

# Lesson Plan – Women’s Voting Rights

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**Content Area:** Women’s Voting Rights

**Grade Level:** Middle School

**Lesson Prepared By:** Kirsten Blake

## **Description/Purpose:**

Students will compare a publication from the Women’s Voting Rights Movement to a current-day publication to gain an understanding of the issues that the suffragists were dealing with during that time, as well as to identify themes that are different and themes that have remained the same for women in the United States.

**Time: 90 minutes** [One-two classes, depending on the length of the class]

## **Objectives:**

Students will be able to

1. Identify social issues that affected women during the Progressive Era (1890s—early 1920s) and Women’s Rights Movement (1840-1920).
2. Compare and contrast social issues from the Women’s Voting Rights Movement to the women of the 21<sup>st</sup> century through the use of popular women’s publications in order to identify and examine women’s issues during that time period.
3. Analyze a primary document from the Women’s Voting Rights Movement to gain an understanding of the importance of using primary documents to examine the past.
4. Reflect and determine the amount of progress that women have made since the Women’s Voting Rights Movement.

## **Prerequisites:**

Students should have a clear understanding of the definition of “suffrage,” or the right or privilege of voting.

Students should have some background knowledge of both the Progressive Era and the Women’s Voting Rights Movement. This will help to make stronger reflections and a deeper analysis of the publications.

## Materials:

Computer Lab...access to [http://www.nwhm.org/online-exhibits/votesforwomen/gallery\\_03.html](http://www.nwhm.org/online-exhibits/votesforwomen/gallery_03.html)

If a computer lab is not available, then print out a copy of the cover of the *Suffragist* magazine, located on Page 3 of the **Image Gallery** of the Online Museum “Woman Suffrage” [available for download [here](#)]

Copies of **covers** from present day women’s magazines (examples: *Self*, *Ladies Home Journal*, *Ms. Magazine*, *Women Today*, *Redbook*, etc.) to be handed out. [Please make sure that the content on the cover of the magazine is age appropriate before making copies]. Teachers are responsible for collecting these magazine covers—they are not provided by the National Women’s History Museum.

Compare-Contrast Graphic Organizer [*available for download [here](#)*]

## Procedures:

### Class Starter/Hook: [5 minutes]

On the board or butcher paper write the following headline, “The Balance of Power in Next Fall’s Election.” Ask the students if they think the headline is from present day (2000s) or the Progressive Era (early 1900s). Give them a few guesses and ask them to explain their answers. Tell them that the headline actually comes from the June 3, 1916 issue of the *Woman’s Journal and Suffrage News* publication (<http://www.spartacus.schoolnet.co.uk/USAWjournal.htm>). Explain that during today’s class you will be comparing and contrasting a primary document from the Women’s Voting Rights Movement to a women’s publication from the 21<sup>st</sup> century to analyze and assess the amount of progress that women have made since the early 1900s.

### Step-by-Step Instructions:

#### **Presentation of new material** [15 minutes]—

Briefly explain that different magazines, or publications, target their articles, advertisements, etc. towards a particular audience.

Ask the class to offer different groups that publications might target (i.e. senior citizens, women, youth, liberals, conservatives, minority groups, etc.).

Explain that today you will be looking at publications that target an audience of women.

A publication is defined as “*a copy of a printed work offered for distribution*” [WordNet]. Ask the class to list what they think is considered a “publication” (i.e. magazines, periodicals, journals, newspapers, books, etc.) and write these on the board or butcher paper.

Publications are considered a primary source, which is “an original document pertaining to an event or subject of inquiry; a firsthand or eyewitness account of an event” [Webster’s dictionary].

We talked about the fact that publications are usually written for a specific audience in mind...so the opinions or viewpoints in a publication can sometimes be “leaning” or “skewed” in one direction. This is

why when a historian is doing research, it is important to look at several publications or primary sources in order to gain a more accurate depiction of what actually occurred during that time period.

Also, some publications can get more attention than others, so when researchers omit certain publications or primary sources from texts that can change the way we teach and learn about history.

Publications from the past can also be helpful when compared to similar publications from present day. That way the researcher can make comparisons about the way society has changed or remained the same.

**Guided Practice** [20 minutes]—

Ask the class to pretend as though they are an editor of a woman's magazine...ask them to write one subject matter that they would want their staff to write about if it were 1917 and one article that they would want their staff to write about if it were present day. Give them **five minutes** to do this individually at their desks.

Create a “T” chart on the board or on butcher paper, one column should have the current year (i.e. 2008) and the other column should have the year “1917.”

Ask students how many years that is (i.e. 1917-2008). [If it were last year (2007), they can subtract in their heads to see that it's just over 90 years]. Ask if they know any 90-year-old people and get them to think about how long that span is in personal terms.

Call on different students to offer their answers and write them up on the T-Chart on the board/butcher paper.

Ask students to make comments about what they see on the board.

