



THE GILDER LEHRMAN  
INSTITUTE *of* AMERICAN HISTORY

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## TEACHING CIVICS THROUGH HISTORY

### Women and the Right to Vote

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by Steve Schwartz

#### UNIT OVERVIEW

This unit is one of the Gilder Lehrman Institute’s Teaching Civics through History resources, designed to align with the Common Core State Standards. These units were developed to provide students with foundational knowledge of the historical roots of current civic and social issues facing their communities and the nation while building their literacy, research, and critical thinking skills. By connecting the past with current events, the unit will 1) enable students to understand that history is made up of individual actions, 2) empower students to develop their civic voices and encourage them to take civic action, and 3) help students recognize their ability to influence history in their own communities and nationwide.

Voting is the fundamental right of American citizens, for it is the guardian of every other right in American society. Yet the right to vote was not conceived of as a natural “inalienable” attribute of citizenship by the nation’s founders. Rather it was often viewed as a privilege, restricted to groups of Americans who possessed certain economic, gender, racial, and social characteristics and qualifications. Women were excluded from the right to vote from the Founding Era until ratification of the Nineteenth Amendment in 1920. Women’s suffrage was achieved after a long historic battle of ideas that began as early as Abigail Adams’s letter to John Adams urging him to “Remember the Ladies.” The struggle continued until universal suffrage was realized in the twentieth century.

In this unit, over the course of one or two weeks, students will learn and practice literacy skills that will help them develop knowledgeable and well-reasoned points of view on the history of women’s suffrage in the United States. They will examine and assess primary and secondary sources, engage in an analysis of articles in the media written from different perspectives using materials produced by the AllSides website, and then develop a civic engagement project that integrates their knowledge of voting rights in the past and present.

Students will demonstrate what they have learned through their analysis and assessment of the primary sources orally in small-group and whole-class discussions and by writing responses to the essential questions posed in the lessons. In addition, they will read current news stories that related to the historical questions under discussion and learn how to assess the content and perspectives. To conclude the unit, the students will develop and implement a civic action project in their own community related to voting rights.

**CLASS TIME REQUIRED:** 1-2 weeks based on the time available; the student project may require additional time outside of class.

**GRADE LEVEL(S):** 5-8

### **ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS**

- What obstacles did women face in seeking the right to vote?
- How did the women's suffrage movement achieve its goal?

### **UNIT OBJECTIVES**

Students will be able to

- Demonstrate an understanding of a scholarly essay that outlines the complexity of voting rights for women
- Analyze primary source documents using close reading strategies
- Draw logical inferences and summarize the essential message of a written document
- Compose and contrast the proposals made by different writers
- Develop a viewpoint, present it, and write a response based on textual and visual evidence
- Collaborate effectively with classmates in small groups
- Distinguish between facts and opinions and identify their proper use in visual and written source materials
- Develop, execute, and evaluate a civic action project

### **COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS**

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.1: Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.6-8.2: Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of the source distinct from prior knowledge or opinions

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.8.7: Integrate visual information (e.g., in charts, graphs, photographs, videos, or maps) with other information in print and digital texts.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.8.9: Analyze the relationship between a primary and secondary source on the same topic.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.4: Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in the text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the cumulative impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone (e.g. how the language evokes a sense of time and place; how it sets a formal or informal tone).

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.1 Cite strong and textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.8.1. 8.1A, 8.1.B: Write arguments to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence. Introduce claim(s), acknowledge and distinguish the claim(s) from alternate or

opposing claims, and organize the reasons and evidence logically. Support claim(s) with logical reasoning and relevant evidence, using accurate credible sources and demonstrating an understanding of the topic or text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.8.1.C: Pose questions that connect the ideas of several speakers and respond to others' questions and comments with relevant evidence, observation, and ideas.

## LESSON 1

### OVERVIEW

In this lesson, students will use written and photographic evidence to examine and explain social, political, and legal opposition to suffrage for women from the colonial period through the early twentieth century. They will demonstrate their comprehension through class discussion, close reading of texts, analysis of visual materials, and completed activity sheets.

### HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

See in the students' handouts, p. 13: Historical Background 1 and the Document Analysis activity sheet (optional): Excerpts from "The Legal Status of Women, 1776–1830," by Marylynn Salmon, *History Now* 7 (Spring 2006), The Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History, [gilderlehrman.org/history-now/journals/2006-03/womens-suffrage](http://gilderlehrman.org/history-now/journals/2006-03/womens-suffrage). Marylynn Salmon is the author of *Women and the Law of Property in Early America* (1989) and *The Limits of Independence: American Women, 1760-1800* (1998).

### ESSENTIAL QUESTION

- What obstacles did women face in seeking the right to vote?

### MATERIALS

- Historical Background 1 and the Document Analysis activity sheet (optional): "The Legal Status of Women, 1776–1830," by Marylynn Salmon, *History Now* 7 (Spring 2006), The Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History, [gilderlehrman.org/history-now/journals/2006-03/womens-suffrage](http://gilderlehrman.org/history-now/journals/2006-03/womens-suffrage). Marylynn Salmon is the author of *Women and the Law of Property in Early America* (1989) and *The Limits of Independence: American Women, 1760-1800* (1998).
- Voting Rights during the Founding Era activity sheet
- Documents with activity sheets: You may use all the sets of documents or a selection of them.
  - Critical Thinking Questions: *Some of the Reasons against Woman Suffrage* activity sheet. Passages from Francis Parkman, *Some of the Reasons against Woman Suffrage*, Boston: Massachusetts Man Suffrage Association, [1905], orig. 1884, pp. 2–3, The Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History, GLC06064.
  - "Vote NO on Woman Suffrage," *Household Hints* (New York and Washington DC: National Association Opposed to Woman Suffrage, post-1911), Equal Suffrage Amendment Collection, Private Collections, State Archives of North Carolina, [digital.ncdcr.gov/cdm/ref/collection/p16062coll19/id/604](http://digital.ncdcr.gov/cdm/ref/collection/p16062coll19/id/604).
  - Headquarters, National Association Opposed to Woman Suffrage, photograph by Harris and Ewing, post-1911, Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division, [loc.gov/pictures/resource/cph.3a26270](http://loc.gov/pictures/resource/cph.3a26270).
- Activity Sheet: "Details, Description, and Decision"

## PROCEDURE

1. Display the Essential Question for the class as the framework for the lesson.

What obstacles did women face in their struggle to achieve the right to vote?

2. Optional: Distribute Marylynn Salmon’s essay, “The Legal Status of Women, 1776-1830,” and the accompanying activity sheet with important phrase selection and critical thinking questions. You may assign it as homework before starting the lesson, and the students can complete the activity sheet to prepare for the class discussion or complete it in class.
3. Before the students work on the activity sheet, you may choose to “share read” the essay in class by having the students follow along silently while you begin to read aloud, modeling prosody, inflection, and punctuation. Then ask the class to join in with the reading after a few sentences while you continue to read aloud, still serving as the model. This technique will support struggling readers as well as English language learners (ELL).

NOTE: Depending on the time available and the experience of your students, you may choose to discuss the historical background with your class rather than assigning the reading.

4. Depending on the students’ experience with examining texts, you may choose to complete the Document Analysis as a whole-class activity or model the selection and analysis of the first phrase and, when the class is ready, suggest the answer to the first question. For the rest of the activity sheet, you may choose to have the students work individually, as partners, or in small groups of three or four.
5. Distribute the “Voting Rights during the Founding Era” activity sheet. This provides three passages from documents addressing voting rights written in the eighteenth century. Read the selection by William Blackstone aloud to the class. Model how to answer this question. The students may answer the following two questions individually or in small groups. Bring the class together to discuss answers and select the most appropriate response for each question. All students should record the answer developed by the class.
6. Distribute the activity sheet entitled Critical Thinking Questions: *Some of the Reasons against Woman Suffrage*, [1905]. Depending on the students’ reading ability, you may want to read the text aloud and model how to respond to the corresponding question. The class may work individually, with partners, or in small groups to complete this activity sheet.
7. If the students are working with partners or in groups, have them discuss what each passage means to them. After sufficient discussion time, have the students share their ideas with the entire class. It is important that the students support their conclusions by referring directly to evidence in the text. If a student says that the quote “Everybody knows that the physical and mental constitution of woman is more delicate than in the other sex” means “Women’s brains and strength are weaker than men’s,” ask the student to go back to the quote and underline the parts of the text that support the answer. This will involve the students in discussion and negotiation. The purpose of this activity is for students to put the answers into their own words and demonstrate understanding of the writer’s point of view.

