninterested? What may have changed their way of thinking?
  - If yes, what lessons can you learn from how young people took action on public issues in the past?

##### Round 3

- What similarities and differences do you see between the civic actions of young people in the past and now?
- What public issues concern young people today?
- What challenges or public issues make you passionate?
- **What will you stand for? How will you stand for it?**

#### Report Out

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Have students individually think about their response to the last question: What will you stand for? Then, invite students to share their responses with the full class. Record topics on the board and take note of topics identified more than once. As a class, analyze what issues their peers feel most activated by and why that might be.

Use this as an opportunity to think creatively about ways young people could address and affect these topics. Learn more about the history of each topic using the National Museum American History's website, online exhibitions, and learning resources ([americanhistory.si.edu](http://americanhistory.si.edu)).

#### Reflect

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Individually, have students write three goals about the topic for which they would take a stand. Their goals should be framed using the following structure:

- Goal 1: What change(s) do you want to see related to the issue you selected?
- Goal 2: How would you want to get involved in addressing this issue?
- Goal 3: When would you take action?