

Virginia Voter Registration and Turnout Lesson Plan

Target Audience: 12th grade government students

Length: 1 day (90—minute class)

Objectives

The students will:

1. Identify and explain voter requirements for residents of Virginia.
2. Describe the procedures used to register to vote in Virginia.
3. Describe the changes or trends in voter participation.
4. Analyze statistical data to determine which groups of people vote the most and which vote the least.
5. Identify and explain factors that influence voter turnout.

1. Overview

In this lesson, students will examine several documents related to voter registration and turnout. Students will use their analysis of these documents to address the following questions:

- What are the requirements and procedures for registering to vote in Virginia?
- How does the process of registering to vote in Virginia affect voter turnout?
- What other factors influence voter turnout?

2. Activities

- Distribute copies of the *Virginia Voter Registration Application Form; Table 400. Voting-Age Population, Percent Reporting Registered, and Voted; and Table 403. Resident Population of Voting Age and Percent Casting Votes*. Working in groups of three or four, students will analyze the primary sources using Handout #1: *Primary Source Analysis Questions*.

3. Group Discussion

- Write three columns on the board: Notice, Questions and Background. Using Handout #1: *Primary Source Analysis Questions* responses, fill-in the columns as a class.

4. Background Information

Importance of Voting

- The right to vote is one of the fundamental rights of citizens in a democratic society. Without it, citizens would not be able to choose the people who will run their government. Voting is a major responsibility of citizenship. Those who do not vote are failing to carry out a civic responsibility. They are also handing over their share of political power to voters whose views they may oppose.

Requirements for Voter Registration

- To be eligible to register to vote in Virginia a person must: be a resident of Virginia; be a U. S. Citizen; be 18 years old on or before election day; does not claim the right to vote in any other State; not currently declared mentally incompetent by a court of law; and if convicted of a felony, your right to vote must have been restored (Source: Virginia State Board of Elections www.sbe.virginia.gov).

Influences on Voter Turnout

- Many factors influence voter turnout in elections. People are more likely to vote in elections which they feel strongly about a candidate or issue. Voter attitude toward government or a particular political party can also have a strong affect on voter turnout. Age, income, and education are important factors in predicting which citizens will vote. More citizens vote in presidential elections than in other national, state, or local contests, but the percentage of Americans voting in presidential elections is on the decline. Voter apathy, dissatisfaction, and the failure to meet the registration requirements contribute to the decline in voting.
- As the documents indicate, voters age 61-64 are more likely to vote while those 21-24 are least likely to go to the polls. Similarly, those with higher education are more likely to register and vote. In both congressional and presidential races, females are more likely to vote than males.

5. Conclusion

Conclude the lesson with a group discussion in which students answer the following questions:

1. How do potential voters view these documents?
2. What problems could the registration form cause potential voters?
3. How could organizations and communities combat the problem of low voter turnout?

6. Differentiation

For remedial students:

- Write three columns on the board: Background, Most Likely to Vote, and Least Likely to Vote. Using Handout #2: *Primary Source Analysis Questions* responses, fill-in the columns as a class.

For advanced students:

- Write three columns on the board: Notice, Trends, and Strategies for Improvement. Using Handout #3: *Primary Source Analysis Questions* responses, fill-in the columns as a class.

7. SOL Skills

The student will demonstrate mastery of the social studies skills citizenship requires, including the ability to

- analyze primary and secondary source documents (GOVT.1a);
- create and interpret maps, diagrams, tables, charts, graphs, and spreadsheets (GOVT.1b);
- distinguish between relevant and irrelevant information (GOVT.1.d);

- identify a problem and prioritize solutions (GOVT.1.f);
- select and defend positions in writing, discussion, and debate (GOVT.1.g).

8. SOL Content

The student will demonstrate knowledge of local, state, and national elections by analyzing voter turnout (GOVT.6.g).