8. Distribute copies of “Vote NO on Woman Suffrage” from *Household Hints*. Ask students or student groups to select one of the “Because” statements and
  - Place themselves in the position of explaining and defending the “Because” statement they selected.
  - Make an argument, as a supporter of women’s suffrage, to debunk that argument.
  - Have volunteers report out their arguments.
  - Ask: How does this activity help us understand why it took until 1920 to grant women the right to vote?
  
9. Distribute or display the photograph of the “Headquarters of the National Association Opposed to Woman Suffrage.” Ask students to carefully examine all aspects of the photograph and complete the activity sheet, “Details, Description, and Decision.” Then ask:
  - What might have been the point of view (POV) of the photographer? Students should explain their answers citing evidence from the photograph.
  - Why is it important to consider the POV before using a primary source such as this photograph?
  
10. Initiate a discussion of the Essential Question: What obstacles did women face in seeking the right to vote? Encourage the students to use evidence from the primary sources to support their answers.

## LESSON 2

### OVERVIEW

In this lesson, students will read a secondary source, an overview of the history of voting rights for women from 1848 to the ratification of the Nineteenth Amendment to the Constitution. They will also examine, analyze, and engage with an array of primary sources that drill down into the issues presented in the scholarly essay. They will demonstrate their comprehension through class discussion, close reading of texts, analysis of visual materials, and completed activity sheets.

### HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

See in the students' handouts, p. 23: "Winning the Vote: A History of Voting Rights," by Steven Mintz, *History Now* 1 (Fall 2004), The Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History, [gilderlehrman.org/history-now/2004-09/elections](http://gilderlehrman.org/history-now/2004-09/elections). Steven Mintz is a professor of history at the University of Texas at Austin and the author of numerous books including *Huck's Raft: A History of American Childhood* and *The Prime of Life: A History of Modern Adulthood*.

### ESSENTIAL QUESTION

- How did the women's suffrage movement achieve its goal?

### MATERIALS

- "Remember the Ladies," Abigail Adams to John Adams, March 31–April 5, 1776, *Adams Family Papers: An Electronic Archive*, Massachusetts Historical Society, [masshist.org/digitaladams](http://masshist.org/digitaladams).
- Historical Background 2 and the Document Analysis activity sheet: "Winning the Vote: A History of Voting Rights," by Steven Mintz, *History Now* 1 (Fall 2004), The Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History, [gilderlehrman.org/history-now/2004-09/elections](http://gilderlehrman.org/history-now/2004-09/elections). Steven Mintz is a professor of history at the University of Texas at Austin and the author of numerous books including *Huck's Raft: A History of American Childhood* and *The Prime of Life: A History of Modern Adulthood*.
- Timeline: "One Hundred Years toward Suffrage: An Overview," compiled by E. Susan Barber, for *Votes for Women: The Struggle for Women's Suffrage: Selected Images from the Collections of the Library of Congress*, [loc.gov/rr/print/list/076\\_vfw\\_timeline.html](http://loc.gov/rr/print/list/076_vfw_timeline.html).
- Analyzing the "Declaration of Sentiments" activity sheet
- Teacher's Resource: "The Declaration of Sentiments," *History of Woman Suffrage*, vol. 1, edited by Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Susan B. Anthony, and Matilda Joslyn Gage (Rochester, NY: Charles Mann, 1887), 70–71.
- Map: "States Grant Women the Right to Vote," *Centuries of Citizenship: A Constitutional Timeline*, National Constitution Center, [constitutioncenter.org/timeline/html/cw08\\_12159.html](http://constitutioncenter.org/timeline/html/cw08_12159.html).
- Chart: Voting Rights Dates in States and Territories, *Centuries of Citizenship: A Constitutional Timeline*, National Constitution Center, [constitutioncenter.org/timeline/html/cw08\\_12159.html](http://constitutioncenter.org/timeline/html/cw08_12159.html).

- Documents:
  - Broadside: *Women in the Home*, Woman Suffrage Party of the City of New York, New York, NY, ca. 1915, The Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History, GLC08964.
  - Broadside: *Lincoln Said*, Seattle, Washington, 1910, The Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History, GLC09103.
  - Broadside: *Votes for Women! The Woman's Reason*, Woman Suffrage Party of New York, New York, NY, ca. 1915, The Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History, GLC08963.
  - Broadside: *How to Vote for Woman Suffrage Amendment*, 1917, The Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History, GLC08961.
- Document: "Nineteenth Amendment to the US Constitution," *Our Documents*, National Archives, [ourdocuments.gov/doc.php?doc=63&page=transcript](https://www.ourdocuments.gov/doc.php?doc=63&page=transcript).

## PROCEDURE

1. Present the following quotation to the class. Ask a volunteer to read it aloud or read it yourself:

"Remember the Ladies and be more generous and favorable to them than your ancestors. Do not put such unlimited power into the hands of the Husbands. Remember, all Men would be tyrants if they could. If particular care and attention is not paid to the Ladies, we are determined to foment a Rebellion and will not hold ourselves bound by any Laws in which we have no voice or Representation."

—Abigail Adams to John Adams, 1776

2. Ask the students to consider the following question: Based on what you have learned about women and the right to vote, what actions to win suffrage for women would be suggested by those following the ideas of Abigail Adams? Lead a short discussion. This may be helpful in eliciting the Essential Question for this lesson: How did the women's suffrage movement achieve its goal?
3. Distribute the Historical Background 2, "Winning the Vote: A History of Voting Rights," and the corresponding activity sheet. You may read the Historical Background out loud, distribute it and have the students read it themselves, or share read the text as described in Lesson 1.

NOTE: Depending on the time available and the experience of your students, you may choose to discuss the historical background with your class rather than assigning the reading.

Do not discuss the content further with the students as you want them to develop an understanding of the topic on their own. If the students have a sufficient preliminary understanding of the topic, you may skip reading the Historical Background.

Depending on the students' experience with examining texts, you may choose to complete the Document Analysis as a whole-class activity or model the selection and analysis of the first phrase and, when the class is ready, the answer to the first question. For the rest of the activity sheet, you may choose to have the students work individually, as partners, or in small groups of three or four.



After giving the students enough time to complete the activity, reconvene the class and discuss different responses and interpretations developed by individual students or groups.

4. Distribute or display copies of the timeline, “One Hundred Years toward Suffrage: An Overview.” Ask students: What progress was made toward women’s suffrage before 1848? Responses may be recorded for later reference.
5. Distribute the “Analyzing the Declaration of Sentiments” activity sheet, with passages from the Declaration of Independence and the Declaration of Sentiments. Depending on the ability of the students, have them read the activity sheet silently, ask for volunteers to read sections aloud, or, to assist struggling readers or ELL students, share read the document.
6. Lead the students through the completion of the first critical thinking question on the activity sheet comparing the two documents. The students then complete the remaining questions on their own or with partners. Set aside time for discussion and recording of appropriate answers.
7. Divide the class into groups, making certain to distribute the students according to varying ability and willingness to participate. Give each group a copy of the map, “States Grant Women the Vote” and “Voting Rights Dates in States and Territories.” Tell the students that they must work with their group to explain the connections between the map and the chart. Allow sufficient time for them to exam both documents, and then have each group report out. Discuss and then negotiate an acceptable answer.
8. Distribute a copy of one of the following documents to each group: *Women in the Home*; *Lincoln Said*; *Votes for Women! The Woman’s Reason*; or *How to Vote for Woman Suffrage Amendment* to each group. Have sufficient copies of the documents to distribute to the entire class after the initial activity. Each group should select a recorder and a reader.
9. Ask the students to carefully study their document and together write an explanation of the relationship of the document to the women’s suffrage movement. Although one student is the recorder, this is a group activity where each student is expected to contribute to the answer. Circulate to ensure participation by each student.
10. Now distribute copies of each document to every student. Ask the reader in each group to report the group’s answer. The class can discuss the effectiveness of the message and format of each document.
11. Distribute or display the Nineteenth Amendment and refer to the Essential Question:  

How did the women’s suffrage movement achieve its goal?
12. For a concluding activity or a homework assignment, have students imagine they were assigned to write a newspaper editorial in 1919 either supporting or opposing the proposed Nineteenth Amendment. They may take either side, but must remember to base their answer on evidence from the documents.

