

Lining up to Vote



VISIT THE BMA and find Jacob Lawrence's print in the American Wing, on view through November 30, 2008. Compare the smooth even surface of the silkscreen print with the visible brushwork on many of the oil paintings nearby.

The 1920s... The Migrants Arrive and Cast their Ballots **Jacob Lawrence**

It's Election Day, and voters are arriving at the neighborhood polls to cast their ballots.

In the weeks leading up to this day, these voters may have attended noisy rallies, waving signs, cheering for their candidate, and arguing vehemently about issues that meant the most to them. But today the hoopla is over, the campaigning is finished, and the voters stand quietly in line, waiting to enter the voting booth. With little fanfare and great dignity, they make their wishes known as they decide who will be the leaders of their town, their state, or their country.

At the table in the center of the room, a man in a black suit signs his name on a list of eligible voters. At the rear, a man in blue steps into the voting booth and pulls the handle to close the curtain. Nobody will be able to see how he casts his vote.

At the back of the room an old man leans on a red cane. The line moves slowly toward us, from the man reading the newspaper to the mother holding her baby—each figure overlapping the one behind, and growing ever larger as they inch forward. The voters in the front are so big that they no longer fit on the page.

It seems that we have joined the line along with the others, standing just behind the workman in overalls and the gentleman with the gold cane. Soon it will be our turn to enter the booth, close the curtains, pull the levers, and vote for the candidate of our choice.

Challenge for Students

Divide the class into groups of "posers" and "sketchers." The posers assume a variety of positions as they stand in a line (one behind the other) facing the sketchers. The sketchers draw the line of posers, showing how their figures overlap.

Interview adults to find out what kind of voting machines they use in their polling places.

Print the image on page 2 for your students.

For visitor information: artbma.org

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THE BALTIMORE MUSEUM OF ART



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