9. Materials

- *Virginia Voter Registration Application Form Handout*
- *Table 400. Voting-Age Population, Percent Reporting Registered, and Voted*
- *Table 403. Resident Population of Voting Age and Percent Casting Votes*
- *Handout #1: Primary Source Analysis Questions*
- *Handout #2: Primary Source Analysis Questions (Remedial)*
- *Handout #3: Primary Source Analysis Questions (Advanced)*

Table 400. Voting-Age Population, Percent Reporting Registered, and Voted: 1994 to 2006

(190.3 represents 190,300,000. Age of November. Covers civilian noninstitutional population 18 years old and over. Includes aliens. Figures are based on Current Population Survey (see text, Section 1. Population, and Appendix III) and differ from those in Table 402 based on population estimates and official vote counts)

Characteristic	Voting-age population (mil.)												Percent reporting they registered						Percent reporting they voted					
	1994	1996	1998	1999	2000	2002	2004	2006	1996	2000	2004	1994	1998	2002	2006	1996	2000	2004	1994	1998	2002	2006		
Total ¹	190.3	193.7	198.2	202.6	210.4	215.7	220.6	226.6	65.9	63.9	65.9	62.0	62.1	60.9	61.6	54.2	54.7	58.3	44.6	41.9	42.3	43.6		
18 to 20 years old.....	10.3	10.8	11.4	11.9	12.5	13.1	13.7	14.3	40.5	40.5	50.7	37.2	32.1	32.8	37.0	31.2	28.4	41.0	16.5	13.5	15.7	17.1		
21 to 34 years old.....	41.1	40.1	38.6	37.3	38.5	39.0	39.4	39.9	56.6	54.7	55.6	51.5	52.4	50.2	50.3	43.1	43.7	46.9	32.2	28.0	27.1	26.3		
35 to 44 years old.....	50.9	53.7	57.4	61.4	66.0	71.0	75.0	79.3	71.2	72.2	73.3	71.3	71.4	69.4	68.8	64.4	64.1	66.8	48.0	43.6	43.1	42.1		
45 to 64 years old.....	31.1	31.9	32.3	32.8	33.9	34.7	35.8	37.0	77.0	76.1	76.9	75.6	75.4	75.8	75.4	67.0	67.6	68.9	60.7	59.5	61.0	60.5		
65 years old and over.....	91.0	92.6	95.2	97.1	100.9	103.8	106.5	110.1	64.4	62.2	64.0	60.8	60.8	59.9	59.5	55.8	53.1	56.3	44.4	41.4	41.4	42.4		
Female.....	98.3	101.0	103.0	105.5	109.5	111.9	114.1	117.3	65.6	67.6	67.6	63.2	63.5	62.8	63.5	55.2	60.1	44.9	42.4	43.0	44.7			
Male.....	160.3	162.8	165.8	168.7	174.1	176.6	179.9	189.3	67.7	65.6	67.9	64.2	63.9	63.1	64.0	56.0	56.4	60.3	48.9	43.3	44.1	45.8		
White.....	131.3	133.7	137.2	142.0	147.9	154.2	160.0	167.1	61.4	60.5	62.9	58.8	59.7	58.3	59.3	52.4	53.8	58.3	48.5	44.7	45.1	47.8		
