

TEACHING TOLERANCE



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MIDDLE & UPPER GRADES ACTIVITY

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EXPANDING VOTING RIGHTS

How Women Won the Vote

Have students divide into three groups, and give each group a different Strategy Card. After each group reads and discusses the card, have them create a presentation for the class showing how their group went about trying to win votes for women.



STRATEGY CARD

Moral Persuasion

In the 1800s, many Americans thought that men and women were completely different from each other. They thought that men were intellectual and women were emotional. They thought that men were worldly and women were spiritual. They thought that men belonged out in public and women belonged in the home. They believed that men were corrupt and women were morally pure.

Large numbers of women who held these beliefs wanted the right to vote. With your group, think and talk about how they might have made their case. Since they agreed that men belonged in public (including politics) and women belonged in the home, how do you think they understood their pursuit of votes for women?

Once you've come up with some ideas, see if you were right and find out more by doing some research. Read "[Women in the Home](#)," published by the National American Women's Suffrage Association. You can also look in a history textbook, or if you have computer access try searching online "women's suffrage" "home protection" and "women's suffrage" "domesticity".

STRATEGY CARD

A Constitutional Amendment

Many women wanted women to have the right to vote because they believed that women were men's equals. At the Seneca Falls Convention in 1848, these women wrote a Declaration of Sentiments that said that "all men and women are created equal." During Woodrow Wilson's presidency, these women protested publicly. They even picketed at the White House, which was both illegal and considered terribly unladylike. These suffragists believed that the federal government had to grant women the right to vote, the same way it granted freed black men the right to vote after the Civil War.

How do you think these women pursued their goal of votes for women? Once you've come up with some ideas, see if you were right and find out more by doing some research. You can look in a history textbook, or if you have computer access try searching online "women's suffrage" "National Women's Party" or "women's suffrage" "Alice Paul." Watch this [video](#) or read the [transcript](#) about suffragist Alice Paul, who fought for a Constitutional Amendment granting women the right to vote.



STRATEGY CARD



State-by-State

Many women wanted to secure women’s right to vote one state at a time. They believed that that would be the most successful strategy to get votes for women. These women achieved some success. Fifteen states and the territory of Alaska had full voting rights for women by the time the 19th Amendment was ratified in 1920. At the state-by-state level, women used a variety of arguments to make their case. Look, for example, at “[Votes for Women/The Woman’s Reason](#).”

Find out more about how these women pursued their goal of votes for women. Do some research on the subject, including [this map](#) that shows which states granted women full or partial voting rights before 1920.