Building a Website or Hosting a Community Education Event

OVERVIEW

Students review the history of the struggle for women’s suffrage by planning, publishing, and marketing a website or event that:

- increases awareness of the story of women’s suffrage in America.
- informs their local community about how women have participated in public life in their area.
- encourages community members to pursue the common good.
- encourages community members to appreciate and exercise their right to vote.

Students may launch their website or host their event around the centennial (or anniversary) of the passage of the Nineteenth Amendment with a community event in which they honor a member of the local community as a role model for civic virtue. The amendment was passed by Congress June 4, 1919, and ratified on August 18, 1920.

Rather than building a website, students might develop another educational activity that exposes a larger audience to what they have learned from *Votes for Women: the Story of the Nineteenth Amendment*. Additional choices might include:

- Hosting a history fair (like a science fair)
- Planning a community education night with booths/voter registration tables
- Developing lessons/activities and then teaching the story of the Nineteenth Amendment at a nearby elementary school
- Other online digital portfolio with a social media initiative

DRIVING QUESTION

- How does one carry out long-term change in order to better align institutions with principles of liberty, justice, and equality within a constitutional order?
OBJECTIVES

- Students will trace the story of women in politics, from the Founding of the United States to the ratification of the Nineteenth Amendment to the twenty-first century.
- Students will identify, develop, and refine indicators of participation in public life.
- Students will examine their own family histories and identify or imagine the ways their ancestors participated in (or were prevented from directly participating in) politics.
- Students will assess the connection between voting and civic virtue.

STANDARDS

- C3 Framework (excerpts): National Council for Social Studies
  
  » D1.5.9-12. Determine the kinds of sources that will be helpful in answering compelling and supporting questions…
  
  » D2.Civ.7.9-12. Apply civic virtues and democratic principles when working with others.
  
  » D3.1.9-12. Gather relevant information from multiple sources representing a wide range of views…
  
  » D4.3.9-12. Present adaptations of arguments and explanations … to reach a range of audiences and venues outside the classroom …
  
  » D4.7.9-12. Assess options for individual and collective action to address local, regional, and global problems …

MATERIALS

- Teacher Resource: Voting Proposals
- Handout A: Testing Assumptions
- Handout B: Project Parameters and Directions
- Handout C: Indicators of Participation in Public Life
- Handout D: Capstone Project Website Outline
- Handout E: Politics and the Women of the ____________ Family
- Handout F: Sample Website/ Award Press Releases

▲ Location of the Seneca Falls Convention.
QUOTES

“I do not wish [women] to have power over men; but over themselves.”
–MARY WOLLSTONECRAFT, 1792

“If women want any rights more than they’s got, why don’t they just take them, and not be talking about it?”
–SOJOURNER TRUTH, 1850

“Cautious, careful people always casting about to preserve their reputation or social standards never can bring about reform. Those who are really in earnest are willing to be anything or nothing in the world’s estimation, and publicly and privately, in season and out, avow their sympathies with despised ideas and their advocates, and bear the consequences.”
–SUSAN B. ANTHONY, 1860

“We, the people.’ It’s a very eloquent beginning. But when [the Constitution] was completed on the seventeenth of September in 1787, I was not included in that ‘We, the people.’ I felt somehow for many years that George Washington and Alexander Hamilton just left me out by mistake. But through the process of amendment, interpretation, and court decision, I have finally been included in ‘We, the people.’”
–BARBARA JORDAN, 1974
Lesson Plan

DAY ONE

Warm-Up » 10 min.

A. Begin with the general question: “To what extent is voting important?” and allow some brief discussion.

B. Let students know that according to a 2018 Pew Research Center survey, “Elections in the U.S.: Priorities and Performance,” 70% of Americans say voting in presidential elections is very important. It is in presidential election years that we generally have the highest level of voter participation.

C. Ask the class: Is it surprising, then, that in the average presidential election year, almost half of eligible voters do not cast a ballot? Why is that? You might point out that, for elections on strictly local issues and races, it is not unusual to have a voter turnout of less than 10% of eligible voters.

D. After some discussion, write on the board: “Civic Virtue: A set of actions and habits necessary for safe, effective, and mutually beneficial participation in a society.” After a brief explanation of that definition, ask: “Is voting in that set of actions and habits that make up for civic virtue? Another way of asking the question might be, is voting a right or responsibility? Do you lack civic virtue if you do not vote?”