Black.....	3.3	3.3	3.3	3.3	3.3	3.3	3.3	3.3	30.9	30.9	34.3	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	32.9	35.3	29.8	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)		
Asian 2, 3.....	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	8.0	9.6	9.3	9.9	10.3	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	30.9	34.3	(NA)	(NA)	25.4	29.8	(NA)	19.4	21.8	21.8	21.8		
Hispanic 4.....	17.5	18.4	20.3	21.6	25.2	27.1	29.0	30.7	34.9	34.3	34.3	30.0	33.7	32.6	32.1	26.7	27.5	28.0	19.1	20.0	18.9	19.3		
Region 5.....	38.4	38.3	38.5	38.9	41.1	41.0	41.2	41.2	64.7	63.7	65.3	60.9	60.8	60.8	60.8	54.5	55.2	58.6	45.2	41.2	41.4	42.8		
Northeast.....	44.5	45.2	45.9	46.4	48.8	48.4	49.1	49.1	67.7	66.0	67.8	62.0	61.9	62.0	62.0	55.5	56.0	59.3	46.5	43.3	43.8	45.1		
Midwest.....	40.1	40.1	40.1	40.1	40.1	40.1	40.1	40.1	60.8	59.5	60.5	59.1	59.0	59.0	59.1	54.8	55.4	58.0	46.3	43.9	44.3	45.2		
South.....	41.0	42.1	43.7	45.5	46.3	46.7	50.4	50.4	60.8	59.5	60.5	59.1	59.0	59.0	59.1	54.8	55.4	58.0	46.3	43.9	44.3	45.2		
West.....	41.0	42.1	43.7	45.5	46.3	46.7	50.4	50.4	60.8	59.5	60.5	59.1	59.0	59.0	59.1	54.8	55.4	58.0	46.3	43.9	44.3	45.2		
School years completed.....	14.7	14.1	13.3	12.9	12.3	12.6	12.1	12.1	40.7	36.1	32.5	40.1	40.2	32.4	29.5	28.1	26.8	23.6	23.2	24.6	19.4	17.1		
High school.....	20.7	21.0	21.0	20.1	20.9	20.7	20.2	47.9	45.9	45.8	44.7	43.4	41.6	39.6	33.8	33.6	34.6	27.0	25.0	23.3	22.8			
High school graduate or GED 6.....	64.9	65.2	65.6	66.3	68.9	69.5	70.0	70.0	62.2	60.1	61.5	58.5	58.6	57.1	57.5	48.1	49.4	52.4	40.5	37.1	37.1	37.6		
College.....	50.4	50.9	52.9	55.3	57.3	59.9	60.2	62.9	70.0	73.7	78.4	68.4	68.3	66.7	68.3	60.5	60.3	66.1	49.1	46.2	45.8	47.3		
Bachelor's or advanced degree.....	39.4	42.5	45.4	48.0	51.0	54.9	58.2	60.4	77.3	78.1	76.3	76.3	75.1	74.4	73.9	75.0	74.2	63.1	67.2	68.5	69.5			
Employed.....	122.6	125.6	130.5	133.4	134.9	138.8	143.8	147.0	67.0	64.7	67.1	62.9	62.6	61.7	62.7	55.2	55.5	60.0	45.2	41.2	42.1	43.9		
Unemployed.....	6.5	6.4	5.2	4.9	4.7	4.9	5.2	5.2	62.5	63.0	62.5	61.4	62.1	60.9	60.7	37.2	35.1	46.4	28.3	28.4	27.2	28.0		
Not in labor force.....	61.2	61.8	62.5	64.2	67.7	69.3	70.5	70.5	62.5	63.0	62.5	61.4	62.1	60.9	60.7	37.2	35.1	46.4	28.3	28.4	27.2	28.0		

