OVERVIEW

Through rhetorical and intertextual analysis, students will learn about the tactics suffragists in New York City used in the early 1900s to counter opposition and build a broad coalition.

STUDENT GOALS

- Students will view flyers and photographs to examine the tactics used by both suffragists and anti-suffragists to persuade and discredit the opposing arguments.
- Students will learn how a later generation of suffragists overcame class divisions and developed strategies to build a broad coalition.
- Students will learn about key leaders who spread the message of woman suffrage to mixed-class audiences.

COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS

Grade 4:
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.4.3
Explain events, procedures, ideas, or concepts in a historical, scientific, or technical text, including what happened and why, based on specific information in the text.

Grades 6-8:
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.7
Integrate visual information (e.g., in charts, graphs, photographs, videos, or maps) with other information in print and digital texts.

Grades 11-12:
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.7
Integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in diverse formats and media (e.g., visually, quantitatively, as well as in words) in order to address a question or solve a problem.
NEW YORK IS THE BATTLEGROUND: Woman Suffrage 1900-1920

GENDER EQUALITY

KEY TERMS/VOCABULARY

- Ballot
- Coalition
- Demonstration
- Division
- Gender
- Suffrage
- Tactic
- Vote

ACTIVISTS

- Carrie Chapman Catt
- Elizabeth Cady Stanton
- Harriot Stanton Blatch
- Leonora O’Reilly
- Rose Schneiderman
- Rosalie Jones
- Susan B. Anthony

ORGANIZATIONS

- American Women Suffrage Association
- National American Woman Suffrage Association
- National Woman Suffrage Association
INTRODUCING RESOURCE 1

“We Oppose Woman Suffrage.” Flyer published by the Woman Anti-Suffrage Association of New York, ca. 1916. Missouri History Museum Archives. Women’s Suffrage Collection.

Upstate New Yorkers Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony became key leaders of the 19th-century American women’s movement after feminists signed the Declaration of Sentiments at Seneca Falls, New York in 1848. Suffragists argued that women were denied full citizenship since they did not have the right to vote. Their sphere of action restricted them to the home. Many of the early suffragists argued that women did not have equal access to education and employment, and that they gave up their independent legal status once they were married due to a system of “coverture” (where women’s legal rights were subsumed or covered by her husband). Women would give their husbands their inheritance from their families, control over property, and their wages if they worked, so that husbands could make financial decisions for the family. In the case of an unhappy marriage, restrictive divorce laws made it difficult for women to divorce their husbands or obtain custody of children. Early suffragists like Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton, who believed not only in the right to vote but far-reaching gender equality, were seen as radical since many men and women in the mid-19th century upheld the traditional division between gender roles, adamantly believing that women’s service was in the home and raising children.
"We Oppose Woman Suffrage." Flyer published by the Woman Anti-Suffrage Association of New York, ca. 1916. Missouri History Museum Archives. Women's Suffrage Collection.
DOCUMENT BASED QUESTIONS

- Who wrote this flyer? What is the basic argument of the text?
- According to the Woman Anti-Suffrage Association of New York, how do the roles of men and women differ?
- How do the authors of this flyer view women’s relationship to the government and politics? What assumptions about women does the text rely on to persuade the reader?
- How do the authors of this flyer describe woman suffragists? What is their criticism?
INTRODUCING RESOURCES 3 & 4


On May 21, 1910, some 10,000 New Yorkers gathered in Union Square to cheer for speakers demanding that women be granted the right to vote. The rally, the largest woman suffrage demonstration yet held in the country, symbolized New York City’s increasingly prominent role in the national movement for votes for women. After 1900, New York City activists provided the cause with much of its funding and leadership. Carrie Chapman Catt, Rosalie Jones, and Harriot Stanton Blatch introduced strategies of mass organizing and publicity as the suffrage movement grew in the 1910s. Immigrant working-class women partnered with middle-class professionals and members of New York’s elite, forging a movement that crossed class and ethnic lines. As the country’s media capital, New York could attract a national audience for its demonstrations, speeches, and parades. As Catt declared in 1909, “New York is the battleground of the whole nation.”
DOCUMENT BASED QUESTIONS

- In resources 2 & 3, what tactics are the woman suffragists using to persuade the public?
- What do you think Nora Blatch de Forest meant in her letter about starting an open air campaign?
- How do these two documents respond to the anti-suffragists’ claim that “the demand for the Ballot is made by a small minority of women” and that it is the “attempt of a minority to force its will upon the majority”?
- Who are the suffragists emulating when they march in a parade? What statement are they making?
- How would demonstrating and protesting on public street corners break with traditional standards of “proper” female behavior?
RESOURCES 4


*TWELVE REASONS WHY WOMEN SHOULD VOTE*

1. BECAUSE it is the foundation of all political liberty that those who obey the Law should have a voice in choosing those who make the Law.

