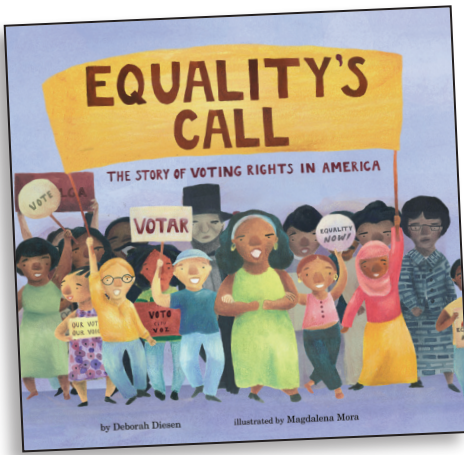


A Curriculum Guide to **EQUALITY'S CALL** THE STORY OF VOTING RIGHTS IN AMERICA

By Deborah Diesen, Illustrated by Magdalena Mora

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Ages 3–8



ABOUT THE BOOK

When our country was founded in 1776, part of the plan was to include the voice of the people. But this ideal was not fully achieved at that time. Some people were left out due to their gender, race, or economic status.

Equality's Call: The Story of Voting Rights in America explains how voting rights were gradually extended to more and more people, including former slaves, women, and eighteen-year-olds. And while there is still more to be done to include all voices in our country, this book acknowledges and celebrates the progress our country has made.

Deborah Diesen's rhyming text briefly explains the history of voting rights in America. The recurring refrains about equality's call throughout the book emphasize the movement toward greater and greater representation. For example:

“But we heard in the distance
Equality's call:
A right isn't right
Till it's granted to all.”

The back matter provides additional information about voting-related legislation and constitutional amendments, as well as a list of voting-rights activists.

Illustrations by Magdalena Mora show how voting rights were extended to an increasingly diverse society of voters as the nation embraced equality's call by dropping rules about wealth, abolishing slavery, extending the franchise to former slaves, granting women the right to vote, and fighting voter suppression. It is an increasingly inclusive story, and it is still in progress.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Key Ideas and Details

The discussion questions and activities below draw on Common Core State Standards for reading and informational text (RI) that ask children to ask and answer questions about key details in a text (RI.K.1–RI.3.1), identify the main topic and key details that support it (RI.K.2–RI.3.2), and describe the relationship between a series of events, concepts, or ideas (RI.K.3–RI.3.3).

1. **Prereading: Anticipation Guide:** What is the story of voting rights in America? Before reading *Equality's Call*, explain whether you agree or disagree with each statement in the Anticipation Guide. Then after reading or listening to the book being read aloud, again check either agree or disagree. Give evidence from the book to explain your answers. Discuss your findings with your classmates. (See Anticipation Guide reproducible at the end of the guide.)
2. How has the right to vote in the United States changed over time? How was this accomplished?
3. *Equality* means being equal and having the same rights and opportunities. What does the author mean when she uses the phrase *equality's call*?
4. In the past, which groups of people were not allowed to vote? Explain the reasoning the text outlines for this discrimination. How does this make you feel?

5. Imagine you could interview one of our country’s founders about voting rights. With a partner, make up questions you could ask. Then take turns acting as the interviewer asking the questions or as the founder who answers them. Here are some topics you can talk about:

- Rules about wealth
- Slavery
- Women’s suffrage
- Paying a tax to vote
- Voter suppression
- Work left to be done

6. What do you think the author wants you to know about voting rights? How do you know? Give examples from the text and back matter.

7. Why is *Equality’s Call* a good title for this book? Ask your teacher to download this poster featuring art and text from the book to hang in your classroom. With your classmates, consider signing your names to the poster to show your commitment to answering equality’s call and supporting voting rights for all. https://www.simonandschusterpublishing.com/downloadables/73555/equalityscall_11x17_poster.pdf

CRAFT AND STRUCTURE

To learn about craft and structure, the CCSS asks us to help students learn and understand vocabulary words and phrases (RI.K.4–RI.3.4), think about the features of nonfiction or literary text (RI.K.5–RI.3.5), and assess the author’s point of view (RI.K.6–RI.3.6). The questions and activities below emphasize these understandings.

1. **Choral Reading: Paying Attention to Rhyme:** In a group or with your entire class, practice reading sections of the book aloud. Follow these steps:

- First, listen to your teacher read the section. Notice how the author uses rhyming words throughout the book. For example, the book begins this way:

“Our founders declared
When our country **began**
That consent of the governed
Was part of the **plan.**”

The rhyming words make the words pleasant to hear, and they create a songlike melody.

- Second, read the book together as a group. Use the rhymes to guide you.
- Third, practice a few times. This helps you to read with more expression and ease.

Good sections to practice reading are sets of stanzas that end with the refrain about equality’s call. You can listen to a group of children working on choral reading with their teacher at this website by scrolling down to the heading “Watch: Choral Reading” to find the video: [ReadingRockets.org/Strategies/Choral_Reading](https://www.readingrockets.org/strategies/choral_reading)



2. **Yes/No, Why:** Answer each of the questions below. First, decide on a yes or no answer. Then explain your reasoning. Some vocabulary words from the book are underlined in each sentence; discuss what these words mean before answering the questions.

