

Subject: Equal Rights for Women

Grade Level: 6-8

Standards:

USG.1.7 Define and provide examples of constitutionalism, rule of law, limited government, and popular sovereignty in the United States Constitution and explain the relationship of these constitutional principles to the protection of the rights of individuals.

USG.2.6 Explain how a shared American civic identity is based on commitment to foundational ideas in Founding Era documents and how it has changed through subsequent periods of United States history to present day.

USG.2.8 Explain the history and provide historical and contemporary examples of fundamental principles and values of American political and civic life, including liberty, security, the common good, justice, equality, law and order, rights of individuals, diversity, popular sovereignty, and representative democracy.

USG.5.6 Explain and give examples of important citizen actions that can impact local, state, and federal government as individuals and members of interest groups.

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

4.2.5 Give examples of how citizens can participate in their state government and explain the right and responsibility of voting

8.1.23 Analyze the influence of early individual social reformers and movements such as the abolitionist, feminist, and social reform movements.

Materials Needed:

Students will need access to:

A computer, laptop, tablet, or smartphone

May need paper and pen/pencil

Learning Objectives:

- Be able to identify at least two ways women were treated negatively as they worked for the right to vote.
- Be able to explain what the 19th Amendment means for women's rights.

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- Be able to explain the purpose of Title IX.
- Be able to describe at least one example of how women currently do not have equal rights.
- Be able to identify at least one approach for improving rights for women.

Introduction/Anticipatory Set:

The Preamble to the Declaration of Independence states the following:

“We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness.”

<https://www.archives.gov/founding-docs/declaration>

The Declaration of Independence was written by Thomas Jefferson, who later became the third President of the United States. It was ratified by the Congressional Congress on July 4, 1776 (now known as Independence Day).

<https://www.archives.gov/founding-docs/declaration/how-did-it-happen>

It is notable that the document refers to “all men” only. Women are not included in the statement. At the time the Declaration was written, Mr. Jefferson owned slaves. Slaves (both men and women) were not included in the practical application of the Declaration. The United States has passed laws since that time that address the equality of people of color and of women. In this lesson, we will learn about equal rights for women.

Body of Lesson:

Watch the video *Equal Rights for Women* by Dr. Terri Jett (4:34 minutes)

<https://www.wfyi.org/programs/simple-civics/television/equal-rights-for-women>

The 19th Amendment to the Constitution

The 19th Amendment was passed by Congress on June 4, 1919. It was ratified by the States on August 18, 1920. This amendment legally guaranteed white women the right to vote. Women’s suffrage is a term used for this right to vote. It was a long battle to obtain this right. Before 1920, only men could vote in elections. The article in this link covers the story of women’s suffrage.

<https://www.archives.gov/milestone-documents/19th-amendment>

Highlights of the Suffrage Story

<https://www.history.com/news/19th-amendment-women-vote-timeline>

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1800's – Women organized, petitioned, picketed, went on hunger strikes, held silent vigils. They were often harassed. They were even at times put in jail or beaten.

1848 – Women's Rights Convention at Seneca Falls, New York called for equality for women and the right to vote

1869 – Wyoming passed a law allowing women the right to vote

1872 – Susan B. Anthony (a suffragist who actively campaigned for the right to vote) and others were arrested in Rochester, New York because they voted illegally in the presidential election.

1878 – California introduces an amendment that would allow women to vote in California elections.

1896 – Black Suffragists organize a national group to advocate for the right to vote, equal pay, educational opportunities, job training, and access to childcare.

1900's – White female suffragists discriminated against African American women and barred them from attending the women's rights conventions organized by white women.

1913 – Militant group of women created by Alice Paul.

1916-1917 – Jeanette Rankin was elected to Congress from Montana.

1917 – On November 14, 33 women were beaten and arrested for picketing in Virginia. It was later called the "Night of Terror".

1918 – President Woodrow Wilson officially supported the right of women to vote

1919 – Both houses of Congress pass the Amendment

1920 – 36 states ratify the Amendment, and it becomes law.

1924 – Native Americans were recognized as citizens.

1965 – Voting Rights Act was passed that protected the rights of ALL citizens to vote.

Equal Rights Amendment

1923 - First introduced to Congress.

This amendment would federally ban discrimination based on gender.

Some legal scholars think that ratification of this amendment would prevent reversal of other laws that protect women's rights.

1972 – Both houses of Congress passed the Amendment. $\frac{3}{4}$ of states (38 states) had to approve the measure within 7 years for it to become law.

2020 – Virginia became the 38th state to ratify (approve of) the amendment. The House of Representative voted to remove the deadline and accept the amendment. The Senate has not yet voted.

2020 – 26 states have equal rights guaranteed in their state constitutions.

According to one study:

White males fill more than 60% of executive leadership positions

White women fill 19% of executive leadership positions

Men of color fill 12% of executive leadership positions

Women of color fill 4% of executive leadership positions

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Studies also show that a lone woman in an executive meeting is more likely to experience:

- Microaggressions
- Sexual harassment
- Being questioned about her skills and abilities

Microaggression definition: “A comment or action that is subtly and often unintentionally hostile or demeaning to a member of a minority or marginalized group.”

Merriam-Webster. (n.d.). Microaggression. In *Merriam-Webster.com dictionary*. Retrieved March 27, 2022, from <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/microaggression>

Sexual harassment definition: “uninvited and unwelcome verbal or physical behavior of a sexual nature especially by a person in authority toward a subordinate (such as an employee or student)”.

Merriam-Webster. (n.d.). Sexual harassment. In *Merriam-Webster.com dictionary*. Retrieved March 27, 2022, from <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/sexual%20harassment>

Student Activity

Students may complete this activity individually or in a group. There can be a group discussion, or the students can submit a written response.

Students should reflect on the following and discuss or write the responses:

What are examples of microaggressions toward women that you have seen?

Describe examples of sexual harassment.

What can be done to address microaggressions or harassment in society today?

Title IX – A Federal Law

States that no person in the United States can be excluded on the basis of sex from any education program or activity that receives Federal funding.

Before this law, it was legal for a college to refuse to admit women.

Title IX also increased access to sports activities and to sports scholarships for female athletes.

Women Advancing Equality|Asian Americans (4:15 minutes)

<https://indiana.pbslearningmedia.org/resource/women-advancing-equality-video/asian-americans/>

Patsy Mink was elected to the House of Representatives from Hawaii in 1964. She was one of the co-authors of Title IX.

Student Activity

Students may complete this activity individually or in a group. There can be a group discussion, or the students can submit a written response.

Students should reflect on the following and discuss or write the responses:

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What barriers do you think Patsy Mink encountered in the early 1960's when she was running for the House of Representatives?

Do you think Title IX has brought equal opportunities in education for women?

Do you think Title IX has brought equal opportunities in sports for women?

Student Activity

Students may complete this activity individually or in a group. There can be a group discussion, or the students can submit a written response.

Describe in your own words the 19th Amendment and Title IX.

Summary/Closure

Laws have been passed to protect women's rights. Currently the Equal Rights Amendment has not been through the complete approval process. Women are not in executive positions as frequently as men. In many organizations, women do not earn equal pay for equal work. Continued efforts are needed to solidify equal rights for women.

Extension Activities

Unstoppable: The Road to Women's Rights (video 43:10 minutes)

<https://indiana.pbslearningmedia.org/collection/unstoppable/t/the-full-episode-unstoppable-the-road-to-womens-rights/>

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