THE 15TH AND 19TH AMENDMENTS TO THE U.S. CONSTITUTION

The Split over Suffrage

NEW YORK STATE SOCIAL STUDIES CORE CURRICULUM, GRADES 7/8:
UNITED STATES AND NEW YORK STATE HISTORY

UNIT FIVE  Life in the New Nation
Chapter III: The Preindustrial Age: 1790–1860’s
http://www.emsc.nysed.gov/ciai/socst/pub/sscore1.pdf (page 64)

These questions and documents can be used in conjunction with the New York State Education Department core curriculum for grades 7/8 Social Studies: United States and New York State History. This lesson will also be useful for Unit Six: Division and Reunion, Chapter Three: results of the Civil War. Students will be able to discuss the influential social changes at the time such as the changing role of women and the Abolition movement.

FOCUS QUESTION
How was the struggle for suffrage by African Americans and women similar and/or different?

MATERIALS
15th, 19th Amendments, Frederick Douglass letter to Josephine Sophie White Griffing, biographies for Douglass and Griffing, Susan B. Anthony, and Elizabeth Cady Stanton, glossary of terms, Seneca Falls Declaration of Sentiments.

PROCEDURE
• Teacher gives students the list of characteristics from the Voter Quality Cards.
• Class prioritizes the characteristics according to what matters to them the most.
• Each student receives a Voter Quality Card.
• Teacher chooses an issue (next field trip, amount of free time, length of next paper, etc.) and tells students that the class is going to vote; however, only the people holding the cards for the top three choices from the prioritized list get to vote.

REFLECT: ASK STUDENTS:
• Was this fair? Why or why not?
• Was it democratic? Why or why not?
• Are there people in our country who cannot vote? (Who?)
• Have there been times in our history when certain people have not been able to vote? (Who?)

The class should discuss issues related to those who have not been allowed to vote in the past.
• Students receive the biographies, glossary and Douglass letter.
• Students read through the letter once on their own, taking notes on points of view. Prompts may include: Who is writing the letter and what is his point of view? To whom is he writing and what can you infer is her point of view? Charts are a good way to keep track of both perspectives.
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• In pairs, students discuss the letter, discussing the points of view (for this exercise, low-level readers should be paired with higher-ones).

Bring the class together to discuss.

DEBATE

• Students are given the chance to choose a side: women’s suffrage or suffrage for African Americans. (If class does not split well, create two sides.)
• Explain that only one group can get the vote and give the Seneca Falls Declaration to the group fighting for the women’s vote.
• Each side is responsible for defending why their side should get the vote.
• Groups meet and come up with reasons why their side should get the vote based on the Douglass letter and Seneca Falls Declaration.
• Debate the two sides—the debate is up to teacher discretion. Formal debates include opening and closing statements as well as question and response time. A good strategy for hearing from all students is to hand out index cards before the debate starts. Once a student has spoken, the index card is taken away and that student may not speak again, but may help his or her team.

REFLECT

Hand out the 15th and 19th Amendments. Read them together as a class. Note the years each Amendment was passed. Ask students to reflect on why it took so long for women to get the vote even though it was being discussed at the time that the 15th Amendment was added to the Constitution.

JOURNAL

Based on the readings and debate today, what would you write back to Frederick Douglass if you were Josephine White Griffing?

FOLLOW-UP/HOMEWORK

• Compare/contrast the Seneca Falls Declaration to the Declaration of Independence.
• Formalize your journal entry on Griffing’s response.
• Interview family/friends about their voting habits and if they think the right to vote is something worth fighting for.
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DISCOVERING HISTORY IN TODAY’S NEW YORK TIMES

Descriptions of historic events in textbooks are often based on the original newspaper accounts. These questions help you compare the past with current reports in The New York Times.

1. Select a current letter to the editor of The New York Times on the subject of human rights. Compare and contrast this letter with the letter from Frederick Douglass to Josephine White Griffing.

2. Compose a letter to the editor of The Times based on a news article in The Times about human rights abuses or disenfranchisement somewhere in the world. Study the letter written by Frederick Douglass to Josephine White Griffing and incorporate his passion and logic in your writing. Follow the instructions on the Editorial page or the Information and Services Directory to submit your letter.