¹ Not in labor force. ² Includes those with citizenship in any country other than the United States. ³ Includes those with citizenship in the United States, but not in the United States for at least 5 years. ⁴ Includes those with citizenship in any country other than the United States, but not in the United States for at least 5 years. ⁵ Prior to 2004, this category was "Asian and Pacific Islanders," therefore rates are not comparable with prior years. ⁶ Hispanic persons may be any race. See also comments on race in the text for Section 1. ⁷ Persons who report having passed the exam are considered to be equivalent to a high school diploma. ⁸ Persons who report having passed the exam are considered to be equivalent to a high school diploma. Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Reports, P20-556, and earlier reports; "Voting and Registration in the Election of November 2006" (published June 2008); <http://www.census.gov/population/www/socdemo/voting.html>; and unpublished data.

Table 403. Resident Population of Voting Age and Percent Casting Votes—States: 2000 to 2006

[209,834 represents 209,834,000. Estimated population, 18 years old and over. Includes Armed Forces stationed in each state, aliens, and institutional population]

State	Voting-age population (1,000) ¹			Percent casting votes for—					
	2000	2004	2006	Presidential electors			U.S. Representatives		
				2000	2004	2006	2000	2004	2006
U.S.	209,834	219,973	225,087	50.3	55.6		47.1	51.5	35.8
AL	3,330	3,401	3,471	50.0	55.4		43.2	52.7	34.6
AK	437	477	494	65.3	65.6		62.8	62.9	47.5
AZ	3,792	4,228	4,540	40.4	47.6		38.6	44.3	32.9
AR	1,998	2,062	2,113	46.1	51.2		31.7	38.4	36.1
CA	24,737	26,287	26,849	44.3	47.3		42.2	44.2	30.9
CO	3,222	3,461	3,592	54.0	61.5		50.4	58.9	42.8
CT	2,570	2,641	2,669	56.8	59.8		51.1	54.1	40.3
DE	592	628	649	55.4	59.7		52.9	56.7	38.6
DC	457	464	471	44.2	49.0	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)
FL	12,394	13,449	14,025	48.1	56.6		40.4	41.8	27.5
GA	6,053	6,564	6,867	42.7	50.3		39.9	45.1	30.0
HI	917	967	995	40.1	44.4		37.1	43.1	34.1
ID	930	1,010	1,065	54.0	59.2		53.0	56.7	41.8
IL	9,194	9,455	9,574	51.6	55.8		47.8	52.8	36.1
IN	4,517	4,643	4,719	48.7	53.2		47.7	52.0	35.3
IA	2,195	2,233	2,260	61.6	67.5		58.1	65.3	45.7
KS	1,980	2,032	2,062	54.2	58.4		52.3	56.9	41.0
KY	3,054	3,146	3,201	50.6	57.1		47.0	52.0	39.2
LA	3,252	3,217	3,176	54.3	58.6		37.0	37.9	28.8
ME	976	1,018	1,032	66.8	72.8		65.4	69.8	52.0
MD	3,954	4,160	4,234	51.2	57.3		48.7	54.2	40.2
MA	4,862	4,956	4,988	56.2	59.1		56.2	59.1	45.0
MI	7,360	7,562	7,619	57.5	64.0		55.3	61.2	47.9
MN	3,645	3,817	3,894	66.9	74.1		64.8	71.3	55.0
MS	2,074	2,122	2,135	47.9	53.7		47.6	52.6	28.1
MO	4,178	4,326	4,413	56.5	63.1		55.7	61.7	47.5
MT	674	707	728	61.0	63.7		60.9	62.9	55.8
NE	1,263	1,299	1,319	55.2	59.9		54.1	58.9	45.2
NV	1,502	1,734	1,853	40.6	47.8		39.1	45.6	31.0
NH	930	987	1,009	61.2	68.8		59.8	66.0	39.9
NJ	6,344	6,533	6,596	50.2	55.3		47.1	50.3	32.4
NM	1,313	1,396	1,445	45.6	54.2		44.7	53.2	38.8
NY	14,313	14,691	14,815	48.6	50.7		48.5	50.7	31.6
NC	6,111	6,456	6,706	47.7	54.2		45.5	52.9	28.9
ND	481	490	494	59.9	63.8		59.4	63.4	44.1
OH	8,479	8,634	8,689	55.5	65.2		54.1	60.0	45.6
OK	2,563	2,639	2,688	48.2	55.5		42.4	52.1	33.7
OR	2,584	2,736	2,834	59.4	67.1		55.7	64.8	47.9
PA	9,368	9,504	9,596	52.4	60.7		48.6	54.2	41.8
RI	803	828	825	51.0	52.8		47.9	48.6	45.2
SC	3,013	3,173	3,281	45.9	51.0		43.9	45.4	33.1
SD	553	578	592	57.2	67.1		56.9	67.3	56.3
TN	4,304	4,484	4,612	48.2	54.4		43.1	49.5	37.2
TX	15,045	16,217	16,918	42.6	45.7		39.8	42.9	24.5
UT	1,523	1,677	1,783	50.6	55.3		49.8	54.2	32.0
VT	462	480	487	63.6	65.1		61.3	63.6	54.0
VA	5,363	5,662	5,819	51.1	56.4		45.2	53.1	39.5
WA	4,396	4,675	4,849	56.6	61.2		54.2	58.4	42.4
WV	1,406	1,414	1,420	46.1	53.4		41.2	51.0	32.0
WI	4,005	4,170	4,246	64.9	71.9		62.6	67.7	48.6
WY	365	381	390	58.5	64.1		58.1	62.8	50.3

X Not applicable. ¹ As of July 1. Source: U.S. Census Bureau, "Annual Estimates of the Population by Selected Age Groups and Sex for the United States: April 1, 2000, to July 1, 2007." (NC-EST2007-02); <<http://www.census.gov/popest/datasets.html>> (released 1 May 2008).

