Suffrage Movement in Oregon

Placing Oregon Suffrage in the Regional and National Context

Foundational Lesson

This curriculum may be successfully used with or without a museum visit.
Developed by Sarah Anderson in consultation with OHS staff and advisory board.
## Pre-Visit Lesson One

### Overview

Students examine a group of primary documents to construct a timeline of the fight for women’s voting rights in Oregon within the national context. In part two of the lesson, students read a secondary source and identify text that connects to the primary documents they previously examined.

### Learning Objectives

› Students understand that Oregon achieved full suffrage (the right to vote in both state and federal elections) eight years before the ratification of the 19th amendment.

› Students know that Oregon was the last state in the Northwest to grant suffrage and that activists from the Western states went on to be leaders in the national suffrage movement.

› Students can analyze both primary and secondary source documents and make sense of them through a sequencing activity.

### Guiding Questions

› Did women in the United States have voting rights before the 19th amendment?

› What role did Oregon play in the national fight for woman suffrage?

### Background Information

The U.S. Constitution did not specify voting rights, leaving the decision of who could vote up to the states. Drafted in 1857, the Oregon constitution restricted “free and equal elections” to white male citizens over the age of 21. Oregon suffrage societies first formed in 1870 and helped put woman suffrage on the ballot six times, more than any other state. Full voting rights (in theory) for Oregon women were finally approved by male voters in 1912, eight years before the ratification of the 19th amendment. It should be noted that early suffragists were mostly white women; however, in 1912, coalitions existed across racial, ethnic, and socio-economic groups in Oregon. It should also be noted that not all women were able to vote in Oregon in 1912 due to federal policies that restricted citizenship based on ethnicity (Chinese, Japanese and Indigenous women). See [When Did All Women Achieve Voting Rights in Oregon?: Intersectionality and Suffrage in Oregon](https://www.oregonhistory.org/2021/03/when-did-all-women-achieve-voting-rights-in-oregon/), as an essential lesson in teaching about the fight for all women’s voting rights.

One reason why suffrage passed in 1912 is due to the momentum of Western states in granting voting rights to women around the same time. See table below:
## Background Information (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STATE</th>
<th>DATE THAT WOMEN ACHIEVED SUFFRAGE RIGHTS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wyoming</td>
<td>1869, 1890</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Utah</td>
<td>1870, lost 1887, regained 1896</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colorado</td>
<td>1893</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Idaho</td>
<td>1896</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Washington</td>
<td>1883, lost 1887, regained 1910</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>California</td>
<td>1911</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oregon and Arizona</td>
<td>1912</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alaska Territory</td>
<td>1913</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nevada</td>
<td>1914</td>
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</table>

The Western states became leaders in the national suffrage movement. Oregon women were often recruited by national suffrage organizations as leaders and voters.

A common misconception is that Oregon (and other states that granted voting rights to women before the 19th Amendment) did not grant *full* suffrage to women until 1920, meaning that women could only vote in local or state elections. In fact, after 1912, women in Oregon could vote in local, state, and federal elections, which is one reason they were so valuable to the national movement.

## Delivery Time

Two 45-minute sessions

## Vocabulary

- **Amendment**: a change or addition designed to improve a text, piece of legislation, or constitution
- **Chronological**: starting with the earliest event and following the order in which they occurred
- **Coalition**: an alliance for combined action, especially a temporary alliance of political parties or other groups seeking change
- **Constitution**: a set of fundamental principles by which a state or other organization is governed
- **Franchise**: the right to vote
- **Municipal**: relating to a city or town
- **Primary Source**: information about an event or time in the past made by someone who lived during that time and learned about or participated in the event or time. Some examples include a letter, speech, or artifact, such as a basket or shoe, as long as they were made or used by the person at that time.
- **Ratify**: sign or give formal consent to (a treaty, contract, or agreement), making it officially valid
| Vocabulary (continued) | › **Secondary Source**: information about an event or time in the past that was created *after the fact* by someone who *did not* experience it first-hand or participate in the events or time. Some examples include scholarly books and articles and reference books such as encyclopedias.  
 › **Suffrage**: the right to vote in political elections |
|---|---|
| **Materials Needed** | › Student handouts:  
  • [Primary Sources](#) (printed set for each small group of six)  
  • [Primary Source Graphics](#) (printed set for each group of six)  
  • [Analysis Sheets: Illustrations and Text](#) (one for each primary source)  
  • [Oregon Suffrage Timeline Challenge Sheets](#) (one for each group of six)  
  • [Analysis Sheets: Charts and Maps](#) (one for each secondary source)  
  • Secondary Source: “*Woman Suffrage in Oregon*” by Kimberly Jensen from *The Oregon Encyclopedia* (one for each student)  
 › Scissors  
 › Tape  
 › Highlighters  
 › Hand lenses (optional) |
| **Step by Step Instructions** | **PART ONE**  
 **Step One:**  
 When did women win the right to vote? Create a woman suffrage KWL (Know-Wonder-Learn) chart with your class. What do we know about when women won the right to vote? Make sure to include misconceptions if students bring them up. What do we wonder?  