## LESSONS 3 AND 4

### OVERVIEW

In these two lessons, based on the foundational knowledge from the first two lessons, students will read, analyze, and assess current news articles on issues regarding women’s right to vote. AllSides.com is a website that identifies articles written from the right, center, and left viewpoints on the political spectrum. The students will engage in group discussions that emphasize civil discourse and distinguishing facts from opinions.

### MATERIALS

- Articles from AllSides.com on the TCTH website, [gilderlehrman.org/tcth](http://gilderlehrman.org/tcth)
- Analyzing a News Article activity sheet
- Teacher’s Resource (optional): Civil Discourse Guidelines. The guidelines provided here are adapted from “Managing Difficult Classroom Discussions,” Center for Innovative Teaching and Learning, Indiana University Bloomington, [citl.indiana.edu/teaching-resources](http://citl.indiana.edu/teaching-resources).

### PROCEDURE

1. Introduce the scope and purpose of the next two days. A demonstration of the AllSides material will allow students to comfortably begin to research materials that reflect a spectrum of right, center, and left on the political scale.
2. Students will then explore (either in groups or individually) some of the articles concerning voting rights issues for women.
3. You may assign three articles from AllSides representing different points on the political spectrum (right, center, left) or allow students to select their own three articles.
4. Students will read the three articles and complete the Analyzing a News Article activity sheet.
5. Facilitate a class discussion among the students about their responses to the questions in the activity sheet. To help maintain civil discourse throughout the discussion, you may ask the students to develop guidelines to follow as they discuss potentially divisive issues that affect them and their families or communities. We have provided examples of such guidelines on the Teacher’s Resource in the handouts. Student input is important, and helping them create the rules for civil discourse themselves will give them greater commitment to follow those rules.
6. As a summary activity, students will develop an oral or written response to the following question:  

How do the important issues presented in the articles reflect, refute, and/or compare with the historical development and evolution of women’s suffrage in the United States?

Make sure that the students cite evidence from the articles and use their historical knowledge to support their viewpoints.

## LESSON 5

### OVERVIEW

The final component of the unit on women’s voting rights is the design, development, and evaluation of a student civic engagement project. The projects will be supported by the historical background presented in Lessons 1 and 2, the ability to discuss, analyze, and assess articles on current issues, and the students’ interest in issues that affect their communities. They will choose engagement activities, formulate action steps for implementation, and present on the effectiveness of their projects.

### MATERIALS

- Civic Engagement Project Proposal activity sheet

### PROCEDURE

1. Based on the knowledge and understanding of the historical roots of current civic and social issues facing their communities and the nation, their literacy, research, and critical thinking skills, and their experience discussing, analyzing, and assessing present-day articles written from different perspectives, the students will design and develop civics-outreach activity projects on topics of their choice and interest with action steps for implementation.
2. The students may work collaboratively or independently to plan, implement, and present civic engagement projects that relate to voting rights and popular participation in the democratic process in modern American society. The students will work collaboratively with you to develop a list of projects related to voting rights and women that have an impact in the school or community. For example,
  - Increasing student participation in voter registration drives
  - Poll-watching and assisting at election sites
  - Lowering the voting age to sixteen
  - Establishing a more equitable redrawing of election district boundaries to counter gerrymandering
  - Expanding voter accessibility
  - Permitting online voting
  - Increasing women’s participation in the vote through issues particularly relevant to women
  - Increasing women’s participation in the vote through increasing access to the polls
  - Increasing awareness of the demographics at each level of government
3. Distribute the Project Proposal activity sheet to each student or student group. The student or group will complete the Project Proposal and submit it to you for evaluation and approval. You may return it to them with suggestions and request revisions before signing off.
4. Guidelines for student civic action projects:
  - Identify issues related to women and participation in the democratic process that are important to the students’ lives and communities.
  - Select an issue to address.
  - Research the chosen issue and discuss what specific actions could improve the situation.

- Plan an action that could effect change keeping in mind what the specific goal is, who or what body has power to make the change, how that person or body can be approached, what action steps will accomplish the goal.
  - Carry out the action (write letters, convene meetings with community members or officials, create flyers/exhibitions/websites, etc.) depending on the specific goals of the project.
  - Assess the effort when it is completed in order to understand their successes and challenges, and ways to continue learning in the future.
5. Based on the time available and your students' experience, establish a schedule of due dates for implementation and presentation of the projects. Discuss what the challenges were and how the students addressed those challenges; how successful were their civic engagement projects; what could they do to be more effective in the future.

## Historical Background 1: “The Legal Status of Women, 1776–1830” by Marylynn Salmon

State law rather than federal law governed women’s rights in the early republic. The authority of state law meant that much depended upon where a woman lived and the particular social circumstances in her region of the country. The disparity in standards can perhaps be seen most dramatically in the experiences of African American women. In the North, where states abolished slavery after the Revolution, black women gained rights to marry, to have custody of their children, and to own property. On paper at least, their rights were identical to those of white women. In the slaveholding South, lawmakers continued to deny enslaved workers these basic human rights. But even in the South, a rising number of freed black women theoretically enjoyed the same privileges under the law as white women. However, racial prejudice against both black and Native American women made it difficult to ensure these rights in practice.

In every state, the legal status of free women depended upon marital status. Unmarried women, including widows, were called “femes soles,” or “women alone.” They had the legal right to live where they pleased and to support themselves in any occupation that did not require a license or a college degree restricted to males. Single women could enter into contracts, buy and sell real estate, or accumulate personal property, which was called *personalty*. It consisted of everything that could be moved—cash, stocks and bonds, livestock, and, in the South, slaves. So long as they remained unmarried, women could sue and be sued, write wills, serve as guardians, and act as executors of estates. These rights were a continuation of the colonial legal tradition. But the revolutionary emphasis on equality brought some important changes in women’s inheritance rights. State lawmakers everywhere abolished primogeniture and the tradition of double shares of a parent’s estate, inheritance customs that favored the eldest son. Instead, equal inheritance for all children became the rule—a big gain for daughters.

Marriage changed women’s legal status dramatically. When women married, as the vast majority did, they still had legal rights but no longer had autonomy. Instead, they found themselves in positions of almost total dependency on their husbands which the law called *coverture*. As the English jurist William Blackstone famously put it in his *Commentaries on English Law* (1765–1769): “By marriage, the husband and wife are one person in the law: that is, the very being or legal existence of the woman is suspended during the marriage, or at least is incorporated and consolidated into that of the husband: under whose wing, protection, and cover, she performs every thing.”

. . . This and other rules about married women’s property rights were meant to support the family as a unit. They worked reasonably well in an economic system based on landed wealth, under which families typically stayed in one place and rarely sold or mortgaged their farms. They did not work as well, however, in a society like the rapidly expanding and industrializing nineteenth-century United States, where lands changed hands frequently and where there was growth in personal property as well as land.

Under these new circumstances, the old system of property law faltered. It failed to give adequate protection to women and, at the same time, denied them the ability to safeguard their own interests. In recognition of this dilemma, states began to pass married women’s property acts in the antebellum decades. These acts gave wives the same legal rights as single women with regard to their estates and

wages. It was piecemeal legislation, enacted reluctantly by male lawmakers who would have preferred to keep women dependent within the family. Yet the lawmakers recognized that these reforms were essential in a capitalist economy based on movable wealth.

Political rights were a function of control over property for men in the republic, but gender alone was the basis for women's exclusion from voting or holding office. Simply put, men with property had the right to vote in the early national period but women, no matter how wealthy, did not, even though women paid the same taxes as men. The reasoning behind this discrimination rested on the assumption that married women were liable to coercion by their husbands; if a wife voted, legislators argued, it meant that a man cast two ballots. As one man put it, "How can a fair one refuse her lover?" Yet single women were also denied suffrage, a clear sign that more was at stake than the power of a husband to influence his wife's choices at the polls.

Blatantly discriminatory attitudes kept lawmakers from giving women the vote. They did not want to share their political power with daughters, mothers, and wives, just as they did not want to share it with freed black men or immigrants. This pattern can be seen clearly in New Jersey, the one state where women with property were allowed to vote after the Revolution. In 1807 legislators took this right away—not only from women but from black men and aliens as well. As it turned out, discrimination against women in the area of the franchise lasted the longest of any disadvantaged group, at least on paper.