E. Ask the class for their initial responses to these questions and allow some discussion.

Activity » 35 min.

A. Explain that you will now consider some ideas related to voting that may or may not be good ideas, but that have been proposed as ways that voting might either strengthen the connection between voting and civic virtue, or help voting become a more effective means for approving/disapproving referendums or selecting officials.

B. Allow students to choose a partner and give each pair a slip from Teacher Resource: Voting Proposals. Give students 10 minutes to examine the proposal and prepare a reasonable and eloquent persuasive speech in favor of it. (Assure them that this is just an exercise and they are not required to agree personally with the proposal.)

C. After ten minutes, have students who discussed the same proposal assemble into groups of 4-6. They should consult for five minutes or so on their best arguments in favor of the proposal they considered.
D. Have a spokesperson for each proposal present it to the class, while the rest of the class takes notes on the key points of the proposal and their initial “yea” or “nay” vote for it. To conclude, you could:

1. take a secret ballot vote on whether to accept each proposal
2. take a voice or show of hands vote on whether to accept each proposal
3. ask students which 3 they would vote for (if any)

Wrap-Up » 5 min.

Discuss with students whether any of the proposals they considered deepened or changed their thinking on the question of whether voting is a right, a responsibility, or both. Is there ever a duty not to vote? Explain.

DAY TWO

Warm-Up » 10 min.

A. Distribute Handout A: Testing Assumptions. Have students respond individually to each statement set. Then work with a partner to discuss their answers. Discuss any of the choices that especially interested your students.

B. If needed, rewrite the definition of civic virtue on the board: “A set of actions and habits necessary for safe, effective, and mutually beneficial participation in a society”

C. Write the phrase “participation in society” on the board, and challenge your students to name as many “indicators” of this phrase as they can.

D. In other words, what behaviors constitute participation in public life, and would be expected to increase if more people practiced civic virtue?

E. Keep a list on the board, and as a class identify 5 or 6 that you believe are the strongest. In order to stay focused on responsibilities of citizenship, be sure at least half of your list includes indicators that do not involve government. For example:

- Starting an organization to serve the needy in your area (voluntary)
- Working for organizations that help the poor (voluntary)
- Volunteering at a local private school (voluntary)
- Keeping up your home and property (voluntary)
- Reading the news and staying informed (voluntary)
- Organizing neighborhood clean-ups (voluntary)
- Running and serving on neighborhood watch (voluntary)
- Writing letters to the editor or opinion pieces on community/national issues (voluntary)
- Attending religious services, serving on church council (voluntary)
- Holding regular responsibility in a position of service in a religious or charitable organization (voluntary)
- Membership in civic organizations (voluntary)
- Voting (government)
- Speaking at local town meetings (government)
- Speaking at school board meetings (government)
- Running for public office (government)
- Volunteering or fundraising for a campaign (government)
- Reporting crimes (government)
- Participating in protests calling for laws to be passed or repealed (government)
- Writing to representatives (government)

Note: it is up to you whether you consider posting on social media to be a form of participation. At the very least, encourage students to question whether such an activity constitutes involvement in public life.

Activity » 30 minutes initial planning time

A. Introduce the Capstone Project. This project provides students with the opportunity to apply and showcase what they learned throughout their study of women’s suffrage in the U.S. After examining their assumptions about voting and citizenship—does voting itself constitute responsible citizenship? Does the right to vote lead to higher levels of participation in public life?—they will investigate these questions and analyze their results. See Appendix D: For Further Reading to identify additional source ideas.

B. Finally, they will plan, create, and market a website or educational event that increases awareness of the history of women in politics, the ways women have influenced local and national politics, and the importance of participation in public life including exercising the right to vote.

C. Divide the class into groups of six and distribute Handout B: Project Parameters and Directions. Go over the directions, making it plain that each student in the group has a clear responsibility (see the suggested grading rubric for guidance)

Notes:
- If students have not completed all of the lessons in Votes for Women: The Story of the Nineteenth Amendment, it would be helpful to have them read the background essays for all lessons.
- If your class will be working on Capstone Project as you progress through the curriculum, allow one class period per lesson for students to complete each sub-page.
- If you are presenting this Capstone Project as a stand-alone lesson without presenting the lessons that come before it, allow students one week of class time to complete their projects. During this time they should have access to the readings, appropriate handouts from all the lessons, and/or other appropriate texts.
- You may also wish to allow students to have Internet or library access to do additional research.
Alternative Assessments

A. You could also **create one website as a class**, assigning a single page/section to each group.

B. If web access is unavailable or impractical, students’ work can be printed on 17 x 11 paper to make a **booklet**. The homepage can be turned into a table of contents and all the sub-pages can be turned into spreads (facing pages in the booklet when it is open). Booklets can be printed in color and delivered to all the locations where voter registration is carried out.

