

LESSON PLAN – Women for President

Subject: Women for President

Grade Level: 6-8

Standards:

USG.3.21 Describe the influence of the media and technology on public opinion and public policy.

USG.5.2 Analyze the roles and responsibilities of citizens in Indiana and the United States.

USG.5.7 Explain how citizens in the United States participate in public elections as voters and supporters of candidates for public office.

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.

USG.5.9 Use information from a variety of resources to describe and discuss current American political issues.

Materials Needed:

Students will need access to:

Computer with video capabilities

Computer or paper/pencil to record responses and submit assignments as needed.

Learning Objectives:

- Students will be able to name at least three women who were candidates for president.
- Students will be able to discuss some of the difficulties that Shirley Chisholm faced during her presidential candidacy.
- Students will be able to state why 2018 was declared the “Year of Women”.

Introduction/Anticipatory Set:

In the most recent presidential race, there were at least six female candidates. This has not been the norm throughout history. Several other countries have had women as leaders, but the United States has not. The following is just a brief list of women leaders.

Golda Meir – prime minister of Israel

Indira Gandhi – prime minister of India

Benazir Bhutto – prime minister of Pakistan

Angela Merkel – chancellor of Germany

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Corazon Aquino – president of Philippines

In this lesson, you will learn about women who have run for president in the United States and about some of the difficulties they faced.

Body of Lesson:

Watch the introductory video

Simple Civics video: Women for President (4:40 minutes)

<https://www.pbs.org/video/women-for-president-oycf88/>

2020 – There were more female candidates for presidency in this year than at any time in history.

2018 – This year was declared the “Year of Women” because women were elected to Congress in record numbers.

2016 and 2008 – Hillary Clinton ran for president in the Democratic party

2012 – Michele Bachmann ran for president in the Republican party

1984 – Geraldine Ferraro ran for vice president in the Democratic party

1972 – Shirley Chisholm ran for president

1940 – Gracie Allen ran for president as part of the Surprise party

1872 – Victoria Woodhull ran for president

In 1870, Victoria Woodhull began an unsuccessful run for president. At the time she ran, she did not meet the age requirement of the Constitution to legally be president. Women actually did not have the right to vote. She grew up in Ohio and was a fortune teller. She worked for Cornelius Vanderbilt who was a wealthy railroad owner. He provided financial backing, and she and her sister became the first female stockbrokers on Wall Street.

In 1872, the Equal Rights Party nominated her as a presidential candidate. She selected Frederick Douglass, a former slave and abolitionist, as the vice-presidential candidate. Mr. Douglass did not acknowledge the nomination, and he campaigned for Ulysses S. Grant. Ms. Woodhull owned a newspaper, and she published articles meant to expose people for crimes. She was arrested for sending obscene material through the mail and libel. She was in jail on election day. She did not receive any votes.

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Gracie Allen was a comedian married to George Burns. They had a popular radio show in 1940. In an attempt to increase ratings for the program, Gracie ran for president as a member of the Surprise party. Her campaign slogan was “Down with Common Sense – Vote for Gracie”. While she was not on any state ballots through the usual process, she did receive some write-in votes.

Shirley Chisholm was a nursery school teacher prior to running for the U.S. House of Representatives. She got into politics to address racial and gender inequalities. On November 5, 1968 she became the first African American female in the House of Representatives. On January 25, 1972, she announced her candidacy for president. She was the first Black candidate (male or female) to run for president. Initially she was prevented from participating in televised debates. She filed a complaint the Federal Communications Commission and was finally allowed to participate in one televised debate with the other candidates. She also experienced difficulties just getting her name on the ballot in some states. Despite all of this, she received more than 150 delegate votes at the 1972 Democratic National Convention (this was about 10% of the total votes).

Geraldine Ferraro was a Democratic Representative from New York from 1979 – 1985. She was the first female vice presidential candidate for one of the two major political parties. Walter Mondale was the presidential candidate on the ticket.