American independence brought women greater freedom from husbands who were abusive, neglectful, or adulterous. In colonial society, divorce was virtually impossible under English precedent, but all of the new states recognized the need to end unhappy marriages. The choice of appropriate remedies varied considerably, however. Some states, particularly in the South, only allowed separate residence with alimony (called divorce from bed and board). Other states granted absolute divorce with the right of the innocent party to remarry. In matters of divorce, social and religious values affected the laws in different parts of the country. The conservatism of divorce laws in the southern states, for example, was probably related to slavery: it was difficult for lawmakers to grant women absolute divorces because of their husbands' adulterous relationships with slaves. Liberal New England laws, in contrast, stemmed from a longstanding Puritan belief that it was better for unhappy couples to separate and remarry than to be joined forever in a state of discord and temptation to sin.

Child-custody rights also changed after the Revolution. The courts were increasingly willing to bypass colonial precedents that favored men in custody disputes. Instead, they placed young children and daughters (although not sons) under the care of mothers. These reforms reflect the rising importance of the gender-based ideology of separate spheres, which gave women moral preeminence in the private sphere of the home and men supremacy in the marketplace and politics. Women would use the concept of moral motherhood to great advantage in their struggle for social justice over the next century.

Source: Excerpts from "The Legal Status of Women, 1776–1830," by Marylynn Salmon, *History Now* 7 (Spring 2006), The Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History, [gilderlehrman.org/history-now/journals/2006-03/womens-suffrage](http://gilderlehrman.org/history-now/journals/2006-03/womens-suffrage). Marylynn Salmon is the author of *Women and the Law of Property in Early America* (1989) and *The Limits of Independence: American Women, 1760–1800* (1998).

**Document Analysis: “The Legal Status of Women, 1776–1830”**

***Important Phrases***

Which phrases or sentences related to the legal status of women in the Founding Era are the most informative or important in this scholarly essay? Choose three and give the reason for your choice.

Phrase 1:

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Why is this phrase informative or important?

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Phrase 2:

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Why is this phrase informative or important?

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Phrase 3:

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Why is this phrase informative or important?

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***Critical Thinking Questions***

Cite evidence from the text in your answers.

1. What rights were reserved for single women in colonial society?

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2. Why does Marylynn Salmon assert that “marriage changed women’s legal status dramatically” in the colonial period?

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3. According to the essay, why were women denied the right to vote?

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4. How did women’s legal status change after the American Revolution?

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5. Describe what the author means by the “gender-based ideology of separate spheres” in the years following the Revolution.

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### Voting Rights during the Founding Era

“By marriage, the husband and wife are one person in law: that is, the very being or legal existence of the woman is suspended during the marriage, or at least is incorporated and consolidated into that of the husband: under whose wing, protection, and cover, she performs every thing.”

—William Blackstone, *Commentaries on the Laws of England* (1765–1769)

**Explain Blackstone’s statement in your own words:**

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“It is dangerous to . . . alter the qualifications of voters; there will be no end of it. New claims will arise; women will demand a vote; . . . every man who has not a farthing, will demand an equal voice with any other, in all acts of state. It tends to confound and destroy all distinctions, and prostrate all ranks to one common level.”

—John Adams to James Sullivan, May 26, 1776  
*Works of John Adams* 9 (Boston, 1854)

**Explain the problem Adams envisioned if voter qualifications were changed:**

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One New Jersey opponent of woman suffrage wrote in the 1790s, “It is evident, that women, generally, are neither, by nature, nor habit, nor education, nor by their necessary condition in society, fitted to perform this duty [of voting] with credit to themselves, or advantage to the public.”

—William Griffith, *Eumenes: Being a Collection of Papers* . . .  
(Trenton, NJ, 1799)

**How does this comment lend support to the arguments of Blackstone and Adams?:**

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**Critical Thinking Questions: *Some of the Reasons against Woman Suffrage,*  
by Francis Parkman, [1905]**

Answer the questions in the boxes on the right citing evidence from the primary source on the left.

<p>“ . . . everybody knows that the physical and mental constitution of woman is more delicate than in the other sex; and, we may add, the relations between mind and body are more intimate and subtle.”</p>	<p>How does the author depict women in this passage?</p>
<p>“It is these and other inherent conditions, joined to the engrossing nature of a woman’s special functions, that have determined through all time her relative position.”</p>	<p>What do you think is meant by the phrase “the engrossing nature of a woman’s special functions”?</p>
<p>“What we have just said . . . is meant as a reminder that her greatest limitations are not of human origin. Men did not make them, and they cannot unmake them. . . . God and Nature have ordained that those subject to them shall not be forced to join in the harsh conflicts of the world militant.”</p>	<p>Why can women expect their role(s) to remain the same?</p>
<p>“To hold the man responsible and yet deprive him of power is neither just nor rational. The man is the natural head of the family, and is responsible for its maintenance and order.”</p>	<p>Is this family system patriarchal or matriarchal?</p>
<p>“Woman suffrage must have one of two effects. If, as many of its advocates complain, women are subservient to men, and do nothing but what they desire, then woman suffrage will have no other result than to increase the power of the other sex; if, on the other hand, women vote as they see fit, without regarding their husbands, then unhappy marriages will be multiplied and divorces redoubled. We cannot afford to add to the elements of domestic unhappiness.”</p>	<p>Explain the threat that is posed to the family if women challenge the status quo.</p>

## Vote NO on Woman Suffrage

### Vote **NO** on Woman Suffrage

BECAUSE 90% of the women either do not want it, or *do not care*.

BECAUSE it means *competition* of women with men instead of *co-operation*.

BECAUSE 80% of the women eligible to vote are married and can only double or annul their husbands' votes.

BECAUSE it can be of no benefit commensurate with the additional expense involved.

BECAUSE in some States more voting women than voting men will place the Government under petticoat rule.

BECAUSE it is unwise to risk the good we already have for the evil which may occur.

### Household Hints



#### National Association **OPPOSED** to Woman Suffrage

Headquarters  
268 Madison Avenue  
New York, N. Y.

Branch  
726 Fourteenth Street, N. W.  
Washington, D. C.

Votes of Women can accomplish no more than votes of Men. Why waste time, energy and money, without result?

*National Association Opposed to Woman Suffrage, New York and Washington DC, post-1911  
(Equal Suffrage Amendment Collection, Private Collections, State Archives of North Carolina)*

### Headquarters, National Association Opposed to Woman Suffrage, post 1911



*Photograph by Harris and Ewing, post-1911 (Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division)*

**Details, Description, and Decision**

<p style="text-align: center;"><i>People</i></p> <p><b><u>Details About:</u></b> Identify the person/people in this image.</p> <p><b><u>Descriptive Summary Sentence:</u></b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Objects</i></p> <p><b><u>Details About:</u></b> Identify the object(s) in this image.</p> <p><b><u>Descriptive Summary Sentence:</u></b></p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Action/Activity</i></p> <p><b><u>Descriptive Details About:</u></b> Identify the action/activity in this image.</p> <p><b><u>Descriptive Summary Sentence:</u></b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Overall Assessment</i></p> <p><b><u>Decision:</u></b> What have I learned about attitudes toward women's suffrage from this photograph?</p>

### **Abigail Adams to John Adams, 1776**

“Remember the Ladies and be more generous and favorable to them than your ancestors. Do not put such unlimited power into the hands of the Husbands. Remember, all Men would be tyrants if they could. If particular care and attention is not paid to the Ladies, we are determined to foment a Rebellion and will not hold ourselves bound by any Laws in which we have no voice or Representation.”

Source: Abigail Adams to John Adams, March 31–April 5, 1776, *Adams Family Papers: An Electronic Archive*, Massachusetts Historical Society, [masshist.org/digitaladams](http://masshist.org/digitaladams).

## Historical Background 2: “Winning the Vote: A History of Voting Rights,” by Steven Mintz

In 1848, at the first women’s rights convention in Seneca Falls, New York, delegates adopted a resolution calling for women’s suffrage. But it would take seventy-two years before most American women could vote. Why did it take so long? Why did significant numbers of women oppose women’s suffrage?

The Constitution speaks of “persons”; only rarely does the document use the word “he.” The Constitution did not explicitly exclude women from Congress or from the presidency or from juries or from voting. The Fourteenth Amendment included a clause that stated, “No State shall make or enforce any law which shall abridge the privileges or immunities of citizens of the United States.”

In the presidential election of 1872, supporters of woman suffrage, including Susan B. Anthony, appeared at the polls, arguing that if all citizens had the right to the privileges of citizenship, they could certainly exercise the right to vote. In *Minor v. Happersett* (1875) the US Supreme Court ruled that women could only receive the vote as a result of explicit legislation or constitutional amendment, rather than through interpretation of the implications of the Constitution. In a unanimous opinion, the Court observed that it was “too late” to claim the right of suffrage by implication. It also ruled that suffrage was a matter for the states, not the federal government, to decide.