C. Encourage students to promote their upcoming website or alternative event using social media and other methods.

D. Notes:

- Be sure to check your school guidelines, including any required or preferred applications, for using and building websites. In the absence of required or preferred apps for your school, you might consider some of these highly-rated (as of 2019) website-building tools: Squarespace, Weebly, Wix, Adobe Spark, Google Sites, Wordpress.com.

- Consider launching your website(s) around the centennial (or anniversary) of the adoption of the Nineteenth Amendment (August 26, 2020) with a community event in which you honor a member of your local community as a role model for civic virtue.

E. Alternative projects might include:

1. Hosting a history fair (like a science fair)

2. Planning a community education night with booths/voter registration tables. Note: Be sure to check your state’s laws regarding requirements for voter registrars, and/or invite your local official who supervises voter registration for your community.

3. Developing lessons/activities and teaching them at a nearby elementary school, etc.

4. Developing an online digital portfolio with accompanying social media initiative to publicize it.
**Voting Proposals**

**Directions:** Copy and cut out the slips and give one to each pair of students.

A. American citizens of voting age should be required to vote.

B. We should lower the voting age to 12.

C. Only people who pay income or property taxes in a given area should have the right to vote there.

D. Our votes all should be public record—no more secret ballots.

E. Elections with less than 70% turnout should be thrown out and held again until 70% turnout is reached.

F. Before casting their ballots, voters should be required to swear under oath that they are informed about the candidates and the issues.

G. Before casting their ballots, voters should be required to prove they are informed about the candidates and the issues.

H. Citizens should be able to vote for “none of the above” if they do not support any candidate.

I. Only high school graduates should be allowed to vote.
Testing Assumptions

Directions: Read each set of statements and check the one you believe is true.

1. Choose one:
   - People who cast votes are more likely to engage in public life in other ways.
   - People who cast votes are less likely to engage in public life in other ways.
   - Whether one votes does not affect how much he or she engages in public life.

2. Choose one:
   - It’s more important that someone feel involved in the political process than for that person to actually, in fact, influence politics.
   - It’s less important that someone feels involved in the political process than for that person to actually, in fact, influence politics.

3. Choose one:
   - Participating in government is more important than participating in public life in other ways (such as volunteering).
   - Participating in government is less important than participating in public life in other ways.

4. Choose one:
   - Your vote has a greater impact in local elections than in national ones.
   - Your vote has a lesser impact in local elections than in national ones.

5. Choose one:
   - Voting is the most important way one can participate in public life.
   - There are other more important ways to participate in public life than voting.
Project Parameters and Directions

**Directions:** You have already examined your assumptions about voting and citizenship. Now you are going to find out if your assumptions are correct. You will search for the answers to these questions on the local as well as national levels.

Whether you choose to create a website, history fair, teach a series of lessons in a local elementary school, or other local education activity, be sure to document all stages of your project through photos, videos, capturing screenshots, etc.

**Project:** Women’s Suffrage in ______ and in the United States Website or local education event.

(your town)

Some interesting questions you might tackle

- Does voting by itself constitute responsible citizenship?
- Does a particular group winning the right to vote lead to higher levels of participation in public life for that group?
- Is voting a right or responsibility, or both?
- Can it ever be virtuous not to vote?
- Voting is a direct way to have an effect, no matter how slight, on the outcome of elections. Many have put energy into winning the right to vote, while many have put energy into preventing others from voting! Since we do not have infinite time and energy, all this activity comes at a cost. Specifically, it comes at the cost of all the other things we could have done with that time and energy. Does a preoccupation with voting cause us to focus less on other, perhaps more effective ways to participate in public life? Explain why or why not.
- How does your study of the story of the Nineteenth Amendment affect your understanding of the difficulties inherent in sustaining a political movement with a singular purpose over a long period of time? How do we keep striving for the principles outlined in the Constitution and Declaration? How do you maintain the faith in the system so that people have hope for correcting the constitutional system and do not lose faith and abandon the system?
## Indicators of Participation in Public Life

