Women and the Right to Vote

Lesson Overview

Did the Nineteenth Amendment provide women with more than the right to vote? Which Amendment process was used? How did this Amendment affect the United States in the last one hundred years? All of these questions and many others are discussed in this lesson.

Lesson Objectives

After completing this lesson, students will be able to

- identify the language of the Nineteenth Amendment,
- explain how the amendment was ratified, and
- explain the impact of the Nineteenth Amendment on women, on society in general, and on women gaining elected offices at the state and national levels.

Materials Needed

- The text of the Nineteenth Amendment
- Board or chart paper
Before the Lesson

Teachers should review the following websites to give them ideas for adapting this lesson and to garner information on the topic.

- **National Archives:**
  [https://museum.archives.gov/rightfully-hers](https://museum.archives.gov/rightfully-hers)

  Many National Archives exhibits are available online and can easily be accessed.

- **National Park Service:**
  [https://www.nps.gov/subjects/womenshistory/19th-amendment-by-state.htm](https://www.nps.gov/subjects/womenshistory/19th-amendment-by-state.htm)

  Provides information about the states that ratified the Nineteenth Amendment.

In advance of the lesson, teachers should also ask students to research Jeannette Rankin, who was elected to the U.S. House of Representatives for Montana prior to the ratification of the Nineteenth Amendment.

Procedure

1. **Beginning the lesson.** Ask students who Jeannette Rankin was. If possible, show a picture of her. What states gave women access to the ballot box prior to the Nineteenth Amendment and why? Place their responses on the board or on chart paper.

   **Optional research.** Ask students to research the number of women who have been elected to the U.S. Congress and when they were elected.
2. **What was the impact of the Nineteenth Amendment?** Begin a class discussion based on the Nineteenth Amendment. Ask questions that will lead to a class discussion:

a. What are the two processes for amending the Constitution, and which one was used in this case?

b. What was the impact of the Nineteenth Amendment on society and women in 1920?

c. What has been the impact of the Nineteenth Amendment on society over the past hundred years?

d. Could there have been a female vice presidential candidate in a major party in 1984 (Geraldine Ferraro) or 2008 (Sarah Palin) and a presidential candidate in 2016 (Hillary Clinton) without the amendment?

e. Despite these nominations, women have not risen to elected offices at the federal level other than the U.S. Congress. Why might that be?

3. **Concluding the lesson.** Divide the class into groups of four or five students. Ask each group to develop a campaign strategy for an imaginary or real candidate. Each group will need to complete the following tasks:

a. Pick a political party.

b. Determine which office the candidate will seek (vice president or president).

c. Determine the race or ethnicity and gender of the candidate.

d. Create a slogan and be ready to explain what it means.

e. Describe two main ideas their candidate stands for.

Each group should share their strategy with the class.
Procedure (continued)

Alternative concluding the lesson activity. Divide the class into groups of four or five students. Give each group a list of states from the National Park Service’s website. Each group must identify when each state in the list ratified the Nineteenth Amendment. Ask students to explain why that state ratified the amendment. The group can determine the best way to display this, such as creating a chart or a slideshow.

Each group should share their work with the other groups.

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