One group of women led by Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony sought a constitutional amendment. Another group, led by Lucy Stone, favored a state-by-state approach. In 1890, the two groups merged to form the National American Woman Suffrage Association. Rather than arguing in favor of equal rights, the NAWSA initially argued that women would serve to uplift politics and counterbalance the votes of immigrants. Meanwhile, opponents of women’s suffrage argued that it would increase family strife, erode the boundaries between masculinity and femininity, and degrade women by exposing them to the corrupt world of politics.

Women succeeded in getting the vote slowly. Wyoming Territory, eager to increase its population, enfranchised women in 1869, followed by Utah, which wanted to counter the increase in non-Mormon voters. Idaho and Colorado also extended the vote to women in the mid-1890s. A number of states, counties, and cities allowed women to vote in municipal elections, for school boards or for other educational issues, and on liquor licenses.

During the early twentieth century, the suffrage movement became better financed and more militant. It attracted growing support from women who favored reforms to help children (such as increased spending on education) and prohibit alcohol. It also attracted growing numbers of working-class women, who viewed politics as the way to improve their wages and working conditions.

World War I helped to fuel support for the Nineteenth Amendment to the Constitution, extending the vote to women. Most suffragists strongly supported the war effort by selling war bonds and making clothing for the troops. In addition, women’s suffrage seemed an effective way to demonstrate that the war truly was a war for democracy.

At first, politicians responded to the Nineteenth Amendment by increasingly favoring issues believed to be of interest to women, such as education and disarmament. But as it became clear that women did not vote as a bloc, politicians became less interested in addressing issues of particular interest to them. It would not be until the late twentieth century that a gender gap in voting would become a major issue in American politics.

Source: "Winning the Vote: A History of Voting Rights," by Steven Mintz, *History Now* 1 (Fall 2004), The Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History, [gilderlehrman.org/history-now/2004-09/elections](http://gilderlehrman.org/history-now/2004-09/elections). Steven Mintz is a professor of history at the University of Texas at Austin and the author of numerous books including *Huck's Raft: A History of American Childhood* and *The Prime of Life: A History of Modern Adulthood*.



## Document Analysis: "Winning the Vote"

### *Important Phrases*

Which phrases or sentences related to the history of voting rights for women are the most informative and important in this scholarly essay? Choose three and give the reason for your choice.

Phrase 1:

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Why is this phrase informative or important?

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Phrase 2:

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Why is this phrase informative or important?

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Phrase 3:

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Why is this phrase informative or important?

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### *Critical Thinking Questions*

Cite evidence from the text in your answers.

1. What was the impact of *Minor v. Happersett* on women's suffrage rights?

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2. What evidence is there that women were able to exercise the right to vote before the ratification of the Nineteenth Amendment?

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3. What factors helped influence the growing interest in the suffrage movement in the early twentieth century?

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4. According to Steven Mintz what impact did World War I have on the suffrage movement?

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5. Why did politicians over time deliberately fail to address issues that were believed to be of interest to women?

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## One Hundred Years toward Suffrage: An Overview

*Timeline created to accompany Votes for Women: The Struggle for Women’s Suffrage: Selected Images from the Collections of the Library of Congress, 1997, compiled by E. Susan Barber with Barbara Orbach Natanson, Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division.*

### 1776

Abigail Adams writes to her husband, John, who is attending the Continental Congress in Philadelphia, asking that he and the other men—who were at work on the Declaration of Independence—“Remember the Ladies.” John responds with humor. The Declaration’s wording specifies that “all men are created equal.”

### 1820 to 1880

Evidence from a variety of printed sources published during this period—advice manuals, poetry and literature, sermons, medical texts—reveals that Americans, in general, held highly stereotypical notions about women’s and men’s roles in society. Historians would later term this phenomenon “The Cult of Domesticity.”

### 1821

Emma Hart Willard founds the Troy Female Seminary in New York--the first endowed school for girls.

### 1833

Oberlin College becomes the first coeducational college in the United States. In 1841, Oberlin awards the first academic degrees to three women. Early graduates include Lucy Stone and Antoinette Brown.

### 1836

Sarah Grimké begins her speaking career as an abolitionist and a women’s rights advocate. She is eventually silenced by male abolitionists who consider her public speaking a liability.

### 1837

The first National Female Anti-Slavery Society convention meets in New York City. Eighty-one delegates from twelve states attend.

### 1837

Mary Lyon founds Mount Holyoke College in Massachusetts, eventually the first four-year college exclusively for women in the United States. Mt. Holyoke was followed by Vassar in 1861, and Wellesley and Smith Colleges, both in 1875. In 1873, the School Sisters of Notre Dame found a school in Baltimore, Maryland, which would eventually become the nation’s first college for Catholic women.

### 1839

Mississippi passes the first Married Woman’s Property Act.

### 1844

Female textile workers in Massachusetts organize the Lowell Female Labor Reform Association (LFLRA) and demand a 10-hour workday. This was one of the first permanent labor associations for working women in the United States.

**1848**

The first women's rights convention in the United States is held in Seneca Falls, New York. Many participants sign a "Declaration of Sentiments and Resolutions" that outlines the main issues and goals for the emerging women's movement. Thereafter, women's rights meetings are held on a regular basis.

**1849**

Harriet Tubman escapes from slavery. Over the next ten years she leads many slaves to freedom by the Underground Railroad.

**1850**

Amelia Jenks Bloomer launches the dress reform movement with a costume bearing her name. The Bloomer costume was later abandoned by many suffragists who feared it detracted attention from more serious women's rights issues.

**1851**

Former slave Sojourner Truth delivers her "Ain't I a Woman?" speech before a spellbound audience at a women's rights convention in Akron, Ohio.

**1852**

Harriet Beecher Stowe publishes *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, which rapidly becomes a bestseller.

**1859**

The successful vulcanization of rubber provides women with reliable condoms for the first time. The birth rate in the United States continues its downward, century-long spiral. By the late 1900s, women will raise an average of only two to three children, in contrast to the five or six children they raised at the beginning of the century.

**1861 to 1865**

The American Civil War disrupts suffrage activity as women, North and South, divert their energies to war work. The war itself, however, serves as a training ground, as women gain important organizational and occupational skills they will later use in postbellum organizational activity.

**1865 to 1880**

Southern white women create Confederate memorial societies to help preserve the memory of the Lost Cause. This activity propels many white southern women into the public sphere for the first time. During this same period, newly emancipated black southern women form thousands of organizations aimed at "uplifting the race."

**1866**

Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony form the American Equal Rights Association, an organization for white and black women and men dedicated to the goal of universal suffrage.

**1868**

The Fourteenth Amendment is ratified, which extends to all citizens the protections of the Constitution against unjust state laws. This Amendment was the first to define "citizens" and "voters" as "male."

**1869**

The women’s rights movement splits into two factions as a result of disagreements over the Fourteenth and soon-to-be-passed Fifteenth Amendments. Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony form the more radical, New York–based National Woman Suffrage Association (NWSA). Lucy Stone, Henry Blackwell, and Julia Ward Howe organize the more conservative American Woman Suffrage Association (AWSA), which is centered in Boston. In this same year, the Wyoming territory is organized with a woman suffrage provision. In 1890, Wyoming was admitted to the Union with its suffrage provision intact.

**1870**

The Fifteenth Amendment enfranchises black men. NWSA refuses to work for its ratification, arguing, instead, that it be “scrapped” in favor of a Sixteenth Amendment providing universal suffrage. Frederick Douglass breaks with Stanton and Anthony over NWSA’s position.

**1870 to 1875**

Several women—including Virginia Louisa Minor, Victoria Woodhull, and Myra Bradwell—attempt to use the Fourteenth Amendment in the courts to secure the vote (Minor and Woodhull) or the right to practice law (Bradwell). They all are unsuccessful.

**1872**

Susan B. Anthony is arrested and brought to trial in Rochester, New York, for attempting to vote for Ulysses S. Grant in the presidential election. At the same time, Sojourner Truth appears at a polling booth in Battle Creek, Michigan, demanding a ballot; she is turned away.

**1874**

The Woman’s Christian Temperance Union (WCTU) is founded by Annie Wittenmyer. With Frances Willard at its head (1876), the WCTU became an important force in the fight for woman suffrage. Not surprisingly, one of the most vehement opponents to women’s enfranchisement was the liquor lobby, which feared women might use the franchise to prohibit the sale of liquor.

