

TEACHING AMERICAN HISTORY PROJECT
The Need For and Challenges to Passing the Susan B. Anthony Amendment
From Kristen DeBona

Grade – 11th Grade U.S. History

Length of class period – (2) 50 minutes [Note: This activity can be shortened to one class period if the optional Susan B. Anthony Amendment Rhyme is assigned for homework versus done in class.]

Inquiry – (What essential question are students answering?)

- *Since when has suffrage been a critical issue to women in the United States?*
- *How has a lack of suffrage shaped the opportunities of women in the United States and how might the right to vote change life for American women?*
- *What challenges and opposition did the American women's' suffrage movement face and why?*

Objectives (What content and skills do you expect students to learn from this lesson?)

- *The students will read and analyze primary source excerpts from to Abigail Adams' "Remember the Ladies" letter written in 1776 to an excerpt from historian Jonathan Soffer's essay "Modern Women Persuading Modern Men" to examine why women felt that need to pursue the Susan B. Anthony Amendment and why achieving suffrage was not an easy feat.*
- *The students will create two rhymes that demonstrate the opposing perspectives behind the women's suffrage movement.*

Materials (What primary sources or local resources are the basis for this lesson?)

- Student copies of the "The Woman's Suffrage Movement: The Need For and Challenges to Passing the Susan B. Anthony Amendment" primary and secondary resource excerpts.
- Student copies of the corresponding "Woman's Suffrage Movement" questions to help the students interpret the primary and secondary resource excerpts.
- Student copies of the instructions for the opposing perspectives of the suffrage movement rhymes.

Activities (What will you and your students do during the lesson to promote learning?)

- **Initiation:** Briefly review the steps and directions for the activity and corresponding assignment. Explain to the students that they need to read each of the five provided excerpts and answer the corresponding five questions to help them learn about the need for and challenges to the women's suffrage movement in the United States. Also inform the students that prior to each question is some background information that should be used to help them read and respond to each excerpt.
- Assign the students to work in small groups no bigger that 2-3. Smaller groups will ensure that every student has to work with the sources and help to generate the assigned rhymes. Students who you know might struggle with materials or get frustrated by the assignment could be in groups of three; students who are more independent learners can be in partnerships of two.
- Instruct the students that they will need to answer the excerpt questions as well as create two rhymes within the two class periods. Students should ideally get through the readings and analysis questions on day one leaving them a full class period to write two rhymes.
- Monitor the students as they progress from station to station, point out interesting aspects within individual excerpts, and ask questions to help the students analyze each set of sources.

Closure: On day 1, verbally close the lesson by asking and discussing the following questions.

- *Since when has suffrage been a critical issue to women in the United States?*
- *How has a lack of suffrage shaped the opportunities of women in the United States and how might the right to vote change life for American women?*
- *What challenges and opposition did the American women's' suffrage movement face and why?*

- *What new opportunities do you think suffrage created for women? How has the right to vote shaped American history?*
- On day 2 the activity can be closed by asking students to share and discuss their rhymes. The discussion can either connect back to the original questions (above) or lead to a conversation about persuasion and creating arguments using historical evidence.

How will you assess what student learned during this lesson?

- Informal: Monitor and assess the students' analysis by asking them questions during the activity.
- Formal: Collect and grade the student's rhymes as well as hold them accountable for the material on the unit test/quiz.

Connecticut Framework Performance Standards

- 1.1 Demonstrate an understanding of significant events and themes in United States history – Analyze the evolution of citizen's rights
- 1.8 The interactions between citizens and their government in the making and implementation of laws – Analyze laws that have been modified to meet society's changing values and needs.
- 1.9 The rights and responsibilities of citizens – Investigate how individuals or groups have worked to expand or limit citizen's rights in the United States.
- 2.2 Interpret information from a variety of primary and secondary sources – Determine the central ideas of, and be able to, summarize information from primary and secondary sources.
- 2.3 Create various forms of written work to demonstrate an understanding of history and social studies issues – Create written work that analyzes a historical event, place or person using various sources.
- 3.2 Analyze and evaluate human action in historical contexts from alternative points of view – Portray the attitudes reflected in a historical period using a variety of writing formats.

The Woman's Suffrage Movement: The Need For and Challenges to Passing the Susan B. Anthony Amendment

Excerpt #1: Remember the Ladies

Abigail Adams writes to her husband, John, a prominent member of the Continental Congress, saying:

"I long to hear that you have declared an independancy-and by the way in the new Code of Laws which I suppose it will be necessary for you to make I desire you would Remember the Ladies, and be more generous and favourable 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 perticular care and attention is not paid to the Ladies we are determined to foment (stir up) a Rebellion, and will not hold ourselves bound by any Laws in which we have no voice, or Representation."

Source: Abigail Adams, *Adams Family Correspondence*, Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 1963, p. 370.

Excerpt #2: Declaration of Sentiments

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

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, ... giving all power into his hands.

He has monopolized nearly all the profitable employments, and from those she is permitted to follow, she receives but a scanty remuneration (payment). 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 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.

