



## NSDAR Educational Resources Committee

### “The Women’s Suffrage Movement: Visions and Voices”

**Contributor:** Linda Moss Mines **Grade Level:** 8

**1. Identify the standards to be addressed:**

**TN Social Sciences 8.42:** Analyze the development of the women's suffrage movement, including the Seneca Falls Convention, and the ideals of Susan B. Anthony, Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Sojourner Truth.

**TN Reading Standards: Key Ideas and Details, Informational Text 8.RI.KID.1:** Analyze what a text says explicitly and draw inferences, cite the strongest, most compelling textual evidence to support conclusions.

**TN Reading Standards: Key Ideas and Details, Informational Text 8.RI.KID.2:** Determine a central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text, provide an objective summary.

**2. Statement of the objective and lesson outcomes:**

Students will:

- Research, define and interpret the work and writings of early women’s suffrage leaders Susan B. Anthony, Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Sojourner Truth.
- Determine the central idea and supporting textual evidence of one of the three texts provided [in a small group] and then, in the larger group, identify the relationships between the three texts and specific phrases in each document supporting the overall concept of women’s suffrage.
- Write a three-paragraph essay in which they compare and contrast the writings of Anthony, Stanton and Truth and, in the concluding paragraph, provide a statement regarding their combined influence on future suffrage leaders and actions.

**3. Materials, resources, and technology to be used by teacher/students:**

- Excerpt from *Chattanooga Times-Free Press* column by Linda Moss Mines, ‘The Hot Humid Historic Summer of 1920’.
- Document A – An Overview of the Women’s Suffrage Movement through a series of 1-minute video created by the National Park Service
- Document B – Two Political Cartoons
- Documents C, D and E - Excerpts from the writings of Susan B. Anthony, Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Sojourner Truth.
- Biography Channel Mini-Video: Susan B. Anthony, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fIPtJpAQkml>
- Biography Channel Mini-Video: Elizabeth Cady Stanton <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nCEaHGgUV-Q>
- Biography Channel Mini-Video: Sojourner Truth <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q-HfiryNoXY>

**4. Introduction of the topic:**

-Teacher will introduce the lesson by writing a question on the white board or projecting on screen: Have you ever dreamed of doing something and been told that your dream is impossible? [Limit discussion to five minutes.]

- The following excerpt from a newspaper column published on 09 August 2020 in the Chattanooga Times-Free Press provides historical background on the women’s suffrage movement. As you read the excerpt, consider the

number of years between the introduction of the concept of women's suffrage and its possible ratification in 1920. How might you have responded to the arguments in favor of women voting?

## **THE HOT, HUMID, HISTORIC SUMMER OF 1920**

Linda Moss Mines

History Column, *Chattanooga Times-Free Press*, 09 August 2020

One hundred years ago, opposition forces faced off in Nashville, Tennessee over the issue of women's suffrage, with the right to vote for 50% of the nation's population hanging in the balance. Over the next three weeks, we'll review the political and social background preceding that summer and the events that culminated in Tennessee's recognition as the 'Perfect

36'.

When the Founding Patriots gathered in Philadelphia for the Second Continental Congress to determine the future of the thirteen English colonies and their relationship with Great Britain and King George III, the representatives were not unified in their thoughts or proposed actions. Strong voices charged the English Parliament with the denial of the "rights of English citizens" and urged for separation. Calmer voices advocated a peaceful resolution of the conflict, even though mightily perplexed over the series of legislative acts that were designed to tax the colonists who were without a voice in the halls of Parliament. By July 1776, after a series of prolonged and often confrontational debates and votes, the delegates signed a Declaration of Independence, authored primarily by Virginia's Thomas Jefferson, that advanced the call for separation with now resounding words, "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their creator with certain inalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness."