**1878**

A Woman Suffrage Amendment is introduced in the US Congress. The wording is unchanged in 1919, when the amendment finally passes both houses.

**1890**

The NWSA and the AWSA are reunited as the National American Woman Suffrage Association (NAWSA) under the leadership of Elizabeth Cady Stanton. During this same year, Jane Addams and Ellen Gates Starr found Hull House, a settlement house project in Chicago’s 19th Ward. Within one year, there are more than a hundred settlement houses—largely operated by women—throughout the United States. The settlement house movement and the Progressive campaign of which it was a part propelled thousands of college-educated white women and a number of women of color into lifetime careers in social work. It also made women an important voice to be reckoned with in American politics.

**1891**

Ida B. Wells launches her nation-wide anti-lynching campaign after the murder of three black businessmen in Memphis, Tennessee.

**1893**

Hannah Greenbaum Solomon founds the National Council of Jewish Women (NCJW) after a meeting of the Jewish Women’s Congress at the Columbian Exposition in Chicago, Illinois. In that same year, Colorado becomes the first state to adopt a state amendment enfranchising women.

**1895**

Elizabeth Cady Stanton publishes *The Woman’s Bible*. After its publication, NAWSA moves to distance itself from this venerable suffrage pioneer because many conservative suffragists considered her to be too radical and, thus, potentially damaging to the suffrage campaign. From this time, Stanton—who had resigned as NAWSA president in 1892—was no longer invited to sit on the stage at NAWSA conventions.

**1896**

Mary Church Terrell, Ida B. Wells-Barnett, Margaret Murray Washington, Fanny Jackson Coppin, Frances Ellen Watkins Harper, Charlotte Forten Grimké, and former slave Harriet Tubman meet in Washington DC to form the National Association of Colored Women (NACW).

**1903**

Mary Dreier, Rheta Childe Dorr, Leonora O’Reilly, and others form the Women’s Trade Union League of New York, an organization of middle- and working-class women dedicated to unionization for working women and to woman suffrage. This group later became a nucleus of the International Ladies’ Garment Workers’ Union (ILGWU).

**1911**

The National Association Opposed to Woman Suffrage (NAOWS) is organized. Led by Mrs. Arthur Dodge, its members included wealthy, influential women and some Catholic clergymen—including Cardinal Gibbons who, in 1916, sent an address to NAOWS’s convention in Washington DC. In addition to the distillers and brewers, who worked largely behind the scenes, the “antis” also drew support from urban political machines, southern congressmen, and corporate capitalists—like railroad magnates and meatpackers—who supported the antis by contributing to their war chests.

**1912**

Theodore Roosevelt’s Progressive (Bull Moose/Republican) Party becomes the first national political party to adopt a woman suffrage plank.

**1913**

Alice Paul and Lucy Burns organize the Congressional Union, later known as the National Women’s Party (1916). Borrowing the tactics of the radical, militant Women’s Social and Political Union (WSPU) in England, members of the Woman’s Party participate in hunger strikes, picket the White House, and engage in other forms of civil disobedience to publicize the suffrage cause.

**1914**

The National Federation of Women’s Clubs—which by this time included more than two million white women and women of color throughout the United States—formally endorses the suffrage campaign.

**1916**

NAWSA president Carrie Chapman Catt unveils her “winning plan” for suffrage victory at a convention in Atlantic City, New Jersey. Catt’s plan required the coordination of activities by a vast cadre of suffrage workers in both state and local associations.

**1916**

Jeannette Rankin of Montana becomes the first American woman elected to represent her state in the US House of Representatives.

**1918 to 1920**

The Great War (World War I) intervenes to slow down the suffrage campaign as some—but not all—suffragists decide to shelve their suffrage activism in favor of war work. In the long run, however, this decision proves to be a prudent one as it adds yet another reason why women deserved the vote.

**June 1919**

Congress passes the Nineteenth Amendment and sends it out to the states for ratification.

**August 26, 1920**

The Nineteenth Amendment is ratified. Its victory accomplished, NAWSA ceases to exist, but its organization becomes the nucleus of the League of Women Voters.

**1923**

The National Woman’s Party first proposes the Equal Rights Amendment to eliminate discrimination on the basis of gender. It has never been ratified.

### Analyzing the Declaration of Sentiments

Declaration of Independence	Declaration of Sentiments	Critical Thinking Questions
<p>. . . When in the Course of human events, it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another, and to assume among the powers of the earth, the separate and equal station to which the Laws of Nature and of Nature’s God entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation.</p> <p>We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness. —That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed, —That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness.</p>	<p>. . . When, in the course of human events, it becomes necessary for one portion of the family of man to assume among the people of the earth a position different from that which they have hitherto occupied, but one to which the laws of nature and of nature’s God entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes that impel them to such a course.</p> <p>We hold these truths to be self-evident: that all men and women are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness; that to secure these rights governments are instituted, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed. Whenever any form of government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the right of those who suffer from it to refuse allegiance to it, and to insist upon the institution of a new government, laying its foundation on such principles, and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their safety and happiness.</p>	<p>Compare the paragraphs from the Declaration of Independence and the Declaration of Sentiments</p> <p>Identify the similarities and differences in the two documents.</p>



Declaration of Independence	Declaration of Sentiments	Critical Thinking Questions
<p>Prudence, indeed, will dictate that Governments long established should not be changed for light and transient causes; and accordingly all experience hath shewn, that mankind are more disposed to suffer, while evils are sufferable, than to right themselves by abolishing the forms to which they are accustomed. But when a long train of abuses and usurpations, pursuing invariably the same Object evinces a design to reduce them under absolute Despotism, it is their right, it is their duty, to throw off such Government, and to provide new Guards for their future security. —Such has been the patient sufferance of these Colonies; and such is now the necessity which constrains them to alter their former Systems of Government. The history of the present King of Great Britain is a history of repeated injuries and usurpations, all having in direct object the establishment of an absolute Tyranny over these States. To prove this, let Facts be submitted to a candid world.</p>	<p>Prudence, indeed, will dictate that governments long established should not be changed for light and transient causes; and accordingly all experience hath shown that mankind are more disposed to suffer, while evils are sufferable, than to right themselves by abolishing the forms to which they were accustomed. But when a long train of abuses and usurpations, pursuing invariably the same object, evinces a design to reduce them under absolute despotism, it is their duty to throw off such government, and to provide new guards for their future security. Such has been the patient sufferance of the women under this government, and such is now the necessity which constrains them to demand the equal station to which they are entitled.</p> <p>The history of mankind is a history of repeated injuries and usurpations on the part of man toward woman, having in direct object the establishment of an absolute tyranny over her. To prove this, let facts be submitted to a candid world.</p>	<p>Compare these two paragraphs of the Declaration of Sentiments and the Declaration of Independence.</p> <p>What is the core argument being made in this section of the documents? (Cite evidence from the documents to support your answer.)</p>

Declaration of Independence	Declaration of Sentiments	Critical Thinking Questions
<p>He has refused his Assent to Laws, the most wholesome and necessary for the public good . . .</p> <p>He has dissolved Representative Houses repeatedly, for opposing with manly firmness his invasions on the rights of the people . . .</p> <p>He has obstructed the Administration of Justice . . .</p> <p>He has abdicated Government here, by declaring us out of his Protection and waging War against us . . .</p>	<p>He has never permitted her to exercise her inalienable right to the elective franchise.</p> <p>He has compelled her to submit to laws, in the formation of which she had no voice.</p> <p>He has withheld from her rights which are given to the most ignorant and degraded men—both natives and foreigners.</p> <p>Having deprived her of this first right of a citizen, the elective franchise, thereby leaving her without representation in the halls of legislation, he has oppressed her on all sides.</p> <p>He has made her, if married, in the eye of the law, civilly dead. . . .</p> <p>He has monopolized nearly all the profitable employments, and from those she is permitted to follow, she receives but a scanty remuneration . . .</p>	<p>In this section of both the Declaration of Independence and the Declaration of Sentiments, the words “He has” are used repeatedly.</p> <p>Which of these arguments in the Declaration of Sentiments do you find the most persuasive and why?</p> <p>Which of the accusations in the section of the Declaration of Sentiments are most directly related to the issue of suffrage for women? Explain your selection(s).</p>