**Step Two:**  
If you haven’t done so already, define suffrage. It sounds like “suffer” but actually comes from a Latin root that means “support, vote, right to vote.” Explain the phrasing “woman suffrage,” as it will probably seem awkward to most students. Woman suffrage is the usage in which *woman* is the adjective — it describes a kind of voting, like black suffrage or male suffrage. “Woman suffrage” is the phrase most people used during the suffrage movement, which is why it is used often in this curriculum. Women's suffrage is the possessive — all women voting. |
**Step Three:**
Tell students that they are going to work together in small groups to work as historians. They will investigate a set of primary documents to see what they can learn about the suffrage movement in Oregon. (If necessary, review the definitions of primary source and secondary source.)

**Step Four:**
Divide students into groups of six. Give each group member a different printed document from the set of Primary Sources and the Analysis Sheets that goes with that type of document: illustration or text (for the purpose of this activity, the NAWSA program cover can be considered text). Have students work quietly to investigate and analyze their individual documents. Once everyone is finished analyzing, students then share their document with the other members of their group.

**Step Five:**
Once everyone has shared, hand out the Oregon Suffrage Timeline Challenge Sheet. Students add dates using what they learned from their primary sources, then cut the descriptions into strips and tape them to the corresponding primary sources. Then students place the primary sources in chronological order to create a timeline of events.

**Step Six:**
Next, hand out the two Secondary Source Graphics and tell them to see what new information these documents provide in understanding the timeline of woman suffrage in Oregon and the United States. If desired, you can also hand out Analysis Sheets: Charts and Maps to help students unpack the secondary documents.

**Step Seven:**
Students can display their timelines and do a gallery walk around the room to compare their timelines with others.

**Step Eight:**
Class check-in:
› What did you learn about the Oregon suffrage movement from the primary sources?
› What additional information did you learn from the secondary source graphics?
### Step by Step Instructions (continued)

- What else do you wonder?
- Add additional learnings and questions to the KWL chart.

### PART TWO

#### Step One:
Distribute copies of *Woman Suffrage in Oregon* by Kimberly Jensen (with wide right margin for annotating) for students to read. Using highlighters or pencils, have students identify parts of the essay that connect to the primary sources and secondary graphics they analyzed. If time is an issue, divide the reading among groups of three students.

#### Step Two:
Discussion questions:
- What connections did you find between the essay and the sources we investigated?
- What was it like to explore the primary sources before reading a secondary source? What did it teach you about being a historian?
- What did the essay add? What new events or dates would you add to your timeline? What did you get right?
- What did you learn about the suffrage movement in Oregon? How does the Oregon timeline compare with what you know of the national timeline? How does the Oregon timeline compare with other Western states?

### Assessments

#### Exit Ticket Slip
- What is 1 question from the KWL chart that was answered in the lesson?
- What is 1 question from the chart that wasn’t answered?
- What is 1 fact that surprised you about woman suffrage in Oregon?

### Teacher Notes
The [Oregon Constitution](https://www.oregonlegislature.gov/constitution/) says that all elections will be “free and equal” and then directly goes on to state that only free white male citizens over the age of 21 can vote. This is a good opportunity to consider how the authors defined “free and equal.” How do we make sense of this language that is at first inclusive and then extremely exclusive?
If a state has no date then various cities or school districts had women voting, except the darker blue states with no date that means they had no woman suffrage at all (Deep South).

