Suffrage Movement in Oregon

Arguments For and Against Woman Suffrage in Oregon

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.
# Suffrage Movement in Oregon

## Overview
Students examine the 1912 Voter Pamphlet arguments for and against an amendment to the Oregon constitution to extend voting rights to women.

## Learning Objectives
- Students can identify arguments for and against woman suffrage in Oregon.
- Students can explain that women led both the suffrage and the anti-suffrage movements and why.
- Students comprehend the concept of public and private spheres and how this concept impacted the suffrage debate.
- Students can summarize and analyze a primary source text.

## Guiding Questions
- How do cultural gender roles impact women’s ability to access political power?
- Why were some women anti-suffrage?
- How did both the suffragists and the anti-suffragists define women’s roles within a democracy?
- How do gender roles intersect with class, race, ethnicity, and other identities?

## Background Information
The background information needed for this lesson for both teachers and students is provided in the speaker notes in the slideshow: [Background on Arguments For and Against Woman Suffrage in Oregon](#).

[Background on Voters’ Pamphlet document](#) is provided on the [Century of Action](#) webpage.

## Delivery Time
One or two 45-minute class periods; depends upon age and background knowledge of class.

## Remote Teaching Guide
These documents are not meant to be a replacement for the lesson plan, but are intended to be used alongside it to guide delivery modifications.

- [Arguments For and Against Suffrage Remote Learning Modification](#)
- [General tips for promoting discussion and engagement online](#)

## Vocabulary
- **Affirmative**: agreeing with or consenting to a statement or request.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Vocabulary</strong> (continued)</th>
<th><strong>Amendment</strong>: a change or addition designed to improve a text, piece of legislation, or constitution</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Candidate</strong>: a person who applies for a government job or is nominated for that job, to be won by election</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Citizenship</strong>: being a legally recognized subject of a state or nation, whether by birth or by naturalization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Civic Life</strong>: participation in public affairs (as opposed to private ones)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Domestic</strong>: relating to the home, or to the internal affairs of a state or nation (as opposed to foreign affairs)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Economic</strong>: relating to trade, industry, and the creation of wealth, money, or work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Enfranchisement</strong>: the giving of a right or privilege, especially the right to vote</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Initiative</strong>: the right of citizens outside the legislature to originate legislation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Naturalization</strong>: the process or act of becoming a citizen of a country to which one has immigrated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Petition</strong>: a formal written request, typically one signed by many people, appealing to authority with respect to a particular cause</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Political</strong>: relating to the government or the public affairs of a country or state; may also relate to the ideas or strategies of a particular party or group in civic life</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Primary Source</strong>: 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.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Private Sphere</strong>: the realm of the home, including family, child rearing, and maintaining the household</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Public Sphere</strong>: the realm outside the home, including work, civic, and political life</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Republican Motherhood</strong>: a concept that shaped the households of free white people in the United States shortly after the Revolution. Men would control the political and economic sphere, while women managed the domestic sphere, including the education of children. Although women could not vote, white women were expected to obtain an education in order to better teach their children and, in this way, shaped future citizens.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Secondary Source</strong>: 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. Examples include scholarly books, articles, and reference books such as encyclopedias.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Vocabulary  
(continued) | **Suffrage**: the right to vote in political elections |
|-----------------|-----------------------------------------------------|
| **Materials Needed** | › Slideshow: Background on Arguments For and Against Woman Suffrage in Oregon  
› 1912 Voter Pamphlet analysis sheets:  
  ◦ Option One: Full Text Pro Arguments and Full Text Anti Arguments  
  ◦ Option Two: Full Text Pro Arguments with Summary and Full Text Anti Arguments with Summary  
  ◦ Option Three: Pro Argument Excerpts and Anti Argument Excerpts  
› Chart paper  
› (optional) 1912 Voter Pamphlet primary document |
| **Step by Step Instructions** | **Step One:**  
Tell students: At the time the United States government was formed in the late 1700s, the only people who were given citizenship, and therefore could vote, were “free white persons of good character.” This excluded black people, Indigenous people, people from Asia, and anyone else who was not considered white. States were able to determine voting rights and they almost all restricted voting rights to white men. (One exception, for a little while, was New Jersey).  