Michele Bachmann was a Republican who served in the House of Representative from 2007 – 2015. She was the first woman from Minnesota to be elected to the House of Representatives. She declared her presidential candidacy in 2011 for the 2012 election; however, she finished sixth in the Iowa caucus and withdrew from the race.

After Bill Clinton’s presidential terms were complete, Hillary Clinton successfully ran for Senate. She was the first woman to be elected Senator from the state of New York. She had an unsuccessful run for the Democratic nomination in 2008. She was then appointed as Secretary of State from 2009 to 2013. She is also the first woman to serve as both a Senator and in a presidential cabinet role. In 2016 Hillary became the presidential nominee of the Democratic party but was not successful in the presidential race.

In 2020, six women started their campaigns for president. Elizabeth Warren, Kamala Harris, Kirsten Gillibrand, Amy Klobuchar, Tulsi Gabbard, and Marianne Williamson. Ms. Williamson is an author of self-help books. Tulsi Gabbard is a congressperson from Hawaii. The remaining four are all U.S. Senators. Warren is from Massachusetts; Harris is from California; Gillibrand is from New York; and Klobuchar is from Minnesota. None were successful in their presidential bids; however, Ms. Harris did become the vice-presidential nominee of the Democratic party and the Vice President of the United States.

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Watch this media presentation (there is a You Tube video embedded within) (approximately 20 minutes total).

Shirley Chisholm | 16 for '16 – The Contenders (Media Gallery)

<https://indiana.pbslearningmedia.org/resource/the-contenders-1001-chisholm/the-contenders-1001-chisholm/>

Class Activity

This activity may be completed as individual assignments, group assignments, or as group discussions.

The answers can be delivered verbally in the group setting, or they can be written and submitted as an assignment.

Students should respond to the following questions:

1. Who was the first woman to run for president?
2. Was the candidacy of Gracie Allen a serious one? Why or why not?
3. Who did Shirley Chisholm say she represented during her run for president? What are your thoughts about her candidacy?
4. Ms. Chisholm addressed several problems in her announcement to run for president. Do you think we still have some of those same problems today? If yes, which ones?
5. What do you think are some obstacles that women face in running for president?

Summary/Closure

In the early history of the United States, it was unheard of for women to run for president or any other elected office. In 1870, Victoria Woodhull made an unsuccessful attempt to run. It took one hundred years before another serious female candidate would seek the presidency. Forty years later, the United States has not elected a woman as president. In 2020, a woman was elected as Vice President. More women are running for office in the House of Representatives, in the Senate, and for president.

Extension Activities

Political Postcards | Women's Suffrage and Modern Trailblazers in Washington (60 minutes)

<https://indiana.pbslearningmedia.org/resource/political-postcards/womens-suffrage-and-modern-trailblazers-in-washington-video/>

This website has multiple videos related to women in politics and their potential impact on the future.

<https://indiana.pbslearningmedia.org/collection/and-she-could-be-next-collection/>

PBS Learning Media

New to PBS Learning Media? Click here to learn more and sign up today:

<https://indiana.pbslearningmedia.org/signup/>

Reference websites

The 6 Women Running for President Have Answers by Maya Salam

<https://www.nytimes.com/2019/06/21/us/elections/female-candidates-president.html>

The White House – Hillary Rodham Clinton

<https://www.whitehouse.gov/about-the-white-house/first-families/hillary-rodham-clinton/>

Hillary Clinton

https://ballotpedia.org/Hillary_Clinton

History, Art & Archives United States House of Representatives – Michele Bachmann

<https://history.house.gov/People/Detail/10411>

History, Art & Archives United States House of Representatives – Geraldine Anne Ferraro

<https://history.house.gov/People/Detail/13081>

History Stories – 9 Things You Need to Know About Victoria Woodhull

<https://www.history.com/news/9-things-you-should-know-about-victoria-woodhull>

Suffragist Movement – First Women to Lead Their Countries

<https://www.britannica.com/explore/100women/the-women/first-woman-to-lead-their-country>