

Grade Level **5-12**

Class Periods **3**

Goals/Objectives/Student Outcomes:

Students will:

- Learn about the 72-year long effort for the enfranchisement of women in the United States.
- Understand Iowan Carrie Lane Chapman Catt's leadership role in that effort.
- Describe the work of the suffragists and the strategies that led to eventual passage of the 19th amendment to the United States Constitution.
- Analyze the major historical events between 1848 and 1920 regarding women's rights.
- Compare and contrast the arguments regarding women's vote.
- Distinguish the differences between women's place in society before and after the passage of the 19th Amendment.
- Describe Carrie Lane Chapman's Iowa background and leadership in the crusade for women's right to vote.

Older students will:

- Compare opportunities for women now with the pre-1920 opportunities.
- Extrapolate from the study of the 1848 situation regarding violence against women and assess the current situation regarding violence against women.

Materials:

1. Videos
2. Poster board
3. *Goldfinch* articles

Background:

Until 1920 only males were granted full citizenship in the United States. Women were treated as "second class citizens" because they could not vote. Women in 26 other countries had already won the right to vote before women in the United States gained that right. (Using an Overhead projector, show the cartoon about the word "suffrage" from *The Goldfinch*, 1989, p.31 as an introduction.)

How did women's suffrage come about in our country? Who were some of the courageous crusaders for women's right to vote?

Crusaders for the right to vote first had to organize in order to win the right to vote. The video, "Carrie Chapman Catt, Honoring the Dream," describes the organization and goals of the National Woman Suffrage Association. It was not easy to convince male lawmakers to change the United States Constitution. Supporters of women's suffrage had to be articulate debaters to convince others to support the issue.

What were some of the arguments for and against women's suffrage? Who actively supported suffrage in Iowa? Do we hear any similar arguments today on issues affecting women?

During the long effort to achieve the right to vote—the right of full citizenship—thousands of women wrote letters, button-holed their legislators, honed their persuasive speaking skills, and sold their rings and brooches to gain financial support. In the early years, women traveled by train—or even side car, horse drawn cart, bicycle, and carriage to make their views known.

During the last 20 years of that effort, Iowan Carrie Chapman Catt was the principal leader in the suffrage movement. She was a superb organizer and her skills and strategies were a key to her success. Once the 19th Amendment was passed, she realized the crusade was won but more work was needed to educate people to be responsible citizens. To accomplish this she founded an organization in 1920 to educate people how to exercise their right to vote and to prepare women to take their place in public office as elected and appointed officials. That organization is the League of Women Voters.

Procedure:

Lesson I

Objectives:

1. To view the video documentary of the 72-year effort to gain the right to vote.
2. To recognize the names of major national leaders in the struggle.

Introduce women's suffrage by giving a brief history of the subject beginning with the Seneca Falls Women's Rights meeting of New York in 1848. Describe Susan B. Anthony's motivation for action, her associates in the Seneca Falls meeting, other women across the nation such as Amelia Bloomer—who lived in Council Bluffs and was an early crusader for women's right to vote—as well as the men who worked for women's suffrage.

Divide the class arbitrarily into two groups (not by gender, race or some other "loaded" dimension) then let half the class vote on some decisions that would affect them all. This exercise effectively leads into a comparison with the disenfranchising of half of the population.

Share the questions that will be asked at the end of the unit. This allows students to be alert to important concepts as they proceed through the unit and makes the learning of these concepts their responsibility.

Use a timeline (large poster) such as the one pictured in *Goldfinch* 11 (Sept. 1989): 16-17 to give the broad picture.

In addition to one or more of the above exercises, view the video, "Carrie Chapman Catt, Honoring the Dream."

Assigned Reading for the Day:

Grade 5—*Goldfinch* 11 (September 1989): "Women Who Worked for the Vote," p. 19; "Suffrage Scrapbook," pp. 22-23; "If You Were a Woman in 1880," p. 24.

Middle School—*Goldfinch* 11 (September 1989): "Documents of Justice," p. 13; *Goldfinch* 8 (February 1987): "Amending the Constitution," pp. 12-13.

High School—*The Book of Distinguished American Women*: "Susan B. Anthony," pp. 16-17; "Lucy Stone," pp. 92-93.

Assignment for Day 2:

While watching video, list arguments for and against women's vote.

Lesson II

Objectives:

1. To state the arguments used for and against women's suffrage in the 1900-1920 era.
2. To describe the role of Iowan Carrie Chapman Catt and other Iowans in the effort for suffrage in Iowa and the United States.

Introduce the subject by reviewing the video used in Lesson I and relating the assigned readings. Help the students understand the period 1915-25 by using statistics, the Twenties and by drawing upon their assigned readings.

Group them into small groups (dyads) and ask them to develop arguments that might have been used between 1900-1920 for and against giving women the right to vote. After allowing them up to 10 minutes, use those groupings to stage a debate.