**Directions:** Complete the chart using information from class discussion and your own research. List your sources in the space provided, using additional pages if necessary.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>List your indicators of participation in public life:</th>
<th>At what rate do people in your town (or state) do this?</th>
<th>At what rate do people do this nationally?</th>
<th>Are people who vote more or less likely to do this?</th>
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**Sources**

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Capstone Project Website Outline

Directions: After investigating these questions, you will analyze your results. Finally, you will plan, create, and market a website or local education event that increases awareness of the history of women in politics and the importance of civic virtue. Adapt this framework as needed to plan a local education event if desired in place of a website. Be sure to document all stages of your work through photos, videos, screenshots, etc.

Your website or local education event should adhere to MLA guidelines and provide appropriate source attribution for all content. It should include pages/sections with information on the following:

I. History of Women’s Suffrage in the U.S. (inspired by lessons in Votes for Women: The Story of the Nineteenth Amendment and described below)
   - Rights, Equality, and Citizenship
   - Women in Early America (1600-1800)
   - A Movement Arises (1800-1860)
   - Shall Women Have the Right to Vote? (1866-1890)
   - The Movement Unites (1890-1920)
   - Women in the Political World Today

II. The history of women’s participation in your local community (inspired by your own research)

III. Your family history and women’s suffrage (optional)

IV. The importance of civic virtue (inspired by your own research)

A Pathway for Change
## The Structure of Your Website

### Lesson One: Rights, Equality, and Citizenship

Create a page/section on your website explaining the foundations of legal equality and the seeds cultivated over time leading to the extension of suffrage to women and their continued participation in public life today.

**This page should feature:**
- Relevant excerpts about the principle of equality from colonial charters, the Declaration of Independence, the U.S. Constitution
- Significant quotations from people who lived during this time.
- Key information about women’s suffrage in your state, if it was in existence at the time.
- Appropriate and informative images.

### Lesson Two: Women in Early America (1600-1800)

Create a page/section on your website giving your audience a more complete introduction to at least four individuals who played a role in the promotion of women’s legal equality in early America.

**This page should feature:**
- Quotes and other primary sources of the time period.
- Key facts and information about the role of women.
- Appropriate and informative images.

### Lesson Three: A Movement Arises (1800-1860)

Create a page/section on your website explaining the events leading up to the Seneca Falls Convention and its significance as a milestone on the journey to suffrage.

**This page should feature:**
- Information about the Seneca Falls Convention and its leaders.
- Quotes and other primary sources of the time period.
- Appropriate and informative images.

### Lesson Four: Shall Women Have the Right to Vote? (1866-1890)

Create a page/section on your website detailing the evolution of the women’s suffrage movement after the Civil War through 1890.

**This page should feature:**
- Biographies of women’s suffrage movement leaders, including positions taken regarding how to respond to the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments.
- Quotes and other primary sources of the time period.
- Appropriate and informative images.
### The Structure of Your Website

#### Lesson Five: The Movement Unites (1890-1920)

Create a page/section on your website detailing events leading up to the passage of the Nineteenth Amendment.

**This page should feature:**
- A succinct explanation of how the women’s suffrage movement finally achieved victory.
- Quotes and other primary sources of the time period.
- Appropriate and informative images.

#### Lesson Six: Women in the Political World Today

Create a page/section on your website highlighting participation in public life by women of your choice. At least one person must live in your local community today.

**This page should feature:**
- Information on the individuals you selected.
- Quotes and other primary sources.
- Appropriate and informative images.

#### Your Local Community *(inspired by your own research)*

Create a page on your website exploring the history of women’s participation in your community. How did women from your town, state, or region contribute to the national conversation on women’s suffrage, or to the strength of your community in other ways?

#### Your Family Histories and Women’s Suffrage *(optional)*

You may choose to create a page on your website highlighting the history of your own families and how your ancestors contributed to the national conversation on women’s equality/women’s suffrage.

#### The Importance of Civic Virtue *(inspired by your own research)*

Create a page on your website to explain civic virtue and why it is necessary. Here, you can document your findings on the connection among voting, civic virtue, and participation in public life.

#### Other Requirements

Design your homepage to include an original logo and a title along with a tagline. Your tagline must be a clear statement (no more than one sentence) that memorably answers the question: How are suffrage and citizenship related?
Politics and the Women of the ___________ Family

**Directions:** Talk with your family members and find out the answers to the following questions. You may choose to include the most interesting pieces of information you discover on your website.