1. Did the founders extend voting rights to everyone?

Yes/No? _____
Why? _____

2. Were slaves enfranchised?

Yes/No? _____
Why? _____

3. Did amendments extend voting rights to women?

Yes/No? _____
Why? _____

4. Were some people's voting rights suppressed in the past?

Yes/No? _____
Why? _____

5. Has equality's call been answered?

Yes/No? _____
Why? _____

3. **Looking Closely at Front Matter:** In *Equality's Call*, you can find the front matter right before the title page. In this book, the front matter gives us background information about voting rights in the US. This material is written in italics. Read this material and then discuss the following questions:

- What idea did the founders all agree on?
- In 1776, could all US adults vote?
- In time, how did people's understanding of democracy and rights change?
- How does the information in the front matter help you understand the book?

4. **Looking Closely at Back Matter:** The back matter follows the main text. It adds to our understanding of voting rights by providing additional information. After examining this material, discuss the following questions:

- How did constitutional amendments and federal laws extend citizenship and voting rights to more people?
- What does it mean to be a voting-rights activist?
- How does the back matter add to your understanding of voting rights in America?



WRITING

CCSS emphasizes writing informative and explanatory text in the early grades. The writing activities below provide experience writing to give an opinion (W.K.1–W.3.1), to inform (W.K.2–W.3.2), and to explain a sequence of events (W.K.3–W.3.3).

1. **Share Your Thoughts:** In *Equality's Call* the author writes about the impact of the call of equality on our country's expansion of voting rights:

“But we heard growing clearer
Equality's call:
A right isn't right
Till it's granted to all.”

Here are some questions to help you reflect on what you learned in the book: What do you think it means to hear equality's call? What do you think it means to answer equality's call? Which groups of people were eventually granted the right to vote? What brought about those changes? What happens when a right is expanded? Consider these questions and then explain what you learned from the book or how you feel about the story of voting rights in America.

2. **Write an Acrostic Poem:** Here is an example of an acrostic poem using the word vote:

VOTE

Voice of all the people
Over time, more and more voices included
Telling whom we think should win an election,
Enjoying the right of suffrage

Notice that the word *vote*, the subject of the poem, is written down the left-hand side. Each letter in *vote* begins a line of the poem. All the lines of the poem are about voting.

Try writing your own acrostic poem. You can use the word *vote*, or try one of these words:

- Right
- Voters
- Voice

Or challenge yourself using the phrase *equality's call*.

3. Find out more about one of the voting-rights activists listed in the back of the book. How did they answer equality's call? Use the biography handout to draw a picture of your activist and then write about how they answered equality's call. (See the Biography Activity reproducible at the end of the guide.)

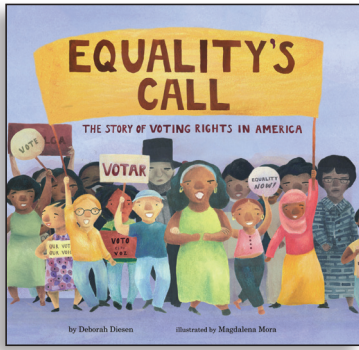
EXTENDING THE EXPERIENCE OF READING THE BOOK

1. **Read Other Books about Voting Rights:**
 - *What's the Big Deal About Elections* by Ruby Shamir, illustrated by Matt Faulkner
 - *Lillian's Right to Vote: A Celebration of the Voting Rights Act of 1965* by Jonah Winter, illustrated by Shane Evans
 - *Granddaddy's Turn: A Journey to the Ballot Box* by Michael Bandy and Eric Stein, illustrated by James E. Ransome
 - *Vote!* by Eileen Christelow
 - *Bold & Brave: Ten Heroes Who Won Women the Right to Vote* by Kirsten Gillibrand, illustrated by Maira Kalman
2. Visit author Deborah Diesen's website at DeborahDiesen.com
Click on *voting rights* to find several activity sheets to complete after reading *Equality's Call*.
3. Visit illustrator Magdalena Mora's website at MagdalenaMora.com to see more of her artwork.

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Anticipation Guide for *Equality's Call*

What is the story of voting rights in America? Explain whether you agree or disagree with each statement in the guide below. Then after reading or listening to the book being read aloud, again either check agree or disagree. Give evidence from the book to explain your answers, and discuss the findings with your classmates.

BEFORE	STATEMENT AND EVIDENCE	AFTER
AGREE/DISAGREE		AGREE/DISAGREE
	<p>1. All US citizens have always been treated equally.</p> <p>Evidence: _____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>	
	<p>2. At one time, only wealthy white men could vote.</p> <p>Evidence: _____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>	
	<p>3. To vote, you need to be 21 years old.</p> <p>Evidence: _____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>	
	<p>4. Women have always had the right to vote.</p> <p>Evidence: _____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>	
	<p>5. In the past, some people had to pay a tax to vote.</p> <p>Evidence: _____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>	

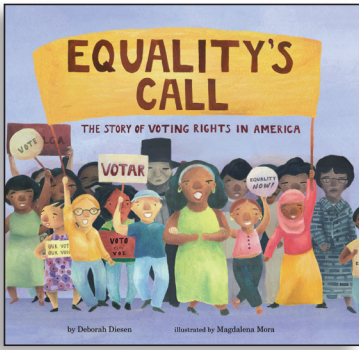


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REPRODUCIBLE



Biography Activity

Find out more about one of the voting rights activists listed in the back of *Equality's Call*. Identify and draw a picture of your chosen activist in the frame, and then write a short biography on how they answered equality's call.

Name of voting rights activist

How they answered equality's call:



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