



Upstate, Downstate: The Women's Movement For Teachers

Standards

- This episode is aligned to New York State Social Studies Standard 4.5b and is appropriate for elementary social studies lessons on women's suffrage, voting, and/or reform movements. Standard 4.5, "In Search for Freedom and a Call for Change," invites educators to explore abolitionism and women's suffrage so that students understand the similarities and differences between these struggles for rights and freedoms, as well as the historical connection between the two movements. After watching the video, students should understand the following key concepts:
 - Women have not always had the same rights as men in the United States and New York State.
 - Women sought to expand their rights and bring about change.

Prerequisites

- Before watching the video and answering the discussion questions, students should already be familiar with slavery, abolitionism, and the Civil War. They should also be familiar with westward expansion, and be aware that western states and territories were much more sparsely populated than eastern states. A map of the population of the U.S. in 1890, including the percentage of males and females in each region, is included under the Student Handout tab as a reference.

Teaching Diversity and Inclusion

- Students may notice that Sojourner Truth and Frederick Douglass are the only people of color featured in this video, which reflects the fact that the leadership of the women's movement in the 1800s was predominantly white. You may wish to address this directly with your students by reminding them that in 1848, the year of the Seneca Falls Convention, slavery was still legal in the United States, and explain that even after slavery was abolished, most African American women did not have the same access to economic, educational, social and political opportunities as their white counterparts. Additionally, some white suffragettes embraced racism and deliberately worked to exclude African Americans from the movement. Despite these challenges, many African American women in the 1800s did fight for women's rights, including Sojourner Truth, Harriet Tubman, Mary Church Terrell, and Ida B. Wells. There were also Latina and Asian American women active in the movement, including Nina Otero Warren, the first Mexican American woman to publish an English-Language novel the United States, Jovita Idar, an early Chicana feminist activist in Laredo, Texas, and Mrs. S. K. Chan, a Chinese American physician and president of the Chinese American Equal Suffrage Society in Portland, Oregon. Unfortunately, the important role that women of color played in the women's rights movement is often not as well documented or celebrated. The "Suffragists of New York" handout under the Student Handout tab introduces students to a lesser known African American women's suffragist, Mary Burnett Talbert, who was active in New York State in the early 1900s.

Checking for Understanding

- **Discussion.** After watching the video and completing the student handout, conduct a whole class or small group discussion to check for student understanding. You may use the questions under the Discussion Questions tab to guide the conversation. Students should use evidence from the video in their answers.
- **Exit Slip.** To assess student understanding at the end of your lesson, consider providing them with an exit slip. Premade exit slips are available under the Student Handouts tab. Possible answers include:
 - Today I learned that in the United States women did not always have the right to...(vote, go to college, own property, etc.).
 - Both women and men fought for women's rights by...(speaking out, writing letters, protesting, forming associations, etc.).

Activities (under Student Handouts tab)

- **Suffragists of New York.** In this activity, students read the biographies of three suffragists who were active in New York State. After reading the biographies, students will complete a graphic organizer, describing each woman and her contributions to the movement. Students may complete all 3 independently or work in groups, with each student completing one section of the graphic organizer and then sharing out with their team members.
- **Primary Source Analysis: Women's Suffrage Postcards.** In this activity, students will analyze two postcards from the early 1900s. The first features a father carrying two crying babies. In the caption he wonders where his wife is, while she speaks at a women's suffrage rally in the background. This anti-suffrage postcard speaks to fears that giving women political power would lead to a reversal of gender roles. The second postcard shows a statue of Abraham Lincoln standing in front of a U.S. flag with only four stars, representing the 4 states who had given women's suffrage at the time of publication (1910)—Wyoming, Colorado, Utah and Idaho. In the corner is the federal seal, or escutcheon, with an ink blot that reads "The ballot is denied to woman." Underneath the seal it reads "the blot on the escutcheon." This postcard uses patriotic symbols to advocate for the vote. After students analyze the primary sources, either individually or in pairs, conduct a whole group discussion to check for understanding.

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<https://www.pbslearningmedia.org/resource/nyh17.socst.elem.suffrage/upstate-downstate-the-womens-movement/>

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