1. Do you have family members who lived in the U.S. before the ratification of the Nineteenth Amendment?

2. Did you have family members in the U.S. at the time of ratification of the Nineteenth Amendment?

3. If your family is from another country, explain whether women could/can vote there.

4. Who was the first female in your family to have the right to vote in the U.S.? (If you are not sure, you can take your best guess based on when your family came to the U.S.) Research the following and report on:
   - Where does/did your family member live?
   - Which presidential election did she first vote in?
   - Which candidates for the House and Senate did she decide between?
   - Who ran for governor of her state at that time?
   - What national issues were likely to have been of concern to her?
   - What state issues were likely to have been of concern?
   - What local issues were likely to have been of concern?
   - Who, if anyone, was the first female in your family to organize a protest, help a campaign, or fundraise for a specific cause? Tell a little of her story.
   - Who, if anyone, was the first female in your family to found or to lead a voluntary civic organization? Tell a little of her story.
   - Who, if anyone, was the first female in your family to win election to public office? Tell a little of her story.

5. How do female members of your family participate in public life today? Explain.
Sample Website/Award Press Releases

Directions: Below are samples you may customize with details about your event.

Local Students Honor Community Leader for Women’s Votes Centennial

For immediate release

Students in [teacher’s name] History Class at [school name] in [city, state], are preparing to honor a local community leader who they say is a model of civic virtue for all Americans. They are giving this award in special commemoration of the anniversary of women’s gaining the right to vote in the U.S. in 1920.

[Honoree] will receive this award as a model citizen, and specifically for his/her work in the area of [information here]. The ceremony will take place at [location] on [day and time] and the public is invited for refreshments afterwards.

The students have also launched a website, [URL], in order to help Americans today understand the perseverance and many accomplishments of leaders in the American women's suffrage movement.

For more information contact [name, info].

Almost Half Americans Don’t Vote? One High School Class Wants to Change That

For immediate release

Students in [teacher’s name] History Class at [school name] in [city, state], are preparing to honor a local community leader who they say is a model of civic virtue for all Americans, and an example of all American’s duty of civic engagement.

[Honoree] will receive this award as a model of civic virtue, and specifically for his/her work in the area of [information here]. The ceremony will take place at [location] on [day and time] and the public is invited for refreshments afterwards.

After learning about the struggles of women in the U.S. to gain the vote, these students were dismayed to learn that, according to... [insert reference], almost half the eligible voting population does not exercise this hard-fought right. That is one reason the class is giving this award on the anniversary of the Nineteenth Amendment’s passage in 1920.

The students have also launched a website, [URL], in order to help Americans today understand the perseverance and many accomplishments of leaders in the American women's suffrage movement.

For more information contact [name, info].
Website or Community Education Event

**Teacher Directions:** Students plan, create, and market a website or community education event that:

- increases awareness of the story of women’s suffrage in America.
- informs their local community about how women have participated in public life in their area.
- communicates their findings on participation in public life and exhorts their fellow citizens to greater involvement for the common good.
- encourages the members of their local community to appreciate and exercise their right to vote on many local issues and in the selection of representatives.

The education project might take the form of a website, a history fair, teaching a unit to younger learners, etc. The portfolio will document student planning and progress. All materials should be completed neatly, with extra pages inserted as needed to fully document the project through photographs, videos, screenshots, etc. Students should prepare a brief presentation describing their project for a school or community audience.

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Project Name ________________________________________________________________

Students Participating ________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

Project Completion Date _______ Portfolio Due Date _______ Presentation Date _______

☐ Portfolio Table of Contents.

☐ Students test their assumptions regarding civic participation (**Handout A: Testing Assumptions**).

☐ Students research participation in public life (**Handout C: Indicators of Participation in Public Life**).
☐ Students plan, create, and market a website or community event to educate users regarding the history of women in politics and the importance of civic virtue. (Handout D: Capstone Project Website Outline) Note: these guidelines may be adapted to help plan a history fair or other local education event.

☐ Students conduct interviews to capture personal stories regarding women’s participation in public life. (Handout E: Politics and the Women of the __________ Family)

☐ Students document their work by including photos, videos, screenshots, etc. of the website or local education event.

☐ Students market and promote their website or local education event. (Handout F: Sample Website/Award Press Releases)

Comments

Project strengths:
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Areas for improvement:
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