

2026-2027 Tenacity Challenge History Prompt

RACIAL IDENTITY OR OTHER INFLUENCES, WHAT SHAPES THE VOTE?

A voter's race is not a definitive predictor of who he/she/they will vote for in an election. For example, 43% of white Americans voted for Harris and 13% of African Americans voted for Trump in 2024.

However, among African Americans and Latinos, it was a very strong predictor in 2012. That year, Barack Obama received approximately 93% of the Black vote and 71% of the Latino vote. Black voter turnout reached 66.2%, the highest recorded rate at that time and, according to Census Bureau estimates, the first presidential election in which the percentage of the Black electorate that voted exceeded the percentage of the white electorate.

Twelve years later, the voting patterns were different. In 2024, Black voter turnout was lower than in 2012. Research estimates that 83% of Black voters supported Kamala Harris and 15% supported Donald Trump. Among Latino voters, Harris received 51% of the vote, down from Obama's 74% in 2012. 48% of Latino voters supported Trump in 2024.

Is this dramatic change attributable to the candidates themselves, Obama vs Romney in 2012, Harris vs. Trump in 2024, and/or to other factors? To what degree did race play a role?

Develop a thesis explaining the differences in Black voter turnout and Black and Latino voting patterns between the 2012 and 2024 elections. Consider the extent to which the candidates themselves contributed to these differences, as well as the political, economic, demographic, social and historical force surrounding each election.