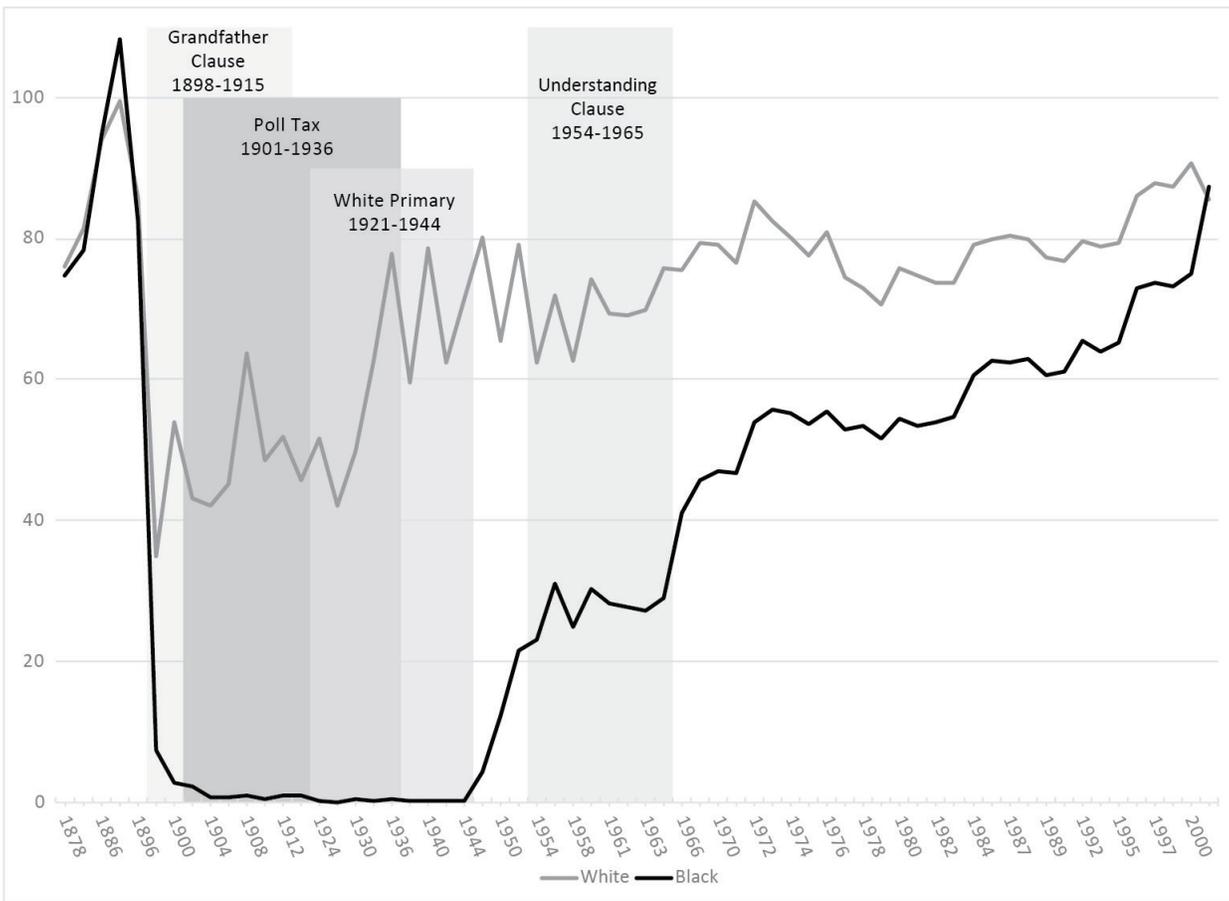


Handout

African American and White Voter Registration in Louisiana (1878–2010)¹

Note: This graph identifies the different strategies that Southern governments used to deny African Americans voting rights in Louisiana. These strategies were adopted throughout the South with identical effects.



Glossary

Grandfather clause: A law stating that if your ancestors could vote before the Civil War, you did not have to meet educational, property, or tax requirements to vote. Because African Americans didn't gain voting rights until the Fifteenth Amendment was adopted in 1870, such a clause singled out formerly enslaved Americans and required that they pay voting taxes and/or take literacy tests to register to vote.

¹ Luke Keele, William Cubbison, and Ismail White, "Suppressing Black Votes: A Historical Case Study of Voting Restrictions in Louisiana," *American Political Science Review* 115, no. 2 (2021): 694–700 (doi:10.1017/S0003055421000034).

Poll taxes: A mandatory payment that was required to register to vote. White Southerners were not required to pay poll taxes because of the grandfather clause.

White primary: A primary election is an election for members of a political party (Democrat, Republican, etc.) to vote and elect a candidate to represent their party in an upcoming general election. White primary elections restricted participation to white voters.

Understanding clause: A law requiring voters “give a ‘reasonable interpretation’ of a section of the state’s constitution” as part of their registration requirements. The law didn’t specify what “reasonable” meant, so local election officials were left to decide, and they used their discretion to keep Black voters from registering.