

Subject: Civics and Government

Grade Level: 9, 10, 11, and 12

Standards:

Standard 5. Students explain the idea of citizenship in the United States, describe the roles of United States citizens, and identify and explain the rights and responsibilities of United States citizens. They also examine how citizens can participate responsibly and effectively in the civic and political life of the United States.

USG.5.8 Describe opportunities available to individuals to contribute to the well-being of their communities and participate responsibly in the political process at local, state and national levels of government.

Standard V.A. What is citizenship?

V.A.1.1.c To achieve this standard, students should be able to explain the idea that citizenship confers equal rights under the law.

Standard V.D What civic dispositions or traits of private and public character are important to the preservation and improvement of American constitutional democracy?

V.D.4 Students should be able to evaluate, take, and defend positions on the importance to American constitutional democracy of dispositions that facilitate thoughtful and effective participation in public affairs.

Standard II.C. What is American political culture?

II.C.1.1. To achieve this standard, students should be able to explain that shared political and civic beliefs and values define an American citizen rather than ethnicity, race, religion, class, language, gender, or national origin.

Materials Needed:

As discussion leader, you will need “How to Conduct a Panel Discussion” ([LINK](#))

Students will need access to:

A computer or laptop or a way to show video in class

Students may need headphones

Access to PBS Learning Media

Access to the internet

LESSON PLAN – WOMEN FOR PRESIDENT

Learning Objectives:

- Recognize gender biases that long prevented women from voting or running for President.
- Highlight the campaigns of a few women who significantly advanced the cause of women’s suffrage.
- Discuss unique experiences and insights that a woman could bring to the Presidency.

Introduction/Anticipatory Set:

Women ran for President long before they were able to vote for President, and their campaigns often highlighted issues that male candidates felt were too hot to handle. Their courage and persistence paid off as several women recently became candidates in the general election. In 2008 and 2016, Hillary Rodham Clinton became the first woman to receive a major party’s nomination as President, and Kamala Harris became the first woman elected Vice President in 2020.

Body of Lesson:

1. Gender biases long prevented women from voting or running for President.
2. Thomas Jefferson and Benjamin Franklin, articulate leaders of early America who helped to shape the U.S. Constitution, had a great deal to say about the rights of women.
 - a. Learning Activity
 - i. Have students read Thomas O. Jewett’s article, “Jefferson’s Views on Women” (<http://alturl.com/vowig>) and Zoe Irene VanZandt’s “Colonial Women through a Franklin Lens” (<http://alturl.com/jsyit>), then write a three-page essay (approximately 750 words) that compares and contrasts the views of these two men.
 - ii. Have students discuss how the gender biases of these men may have influenced the writing of the Constitution.
3. The Presidential campaigns of a few women significantly advanced the cause of women’s suffrage.
 - a. View the video, “Women for President.”
 - b. Learning Activity
 - i. The first two women candidates for President, Victorian Woodhull (1872) and Belva Lockwood (1884 and 1888), campaigned under the banner of the Equal Rights Party.

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- ii. Have students research the history of this party and discuss how it drew attention to the need to allow women to vote in national elections. How did the party advance this effort?
- 4. Some argue that a woman could bring unique experiences and insights to the Presidency.
 - a. Six women won the right to appear in the 2020 Democratic Presidential debates¹:
 - i. Tulsi Gabbard
 - ii. Kirsten Gillibrand
 - iii. Kamala Harris
 - iv. Amy Klobuchar
 - v. Elizabeth Warren
 - vi. Marianne Williamson
 - b. Learning Activity
 - i. Have each student choose one of these candidates, then research her life and policy positions.
 - ii. Select one student to represent each candidate in a panel discussion of this question: What unique experiences and insights might this woman bring to the Presidency?

Summary/Closure

Women have served as president or prime minister of most Western nations, including the United Kingdom, Germany, Greece, Denmark, and Norway. This has not been true of the United States, although several well-qualified women have been candidates for the highest office. Although gender bias is an obstacle, the number of women political leaders continues to grow and American voters elected their first woman Vice President in 2020.

Extension Activities

Bias against women in political leadership may be much higher than surveys would indicate. A 2018 study by Mark Setzler of High Point University² showed that the same respondents are twice as likely to agree with masked statements of gender bias rather than explicit statements of bias, though both types of statements indicate a bias against women. Here are examples:

Explicit Statements of Gender Bias	Masked Statements of Gender Bias
Men make better political leaders than women do.	Men make decisions more quickly than women do.
We have no great women leaders in our history.	Only men are bold enough to deal with foreign leaders.

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I would not vote for a woman candidate for President.	Not enough men would vote for a woman to elect her President.
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Have your students survey voters in your neighborhood using both sets of questions, then let them compare the results. Did your surveys confirm Setzler’s study—i.e., did some people agree with masked statements of gender bias but disagree with explicit statements? How do your students interpret their results? What do your surveys suggest about the prospects of a woman candidate for President?

About the Author: Joe Allison is a writer living in central Indiana. As reference book editor for Thomas Nelson Publishers, he coordinated publication of several supplemental texts for social studies, including *Choosing the President 1980*, by the League of Women Voters; the *Quick Reference Encyclopedia*, by Calvin Linton et al.; and *Nelson’s Encyclopedia for Young Readers*, edited by Laurence Urdang. He served as editorial director of curriculum for Warner Press, Inc., in 2014–2016.

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¹For the qualifications to appear in the 2020 Presidential Debates, see “The Commission on Presidential Debates: An Overview,” <https://www.debates.org/about-cpd/overview/>, accessed February 18, 2022.

²Mark Setzler, “Measuring Bias against Female Political Leadership,” Cambridge University Press, November 16, 2018. <https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/politics-and-gender/article/measuring-bias-against-female-political-leadership/95E3F910AE8AEE6C1DA23CBD27D3A736>, accessed February 18, 2022.