

Appendix A

Reading Exercise: The Struggle for Women's Right to Vote

Directions

Distribute the two stories to students and provide 15-20 minutes for them to read the stories and respond to the questions that follow. Dedicate 20 minutes or more to discussing their answers. Coax them to use examples to support their responses. You might need to define terms such as “suffrage” and “suffragette,” and clarify the difference between federal/national laws and state laws. Make references to what students learned in this exercise in future lessons to reinforce their memory and understanding of history and why it is important to think about whether historical narratives are biased and accurate.

The Struggle for Women's Right to Vote (First Version)

The movement for women's suffrage in the United States began at the Seneca Falls Convention in 1848 in New York. At the time women did not have the right to vote. At the convention, men and women talked about how to change this. Many men believed that women were not smart enough to make good decisions. Some believed that God did not want women to have the power to make laws. Sometimes men and women made fun of the women who fought for the right to vote. The struggle was for a good cause. It improved American democracy.

In 1866, a group of men and women formed the American Equal Rights Association. Lucretia Mott was president and Susan B. Anthony and Henry Blackwell were secretaries. Association members did not agree on everything. Some wanted the group to fight for the 14th Amendment. The new law would give Black males the right to vote. In 1869, Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony foolishly left the group. They formed the National Women's Suffrage Association (NWSA). Their group did not want to fight for the 14th Amendment. They wanted to focus on a national amendment for women's votes. They also wanted more divorce rights for women. They were against the sale of alcohol. Those who disagreed with them created the American Women's Suffrage Association (AWSA). They supported the 14th Amendment. They wanted states to decide whether women could vote. Many thought that the ideas of the NWSA were too extreme.

In 1890, the NWSA united with the AWSA. It was a wise move. Not many people today would do the same thing. The new group became the National American Women Suffrage Association (NAWSA). The new group wanted a national amendment to give women the vote. It asked senators and representative for support. It got help from community centers and businesses. The group also had enemies.

In 1911, a group of wealthy women and Catholic priests formed the National Association Opposed to Woman Suffrage (NAOWS). This association believed that women's suffrage was dangerous. Its members believed that the country would not be better with women's votes. Many in NAOWS believed that if women got the right to vote, they would lose their femininity. The suffragettes did not give up. NAWSA held a march for women's in votes in Washington, D.C. There were over 8,000 marchers. Some men who watched the march threw bottles and garbage at the women. The brave women finally got the vote in 1920 when Congress passed the 19th Amendment.

The Struggle for Women's Right to Vote (Second Version)

The movement for women's suffrage in the United States began at the Seneca Falls Convention in 1848 in New York. At the time women did not have the right to vote. At the convention, men and women talked about how to change this. Many men believed that women were not smart enough to make good decisions. Some believed that God did not want women to have the power to make laws. Sometimes men and women made fun of the women who fought for the right to vote. Many women believed their lives would get better if they could vote.

In 1866, a group of men and women formed the American Equal Rights Association. Association members did not agree on everything. Some wanted the group to fight for the 14th Amendment. The new law would give Black males the right to vote. In 1869, Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony left the group. They formed the National Women's Suffrage Association (NWSA). Their group did not want to fight for the 14th Amendment. They focused on a national amendment for women's votes. They also wanted more divorce rights for women. They were against the sale of alcohol. Those who disagreed with them created the American Women's Suffrage Association (AWSA). They supported the 14th Amendment. They wanted states to decide whether women could vote. Many thought that the ideas of the NWSA were too extreme.

In 1890, the NWSA united with the AWSA. The new group became the National American Women Suffrage Association (NAWSA). The new group wanted a national amendment to give women the vote. It asked senators and representative for support. It got help from community centers and businesses. It got help from women working in factories who joined women's trade unions. The NAWSA was not always open to all women. Many of its members did not want to work with Black women. In 1896, Ida B. Well-Barnett, Frances E. W. Harper, and others formed the National Association of Colored Women (NACW). The group worked for women's right to vote. They also worked to improve Black education and employment opportunities.

Suffragettes had many enemies. In 1911, a group of wealthy women and Catholic priests formed the National Association Opposed to Woman Suffrage (NAOWS). This association believed that women's suffrage was dangerous. Its members believed that the country would not be better with women's votes. Many in NAOWS believed that if women got the right to vote, they would lose their femininity. NAWSA held a march for women's in votes in Washington, D.C. There were over 8,000 marchers. Some men who watched the march threw bottles and garbage at the women.

World War I started in 1914. The war gave women the chance to prove they were patriotic. NAWSA pledged to President Wilson that it would give him resources and volunteers to help win the war. This caused Wilson to support the suffragettes. Women won the vote in 1920, when Congress passed the 19th Amendment.

Discussion Questions:

1. Do you think the purpose of the two versions of the story are more alike or very different from each other? Why?
2. Which version includes clear biases or opinions about the past and what people did? Provide examples.
3. Which version of the story provides more details? Give examples.
4. What difference do the details make in telling the story of Suffrage Movement? Think about how the details influence your understanding of the movement. Think about how the details impact the way you feel about the movement.
5. What details could have been added to help the reader understand the Suffrage Movement?