Students may need help making sense of the term “help-mate” or they may come up with some good ideas in the struggle to define it.

“Woman Suffrage on the Ballot in Oregon” chart may raise more questions than answers, and those questions will not necessarily be answered in this lesson.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Support for All Students</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>› Have students investigate documents in pairs.</td>
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<tr>
<td>› For younger students, struggling readers, or anyone: Divide the reading into sections and assign each section to a small group. That group works to make a cartoon illustration for each paragraph, demonstrating their understanding. Combine the groups' illustrations to tell the whole story, perhaps in comic book form.</td>
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</tbody>
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<tr>
<th>Extensions</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Recommended: Follow up with viewings of the following short films:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>› <a href="https://www.opb.org">OPB video on Abigail Scott Duniway</a> to learn more about the first phase of the Oregon suffrage movement, and/or</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>› <a href="https://www.opb.org">OPB video of Oregon suffragists</a> to learn more about the second phase of the woman suffrage movement in Oregon.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
This Atlantic article maps international suffrage rights between 1892 and 2012. This interactive world map from Scholastic also allows students to compare when women achieved suffrage internationally.

### Connect to the National Story

- National Archives lesson “Extending Suffrage to Women”. This lesson also asks students to sequence primary documents to gain an overall understanding of the national movement. How does the Oregon timeline fit into this larger picture?
- “Women’s Suffrage” lesson from Teaching Tolerance shows, in part, how the federal government’s role in securing voting rights expanded over time.

### Additional Educator Resources

- Timeline and Map of Woman Suffrage Legislation State by State 1838–1919, an interactive map from the University of Washington
- For additional primary documents on woman suffrage in Oregon, two great resources are:
  - Oregon Secretary of State’s Woman Suffrage Centennial Web Exhibit’s slideshow
  - “Related Historical Records” linked to the Woman Suffrage in Oregon essay webpage on The Oregon Encyclopedia
- For more about annotating, see this “Skills and Strategies” page from the New York Times: “Annotating to Engage, Analyze, Connect and Create”.

### Oregon Social Studies Standards

#### Middle School

- **6.3** Examine the origins, purposes, and impact of constitutions, laws, treaties, and international agreements.
- **6.4** Recognize historical and contemporary means of changing societies and promoting the common good.
- **6.13** Construct and analyze maps, graphs, charts, models, and databases to make inferences and predictions regarding geographic distributions (e.g., perceptual impacts for creating boundaries, borders, cultural regions of Indigenous peoples).
- **6.17** Identify and examine the roles and impact of diverse groups of people (e.g. gender roles, social roles, political and economic structures) within the countries of the Western Hemisphere.
- **6.21** Identify issues related to historical events to recognize power, authority, and governance as it relates to systems of oppression and its impact on ethnic and religious groups and other traditionally marginalized groups in the modern era (bias and injustice, discrimination, stereotypes).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>› <strong>6.24</strong> Gather, interpret, document, and use information from multiple sources and diverse media, distinguish facts from opinions while recognizing points of view through inquiry and research.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>› <strong>6.26</strong> Analyze how a specific problem can manifest itself at local, regional, and global levels. Identify challenges and opportunities faced by those trying to address a specific problem.</td>
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<tr>
<td>› <strong>7.1</strong> Describe the role of citizens in governments.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>› <strong>7.25</strong> Identify issues related to historical events to recognize power, authority, religion, and governance as it relates to systemic oppression and its impact on Indigenous peoples and ethnic and religious groups, and other traditionally marginalized groups in the modern era.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>› <strong>7.27</strong> Critique and analyze information for point of view, historical context, distortion, propaganda, and relevance, including sources with conflicting information.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>› <strong>7.28</strong> Draw on multiple disciplinary lenses to analyze how a specific problem can manifest itself at local, regional, and global levels over time, identifying its characteristics and causes, and the challenges and opportunities faced by those trying to address the problem.</td>
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<tr>
<td>› <strong>8.4</strong> Examine the evolution of political parties and interest groups and their effect on events, issues, and ideas.</td>
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<tr>
<td>› <strong>8.5</strong> Examine and analyze important United States and Oregon documents, including (but not limited to) the Constitution, Bill of Rights, 13th–15th amendments, and Oregon Constitution.</td>
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<tr>
<td>› <strong>8.7</strong> Analyze the expanding eligibility of citizenship in the continuing struggle for the expansion of rights for ethnic and traditionally marginalized groups.</td>
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<tr>
<td>› <strong>8.8</strong> Analyze important political and ethical values such as freedom, democracy, equality, equity, and justice embodied in documents such as the Declaration of Independence, the United States Constitution, and the Bill of Rights.</td>
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<tr>
<td>› <strong>8.9</strong> Analyze the effect of historical and contemporary means of changing societies, and promoting the common good.</td>
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<tr>
<td>› <strong>8.10</strong> Explain specific roles and responsibilities of citizens (such as voters, jurors, taxpayers, members of the armed forces, petitioners, protesters, and office-holders).</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
8.27 Determine and explain the importance and contributions (products, events, actions, and ideas) of key people, cultures, ethnic groups (including individuals who are American Indian/Alaska Native/Native Hawaiian or Americans of African, Asian, Pacific Island, Chicano, Latino, or Middle Eastern descent), religious groups, and other traditionally marginalized groups (women, people with disabilities, immigrants, refugees, and individuals who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender) in Oregon, the United States, and the world.