*\*\*If you are teaching this lesson in two 45-minute classes, then you would stop the first day here and close out by having students make inferences on the T-Chart's answers [5 minutes]. Let them know that you will be continuing tomorrow by examining two different publications.*

**Independent Practice** [35 minutes]—

*\*\*If you are beginning the 2<sup>nd</sup> day of this lesson then you should spend about 5 minutes re-capping what you talked about the class before, to bring the students back to the content matter.*

Divide the class into groups of 2-4 (depending on the size of your class), and hand out a **Compare-Contrast Graphic Organizer** to each student.

If students are in the computer lab, then groups need to be sitting next to each other, so that they can examine the primary document on NWHM's website. If you are printing off the image then pass out a handout to each student.

Then give each group a copy of the cover of a current women's publication. Each group should have a different cover, so that each group is looking at the same publication from the *Suffragist*, but a different publication from today.

Explain that the students will be taking the next 15-20 minutes looking at the cover of each publication and writing down on their Compare-Contrast Graphic Organizer the similarities and differences between the two articles. Tell them to use their prior knowledge of the Women's Voting Rights Movement and of today's current events to make inferences and observations.

The teacher should circulate around the room to see how the groups are doing. Ask questions to push them and assist them with making deeper observations.

Once the time is met or students seem to have completed their graphic organizer, have each group present their findings. Give each group about 2-3 minutes to present. Make sure that they introduce their present day women's publication cover, as all groups are different. If need be and to ensure that the presentations remain focused, you might just have them list the one similarity and one difference between the two publications.

**Closure:** [10 minutes]

Have the students take a look at the T-Chart that they had made earlier (or the day before). What were the differences and similarities to the articles that they had created and the ones that they examined in their groups?

Ask what is their biggest "take-away" about the progression of women's publications from the Women's Movement to today. Were you surprised about anything? Call on 3-4 students or have one person from each group answer.

By looking at a primary document from the Women's Voting Movement, what did you learn?

**Assessment/Homework:**

**Ideas:**

1. Have students write a journal entry about their group's findings and answer the questions, "How much progress have women made since the Women's Voting Rights Movement? What could you use to find out more about these topics?"
2. Have them find a current article (newspaper or magazine) about a women's issue and write a short essay comparing the content to issues that women faced during the Progressive Era.
3. Give them a printout of the graphic on page 13 of the **Image Gallery** of the Online Museum "Woman Suffrage" titled "Why is it Not a National Question?" This graphic, which originally appeared in the *New York Evening Journal*, was reprinted in the *Suffragist* magazine. Have them examine the primary document and write 2-3 paragraphs about their observations and reflections on it being published in both the *New York Evening Journal* and the *Suffragist* magazine. [available for download [here](#)]

### **Follow Up Lesson:**

Talk about how public policy questions and even human rights can differ by state. Ask students about laws regulating marriage, alcohol sales, capital punishment, abortion rights and gay rights, in their state compared with other states. Remember to stress that women's voting rights varied tremendously by state and even municipality. Every western state, except New Mexico, had granted full rights before the first eastern state (New York) did!

### **Further Research/Resources:**

#### *Primary Sources at the Library of Congress*

<http://www.loc.gov/teachers/classroommaterials/primarysourcesets/womens-suffrage/>

#### *Additional Resources on Women's Voting Rights Movement:*

1. [http://www.nwhm.org/online-exhibits/votesforwomen/add\\_res/add\\_res.html](http://www.nwhm.org/online-exhibits/votesforwomen/add_res/add_res.html)
2. <http://www.law.umkc.edu/faculty/projects/ftrials/anthony/nytimes.html>
3. <http://www.pbs.org/stantonanthony/>
4. <http://www.suffragist.com/>

### **Standards:**

#### **National Center for History in the Schools (NCHS)**

*Era* – Expansion and Reform (1801-1861)

*Standard 4:* The sources and character of cultural, religious, and social reform movements in the antebellum period.

#### **Common Core**

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.6-8.6

Identify aspects of a text that reveal an author's point of view or purpose (e.g., loaded language, inclusion or avoidance of particular facts).

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.6-8.9

Analyze the relationship between a primary and secondary source on the same topic.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.9-10.1

Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources, attending to such features as the date and origin of the information.

**National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS)**

II-b Time, Continuity and Change: *Social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of the ways human beings view themselves in and over time, so that the learner can identify and use key concepts such as chronology, causality, change, conflict, and complexity to explain, analyze, and show connections among patterns of historical change and continuity.*

II-f Time, Continuity and Change: *Social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of the ways human beings view themselves in and over time, so that the learner can use knowledge of facts and concepts drawn from history, along with methods of historical inquiry, to make informed decisions and actions on public issues.*

IV-g Individual Development and Identity: *Social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of individual development and identity, so that the learner can work independently and cooperatively to accomplish goals.*

V-f Individuals, Groups and Institutions: *Social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of interactions among individuals, groups, and institutions, so that the learner can describe the role of institutions in furthering both continuity and change.*

**National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE)**

7. Students conduct research on issues and interests by generating ideas and questions, as well as posing problems. They gather, evaluate, and synthesize data from a variety of sources (e.g., print and non-print texts, artifacts, people) to communicate their discoveries in ways that suit their purpose and audience.

12. Students use spoken, written, and visual language to accomplish their own purposes (e.g., for learning, enjoyment, persuasion, and the exchange of information).