2. BECAUSE most Laws affect women as much as men, and some Laws affect women more than they do men.

3. BECAUSE the Laws which affect women are now passed without consulting them.

4. BECAUSE Laws affecting children should be regarded from the woman’s point of view as well as the man’s.

5. BECAUSE questions affecting the home come up for consideration in every session of the Legislature and of Congress.

6. BECAUSE women have experience which should be helpfully brought to bear on legislation.

7. BECAUSE to deprive women of the vote is to lower their position in common estimation.

8. BECAUSE the possession of the vote would increase the sense of responsibility among women toward questions of public importance.

9. BECAUSE public-spirited mothers mean public-spirited sons.

10. BECAUSE large numbers of intelligent, thoughtful, hard-working women desire the franchise.

11. BECAUSE the objections raised against their having the franchise are based on sentiment, not on reason.

12. BECAUSE to sum up all reasons in one—IT IS FOR THE COMMON GOOD OF ALL.

WOMEN SUFFRAGE PARTY

27 Lafayette Avenue

Brooklyn, N.Y.
DOCUMENT BASED QUESTIONS

- Who wrote this flyer? What is the basic argument of the text?
- How do the first four reasons on this flyer address the third point on the anti-suffrage flyer?
- What groups of women do you imagine the suffragists hoped to appeal to in reasons #5 and #10?
- What assumption about women are the suffragists addressing in reason #11?
- Why do you think the suffragists conclude with reason #12?
- Do you notice a strategy in how these 12 reasons were ordered?
ACTIVITY

The above photograph features two prominent activists—Harriot Stanton Blatch and Rose Schneiderman.

- Harriot Stanton Blatch was the daughter of pioneering suffragist Elizabeth Cady Stanton. She was college educated, and after returning home from England she sought to broaden support for the Women's Suffrage Movement by joining with the leadership of the Women's Trade Union League. She founded the Equality League of Self-Supporting Women in 1907 to recruit working class women into the suffrage movement and continue collaborating with prominent society women. The core membership of the league consisted of working class women who played a large role in marching in the suffrage parade of 1910 that Blatch helped organize through the League.

- Rose Schneiderman was a Russian Jewish immigrant and prominent garment union activist. She participated in the Uprising of 20,000 shirtwaist workers led by the International Ladies Garment Workers' Union in 1909. Later, she would become president of the National Women's Trade Union League. For Rose Schneiderman, suffrage was the means for acquiring economic rights.
ACTIVITY (CONT’D)

Step 1: Divide the room into two groups. Group 1 will represent Harriot Stanton Blatch meeting with other suffrage leaders who were college educated like Carrie Chapman Catt and Rosalie Jones. Group 2 will represent Rose Schneiderman meeting with Leonora O’Reilly, a trade unionist who had been introduced to factory work at a young age. Each group should brainstorm how the vote would further the goals and conditions of women, specifically women in their prospective communities.

Step 2: Harriot Stanton Blatch and Rose Schneiderman meet (prior to when this photograph was taken). Select one volunteer from each group to enact the conversation between these two suffrage leaders. Both figures should share their notes from their previous meetings with other suffragists to see what concerns they share and where their priorities might differ. The two will then consider how they might build membership in the suffrage party and inspire more people to join the cause and demonstrate in the upcoming marches.

Before enacting this conversation, all the other students will be given a Venn diagram. They will be asked to record moments when the two might have found common ground and where their priorities do not overlap. (Note, this can also happen as a class afterwards if preferred).

Step 3: Based on what each student recorded in the intersection on their Venn diagrams, as a class, students will write a running list of what they imagined Harriot Stanton Blatch and Rose Schneiderman called out to the crowd gathered by Wall Street, captured in the photograph above.

Step 4: Ask the students to debrief what they learned from this exercise. What are the necessary tools that the activists have to use to build a broad coalition? And how did the concerns shared by both groups compare to what was written in the 12 Reasons flyer? Ask if the students noticed any parallels.
ADDITIONAL READING

THE NEW YORK TIMES ARTICLES

“Women's Political Views” by Harriot Stanton Blatch, June 5, 1914, is a letter to The New York Times’s editor explaining why a discussion of women’s political views would confuse the important issue of suffrage. http://query.nytimes.com/mem/archive-free/pdf?res=9A07E5DA133EE733A25750C1A9609C946596D6CF


CONTEMPORARY CONNECTIONS


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SOURCES


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