

EXPANDING VOTING RIGHTS

Voting Rights: Opposing Viewpoints

Limiting Voting Rights to Propert Owners

“The same reasoning which will induce you to admit all men who have no property, to vote, with those who have ... will prove that you ought to admit women and children [Adams opposed allowing women and children to vote]; for, generally speaking, women and children have as good judgments, and as independent minds, as those men who are wholly destitute of property these last being to all intents and purposes as much dependent upon others, who will please to feed, clothe, and employ them, as women are upon their husbands, or children on their parents.”

—JOHN ADAMS

Disposing of Property-Owning Restrictions

“Today a man owns a jackass worth fifty dollars and he is entitled to vote; but before the next election the jackass dies. The man in the mean time has become more experienced, his knowledge of the principles of government, and his acquaintance with mankind, are more extensive, and he is therefore better qualified to make a proper selection of rulers—But the jackass is dead and the man cannot vote. Now gentlemen, pray inform me, in whom is the right of suffrage? In the man or in the jackass?”

—BENJAMIN FRANKLIN

Working in pairs, complete the following:

Have one person take the role of Adams and the other take the role of Franklin.

Have “Adams” explain Adams’ point of view to “Franklin.”

Have “Franklin” repeat that point of view back to “Adams.”

Then “Franklin” explain Franklin’s point of view to “Adams.”

Have “Adams” repeat that point of view back to “Franklin.”