Declaration of Independence	Declaration of Sentiments	Critical Thinking Questions
<p>In every stage of these Oppressions We have Petitioned for Redress in the most humble terms: Our repeated Petitions have been answered only by repeated injury . . . We have warned them from time to time of attempts . . . to extend an unwarrantable jurisdiction over us . . . We have appealed to their native justice and magnanimity . . . They too have been deaf to the voice of justice . . .</p> <p>We, therefore, . . . publish and declare, That these United Colonies are, and of Right ought to be Free and Independent States.</p>	<p>He has denied her the facilities for obtaining a thorough education, all colleges being closed against her. . . .</p> <p>He has endeavored, in every way that he could, to destroy her confidence in her own powers, to lessen her self-respect, and to make her willing to lead a dependent and abject life.</p> <p>Now, in view of this entire disfranchisement of one-half the people of this country, their social and religious degradation—in view of the unjust laws above mentioned, and because women do feel themselves aggrieved, oppressed, and fraudulently deprived of their most sacred rights, we insist that they have immediate admission to all the rights and privileges which belong to them as citizens of the United States.</p>	<p>Why did the authors of the Declaration of Sentiments use the following words in this section: <i>degradation, aggrieved, oppressed, fraudulently deprived</i>?</p> <p>How do the demands in the final paragraphs compare? (Cite evidence from the documents to support your answer.)</p>

## The Declaration of Sentiments, Seneca Falls Convention (July 1848)

When, in the course of human events, it becomes necessary for one portion of the family of man to assume among the people of the earth a position different from that which they have hitherto occupied, but one to which the laws of nature and of nature's God entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes that impel them to such a course.

We hold these truths to be self-evident: that all men and women are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness; that to secure these rights governments are instituted, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed. Whenever any form of government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the right of those who suffer from it to refuse allegiance to it, and to insist upon the institution of a new government, laying its foundation on such principles, and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their safety and happiness. Prudence, indeed, will dictate that governments long established should not be changed for light and transient causes; and accordingly all experience hath shown that mankind are more disposed to suffer, while evils are sufferable, than to right themselves by abolishing the forms to which they were accustomed. But when a long train of abuses and usurpations, pursuing invariably the same object evinces a design to reduce them under absolute despotism, it is their duty to throw off such government, and to provide new guards for their future security. Such has been the patient sufferance of the women under this government, and such is now the necessity which constrains them to demand the equal station to which they are entitled.

The history of mankind is a history of repeated injuries and usurpations on the part of man toward woman, having in direct object the establishment of an absolute tyranny over her. To prove this, let facts be submitted to a candid world.

He has never permitted her to exercise her inalienable right to the elective franchise.

He has compelled her to submit to laws, in the formation of which she had no voice.

He has withheld from her rights which are given to the most ignorant and degraded men—both natives and foreigners.

Having deprived her of this first right of a citizen, the elective franchise, thereby leaving her without representation in the halls of legislation, he has oppressed her on all sides.

He has made her, if married, in the eye of the law, civilly dead.

He has taken from her all right in property, even to the wages she earns.

He has made her, morally, an irresponsible being, as she can commit many crimes with impunity, provided they be done in the presence of her husband. In the covenant of marriage, she is compelled to promise obedience to her husband, he becoming, to all intents and purposes, her master—the law giving him power to deprive her of her liberty, and to administer chastisement.

He has so framed the laws of divorce, as to what shall be the proper causes, and in case of separation, to whom the guardianship of the children shall be given, as to be wholly regardless of the happiness of

women—the law, in all cases, going upon a false supposition of the supremacy of man, and giving all power into his hands.

After depriving her of all rights as a married woman, if single, and the owner of property, he has taxed her to support a government which recognizes her only when her property can be made profitable to it.

He has monopolized nearly all the profitable employments, and from those she is permitted to follow, she receives but a scanty remuneration. He closes against her all the avenues to wealth and distinction which he considers most honorable to himself. As a teacher of theology, medicine, or law, she is not known.

He has denied her the facilities for obtaining a thorough education, all colleges being closed against her.

He allows her in Church, as well as State, but a subordinate position, claiming Apostolic authority for her exclusion from the ministry, and, with some exceptions, from any public participation in the affairs of the Church.

He has created a false public sentiment by giving to the world a different code of morals for men and women, by which moral delinquencies which exclude women from society, are not only tolerated, but deemed of little account in man.

He has usurped the prerogative of Jehovah himself, claiming it as his right to assign for her a sphere of action, when that belongs to her conscience and to her God.

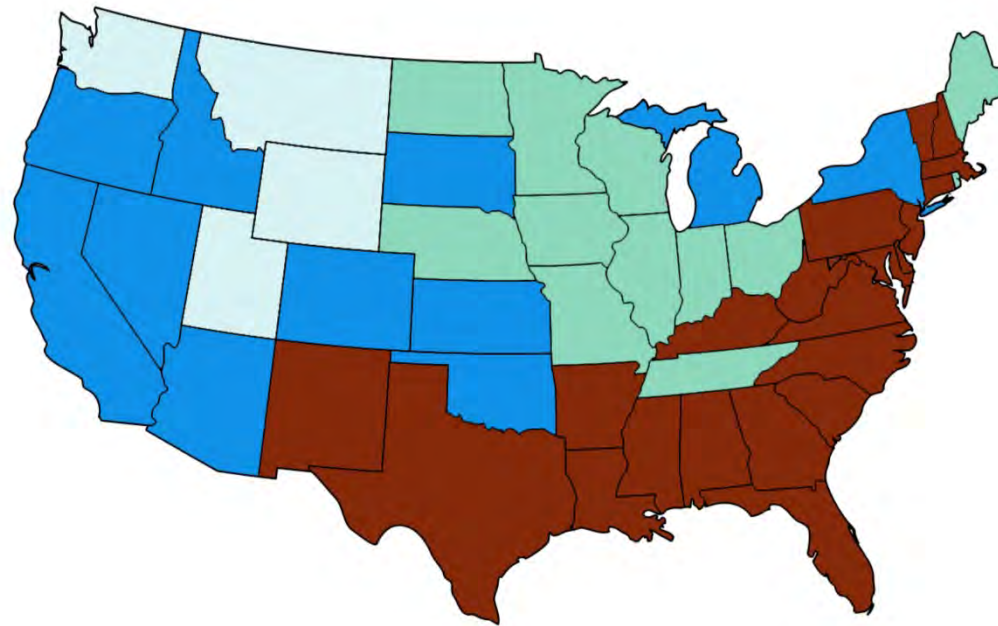
He has endeavored, in every way that he could, to destroy her confidence in her own powers, to lessen her self-respect, and to make her willing to lead a dependent and abject life.

Now, in view of this entire disfranchisement of one-half the people of this country, their social and religious degradation—in view of the unjust laws above mentioned, and because women do feel themselves aggrieved, oppressed, and fraudulently deprived of their most sacred rights, we insist that they have immediate admission to all the rights and privileges which belong to them as citizens of the United States.


Source: *History of Woman Suffrage*, vol. 1, ed. Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Susan B. Anthony, and Matilda Joslyn Gage (Rochester, NY: Charles Mann, 1887), 70–71.


### States Grant Women the Right to Vote


From *Centuries of Citizenship: A Constitutional Timeline*, National Constitution Center




States in which women:

 had full voting rights before the 19th Amendment

 could vote for president before the 19th Amendment

 had full voting rights before the 19th Amendment and before statehood

 gained voting rights with passage of the 19th Amendment

### Voting Rights Dates in States and Territories

From *Centuries of Citizenship: A Constitutional Timeline*, National Constitution Center

While fighting for an amendment to the US Constitution, the women’s suffrage movement also waged a state-by-state campaign.

Type of Voting Authorized	Territories and States in Order of Adoption
Territories granting women full voting rights before the ratification of the Nineteenth Amendment and before they received statehood	Territory of Wyoming 1869 Territory of Utah 1870 Territory of Washington 1883 Territory of Montana 1887 Territory of Alaska 1913
States granting women the right to vote before the ratification of the Nineteenth Amendment	Wyoming 1890 Colorado 1893 Utah 1896 Idaho 1896 Washington 1910 California 1911 Arizona 1912 Kansas 1912 Oregon 1912 Montana 1914 Nevada 1914 New York 1917 Michigan 1918 Oklahoma 1918 South Dakota 1918
States where women could vote for president before the ratification of the Nineteenth Amendment	Illinois 1913 Nebraska 1917 Ohio 1917 Indiana 1917 North Dakota 1917 Rhode Island 1917 Iowa 1919 Maine 1919 Minnesota 1919 Missouri 1919 Tennessee 1919 Wisconsin 1919

States where women gained the right to vote through the 19th Amendment	Vermont New Hampshire Massachusetts Connecticut Pennsylvania New Jersey Delaware Maryland West Virginia Virginia North Carolina South Carolina Georgia Alabama Florida Mississippi Louisiana Arkansas Texas New Mexico Kentucky
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*Women in the Home, ca. 1915*

## WOMEN IN THE HOME

We are forever being told that the place for women is in the HOME. Well, so be it. But what do we expect of her in the home? Merely to stay in the home is not enough. She is a failure unless she does certain things for the home. She must make the home minister, as far as her means allow, to the health and welfare, moral as well as physical, of her family, and especially of her children. She, more than anyone else, is held responsible for what they become.

