

## Women's Suffrage

What is the 19<sup>th</sup> amendment to the Constitution?

**Duration:** 60 minutes

**Grade Level:** Grades 3 – 8

### Learning Objectives:

- Learn about the right to vote in the United States
- Develop an understanding of how women in the United States gained the right to vote
- Identify key figures in the women's suffrage movement
- Understand how women gained the right to vote

### Outcomes:

- Students will be exposed to and learn about the women's suffrage movement
- Students will be introduced to notions of political activism and the democratic process
- Students will gain skills of persuasion and identify their personal values and how those impact their decisions

### Associated Activities:

- Home Election Activity, 60 minutes
- Votes for Women Paraphernalia, 45 minutes
- Votes for Women Word Search, 20 minutes

## What is Suffrage?

Suffrage is the right to vote in political elections. Voting allows citizens of the United States the right to vote in federal elections, allowing them the opportunity to help decide laws by electing officials that make those laws.

**Activity:** Learn more about the voting process! Create a mock election at home and work with your family members (or stuffed animal friends) to hold an election at home.

## What is the 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment?

Until 1900, most women around the world were not allowed to vote. In the United States Constitution of 1789, women were considered citizens, but the right to vote was not included. Each state had to decide its own regulations about voting.

The 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment, also called the Anthony Amendment, allows all women the right to vote. The movement that earned them this right is known as the Women's Suffrage Movement. New Jersey allowed women who owned property to vote from 1790–1807, but then they took the right away.

The 19<sup>th</sup> amendment was introduced in Congress in 1878, but was not ratified (or put into law) until August 18, 1920, only one hundred years ago. There needed to be  $\frac{3}{4}$  of states in favor of passing the amendment. In August 1920, after  $\frac{1}{4}$  of states rejected the amendment, Tennessee was the last state to vote on the amendment. The right for women to vote was passed by one vote and gave all women in the United States this right.

**Learn More:** Watch a ten-minute video created by students from Utah for National History Day to learn more: <https://youtu.be/HLdJExZmqEg>



## Who was involved in the women's suffrage movement?

Two key figures in the movement were Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton. Both women died before the amendment passed.

**Activity:** Complete the Votes for Women word search in English and in Spanish! Look up any words that you don't know.

### Elizabeth Cady Stanton (*November 12, 1815 – October 26, 1902*)

Stanton formulated the agenda for woman's rights that guided the movement into the 20<sup>th</sup> century. She authored "The Declaration of Sentiments," which expanded on the Declaration of Independence by adding the word "woman/women" throughout. Stanton was inspired on her honeymoon in London when she met Lucretia Mott, an abolitionist who was also angry that women were excluded from the World's Anti-Slavery convention. The two chose to call a woman's rights convention when they returned to the United States, which was held in 1848 in Seneca Falls, New York.

### Susan B. Anthony (*February 15, 1820 – March 13, 1906*)

Anthony was inspired by the belief that everyone was equal. Anthony first met Stanton in 1851 at an antislavery meeting in Seneca Falls. Anthony was inspired by Stanton's vision for advancing women and her passion for women's right to vote, participate in the government, and control their own lives. Stanton recognized that Anthony had organizing skills that could benefit the movement because Stanton had children. Together, the two published the newspaper *The Revolution*, launched the woman's suffrage movement, and protested for equal rights together.

**Think:** Who are other strong, revolutionary women that you can think of? Send us your favorites and why they are important. We will compile a list online!

## How did they persuade people to support Women's Suffrage?



Connecticut Woman Suffrage Association, Hartford, c. 1916, State Archives, Connecticut State Library

The National Woman's Party was crucial to raising awareness about the women's suffrage movement. In order to do so, they used versatile and creative tactics. Its leaders were inspired by a variety of sources, including the British suffrage campaign, American labor activism, and the temperance, antislavery, and early women's rights campaigns in the United States.

Lobbying meant that these women put pressure on congress to pass an amendment giving women nation-wide the right to vote. Petitioning meant that they gathered signatures in support of their cause to present to government officials.

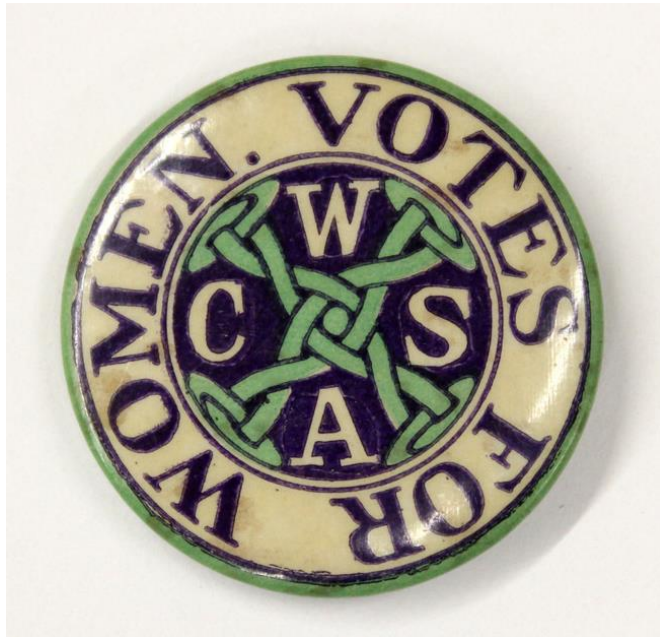
They were able to supplement these actions with other, more public actions. This includes parades, pageants, public speaking, demonstrations, and large meetings and conventions. This gave them greater visibility, impressing onlookers and showing that they were serious about their cause and respectable. The movement also expanded in smaller ways, beginning with outreach over tea parties and other intimate gatherings.

Some women were arrested to show their dedication to the cause and gain favorable portrayals in the press.

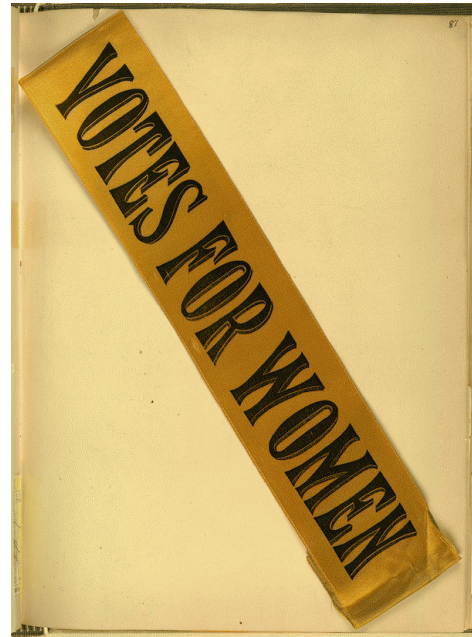
**Think:** What values are important enough to you that you would try to inspire other people? What would you do to convince people? What might make you change your mind?



## Votes for Women Paraphernalia



Button, 1910s, Connecticut Woman Suffrage Association, Litchfield Historical Society



"Votes For Women" Ribbon, c. 1911, Miller NAWSA Suffrage Scrapbooks, Library of Congress

### Questions for Viewing:

- What do you see?
- Why do you think women made and wore these items?
- How do these colors make you feel? What about the way these look?
- When would you want to wear a Votes for Women button or ribbon?

**Activity:** Create your own Votes for Women paraphernalia. Take the lessons you learn from these objects and create banners, buttons, and sashes at home!