



Centennial of the 19th Amendment - Resources for Gr. 6-8 Teachers

Grades 6-8

Kids Voting USA lessons/activities (free, register at <https://kidsvotingusa.org/>)

1. *Historical Debate – women’s suffrage*. This debate has as its statement “Resolved, that women should be allowed to vote,” as if the students lived in the early 1900s. The more the students inhabit their roles (via dress, or adopting specific historical figures) the more successful the debate is likely to be. The debate also leads into a whole-class discussion about the issues involved in women’s suffrage, past and present, including other suffrage movements (such as the civil rights movement of the 20th century, and current concerns about voter suppression). Time: students could be given homework assignments to research their position; class-time could include group work and final debate, followed by discussion (minimum 2 hours total in class).
2. *Literature Connection Activity -A Time for Courage* (fictional account of a young suffragist) is read by the students as a window on how people thought about suffrage historically. Activities such as writing a journal entry as a person of the time during which women’s right to vote was being argued helps students to develop an understanding of the suffrage movement. This understanding can be expanded to include suffrage for other disenfranchised groups, such as African-Americans and Native Americans.
3. *Suffrage Sequence Cards*- This is a useful activity to gain a basic knowledge of the history of the suffrage movement. It might be advisable to place this early in the unit, if more than one activity is to be used. It’s also an opportunity for students to work in small groups, as they learn the correct sequence of events (including some discussion of cause and effect). This activity also shows the intersections between multiple suffrage movements, including those for African-Americans and other minority groups.

TED Ed videos

The fight for the right to vote in the United States - Nicki Beaman Griffin

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P9VdyPbbzII> 5 minute video on how voting rights have changed since the first election in 1789.

The historic women’s suffrage march on Washington - Michelle Mehrtens

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v= KhYRqozTDE> 5 minute video on the Women’s Suffrage Parade in Washington, DC in 1913 and events leading to the passage of the 19th Amendment.

Useful Primary Documents for Unit on Women’s Suffrage

National Archives: <https://www.archives.gov/education/lessons/woman-suffrage>

The following is a selective list of documents and/or activities that might be useful for a unit on the history of women’s suffrage in the United States at the middle school (grades 6-8) level. These are just a select few

of the vast collection of photographs, films, letters, and other documents available at the National Archives for educational use.

<https://www.archives.gov/education/lessons/worksheets>: useful tutorial on how to approach and effectively use a primary source, with student worksheets for every kind of document.

<https://www.docsteach.org/activities/teacher/the-suffrage-and-the-civil-rights-reform-movements>

An activity that compares a photo from a women's suffrage march in 1916 with the Washington, D. C. civil rights march in 1963. (1916, 1963)

<https://www.docsteach.org/documents/document/petition-prohibit-disfranchisement>

Original document petitioning Congress to consider women's suffrage. Lays out the arguments simply and comprehensively. It asks for an amendment to the Constitution that shall prohibit the several states from disfranchising any of their citizens on the grounds of sex. (1866)

<https://www.docsteach.org/documents/document/fifteenth-amendment>

Resolution promising the protection of the right to vote for all men regardless of color, race, or previous status of servitude. This led to the Fifteenth Amendment, and is a good example of the comprehensive nature of the suffrage movement in the 19th century. (1869)

<https://www.docsteach.org/documents/document/macon-ga-congress>

This document is a petition by women in the state of Georgia, *against* a possible constitutional amendment giving women the vote. The reasons for the women's stance are interesting and reveal the fissures between women across the country, dependent upon their local circumstance and beliefs. These women argue that women's suffrage would be against the best interests of the Nation but in particular of the South, and would interfere with white supremacy. (1913)

<https://www.docsteach.org/documents/document/tx-woman-suffrage-petition>

This is a petition by Texas women in support of the women's suffrage amendment. Some things to note in it: the argument of "no taxation without representation," and the "bogy" of state's rights. (1916)

<https://www.docsteach.org/documents/document/russian-banner>

Photograph of women picketing the White House. Their sign illustrates the impact of the U.S.'s involvement in World War I on the arguments for women's suffrage. When Russia's autocratic government fell, the Allies worked to compel the new government to stay the course and "fight for

democracy” against Germany and Austria. The Suffragists pointed out the hypocrisy of that argument. (1917)

<https://www.docsteach.org/documents/document/carpenters-joiners-gallinger>

This document shows the link between some labor unions and the suffrage movement during World War I. The argument that women’s contributions to the war effort should be rewarded with the vote is made. (1917)

<https://www.docsteach.org/documents/document/senate-passage-19th-amendment>

The passage of the constitutional amendment for women’s suffrage in the U.S. Senate. (1919)

<https://www.docsteach.org/documents/document/april-first>

A cartoon showing Mississippi’s refusal to pass the constitutional amendment for women’s suffrage, thus delaying its success. Note how the suffragist and the Mississippi resident are portrayed in this drawing. (1919)

<https://www.docsteach.org/documents/document/mabel-lee>

A photograph of Mabel Lee, activist and suffragist. The limitations of the suffrage amendment are evident here---the Chinese Exclusion Act prevented her from becoming a citizen and thus voting. This did not stop her activism. (1923)

<https://www.docsteach.org/documents/document/manufacture-military-aeroplanes>

This is a film about the production of “aeroplanes” for the war effort. About five minutes into the film, it turns to the role of women in the manufacture of the aeroplanes and there is substantive footage of women working at various aspects of aeroplane manufacture. (1917-1918)

<https://www.docsteach.org/documents/document/women-electric-welders>

This photograph is of the first women to work as electric welders as part of the war effort. The arrangement of the people in the photo, the implements they are holding, and their general demeanor are all useful pieces of information about the status of women at the time, and the impact of the war effort on women’s status in society. (ca. 1918)

<https://www.docsteach.org/documents/document/womens-machine-gun-squad>

A photograph of the women's machine gun squad during World War I, demonstrating a new weapon to be sent to the front. Unusual in its acknowledgment of women using weaponry, if only as a demonstration. (1918)

<https://www.docsteach.org/documents/document/women-rivet-heaters>

"Rosie the Riveter" photo, but from World War I. Example of women participating in the war effort, and working in traditionally male occupations. Note the racial integration of this group, from the Seattle area. (1918)