



# Book of the Month

Presented by ADL's Education Department

**About the Book of the Month:** This collection of featured books is from Books Matter: The Best Kid Lit on Bias, Diversity and Social Justice. The books teach about bias and prejudice, promote respect for diversity, encourage social action and reinforce themes addressed in education programs of [A World of Difference® Institute](#), ADL's international anti-bias education and diversity training provider. For educators, adult family members and other caregivers of children, reading the books listed on this site with your children and incorporating them into instruction are excellent ways to talk about these important concepts at home and in the classroom.

## Equality's Call: The Story of Voting Rights in America

Deborah Diesen (Author), Magdalena Mora (Illustrator)

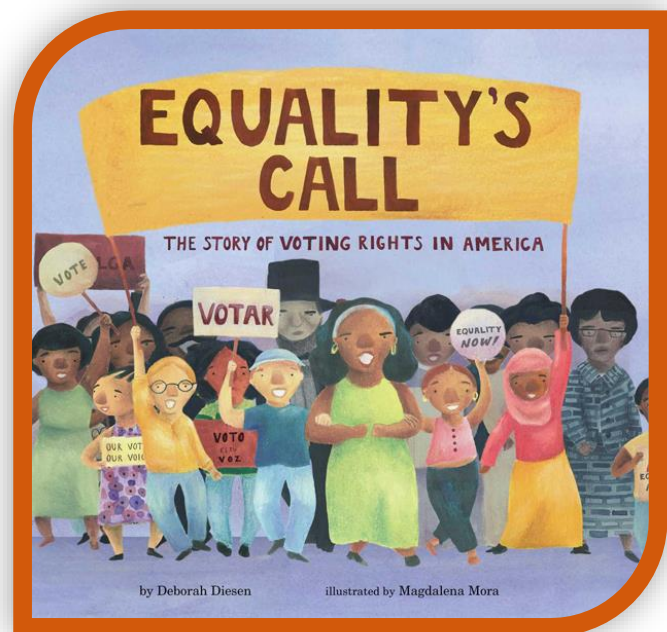
The founders of the United States declared that consent of the governed was a key part of their plan for the new nation. But for many years, only white men who had money could vote. This unflinching and inspiring history of voting rights looks back at the activists who answered equality's call, working tirelessly to secure the right for all to vote, and it also looks forward to the future and the work that still needs to be done.

ISBN: 978-1534439580

Publisher: Beach Lane Books

Year Published: 2020

Age Range: 5–9



### Book Themes

Voting Rights, Equity, Racism, Sexism, Bias, Social Justice

### Key Words

Discuss and define these words with children prior to reading the book. Do not focus on students' retention of all the words; instead make sure they understand the words enough to follow the story and remind children of the words' meanings as they come up in the book. You can also post the words and

point out to students when they appear in the story. For definitions that are differentiated for young children, see ADL's [Education Glossary Terms](#).

- |                |               |                  |                 |
|----------------|---------------|------------------|-----------------|
| ■ abolition    | ■ enslavement | ■ omitted        | ■ voting rights |
| ■ amendments   | ■ equality    | ■ oppression     | ■ wealth        |
| ■ consent      | ■ governed    | ■ representation |                 |
| ■ democracy    | ■ granted     | ■ suffrage       |                 |
| ■ enfranchised | ■ legislation | ■ suppression    |                 |

## Discussion Questions

Before reading the book aloud, ask some or all of these pre-reading questions:

- What is the title of the book? What do you think it means?
- Who do you see on the cover of the book?
- What do you think the book might be about?

As you read the book aloud, ask a few discussion questions periodically throughout reading to check for comprehension and keep the students engaged. Below are sample questions that correlate to specific page numbers.

- Who could vote, and who could not vote? (page 9)
- Who do you see on this page? (page 19)
- Did all women get the right to vote? (page 27)

After reading the book aloud, ask some or all of the following discussion questions:

- What is the book about?
- What does, "A right isn't right till it's granted to all," mean?
- In the beginning of our country, who could vote and who could not vote? What do you think about this?
- How could you tell who could vote and who couldn't?
- When women got the right to vote with the nineteenth amendment, were all women able to vote? How do you know?
- What do you think the book means when it says, "the journey's not over?"
- How do people feel when they have the right to vote?
- Have you ever voted for something? How did you feel while you voted?
- What do you think the book is called, *Equality's Call*? What does equality mean?
- What did you learn that you didn't know before? What surprised you?
- What did you learn about voting rights?
- Why do you think the author wrote the book?

- What is the message of the book?

## Extension Activities

Below are activities for students that can extend learning from the book.

### 1. Voting and Me: Here I Stand

Ask students: *What is the book about? Have you ever voted for something? Have you ever gone with a family member to vote in an election?* Elicit that the book is about voting (which means “to express an opinion”), and how throughout U.S. history, some people had the right to vote and some people did not. Explain that activists (see Activity #3) and others worked to change those laws. Engage students in a discussion about what voting is, asking for them to share times they have voted for something—could be at home (e.g., what game should we play, where to go on vacation, how to celebrate something) or in school (e.g., vote for what to have for lunch/snacks/party, vote for how much homework, vote for student council). Ask students: *How does it feel to vote for something you care about?*

Then, engage students in a “Here I Stand” activity where you read statements about voting and have students stand along an imaginary line based on whether they Strongly Agree, Strongly Disagree or fall somewhere in between. Explain that these statements are about voting in an election for a leader or representative. (*Note: If you are teaching remotely, you can use [Mentimeter](#) (Type: Scales) as a digital version of “Here I Stand.”*)

Read the following statements, one at a time. When students are situated in their spots, have them talk with each other about why they hold that opinion. Repeat this process for each statement.