Source: U.S. House of Representatives, Office of the Clerk, *Statistics of the Presidential and Congressional Election*, biennial. See also <http://clerk.house.gov/member_info/electionInfo/index.html>.

Virginia Voter Registration Application Form

Instructions

You are not officially registered to vote until this application is approved. You should receive a Voter Card in the mail. If you do not receive this acknowledgement within 30 days after mailing this form, please contact your city or county voter registration office or the State Board of Elections. If you are already registered to vote with your current name and address, you do not need to re-register. If you have any questions regarding your voter registration status, please call your local Voter Registration Office.

Identification Requirement

For Registration

If you are registering for the first time by mail, federal law (the Help America Vote Act) requires you to provide identification. To avoid delays, please **enclose a copy of one of the following documents** that shows your **name and address** with your application: (1) current and valid photo ID, (2) current utility bill, (3) bank statement, (4) government check, (5) paycheck, or (6) other government document. You can also present this required identification at the polls but may experience delays.

For Voting

Virginia law requires every voter voting in person to show identification or sign a statement, subject to felony penalties for false statements pursuant to §24.2-1016, that the person is the named registered voter.

Mailing Instructions

- Detach the return envelope that is provided.
 - Write your name and return address in the space provided on the front.
 - Write the address of the voter registration office for the county or city where you live. List provided on the next page.
 - Must be POSTMARKED at least 29 days before the next Primary or General Election in which you plan to vote.
-

Privacy Act Notice: Article II, Section 2 of the Constitution of Virginia (1971) requires that a person registering to vote provide his or her social security number, if any. Therefore, if you do not provide your social security number, your application for voter registration will be denied. Section 7 of the Federal Privacy Act (Public Law Number 93-579) allows the Commonwealth to enforce this requirement, but also requires that you be advised that state and local voting officials will use the social security number as a unique identifier to ensure that no person is registered in more than one place. This registration card will not be open to inspection by the public. Your social security number will appear on reports produced only for official use by voter registration and election officials, and for jury selection purposes by courts.

WARNING: INTENTIONALLY MAKING A MATERIALLY FALSE STATEMENT ON THIS FORM CONSTITUTES THE CRIME OF ELECTION FRAUD, WHICH IS PUNISHABLE UNDER VIRGINIA LAW AS A FELONY. VIOLATORS MAY BE SENTENCED TO UP TO 10 YEARS IN PRISON, OR UP TO 12 MONTHS IN JAIL AND/OR FINED UP TO \$2,500.

Virginia Voter Registration Application Form

→ Use this form to register to vote in Virginia or report a change in name or address. If you are already registered with your current name and address, you do not need to re-register.

To register to vote in Virginia, you must:

- Be a **United States citizen**
- Be a **resident of Virginia**
- Be **18 years old by the next general election**
- Have **had your voting rights restored** if you have ever been convicted of a felony
- Have **had your capacity restored** if you have ever been declared mentally incapacitated in a Circuit Court

→ **Starred (*) items are required.** If you do not complete all of the items that are marked with *, your application may be denied. Once your local registrar approves your application, you will receive a voter card **by mail**.

1	* Are you a citizen of the United States of America? <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	* Will you be at least 18 years of age on or before the next General Election day? <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	If you checked "NO" in response to either of these questions, do not complete this form.
2	<input type="text"/> - <input type="text"/> - <input type="text"/> * Social Security Number	<input type="checkbox"/> Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female * Gender	<input type="text"/> / <input type="text"/> / <input type="text"/> * Date of Birth
	<input type="text"/> - <input type="text"/> - <input type="text"/> * Last Name	<input type="text"/> - <input type="text"/> - <input type="text"/> * First Name	<input type="text"/> - <input type="text"/> - <input type="text"/> * Full Middle or Maiden Name <input type="checkbox"/> None <input type="checkbox"/> None * Suffix (Jr., Sr., III, Etc.)

3

* Residence (Permanent) Home Address Apt/Unit/Lot/Rm/Ste City/Town Zip Code

If Rural Address or Homeless, please describe where you reside E-mail address

Mailing Address (If different)/ Virginia P.O.Box or Uniformed Service Address, if applicable (include Zip Code) City or County
Name of City or County of Residence

4

* Have you ever been convicted of a felony? YES NO State where convicted

If YES, have your voting rights been restored? YES NO If YES, when restored?