3. The Constitution of the United States is often referred to in news reports. Collect examples from current issues of The Times. Create a poster with your clippings. Write a title and a paragraph for your poster explaining how these articles are related.
### The 15th and 19th Amendments to the U.S. Constitution

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>You have a Play Station</th>
<th>You have an Xbox</th>
<th>You have a dog</th>
<th>You have a fish</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>You have a cat</td>
<td>You have your own room</td>
<td>You are wheelchair bound</td>
<td>Your parents are married</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You have 2 siblings</td>
<td>Your parents speak English</td>
<td>Your family is wealthy</td>
<td>Your family is middle class</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Your parents do not speak English</td>
<td>You have freckles</td>
<td>Your family owns their own home</td>
<td>You are a convicted felon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>You were not born in the United States but have lived here for 10 years</td>
<td>You were not born in the United States but lived here for 10 days</td>
<td>You are 10 years old</td>
<td>You cannot read</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>You are mentally ill</td>
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15TH AMENDMENT TO THE UNITED STATES CONSTITUTION


Fortieth Congress of the United States of America;
At the First Session.
Begun and held at the city of Washington, on Monday, the seventh day of December, one thousand eight hundred and eighty-eight.

A RESOLUTION

Proposing an amendment to the Constitution of the United States.

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, (two-thirds of both Houses concurring) That the following article be proposed to the legislatures of the several States as an amendment to the Constitution of the United States, which, when ratified by three-fourths of said legislatures shall be valid as part of the Constitution, namely:

Article XV.

Section 1. The right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of race, color, or previous condition of servitude.

Section 2. The Congress shall have power to enforce this article by appropriate legislation.

[Signatures]

Speaker of the House of Representatives

President of the Senate
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19TH AMENDMENT TO THE UNITED STATES CONSTITUTION

Sixty-sixth Congress of the United States of America;

At the First Session,

Begun and held at the City of Washington on Monday, the sixteenth day of May, one thousand nine hundred and nineteen.

JOINT RESOLUTION
Proposing an amendment to the Constitution extending the right of suffrage to women.

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled (two-thirds of each House concurring therein), That the following article is proposed as an amendment to the Constitution, which shall be valid to all intents and purposes as part of the Constitution when ratified by the legislatures of three-fourths of the several States.

"ARTICLE

"The right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of sex.

"Congress shall have power to enforce this article by appropriate legislation."

Speaker of the House of Representatives.

Vice President of the United States and President of the Senate.
My dear Friend:
I am impelled by no lack of generosity in refusing to come to Washington to speak in behalf of woman’s suffrage. The right of woman to vote is as sacred in my judgment as that of man, and I am quite willing at any time to hold up both my hands in favor of this right. It does not however follow that I can come to Washington or go elsewhere to deliver lectures upon this special subject. I am now devoting myself to a cause not more sacred, certainly more urgent, because it is one of life and death to the long-enslaved people of this country; and this is: Negro suffrage. While the negro is mobbed, beaten, shot, stabbed, hanged,
burnt, and is the target of all that is malignant in the North and all that is murderous in the South, his claims may be preferred by me without exposing in any wise myself to the imputation of narrowness or meanness towards the cause of woman. As you very well know, woman has a thousand ways to attach herself to the governing power of the land and already exerts an honorable influence on the course of legislation. She is the victim of abuses, to be sure, but it cannot be pretended I think that her cause is as urgent as that of ours. I never suspected you of sympathizing with Miss Anthony and Mrs. Stanton in their course. Their principle is: that no negro shall be enfranchised while woman is not. Now, considering that white men have been enfranchised always and colored men have not, the conduct of these white women, whose husbands, fathers and brothers are voters, does not seem generous.

Very truly yours,

Fred Douglass
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GLOSSARY FOR DOUGLASS LETTER

abolitionists People who supported completely ending slavery (plural of the noun “abolitionist.”) Related words: abolish (verb), abolition (noun), abolitionism (noun).

advocated Supported, spoke and/or wrote in favor of someone or something (past tense of the verb “advocate”). Related words: advocate (noun).

conduct Behavior (noun – can also be used as a verb meaning behave).

convention Large gathering of people to meet for a particular purpose (noun). Related word: convene (verb).

emancipation The act of freeing, especially freeing from slavery (noun). Related word: emancipate (verb).

enfranchised Provided with citizenship, especially the right to vote (predicate adjective of the verb “enfranchise”). Related words: enfranchise (verb), franchise (noun), enfranchisement (noun), disenfranchise (verb), disenfranchisement (noun).

exerts Makes a great effort, put into action (verb). Related word: exertion (noun).

exposing Leaving open to harm or danger, revealing, verb. Related word: exposure (noun).