8.29 Use and interpret relevant primary and secondary sources pertaining to U.S. history from multiple perspectives.

8.30 Synthesize information and data to construct an account of historical events that includes multiple sources and varied perspectives.

8.33 Analyze how a specific problem can manifest itself at local, regional, and global levels over time, identifying its characteristics and causes, and the challenges and opportunities faced by those trying to address the problem.

8.35 Construct explanations using reasoning, correct sequence, examples and details with relevant information and data, while acknowledging the strengths and weaknesses of the explanations.

**High School**

**HS.1** Analyze the impact of constitutional amendments on groups, individuals, institutions, and national order.

**HS.5** Evaluate the relationships among governments at the local, state, tribal, national, and global levels.

**HS.9** Examine and evaluate documents related to the Constitution and Supreme Court decisions (such as Declaration of Independence, Federalist Papers, Anti-Federalist Papers, the Constitution, the Bill of Rights, and Constitutional amendments).

**HS.10** Explain the roles and responsibilities of active members of a democracy and the role of individuals, social movements, and governments in various current events.

**HS.13** Examine and analyze provisions of the Oregon Constitution and the U.S. Constitution.

**HS.53** Explain how power and privilege influence where people live and how they interact with their environment at the intergroup and institutional levels and how they have been affected.

**HS.54** Evaluate continuity and change over the course of world and United States history.
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>› <strong>HS.62</strong> Identify historical and current events, issues, and problems when national and/or global interests are/have been in conflict, and provide analysis from multiple perspectives.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>› <strong>HS.63</strong> Identify and analyze ethnic groups (including individuals who are American Indian/Alaska Native/Native Hawaiian or Americans of African, Asian, Pacific Island, Chicano, Latino, or Middle Eastern descent), religious groups, and other traditionally marginalized groups (women, people with disabilities, immigrants, refugees, and individuals who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender), their relevant historic and current contributions to Oregon, the United States, and the world.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>› <strong>HS.65</strong> Identify and analyze the nature of systemic oppression on ethnic and religious groups, as well as other traditionally marginalized groups, in the pursuit of justice and equality in Oregon, the United States, and the world.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>› <strong>HS.66</strong> Examine and analyze the multiple perspectives and contributions of ethnic and religious groups, as well as traditionally marginalized groups within a dominant society and how different values and views shape Oregon, the United States, and the world.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>› <strong>HS.67</strong> Evaluate historical sources for perspective, limitations, accuracy, and historical context.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>› <strong>HS.72</strong> Construct explanations using sound reasoning, correct sequence (linear or nonlinear), examples, and details with significant and pertinent information and data, while acknowledging the strengths and weaknesses of the explanations given its purpose (such as validity, value and limitation, cause and effect, chronological, procedural, technical).</td>
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