Excerpt #: 3 "A Woman's" View on Suffrage

To the Editor of the New York Times:

... I have this morning read Mrs. E. C. Stanton's communication on the subject of Miss Anthony's case, now before the courts, and I cannot refrain from saying a word to these ladies. Have they, while working so earnestly for the enfranchisement of women, an idea of how the majority of their countrywomen feel on the subject? I believe, from all that I have ever been able to ascertain, that for every one woman who desires to vote, there are ten at the least who do not wish to do so. And are we, the majority of educated women in this country, to have political duties thrust upon us, which we not only do not desire, but utterly abhor! ...

Could I speak with a thousand tongues, it would be to give a hundred thousand reasons why we should not vote. We can use of influence in our homes, a woman's proper sphere...It is all we want. Let almost any woman who has a family to care for speak, and say how much time she has to devote to the study of political questions, and to the duties which are incumbent upon voters; for if we are made voters, we are in honor bound to fulfill the utmost all the duties attached to the so-called "privilege." ...

To the women of our land who yet love their own womanly sphere, I say, Keep silence in public when you can; but work, work at home in your own dominion, that we may be saved from this fate. I hope, and I know that I speak for many besides myself in saying this, that for many years to come there may be found men enough who care for the peace, dignity, modesty, and womanly reserve of their mothers, wives, daughters, and sisters to protect us from having thrust upon us that dreaded "right" of voting.

A Woman.

No. 461 West Twenty-third Street,
New York, Thursday, Jan. 30, 1873

Source: *New York Times*, February 3, 1873. Found in *Forward into the Light: The Struggle for Woman's Suffrage*, Madeline Meyers, editor, Carlisle, MA: Discovery Enterprises, Ltd., 1994, pp. 34-5.

Excerpt #4: Parade Protest Arouses Senate

WASHINGTON. March 4. – Bitter complaint was heard on every hand today because of the lack of protection given to the women marchers by the Metropolitan Police during the suffrage pageant and procession yesterday. Congress had passed a special resolution directing that Pennsylvania Avenue be kept clear for the demonstration. Many persons were injured. The stories of the police do not agree. One policeman say yesterday that the police authorities had no idea that they would have to handle the tremendous crowd, equal to any inauguration gathering (President Wilson) that flocked into Pennsylvania Avenue yesterday and had not detailed enough men for that reason. Leaders in the suffrage cause say that those policemen who were detailed did not perform their duty... "I do not want to be unfair," said Mrs. Glenna S. Tinnan of Washington, the director of the pageant, "but the treatment accorded us was simply unspeakable. It was more than a question of an undermanned police line. Those who were assigned to the task not only did little or nothing, but even seemed to encourage the hoodlums in the work of breaking up the parade."... "Only one policeman that I saw did his full duty. Some stood in groups and twiddled their fingers and repeated again and again, 'We can do nothing about this crowd.' I heard another policeman say, 'If my wife were in that line of march I'd knock her down.'... "The Boy Scouts," said Miss Alice Paul of Philadelphia, "were the only ones who did any effective police work."

Source: *New York Times*, March 5, 1913, p. 8. Found in *Forward into the Light: The Struggle for Woman's Suffrage*, Madeline Meyers, editor, Carlisle, MA: Discovery Enterprises, Ltd., 1994, pp. 46-7.

Excerpt #5: Modern Women Persuading Modern Men

By 1916, women's suffrage had made some progress in lightly populated western states where women gained their right to vote in individual states. But it was far from certain that a federal amendment could overcome opposition from the liquor lobby, which feared that women voters would prohibit alcohol; segregationists, who didn't want black women to vote; and some military-preparedness advocates who complained that if women were allowed to vote the country would never again agree to fight. Some anti-suffragists argued that allowing women to vote would be disruptive to home life, as women would take time off from their domestic duties to vote and perhaps undermine male authority by arguing about politics with their husbands and sons. At the same time, some woman suffragists, particularly the older generation active before 1900, alienated immigrants with their nativist rhetoric.

Source: *Modern Women Persuading Modern Men: The Nineteenth Amendment and the Movement for Woman Suffraae. 1916-1920* by Jonathan Soffer

The Woman's Suffrage Movement: The Need For and Challenges To Passing the Susan B. Anthony Amendment

Question #1: Since When Has Suffrage Been an Issue?

Early on in the American colonies, women had a subordinate status to the men in their lives, starting with their fathers, then their husbands, and sometimes, even their sons. They had almost total responsibility for domestic duties, such as maintaining the home, rearing the children, running the farm, and, of course, caring for their husbands – cooking, cleaning, laundering, and providing them with children. Women had no legal rights of their own, and everything that came with them to a marriage became the sole property of the husband. A colonial woman's own children legally belonged only to her husband. During the early years in the colonies, women often felt frustrated by their lack of power, but were totally at their husband's mercy as to whether they could even be heard in the subject.

Using **Excerpt #1**, how far back does the issue of women's suffrage go? What do you think Abigail Adams meant when she asked her husband to "Remember the Ladies"? Why does Adams make this request of her husband and what does she predict will happen if he ignores her request? In your opinion, was Abigail Adams' request met?

