

# Women's Suffrage and the 19th Amendment

**Directions:** Read the passage below and answer the questions that follow

Women's suffrage was the name of the goal that women worked to achieve from the middle of the 19th century to the beginning of the 20th. **Suffrage** is another word for the right to vote and participate in politics.

Before 1920, women had very few political or social rights. Women were not expected to work in politics or even participate in political discussions. Prior to suffrage, it was considered rude and unladylike for a woman to even speak her mind.

Women had been fighting for the right to vote almost since the United States was established. Though the constitution did not say women could not vote, individual states had laws that did not allow them to vote. Activists like Lucy Stone, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, and Sojourner Truth began speaking up about equality for women in the earlier part of the 1800s. In 1848, Elizabeth Cady Stanton and other well-known activists organized the Seneca Falls Convention, a two-day meeting of people who wanted to win voting rights for women. Throughout the two-day convention, attendees shared ideas on how to achieve their goal. Influential leaders like Lucretia Mott, Amelia Bloomer, and even Frederick Douglass attended the convention, and some of them spoke about the situation and what they could do to make it better. The convention was widely reported on, and news of the event inspired women all over the country to join the fight and demand change. Official groups were formed, and the women who joined them, called "suffragettes," went on to stage demonstrations, give speeches, and write about the struggle for women's rights.

By 1915, a few rights had been won. Some states allowed women to vote in state elections, but they still were not allowed to vote nationally. However, the work that women did on the homefront during World War I, combined with the perseverance suffragettes had shown over the last 70 years, caused many people to change their thinking about a woman's role in society. In 1920, the **19th Amendment**, which said that no one could be excluded from voting in an election because of their gender, was ratified.

## Part 1: Reading Comprehension

1. Why were women not allowed to vote before 1920?
2. Describe an event that made a significant impact on the women's suffrage movement.
3. Why is it significant that Frederick Douglass attended the Seneca Convention?

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

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4. Why is the 19th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution important for the country, both in the past and today?

## Part 2: Writing

Imagine you're attending the Seneca Falls Convention. Write a short speech on why women should be given the right to vote.

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## Part 3: Creative Expression

One of the ways the suffragettes attracted attention to their cause was by coming up with sayings and slogans to express their beliefs. Pretend you're part of a suffrage organization in 1910. Come up with a snappy slogan for your organization, then design a poster around it.

Write your slogan on the lines below.

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Design your poster in the box below.