5

* Have you ever been judged mentally incapacitated? YES NO

If YES, has court restored you to capacity? YES NO If YES, when restored?

6

Registration Statement: I swear/affirm, under felony penalty for making willfully false material statements or entries, that the information provided on this form is true. I authorize the cancellation (entered in Box 7 below) of my current registration and I have read the Privacy Act Notice on the front of this form.

→ * **Signature** (or mark if unable to sign)

If applicant is unable to sign due to a physical disability, write the name/address of person who assisted. (Required). Check/describe if you have a disability that requires accommodation in order to vote.

I'm interested in being an Election Official on Election Day. Please send me information. You may request that your home address not be released if you (a) are **active or retired law enforcement**, or (b) have been granted a **protective court order**, or (c) are in fear of your personal safety from someone who has **threatened or stalked** you and have filed a complaint against that person with a magistrate or law enforcement (must attach copy of complaint). You must show a Virginia P.O. box under mailing address in Box 3 above. **Law Enforcement** **Protective Order** **Threatened/Stalked**

7 Commonwealth of Virginia—*Previous Voter Registration Information

- No, I am not currently registered to vote in Virginia or another state.
- Yes, I am registered to vote at another address in Virginia or in another state. **If YES, the information below must be completed:**

/ /
Full Name as Registered Date of Birth

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Social Security Number (last 4 digits required)

City/Town State Zip Code

City/County/Town of Residence (if applicable). This cancellation information will be sent to the county or city and state you entered above.

Virginia Voter Registration Application Receipt

Name of Applicant _____

M	M	/	D	D	/	Y	Y	Y	Y
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Date

Name of group or individual receiving application _____

E-mail address _____

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Daytime telephone number of group or individual receiving application

If you have not received a Voter Card within thirty (30) days of submitting a Voter Registration Application, please contact the **Virginia State Board of Elections**.

On-line: www.sbe.virginia.gov

Voice: 800 · 552 · 9745

TTY: 800 · 260 · 3466

Richmond local: 804 · 864 · 8901

No receipt is required for application completed in the Voter Registration Office.

VA-NVRA-1 7/08

Notes

- Deceased
- Out of State
- Error Deleted
- Judged Incapacitated
- Transferred Out
- Convicted of a Felony
- Personal Request
- NVRA Cancel
- Re-Registered
- Inactive Status
- Reactivated

<p>Other changes</p> <p>New PCT Authorized by Date changed</p>	<p>New Last Name</p> <p>New First, Middle/Maiden Name and Suffix</p> <p>Date changed</p>
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Registration date	PCT	Town code	Denial date & reason	Date changed
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For Office Use Only

Name _____
Period _____ Date _____

Primary Source Analysis Questions

Directions: After reviewing the *Virginia Voter Registration Application Form; Table 400. Voting-Age Population, Percent Reporting Registered, and Voted; and Table 403. Resident Population of Voting Age and Percent Casting Votes*, form groups of three or four and respond to the questions.

1. What did you notice about the three documents?
2. What questions do you have about the context and background?
3. What do you know about the requirements to vote in Virginia?
4. Where can Virginians find information about the registration process?
5. How has voter turnout changed in the most recent elections?
6. What factors seem to influence higher voter turnout?

Name _____
Period _____ Date _____

Primary Source Analysis Questions

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1. Looking at the voter registration form, what problems do you foresee for Virginians as they register to vote?
2. Which groups might be at a disadvantage?
3. Which groups might have an advantage?
4. Looking at the registration statistics, which groups of people are more likely to vote?
5. Looking at the registration statistics, which groups of people are least likely to vote?
6. What do you think could be done to increase the number of voters who participate in elections?

Name _____
Period _____ Date _____

Primary Source Analysis Questions

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1. What do you notice about the documents?
2. Are there characteristics that are surprising to you?
3. Does the data illustrate trends in voter participation?
4. How has voter participation changed over time?
5. What national campaigns to increase voter turnout are you familiar with?
 - Statewide campaigns
6. What solutions or strategies do you have to increase voter turnout in Virginia?