Why mention the Declaration of Independence when discussing the historic fight for women's suffrage? In an examination of James Madison's copious notes from the meetings, it is interesting to note the absence of any discussion regarding the role of women in the new society. Only in the letters between Boston's John Adams and his wife, Abigail, do we find any mention of the "ladies". Abigail Adams, an ardent student of the Enlightenment philosophers and no stranger to intellectual discussions among Boston's political elite, reminded John to "Remember the Ladies, and be more generous and favourable to them than [his] ancestors."

However, there would be no formal national platform advocating for the rights of women, especially the right to vote, until 72 years later in 1848 when women and some men will gather in Seneca Falls, New York to advance the idea. Interestingly, it will be another 72 years before women's suffrage will become a reality - - based on the vote of the Tennessee General Assembly, following a call into session by Governor Al Roberts [Overton County].

So how did all the nation's attention come to be focused on Tennessee during that summer and what role did area residents play in the ratification of the Nineteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution? It is an intriguing story that begins long before 1920 and a vote in Nashville.

On June 4, 1919, the Sixty-Sixth Congress of the United States reached the two-thirds majority necessary for the passage of the 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment. Victory was celebrated across the nation by the supporters of women's suffrage; after all, 21 previous consecutive Congresses had rejected the idea of federal women's suffrage. Victory was near - - IF.

According to Constitutional guidelines regarding the amendment process, two-thirds of the states had to ratify the amendment. With forty-eight states in the Union, thirty-six state legislatures would need to meet and vote for the ratification. Given that the state legislatures were comprised of all-male senators and representatives, the road to ratification began with an uncertain outcome . . .

-Instruct students to write a journal entry about what they feel might be the two most effective arguments in favor of women's suffrage and the two most effective arguments against women's suffrage.

#### 5. Procedure for instruction:

##### Whole Group Activity:

The class will view:

- Suffrage in 60 Seconds, An Overview: [https://www.nps.gov/articles/000/suffrage60seconds\\_intro.htm](https://www.nps.gov/articles/000/suffrage60seconds_intro.htm)
- Suffrage in 60 Seconds, Equil-Tea: [https://www.nps.gov/articles/000/suffrage60seconds\\_intro.htm](https://www.nps.gov/articles/000/suffrage60seconds_intro.htm)
- Suffrage in 60 Seconds, African American Women and the Vote [https://www.nps.gov/articles/000/suffrage60seconds\\_african\\_american\\_women.htm](https://www.nps.gov/articles/000/suffrage60seconds_african_american_women.htm)
- Suffrage in 60 Seconds, How Women Won the West [https://www.nps.gov/articles/000/suffrage60seconds\\_how\\_women\\_won\\_the\\_west.htm](https://www.nps.gov/articles/000/suffrage60seconds_how_women_won_the_west.htm)

After viewing each video snippet, students will write a one-sentence summary.

Students will then analyze Document B, 'Two Political Cartoons' by answering the questions on the document.

##### Small Group Activity:

Divide the class into three groups:

Group 1 – Susan B. Anthony

Group 2 – Elizabeth Cady Stanton

Group 3 – Sojourner Truth

1. All students will be presented Documents C, D and E.

2. The students in each group will be asked to view the mini-biographical video for their assigned suffrage leader and then read, analyze and discuss the coordinating quotes.

3. The students in each group will create a 3 to 5-minute oral presentation for the class. The presentation will include an introduction to the suffrage leader and her written/spoken comments regarding the right to vote.

#### 6. Lesson closure:

**Whole Group Activity:**

1. Each group will present its work to the class.
2. Members of the non-presenting groups will take notes on the other documents.
3. Questions may be asked of the presenters by other students and/or the teacher.

**7. Assessment of Understanding**

Write a three-paragraph essay [200 – 250 words] in which the student compares and contrasts the writings of Anthony, Stanton and Truth and, in the concluding paragraph, provides a statement regarding their combined influence on future suffrage leaders and actions.

Keep these questions in mind as you write: What are the similar points in the arguments made by each leader regarding the right to vote? Are there points in which they disagree or offer a point of view based on different perspective or experiences?