



citizens. not spectators.  
promoting youth civic and political engagement.



Center for Civic Education

## Citizens, Not Spectators

### Lesson 1: Becoming a Voter

#### Teacher Resource 2: State Voting Qualifications

This resource provides detailed information on state requirements for voting. Teacher Resource 4 provides an abbreviated list of general state voting requirements and space to add your state's voting requirements. You may project Teacher Resource 4 on a screen in the classroom.

Each state has its own laws about who can register and who can vote. Some states allow seventeen-year-old citizens to register as long as they reach their eighteenth birthday by the next Election Day. For your state's specific requirements, visit the U.S. Election Assistance Commission ([http://www.eac.gov/voter\\_resources/contact\\_your\\_state.aspx](http://www.eac.gov/voter_resources/contact_your_state.aspx)) or your secretary of state's homepage.

A reasonable and durational state residency requirement may be acceptable if it adheres to the Supreme Court's decision in *Dunn v. Blumstein*, 405 U.S. 330 (1972) (see <http://supreme.justia.com/us/405/330/index.html>).

States wish to avoid potential election fraud caused by nonresident voting.

However, the U.S. Constitution sets requirements for voter eligibility that must be adhered to by every state. You will qualify to register to vote if you meet all the following requirements:

1. You are a citizen of the United States.

"The right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of race, color, or previous condition of servitude."

—Fifteenth Amendment, Section 1

2. You are at least eighteen years of age.

"The right of citizens of the United States, who are eighteen years of age or older, to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of age."

—Twenty-sixth Amendment, Section 1

3. You are not imprisoned or on parole for conviction of a felony. (This qualification varies by state.) For more information, visit Justia.com:  
<http://supreme.justia.com/constitution/amendment-14/92-voter-qualifications.html>
4. You have not been judged by a court to be mentally incompetent to register and vote. The National Voter Registration Act of 1993 allows for the removal of an individual from voting lists due to mental incapacity. For more information, read the National Voter Registration Act at the U.S. Election Assistance Commission's website:  
[http://www.eac.gov/national\\_voter\\_registration\\_act/default.aspx](http://www.eac.gov/national_voter_registration_act/default.aspx).
5. You have registered to vote within your state's required number of days before an election. See your secretary of state's website for details.