- It is important to vote so your opinion counts.
- Every vote should not have equal value—some votes are more important than others.
- Young people under 18 years old should not be able to vote.
- Voting should not be too easy, or it won't be taken seriously.
- It is not okay if my vote doesn't count.

After this process, reconvene the class and discuss the importance of voting, how students feel when they vote and how they would feel if they couldn't vote for something, or if they voted but their vote didn't count. Consider having them write a short reflective essay about the experience.

### 2. Learn More about Voting Rights

Explain that in political elections, people vote for people (e.g., Mayor, Senator, President) and laws. Read aloud the back pages of the book, “Voting-Related Amendments and Legislation” on pages 38-39. Explain that “legislation” are laws that are created by elected officials (Mayors, Senators, House of Representatives, etc.) and voters. Talk with them about voting rights and explain how not everyone was able to vote when our country was established and not was everyone able to vote throughout our history, including Black people, other people of color, women and others. After reviewing this history, have students go home and talk with their parents and family members about what they know about voting rights. Together, look at the last pages of the book, pages 36-37, and explain/elicite that many of the people have signs with sayings or slogans about voting rights. Read them aloud and ask what each means. Then have students, using everything they learned, make their own posters with slogans (and illustrations) expressing what they think about voting rights.

### 3. Research Project: Voting Rights Activists

Explain that in the book, activists helped to bring about change and improve voting rights for all. Ask: *What is an activist?* Explain to students that activists get involved in activities where they work to change something that they think is unfair or unjust. Read aloud about the Voting Rights Activists described on page 40-41 of the book. Ask students to listen out for one they may be interested in learning more about. After reading, have students identify one of the activists to conduct a research project about, to learn more about voting rights activism. As a class, brainstorm possible areas of inquiry about the activist including: (1) where the person grew up, (2) aspect(s) of their identity that may have shaped the issue they focused on, (3) the issues they cared about, (4) what inspired them to get involved in activism, (5) the activism strategies they used, (6) other information about their career or personal life. Have students culminate their research into one of the following ways: essay or poem about the person, imagined journal entries, a timeline of their life, or a portrait of the activist (drawing, painting, collage, sculpture) that includes a short blurb about them—like what you would see in a museum. Have all students present their culminating projects to the whole class. You can adjust the scope of the project based on the age level of the students (portrait or timeline for younger children and essay/poem or journal entries for older students).

## ADL Resources

The following are curriculum and educational resources on voting rights, social justice and people, identity and culture.

### Curriculum Resources

We Can All Be Kid President, [www.adl.org/education/educator-resources/lesson-plans/we-can-all-be-kid-president](http://www.adl.org/education/educator-resources/lesson-plans/we-can-all-be-kid-president).

Representing the People: Diversity and Elections, [www.adl.org/education/educator-resources/lesson-plans/representing-the-people-diversity-and-elections](http://www.adl.org/education/educator-resources/lesson-plans/representing-the-people-diversity-and-elections).

Social Justice Poetry, [www.adl.org/education/educator-resources/lesson-plans/social-justice-poetry](http://www.adl.org/education/educator-resources/lesson-plans/social-justice-poetry).

Voting Rights Then and Now, [www.adl.org/education/educator-resources/lesson-plans/voting-rights-then-and-now](http://www.adl.org/education/educator-resources/lesson-plans/voting-rights-then-and-now).

### Websites

7 Engaging Picture Books about Voting and Elections

[www.adl.org/blog/7-engaging-picture-books-about-voting-and-elections](http://www.adl.org/blog/7-engaging-picture-books-about-voting-and-elections)

This blog includes a round-up of picture books for elementary students about voting, elections and the power of democracy. Talking with young children about voting and elections can open doors to conversations about fairness, democracy, citizenship and participation.

10 Ways Youth Can Engage in Activism

[www.adl.org/education/resources/tools-and-strategies/10-ways-youth-can-engage-in-activism](http://www.adl.org/education/resources/tools-and-strategies/10-ways-youth-can-engage-in-activism)

A list of ideas for bringing social activism into the classroom and outside of the school walls. These strategies can be acted upon individually, organized together as a group and young people can join with a larger effort that is taking place locally or nationally.

### 9 Ways to Teach about the Election: A Social Justice Approach

[www.adl.org/education/resources/tools-and-strategies/9-ways-to-teach-about-the-election-a-social-justice](http://www.adl.org/education/resources/tools-and-strategies/9-ways-to-teach-about-the-election-a-social-justice)

Campaigns and elections are ripe with opportunity to discuss government, the electoral process, civics, history and other important issues. Teach students about the election with a focus on social justice issues using these strategies and activities.

### Teaching about Elections

[www.adl.org/education/resources/tools-and-strategies/teaching-about-elections](http://www.adl.org/education/resources/tools-and-strategies/teaching-about-elections)

Elections provide great opportunities to teach students about civics, how government works, the electoral process, current events and issues, historical context and campaign politics. This page provides education resources, lesson plans and other election-related pedagogical content to assist you in teaching about elections.

### Children's Books

Below are links to lists of recommended anti-bias and multicultural books for the indicated category.

[People, Identity & Culture](#)

[Social Justice](#)