**Step Two:**  
Tell students: We’re going to specifically look at the role gender played in voting rights. For over a hundred years of American history, women were not allowed to vote. What do you think of that? Can you think of any reasons why the United States did not give women the right to vote? How do you think women felt about this? Do you think all women wanted the vote?  

**Step Three:**  
Show your students the Slideshow: Background on Arguments For and Against Woman Suffrage in Oregon to establish some context. Speaking notes are provided in the slideshow notes section. NOTE: This slideshow is only meant to give very general background information for the 1912 election. It is not meant to be a comprehensive overview of the woman suffrage movement. You may want to spend more time delving deeper into certain concepts, people, or events.
**Step Four:**
Tell students they will be reading one of the arguments for or against women’s voting rights from the 1912 Oregon Voter Pamphlet. NOTE: choose which version of the analysis sheet will be best for your students: full text with no summary provided, full text with summary provided, or excerpts.

**Step Five:**
Distribute the analysis sheets to pairs of students. Assign each pair one pro or anti argument to summarize/analyze. For example, one pair will have the pro argument #3, while another has the anti argument #5. There are 15 arguments in total, so you may need to have groups of three or duplicate some of the assignments.

**Step Six:**
Once student pairs have finished summarizing and analyzing, work with the class to create a chart of pro and anti arguments. Each student pair should add something from their summary.

**Step Seven:**
Further analyze by exploring the following questions either as a class, as journal questions, or as small group discussion:

- What do you notice about who signed the negative argument?
- What did the authors mean when they stated, “...office-holding is inconsistent with the duties of most women?” Or when they suggested, “Let any man ask the women of his acquaintance, and particularly the women who are doing woman’s work in the world, the women whom he most respects, and he can satisfy himself as to whether women want the right to vote?”
- Given that only men could vote, why do you think the members of the Oregon State Association Opposed to the Extension of Suffrage to Women argued that defeats in previous elections proved that “woman suffrage is not wanted in Oregon, either by the women or by the men?”
- What do you think the members of the Oregon State Association Opposed to the Extension of Suffrage to Women meant by their assertion that “the vast majority of women are represented by household suffrage?”
- Given that the ideal of “True Womanhood” excluded poor women and women of color, how do you think women who were not white, middle/upper class American citizens were represented in either side’s arguments?
| Step by Step Instructions (continued) | › Do you agree with their next point that “the women not so represented suffer no practical injustice which giving them suffrage will remedy?”  
› How do you think both sides defined women’s role in a democratic society?  
› Why do you think some women were so passionate about opposing the right to vote?  
› What did this activity teach you about Oregon in the early 20th century? |
| --- | --- |
| Assessments | › Written reflection on one or more of the above discussion questions  
3-2-1 Exit Ticket Slip  
› What are 3 reasons anti-suffragists gave for opposing the vote?  
› What are 2 arguments suffragists made for giving women the vote?  
› What is 1 reason why the ideal of True Womanhood did not include most women? |
| Teacher Notes | Consider comparing the way women signed their names in the Voter Pamphlet between the affirmative and negative arguments. What does this tell us about the difference in how women identified themselves?  
This lesson focuses on just some of the arguments for and against suffrage in the early 20th century. To explore arguments from earlier in the movement, explore the conflict over the 15th amendment and the idea of universal suffrage. See Additional Educator Resources below for a related article. |
| Support for All Students | › Students can work Individually, in pairs, or in groups  
› Choose the analysis sheet that will best support your students’ learning |
| Extensions | Hold a town hall meeting with students representing different arguments.  
Have students write a dialogue poem exploring the views of both a pro- and anti-suffrage woman in 1912 Oregon.  
Investigate this suffrage campaign handout created by Congressional Union for Woman Suffrage (a national organization) entitled “Will the Federal Suffrage Amendment Complicate the Race Problem?” |
### Extensions (continued)

The flyer also assures readers that in the states where there is a higher black population, there are already barriers in place to prevent black men from voting, and the same will be applied to women. It should be noted that the racial rifts that occurred in the national suffrage movement did not appear to have taken place in Oregon, partially due to the small size of Oregon’s black community.

- What does this flyer tell us about the Congressional Union for Woman Suffrage?
- When they argue for woman suffrage, who are they actually advocating for? Who is the target audience for this flyer?

Examine one more argument from the pro-suffrage side using this [paid advertisement](mailto:www.example.com) highlighting the need for more labor protections for Oregon working women. How does this agenda conflict with the anti-suffrage view of women’s place in society?