Question #2: The Beginning of the "Rebellion"

The official beginning of the "rebellion" that Abigail Adams predicted began at Seneca Falls, New York, on July 19 and 20, 1848. At the convention, women publically expressed their dissatisfaction with their lack of legal rights. The demand for the right to vote was one of several resolutions approved by the women assembled at the convention, beginning a 72-year struggle for women's suffrage – one that would last until the passing of the 19th Amendment in 1919.

Using **Excerpt #2**, describe in your own words why women feel they need the right to vote. In other words what problems do the women at the convention attribute to their lack of suffrage? How might the right to vote change the conditions of women which were identified in the Declaration of Sentiments?

Question #3: A Unique Perspective

It cannot be assumed that anti-suffragists, or those who were against giving women the right to vote, were all men. In fact, the women's suffrage movement in the United States faced many challenges along their road to victory and some of their stumbling blocks were fellow women who argued against suffrage for women.

Using **Excerpt #3**, describe in your own words the argument made by “A Woman” in her letter to the editor of the *New York Times*. What criticisms does she make of the Suffrage Movement? Why does she claim suffrage is unnecessary? What does this letter reveal about the challenges faced by the Women’s Suffrage Movement?

Question #4: Policemen and Parades

By the beginning of the 20th century (1900s) early leaders of the Women’s Suffrage Movement were on their way out making way for new leadership. Susan B. Anthony, a Quaker teacher who had resigned her position in protest against discrimination toward women was one of the most inspiring leaders of the cause and from whom the 19th Amendment gets its namesake, was in her eighties while other early reformers were already dead. As such, Anthony recognized that in a new century new leadership was needed and she passed her presidency at the National American Woman Suffrage Association (NAWSA) to a young woman named Carrie Chapman Catt. Under new leadership NAWSA between 1910 and 1920 attempted to capture the attention of the nation and persuade them that suffrage was need for women by parading for votes. Although most of the parades were peaceful, a few were not.

Using **Excerpt #4**, identify and describe what the challenges the Women’s Suffrage Movement faced according to the newspaper article. Given the fact that the events of the parade were published, do you think that parading for votes was an effective method to achieve women’s suffrage? Why or why not?

Question #5: Modern Women Persuading Modern Men

In addition to parades the Women’s Suffrage Movement under the direction of NAWSA attempted to achieve the right to vote at both state and national levels. NAWSA launched a campaign aimed at passing an amendment to the constitution which would allow women the right to vote by achieving the right to vote state-by-state in hopes that if enough individual states gave women the right to vote that Congress would be pressured into passing a constitutional amendment. Despite, their attempts to work with and convince both Republican and Democratic Parties, NAWSA faced many underlying challenges when it came to convincing the men who ran the country that America would not go to “hell in a hand basket” were women given the right to vote.

Using **Excerpt #5**, identify and describe at least three reasons why people were concerned about giving women the right to vote aside from the fact that it challenged the traditional role of women as wives, mothers and homemakers who were considered too morally pure to enter the political arena.

**The Woman's Suffrage Movement:
Opposing Perspectives Rhyme**

Background: *Now that you have examined why women felt the need for suffrage and some of the challenges to the passage of the Susan B. Anthony Amendment, you and a partner will be responsible for demonstrating your understanding of the material by creating two short rhymes that reveal the opposing perspectives behind the women's suffrage movement in the United States. In the first rhyme you will take the perspective of an American who believes that women deserve the right to vote and that the Susan B. Anthony Amendment should be passed. In the second rhyme you will take the perspective of an American who believes that women should not have the right to vote and thus the Susan B. Anthony Amendment should be rejected. Your rhymes should be based on historic arguments drawn from the five excerpts you have read in class. In order to complete this assignment and receive a good grade you must fulfill the specific requirements of each rhyme below.*

Directions: *Each rhyme, must have a title, a chorus with at least 3 rhymes and 3 verses with at least 3 rhymes each. Your song should be written neatly below using appropriate language and should reflect a mature consideration of the historical event.*

Rhyme #1: The Perspective of a Pro-Susan B. Anthony Amendment American

Song Title:

Chorus: *Create a catchy and persuasive rhyme that could help convince other Americans that women deserve the right to vote.*

Song Verse #1: *Create a verse that describes what life is like for women who cannot vote.*

Song Verse #2: *Create a verse that describes what challenges women have had to overcome in order to achieve the right to vote.*

Song Verse #3: Create a verse that describes what benefits would be gained if women were given the right to vote.

Rhyme #2: The Perspective of an Anti-Susan B. Anthony Amendment American

Song Title:

Chorus: Create a catchy and persuasive rhyme that could help convince other Americans that women should be denied the right to vote.

Song Verse #1: Create a verse that argues that a women's proper sphere of influence is in the home as a wife and mother.

Song Verse #2: Create a verse that describes how women themselves do not want suffrage.

Song Verse #3: Create a verse that describes how giving women the right to vote could harm society and or America.