honorable Respectable (adjective). Related word: honor (noun and verb).

impelled Urged, pushed to do something (predicate adjective of the verb “impel”).

imputation Accusation (noun). Related word: impute (verb).

malignant Causing injury, dangerous, evil (adjective). Related word: malignancy (noun).

merger The joining of two or more groups or businesses (noun). Related word: merge (verb).

recruitment Encouraging people to become members (noun). Related words: recruit (noun and verb), recruiter (noun).

suffrage The right to vote (noun).

suffragists People who supported the expansion of the right to vote, especially to women (plural of the noun “suffragist”).
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FREDERICK DOUGLASS, 1818–1895, was born into slavery in Maryland. He escaped from slavery when he was twenty years old and quickly became one of the nation’s leading abolitionists, lecturing throughout the entire country and publishing antislavery newspapers. Seeing the connections between abolition and women’s rights, he was a participant in the 1848 Seneca Falls Woman’s Rights Convention. During the Civil War, he advocated slave emancipation to President Abraham Lincoln and actively supported the recruitment of African Americans into the U.S. Army.

SUSAN B. ANTHONY, 1820–1906 (right), became the leading public face of the women’s rights movement, because, unlike Stanton, she remained unmarried and without children, allowing her to travel extensively in support of the cause. She also became an activist in the abolitionist movement, becoming a lecturer for the American Anti-Slavery Movement in 1856 and during the Civil War organized the Women’s Loyal National League, which lobbied for the passage of the Thirteenth Amendment, which abolished slavery. After the Civil War, she split with other suffragists who supported the Fifteenth Amendment.

JOSEPHINE SOPHIE WHITE GRIFFING, 1816–1872 (not pictured), was born in Hebron, Connecticut, but after her marriage in 1835 she moved to Litchfield, Ohio. In Ohio her home was a safe house for fugitive slaves escaping to freedom. In 1849 she began to speak in public at anti-slavery conventions. During the Civil War, she became active in organizations to aid freedmen and soldiers and lobbied President Abraham Lincoln to organize the Freedmen’s Bureau to aid the newly emancipated slaves. Like so many women abolitionists, she became a suffragist and served as secretary of the National Woman Suffrage Association.

ELIZABETH CADY STANTON, 1815–1902, born in Johnstown, New York, was one of the leading advocates of women’s rights in the nineteenth century. She and her husband, Henry Stanton, were active abolitionists. When they attended the World Anti-Slavery Convention in London in 1840, Stanton became outraged when the Convention refused to seat her and the other women delegates. She turned this outrage to action in 1848, when she and other women organized the Seneca Falls Woman’s Rights Convention. She also co-authored the Convention’s Declaration of Sentiments, which made a revolutionary call for women’s equality. She worked closely with Susan B. Anthony, whom she met in 1851, forming a lifelong partnership to advance women’s rights. After the Civil War, Stanton and Anthony formed the National Woman Suffrage Association in support of women’s suffrage. They opposed the Fifteenth Amendment because it gave African American men the right to vote but did nothing to advance women’s rights. In doing so they broke with other suffragists, who believed it was “the Negro’s hour” and formed the American Woman’s Suffrage Association. Throughout her life Stanton remained a leading thinker and activist in the women’s rights movement. She engineered the merger of the two competing suffrage movements in 1890, becoming its first president.
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THE FIRST CONVENTION
EVER CALLED TO DISCUSS THE
Civil and Political Rights of Women,

SENeca Falls, N. Y., JUly 19, 20, 1848.

WOMAN’S RIGHTS CONVENTION.

A Convention to discuss the social, civil, and religious condition and rights of woman will be held in the Wesleyan Chapel, at Seneca Falls, N. Y., on Wednesday and Thursday, the 19th and 20th of July current; commencing at 10 o’clock A. M. During the first day the meeting will be exclusively for women, who are earnestly invited to attend. The public generally are invited to be present on the second day, when Lucretia Mott, of Philadelphia, and other ladies and gentlemen, will address the Convention.*

*This call was published in the Seneca County Courier, July 14, 1848, without any signatures. The movers of this Convention, who drafted the call, the declaration and resolutions were Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Lucretia Mott, Martha C. Wright, Mary Ann McClintock, and Jane C. Hunt.

DECLARATION OF SENTIMENTS.

When, in the course of human events, it becomes necessary for one portion of the family of man to assume among the people of the earth a position different from that which they have hitherto occupied, but one to which the laws of nature and of nature’s God entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes that impel them to such a course.