Role playing, stage a speech as Carrie Chapman Catt might have made in front of a mixed group of citizens of 1900-1920. Assign roles such as hecklers, supporters, lawmakers, and presenters.

Use a chart to compare the arguments for and against allowing women to vote. Let students role-play arguments in support of or in opposition to the issue.

Assigned Reading:

Grade 5—"Women Should Vote, Women Should Not Vote," *Goldfinch* 11 (September 1989), p. 5.

Middle School—Use the above and "Men Who Worked for Suffrage," *Goldfinch* 11 (September 1989), pp. 14-15.

High School—Above resources and *The Book of Distinguished American Women*: "Alice Paul," p. 78 and "Jeanette Rankin," p. 80,

related materials in other suggested resources and Laura Kline, "A Woman's Place," *Visions*, Iowa State University, (Fall 1990): 27-30

Lesson III

Objectives:

1. To analyze Carrie Chapman Catt's place in the suffrage movement in Iowa and across the nation.

2. To relate women's wish to be part of the governing process with current day participation in the electoral process, for example, universal suffrage (voting by all citizens), females holding appointive or elective office, efforts to pass the Equal Rights Amendment in Iowa.

a. Use the activities "Who Can Vote When?" or "How Much and When?" a crossword puzzle from *Goldfinch* 8 (February 1987).

b. Arrange to have a current voting booth brought into class, invite a member of the League of Women Voters to speak about voting and let students actually use the booth to "vote." The county auditor would be the right person to contact regarding the voting booth.

c. Discussion: What might have been the feelings of women who couldn't vote? What activities at Iowa State College might have prepared Carrie for her leadership role in the suffrage movement? Why did Carrie Chapman Catt feel it necessary to call for a new organization, the League of Women Voters? Do you think people feel the privilege and responsibility of being part of the governing process today? If Carrie and other suffragists were living today, what might they be working to accomplish?

Assigned Reading:

Grade 5—"Women who worked for the vote in Iowa," *Goldfinch* 11 (September 1989): 19 and "One Iowan's Life, Carrie Chapman Catt," *Goldfinch* 11 (September 1989): 6.

Middle School—Above resource and "Keeping Up with the Times" in student text, *Iowa Heritage in the American Revolution*.

High School—Above resources and selections on Carrie Chapman Catt in Louise Noun, *Strong Minded Women*; Nancy Neumann, *The League at 75*; or Mary E. Palmer, "Carrie Chapman Catt"

Assessment of Outcomes:

In an essay or class debate present arguments for and against women receiving the vote.

Students will:

- describe in a class discussion the major players and their contributions in the suffrage movement.
- place on a timeline the important events leading to the passage of the 19th amendment and explain in essay form the strategies employed by suffragists.
- summarize in writing Carrie Lane Chapman Can's back-ground and her significant role in the crusade for women's right to vote.

Extensions and Adaptations:

Take a field trip to the Iowa Capitol to see the Iowa Women's Hall of Fame Exhibit.

Take a field trip to Charles City to see Carrie's girlhood home and have her work described by Rhoda McCartney, 515-228-3336, President of the 19th Amendment Society of Charles City.

Invite Jane Cox, playwright and actress in the play "Yellow Rose of Suffrage" to present at a student assembly. Jane Cox, Iowa State University Theater, 210 Pearson, 515-294-9766.

While in Ames, tour Carrie Chapman Catt Hall, Iowa State University, contact Carole Horowitz, Iowa State University, 515-292-9454.

Use the "Know, Want to know, Learned" process to review the unit.

Write articles for a newspaper on the passage of the 19th Amendment or prepare articles for a special edition of the newspaper.

Invite women who voted for the first time in the 1920s and '30s who could recall their feelings at being able to vote for the first time.

Contact your local League of Women Voters and invite several members to share their knowledge on voting and participation in the political process.

Plan a special event for the community to coincide with Women's History Week in March.

Resources:

Supplemental Curriculum Unit Available:

Eisenberg, Bonnie, "Woman Suffrage Movement 1848-1920," available from National Women's History Project, 7738 Bell Road, Windsor, CA 95492; 707-838-6000. This is an excellent unit designed to be used in a history or government class in grades 5-12. It includes questions for research and discussion, historical photos, suggested class activities, and information about African-American suffragists. It would be a good resource to accompany the unit on Iowa Suffrage.

Videos:

1. "Carrie Chapman Catt, Honoring the Dream," 21-minutes. Tells the story of the effort to get the 19th Amendment passed and focuses on Carrie Chapman Catt's participation and leadership in the suffrage movement. Available from Iowa State University Media Distribution, 112 Pearson Hall, Iowa State University, Ames, IA 50011, 515-294-1540, Rental Price—\$11.00 plus shipping, Catalogue No. 47809 or League of Women Voters of Iowa, 4815 University, Suite 3, Des Moines, IA 50311-3303, 515-277-0814. Rental Price—\$5.00. Available for purchase from Rhoda McCartney, 19th Amendment Society, P.O. Box 19, Charles City, IA 50616.

