

Lesson 1: What is Democracy? The Push to Expand Suffrage

Discipline: U.S. History I (grades 9-12)

Lesson Type: Independent reading and class discussion

Rationale: Students will be provided the necessary context for understanding the women's suffrage movement in Massachusetts. Students will also have a chance to practice their discussion skills by participating in the Take a Stand activity.

Instructional Objectives:

- 1) Students will be able to identify key moments in the women's suffrage movement by completing the reading.
- 2) Students will be able to identify parts of the arguments for and against women's suffrage by participating in the Take a Stand activity.

MA Curriculum Framework:

- USI.23: Analyze the rising levels of political participation and the expansion of suffrage in antebellum America (C, H).
- USI.33: Analyze the goals and effect of the antebellum women's suffrage movement. (H)

C3 Framework:

- D2.His.2.9-12: Analyze change and continuity in historical eras.
- D2.Civ.2.9-12: Analyze the role of citizens in the U.S. political system, with attention to various theories of democracy, changes in Americans' participation over time, and alternative models from other countries, past and present.
- D2.Civ.10.9-12: Analyze the impact and the appropriate roles of personal interests and perspectives on the application of civic virtues, democratic principles, constitutional rights, and human rights.

APUSH Curriculum Standards:

- 4.1.III.A: Americans formed new voluntary organizations that aimed to change individual behaviors and improve society through temperance and other reform efforts.
- 4.1.III.C: A woman's rights movement sought to create greater equality and opportunities for women, expressing its ideals at the Seneca Falls Convention.

Materials: Handout 2A, whiteboard or projector

Procedure:

Initiation (5-7 minutes): Post a Do Now question on the board: What was the “common man” aka the average American like in the 1820s and 1830s? Give students 3-4 minutes to respond. Then, select students randomly to respond and create a list on the board of their responses, prompting for further questioning as necessary.

Development (30 minutes): Distribute handout on the growing role of women in politics and a brief overview of the suffrage movement (please note that part of this handout is also used in Module 1). Refer back to the list the class just created as appropriate while completing the reading to affirm student responses. Then, complete Take a Stand activity. Post the following statements on the board (powerpoint may be easiest, if possible) and have students silently read the statements to themselves. Then, designate different areas of the room as a spectrum. One side of the room should be strongly agree, another spot in the room should be agree, another should be neutral, another should be disagree, and the opposite end of the room should be strongly disagree. Once students have read the statement, they should go stand in the area of the room that corresponds with how they feel about the statement. It helps if there are signs to label these areas of the room that are posted beforehand. Remind students that they should only speak one at a time and that they will be called on randomly to defend their position. Once students have moved, begin to select students randomly to explain why they moved to their area of the room. It is suggested that the teacher permits students to change their position as students argue in support of their point of view, but these students should be asked why they move, as it results in some interesting discussion points.

Post the following statements for the Take a Stand:

- 1) America did not need to allow more people to vote during the 1820s and 1830s.
- 2) The more people who vote, the harder it is to have a functioning government.
- 3) In the 1820s and 1830s, women were too uneducated to vote.
- 4) In the 1820s and 1830s, America had greater concerns than extending suffrage to women.

Allow 3-5 minutes of discussion per statement.

Closing (7-10 minutes): When all statements have been discussed, have students return to their seats. Have students write a 1-2 paragraph response on the following question: “Based on today’s discussions, what factors contributed to the rise of the women’s suffrage movement during the mid-nineteenth century?” Teachers should collect these responses to grade upon completion.

Extension Activity: Have students create their own Take a Stand question related to women's suffrage. Have each student submit his/her question, then select one question randomly.

Assessment Measures: The teacher will be able to assess student learning and understanding through the oral discussion of the Take a Stand Activity and through the written responses obtained during the closing part of the lesson.