We hold these truths to be self-evident: that all men and women 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; that to secure these rights governments are instituted, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed. Whenever any form of government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the right of those who suffer from it to refuse allegiance to it, and to insist upon the institution of a new government, laying its foundation on such principles, and organizing its powers in such form as to them shall seem most likely to effect their safety and happiness. Prudence, indeed, will dictate that governments long established should not be changed for light and transient causes; and accordingly, all experience hath shown that mankind are more disposed to suffer, while evils are sufferable, than to right themselves by abolishing the forms to which they were accustomed. But when a long train of abuses and usurpations, pursing invariably the same object evinces a design to reduce them under absolute despotism, it is their duty to throw off such government, and to provide new guards for their future security. Such has been the patient sufferance of the women under this government, and such is now the necessity which constrains them to demand the equal station to which they are entitled.

The history of mankind is a history of repeated injuries and usurpations on the part of man toward woman, having in direct object the establishment of an absolute tyranny over her. To prove this, let facts be submitted to a candid world.
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He has never permitted her to exercise her inalienable right to the elective franchise.

He has compelled her to submit to laws, in the formation of which she had no voice.

He has withheld from her rights which are given to the most ignorant and degraded men—both natives and foreigners.

Having deprived her of this first right of a citizen, the elective franchise, thereby leaving her without representation in the halls of legislation, he has oppressed her on all sides.

He has made her, if married, in the eye of the law, civilly dead.

He has taken from her all right in property, even to the wages she earns.

He has made her, morally, an irresponsible being, as she can commit many crimes with impunity, provided they be done in the presence of her husband. In the covenant of marriage, she is compelled to promise obedience to her husband, he becoming, to all intents and purposes, her master—the law giving him power to deprive her of her liberty, and to administer chastisement.

He has so framed the laws of divorce, as to what shall be the proper causes of divorce; in case of separation, to whom the guardianship of the children shall be given; as to be wholly regardless of the happiness of women—the law, in all cases, going upon a false supposition of the supremacy of man, and giving all power into his hands.

After depriving her of all rights as a married woman, if single and the owner of property, he has taxed her to support a government which recognizes her only when her property can be made profitable to it.

He has monopolized nearly all the profitable employments, and from those she is permitted to follow, she receives but a scanty remuneration.

He closes against her all the avenues to wealth and distinction, which he considers most honorable to himself. As a teacher of theology, medicine, or law, she is not known.

He has denied her the facilities for obtaining a thorough education—all colleges being closed against her.

He allows her in Church, as well as State, but a subordinate position, claiming, Apostolic authority for her exclusion from the ministry, and, with some exceptions, from any public participation in the affairs of the Church.

He has created a false public sentiment, by giving to the world a different code of morals for men and women, by which moral delinquencies which exclude women from society, are not only tolerated but deemed of little account in man.

He has usurped the prerogative of Jehovah himself, claiming it as his right to assign for her a sphere of action, when that belongs to her conscience and to her God.

He has endeavored, in every way that he could, to destroy her confidence in her own powers, to lessen her self-respect, and to make her willing to lead a dependent and abject life.

Now, in view of this entire disfranchisement of one-half the people of this country, their social and religious degradation,—in view of the unjust laws above mentioned, and because women do feel themselves aggrieved, oppressed, and fraudulently deprived of their most sacred rights, we insist that they have immediate admission to all the rights and privileges which belong to them as citizens of the United States.

In entering upon the great work before us, we anticipate no small amount of misconception, misrepresentation, and ridicule; but we shall use every instrumentality within our power to effect our object. We shall employ agents, circulate tracts, petition the state and national legislatures, and endeavor to enlist the pulpit and the press in our behalf. We hope this Convention will be followed by a series of Conventions, embracing every part of the country.

Firmly relying upon the final triumph of the Right and the True, we do this day affix our signatures to this declaration.

Lucretia Mott, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Lucretia Newbon Fote, Mary Ann McClintock, Martha C. Wright, Jane C. Hunt, Amy Post, Catharine A. F. Stebbins, Mary H. Hallowell, Charlotte Woodward, Sarah Hallowell.

Richard P. Hunt, Samuel D. Tilmus, Eliska Fute, Frederich Douglass, Elias J. Doty, James Mott, Thomas McClintock.

This Declaration was unanimously adopted and signed by 32 men and 68 women.