Listen to [Winning the Vote](mailto:www.example.com), a suffragist song, that presents two different sides of the arguments, including reference to the women’s sphere. And with a happy ending!

### Connect to the National Story

- [Together for Home and Family](mailto:www.example.com) poster, discussion questions, and activity ideas from the New-York Historical Society’s Women and the American Story curriculum
- [Arguments For and Against Suffrage](mailto:www.example.com) documents, discussion questions, and activity ideas from the New-York Historical Society’s Women and the American Story curriculum
- [Why Did Women Want the Right to Vote?](mailto:www.example.com) from the National Archives (high school), examines several different petitions to the U.S. congress to understand why women wanted suffrage nationwide.
- “[Extending Suffrage to Women](mailto:www.example.com)”: This comprehensive lesson from the National Archives explores arguments for and against suffrage, among other topics. Based on a set of primary documents.

### Additional Educator Resources

- [Anti-suffrage arguments](mailto:www.example.com) from the Oregon State Bar website
- “[Ladies Last](mailto:www.example.com)” from The American Scholar explores the fight for women’s voting rights after the Civil War, including arguments for and against.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Oregon Social Studies Standards</th>
<th>Middle School</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6.4 Recognize historical and contemporary means of changing societies and promoting the common good.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>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.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>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).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6.24 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></td>
<td>6.26 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>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6.28 Construct arguments using claims and evidence from multiple sources, while acknowledging the strengths and limitations of these arguments.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7.27 Critique and analyze information for point of view, historical context, distortion, propaganda, and relevance including sources with conflicting information.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7.28 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>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8.7 Analyze the expanding eligibility of citizenship in the continuing struggle for the expansion of rights for ethnic and traditionally marginalized groups.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8.9 Analyze the effect of historical and contemporary means of changing societies, and promoting the common good.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8.10 Explain specific roles and responsibilities of citizens (such as voters, jurors, taxpayers, members of the armed forces, petitioners, protesters, and office-holders).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8.14 Investigate how economic decisions affect the well-being of individuals within a group (such as enslaved people, Indigenous peoples, women, and children), businesses, and society.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8.25 Evaluate the influence of the intersections of identity, including but not limited to gender, age, race, ethnicity, religion, and class on the experiences of peoples, groups, and events.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Oregon Social Studies Standards (continued)

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>› <strong>8.28</strong>  Identify issues related to historical events to recognize power, authority, and governance as it relates to systemic oppression and its impact on ethnic and religious groups, as well as other historically persecuted individuals in the United States in the modern era (bias, injustice, discrimination, and stereotypes).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>› <strong>8.29</strong>  Use and interpret relevant primary and secondary sources pertaining to U.S. history from multiple perspectives.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>› <strong>8.31</strong>  Analyze intersecting identities and relationships within the living histories of ethnic groups such as 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 the United States.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>› <strong>8.32</strong>  Critique and analyze information for point of view, historical context, distortion, bias propaganda, and relevance including sources with conflicting information in order to question the dominant narratives in history.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>› <strong>8.33</strong>  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>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### High School

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>› <strong>HS.10</strong>  Explain the roles and responsibilities of active members of a democracy and the role of individuals, social movements, and governments in various current events.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>› <strong>HS.11</strong>  Examine the pluralistic realities of society recognizing issues of equity and evaluating the need for change.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>› <strong>HS.55</strong>  Analyze the complexity of the interaction of multiple perspectives to investigate causes and effects of significant events in the development of world, U.S., and Oregon history.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>› <strong>HS.58</strong>  Examine and evaluate the origins of fundamental political debates and how conflict, compromise, and cooperation have shaped unity and diversity in world, U.S., and Oregon history.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>› <strong>HS.61</strong>  Analyze and explain persistent historical, social, and political issues, conflicts, and compromises in regards to power, inequality, and justice and their connections to current events and movements.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<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>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oregon Social Studies Standards (continued)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---</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>
<td></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>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>› <strong>HS.67</strong> Evaluate historical sources for perspective, limitations, accuracy, and historical context.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>› <strong>HS.68</strong> Select and analyze historical information, including contradictory evidence, from a variety of primary and secondary sources to support or reject a claim.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>› <strong>HS.69</strong> Create and defend a historical argument utilizing primary and secondary sources as evidence.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>