2. "Carrie Chapman Catt, ISU's Most Distinguished Alum," 18 minutes. Available from Iowa State University Media Distribution (Catalogue No. 40002) or League of Women Voters of Iowa. (See #1 for contact information and rental price.)

Books:

1. Mary Gray Peck. *Carrie Chapman Catt: A Biography*. New York: H. W. Wilson Company, 1949.
2. Jacqueline Van Voris. *Carrie Chapman Catt, A Public Life*. New York: Feminist Press, 1987.
3. Louise Noun. *Strong Minded Women*. Ames: Iowa State University, 1969.

4. Eleanor Flexner. *A Century of Struggle: The Woman's Rights Movement in the United States*. New York: 1971.

5. Nettie Rogers Shuler and Carrie Chapman Catt. *Woman Suffrage and Politics*. New York: C. Scribner's Sons, 1923.

6. Nancy Neumann. *The League at 75*. Washington, DC: League of Women Voters.

7. Paula Giddings. *When and Where I Enter: The Impact of Black Women on Race and Sex in America*. New York: Bantam Books, 1984.

8. Aileen Krador. *The Ideas of the Woman Suffrage Movement, 1890-1920*. Garden City: Doubleday Anchor, 1971.

Journals:

1. Louise Noun. "Carrie Chapman Catt—Trouble in Mason City." *The Palimpsest* 74 (Fall 1990): 130-144.
2. Laura Kline. "Woman's Place." *Visions*, Iowa State University (Fall 1990): 27-30.
3. "Carrie Chapman Catt and Woman Suffrage." *Goldfinch* 11 (September 1989).

Other Resources:

1. "Amending the Constitution: Women Suffrage." *Goldfinch* 8 (February 1987): 12-13.
2. National 19th Amendment Society Handout—Chronology of Carrie's Life, Honors and Awards and Sketch of Childhood Home.
3. John Temple Graves. "One of the World's Great Women." *Cosmopolitan* (Feb. 1916): 445.
4. Mary E. Palmer. "Carrie Chapman Catt." *Iowa Voter*, June 1976.
5. Mary Ann Tetreault. "African-American Women's Fight for Woman Suffrage." *IoWoman* 25, No.1.
6. Stephanie Pratt of Iowa Commission on the Status of Women is available to speak to Central Iowa schools and civic and social organizations about woman suffrage during 1995, the 75th anniversary of suffrage. For more information, contact Pratt at 515-281-4470 or 800-558-4427.
7. The Des Moines Playhouse performs a 1/2 hour interactive play about the life of Iowa suffragist Carrie Chapman Catt. The play is especially targeted toward grade school children, with audience interaction following. For more information, contact The Playhouse, 515-277-6261.
8. Joyce Hope Scott. "Black Nationalist Fiction," in *Nationalisms and Sexualities*, Andrew Parker, ed. New York: Rutledge, 1992.

Quotes From Carrie Chapman Catt:

"The chief end of all of us is to build a good society."

"Service to a just cause rewards the worker with more real happiness and satisfaction than any other venture in life."

"Failure is impossible." (Susan B. Anthony's last public words. Carrie always had this motto hanging in her office.)

"We hold these truths to be self evident that all men and women are created equal." (From the Seneca Falls document—Carrie quoted it often.)

"Don't give up. March forward." (Words after a New York defeat)

"I have lived to realize the great dream of my life—the enfranchisement of women."

"We are no longer petitioners, but free and equal citizens." (Upon winning the vote)

"Women have suffered agony of soul which you can never comprehend, that you and your daughters might inherit political freedom."

"Progress is calling to you to make no pause. ACT!" "Fight forward bravely and with great understanding."

"Give yourself." (Closing of her Iowa State College commencement address)

"Working for suffrage is not a duty; it is the privilege of a lifetime."

"The vote is a power, a weapon of offense and a defense, a prayer. Use it intelligently, conscientiously, prayerfully."

"I much prefer to give the little I have to the living causes of this day rather than to a memorial of the past."

"Women, are you ready now to go gather as the women did at Seneca Falls and lay out a program of wrongs still to be righted and of rights to be attained?"

"The national organization had no money, but they agreed to send what was better than silver or gold, Mrs. Carrie Lane Chapman."
(From a Colorado newspaper after the state's successful suffrage campaign)

"I remember the world used to say of a married woman, 'She has clothes, shelter and food. What more can she want?' I am skeptical about the contentment of these women."

"If the women went home as full of convictions as my garments were of perspiration, it was a success."

"With the same consecration to a great cause manifested by the pioneers who set our feet upon the path leading upwards, with the same devotion revealed by those who came after and performed drudgery of weary years, you free women of America, must lead on to the ideal democracy never yet attained, but which alone can salvage civilization."