

Student Name:

Document Analysis:
*Appeal of Forty Thousand Citizens, Threatened with Disenfranchisement,
to the People of Pennsylvania*
(Philadelphia, January 24, 1838), excerpt

Vocabulary

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| Appeal | A serious or urgent request, usually to the public |
| Convention | A large meeting focused on a purpose or theme |
| Commonwealth | A self-governing unit; in the context of the USA this is another way to refer to statehood |
| Despotism, despot | A ruler with absolute power |
| Posterity | Future generations of people |
| Disfranchise | Take away the right to vote |

Question # 1: Which word is repeated in the first paragraph? Why is this significant?

Question # 2: Go back to the following quote in second paragraph. Use the lines before and after to understand it's meaning. "It is the safeguard of the strongest that he lives under a government which is obliged to respect the voice of the weakest." In your own words, explain the argument that the author is making about the right to vote.

Question # 3: Go back to the following quote in third paragraph. “We love our native country, much as it has wronged us; and in the peaceable exercise of our inalienable rights, we will cling to it.” In your own words, explain the argument that the author is making about the right to vote.

Question # 4: In the second and fourth paragraph, the author writes about taxation. What arguments does he make about taxation and the right to vote?

Question # 5: Go back to the following quote in 5th paragraph. “...It is only for the “*industrious, peaceful, and useful*” part of the colored people that we plead.” (A) In your own words, explain the argument that the author is making about the right to vote. (B) Why do you think the author includes this argument?

Today, there are thousands of Pennsylvanians between the ages of 16 and 18 that do not have the right to vote. Imagine that you are writing an “*Appeal of Thousands of Young Citizens, Who Do not Have the Right to Vote, to the People of Philadelphia.*”

Instructions: First, go back to the *Appeal of Forty Thousand Citizens* and compare and contrast their arguments to the issue of lowering the voting age to 16.

| Argument from the <i>Appeal of Forty Thousand Citizens</i> | Is this an argument that could be used to convince lawmakers to change the voting age to 16? Why or why not? |
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NEXT, decide the purpose of your appeal. Circle one.

I want to convince lawmakers to lower the voting age.

I want to convince lawmakers to keep the voting age at 18.