SHE is responsible for the cleanliness of her house.

SHE is responsible for the wholesomeness of the food.

SHE is responsible for the children's health.

SHE, above all, is responsible for their morals, for their sense of truth, of honesty and decency, for what they turn out to be.

### How Far Can the Mother Control These Things?

She can clean her own rooms, BUT if the neighbors are allowed to live in filth, she cannot keep her rooms from being filled with bad air and smells, or from being infested with vermin.

She can cook her food well, BUT if dealers are permitted to sell poor food, unclean milk or stale eggs, she cannot make the food wholesome for her children.

She can care for her own plumbing and the refuse of her own home, BUT if the plumbing in the rest of the house is unsanitary, if garbage accumulates and the halls and stairs are left dirty, she cannot protect her children from the sickness and infection that these conditions bring.

She can take every care to avoid fire, BUT if the house has been badly built, if the fire-escapes are insufficient or not fire-proof, she cannot guard her children from the horrors of being maimed or killed by fire.

She can open her windows to give her children the air that we are told is so necessary, BUT if the air is laden with infection, with tuberculosis and other contagious diseases, she cannot protect her children from this danger.

She can send her children out for air and exercise, BUT if the conditions that surround them on the streets are immoral and degrading, she cannot protect them from these dangers.

ALONE, she CANNOT make these things right. WHO or WHAT can?

THE CITY can do it—the CITY GOVERNMENT that is elected BY THE PEOPLE, to take care of the interest of THE PEOPLE.

And who decides what the city government shall do?

FIRST, the officials of that government; and,

SECOND, those who elect them.

DO THE WOMEN ELECT THEM? NO, the men do. So it is the MEN and NOT THE WOMEN that are really responsible for the

UNCLEAN HOUSES

UNWHOLESOME FOOD

RISK OF TUBERCULOSIS AND OTHER DISEASES

IMMORAL INFLUENCES OF THE STREET.

BAD PLUMBING

DANGER OF FIRE

In fact, MEN are responsible for the conditions under which the children live, but we hold WOMEN responsible for the results of those conditions. If we hold women responsible for the results, must we not, in simple justice, let them have something to say as to what these conditions shall be? There is one simple way of doing this. Give them the same means that men have. LET THEM VOTE.

Women are, by nature and training, housekeepers. Let them have a hand in the city's housekeeping, even if they introduce an occasional house-cleaning.

## WOMAN SUFFRAGE PARTY

OF THE CITY OF NEW YORK

Headquarters: 30 East 34th Street, Southwest cor. Madison Avenue



*Lincoln Said, ca. 1910*

# LINCOLN SAID

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Seventy-five years ago Abraham Lincoln said: "I go for all sharing the privileges of government who assist in bearing its burdens, by no means excluding women."

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# WOMEN SHOULD VOTE

POSTER SUPPLEMENT TO *VOTES FOR WOMEN*, 495-496 ARCADE, SEATTLE, U.S.A.

WHITE & DAVIS  
PRINTING CO. SEATTLE

*The Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History, GLC09103*

*Votes for Women! The Woman's Reason, ca. 1915*

**VOTES FOR WOMEN!**  
**THE WOMAN'S REASON.**  
**BECAUSE**

**BECAUSE** women must obey the laws just as men do,  
They should vote equally with men.

**BECAUSE** women pay taxes just as men do, thus supporting the government,  
They should vote equally with men.

**BECAUSE** women suffer from bad government just as men do,  
They should vote equally with men.

**BECAUSE** mothers want to make their children's surroundings better,  
They should vote equally with men.

**BECAUSE** over 8,000,000 women in the United States are wage workers and their health and that of our future citizens are often endangered by evil working conditions that can only be remedied by legislation,  
They should vote equally with men.

**BECAUSE** women of leisure who attempt to serve the public welfare should be able to support their advice by their votes,  
They should vote equally with men.

**BECAUSE** busy housemothers and professional women cannot give such public service, and can only serve the state by the same means used by the busy man—namely, by casting a ballot,  
They should vote equally with men.

**BECAUSE** women need to be trained to a higher sense of social and civic responsibility, and such sense develops by use,  
They should vote equally with men.

**BECAUSE** women are consumers, and consumers need fuller representation in politics,  
They should vote equally with men.

**BECAUSE** women are citizens of a government of the people, by the people and for the people, and women are people.  
They should vote equally with men.

**EQUAL SUFFRAGE FOR MEN AND WOMEN.**


**WOMEN** Need It.  
**MEN** Need It.  
The **STATE** Needs It.

**WHY?**

**BECAUSE** Women Ought To **GIVE** Their Help.  
Men Ought To **HAVE** Their Help.  
The State Ought To **USE** Their Help.

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**WOMAN SUFFRAGE PARTY**  
OF THE CITY OF NEW YORK  
Headquarters: 30 East 34th Street, Southwest cor. Madison Avenue



*The Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History, GLC08963*

*How to Vote for Woman Suffrage, 1917*

**How To Vote For Woman Suffrage  
Amendment, Election Day,  
November 6th, 1917**

THE FORM OF BALLOT WILL BE AS FOLLOWS

<b>YES</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<b>AMENDMENT No. 1</b>
<b>NO</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Shall the proposed amendment to section one of article two of the Constitution, conferring equal suffrage upon women, be approved?


  

<b>YES</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>AMENDMENT No. 2</b>
<b>NO</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Shall the proposed amendment to section ten of article eight of the Constitution, etc.

**Vote "YES" on Amendment No. 1**  
as marked above

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**N. Y. State Woman Suffrage Party**  
109 STATE STREET, ALBANY, N. Y.



*The Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History, GLC08961*

### **Nineteenth Amendment to the US Constitution, 1920**

The right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of sex.

Congress shall have power to enforce this article by appropriate legislation.

## Analyzing a News Article

Source: \_\_\_\_\_

*newspaper/magazine/website*

Article Title:

\_\_\_\_\_

Date Published: \_\_\_\_\_

1. What did you already know about that topic?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

2. Basic information presented:

Who? \_\_\_\_\_

What? \_\_\_\_\_

When? \_\_\_\_\_

Where? \_\_\_\_\_

Why? \_\_\_\_\_

How? \_\_\_\_\_

3. Does your article have a right/center/left point of view? What evidence leads you to that conclusion?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

4. What audience was this article written for? What evidence supports your conclusion?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

5. Reliability of Sources

a. Is there an author's name provided? \_\_\_\_\_ If so, who is the author? \_\_\_\_\_

b. What source or sources does the author quote or refer to in the article? Do you think these sources are reliable? Why or why not? What evidence supports your conclusion?

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6. Personal Reaction: What do you think of this article?

*(Include two points made in the text to support your answer.)*

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## Civil Discourse Guidelines<sup>1</sup>

Listen respectfully without interrupting.

Allow everyone the opportunity to speak.

Criticize ideas, not individuals or groups.

Avoid inflammatory language, including name-calling.

Ask questions when you don't understand; don't assume you know others' thinking or motivations.

Don't expect any individuals to speak on behalf of their gender, ethnic groups, class, status, etc.  
(or the groups we perceive them to be a part of).

Base your arguments on evidence, not assumptions.

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<sup>1</sup>The guidelines provided here are adapted from "Managing Difficult Classroom Discussions," Center for Innovative Teaching and Learning, Indiana University Bloomington, [citl.indiana.edu/teaching-resources/diversity-inclusion](http://citl.indiana.edu/teaching-resources/diversity-inclusion).



Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_ Period \_\_\_\_\_

### Civic Engagement Project Proposal

Project Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Project Participants(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Project Goal:

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Action Steps:

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#### *Teachers Comments*

Questions to Consider:

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Revisions Needed:

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Approved: \_\_\_\_\_