



## **Women's Suffrage, 1920**

### **ESSENTIAL QUESTION**

*How Can a Political Right Be Gained?*

### **Standards**

#### Social Studies

(6-8) I.1.3, I.1.4,

(9-12) I.1.3, I.1.4, I.1.5

AH.B.1.3, AH.B.1.6

8.C&G.1, 8.C&G.1.1, 8.C&G.1.2, 8.C&G.1.3, 8.C&G.1.5, AH.C&G.1; AH.C&G.1.1, AH.C&G.1.2, AH.C&G.1.3, AH.C&G.2.3

8.H.1, 8.H.1.1, 8.H.1.2, 8.H.1.3, 8.H.1.4, 8.H.2.2, 8.H.2.3, AH.H.1.1, AH.H.3.1

#### English Language Arts:

RI.6-12.1, RI.6-12.2, RI.6-12.3, RI.6-12.4, RI.6-12.6, RI.7.7, RI.6-12.8, RI.6-12.9, RI.6-12.10

L.6-12.1, L.6-12.4, L.6-12.6

SL.6-12.1, SL.6-8.5

### **Standards for extension options**

(6-8) I.1.6, I.1.7, I.1.8, I.1.10, (9-12) I.1.6

AH.C&G.1.4; AH.H.3.2

L.6-12.2, L.6-8.3

SL.6-12.4

W.6-12.1, W.6-12.2, W.6-12.3, W.6-12.4, W.6-12.5

### **Objectives**

- Assess the effectiveness of three of N.C.'s women's suffrage leaders.
- Analyze pro- and anti-suffrage opinions through political cartoons.

## Lesson Contents

The women's suffrage movement in North Carolina began in 1894 with the formation of the Equal Suffrage Association in Asheville, led by Helen Morris Lewis, who advocated for a constitutional amendment to grant women the right to vote. In 1897, a state senator introduced a women's suffrage bill, but it moved to the Committee on Psychiatric Hospitals and was ignored. The movement revived in 1913 with the North Carolina Equal Suffrage League meeting in Charlotte. Many believed women's contributions during World War I would sway President Wilson and congress to support suffrage. In 1918, U.S. congress approved the 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment for the state ratification process.

In response, an anti-suffrage movement grew to oppose North Carolina's ratification. Textile mill owners, who relied on child labor, were among those who feared women's voting power. Concerns about race influenced both sides of the debate. In August 1920, Governor Thomas W. Bickett called a special session to consider the amendment, but the state senate voted by a narrow margin to delay voting. Tennessee became the 36<sup>th</sup> state to ratify, changing federal law and women's political power across the country. Despite not being able to vote herself, Lilliam Exum Clement, a lawyer from Asheville, was elected as a Buncombe County representative in 1920 and became the South's first woman legislator. The legislature revised state laws that year to allow women to vote. The constitution, however, did not change.

### Primary Sources

**Pro and anti-suffrage political cartoons**, PC. 1618, State Archives of N.C.

[digital.ncdcr.gov/Documents/Detail/political-cartoons-pro-womens-suffrage/761052](https://digital.ncdcr.gov/Documents/Detail/political-cartoons-pro-womens-suffrage/761052);  
[digital.ncdcr.gov/Documents/Detail/anti-woman-suffrage-fan-diagram-showing-percentage-of-increase-vote-in-new-york-with-woman-suffrage/776785](https://digital.ncdcr.gov/Documents/Detail/anti-woman-suffrage-fan-diagram-showing-percentage-of-increase-vote-in-new-york-with-woman-suffrage/776785);  
[digital.ncdcr.gov/Documents/Detail/anti-woman-suffrage-circular-the-southern-league-for-the-rejection-of-the-susan-b.-anthony-amendment-july-1920/769740](https://digital.ncdcr.gov/Documents/Detail/anti-woman-suffrage-circular-the-southern-league-for-the-rejection-of-the-susan-b.-anthony-amendment-july-1920/769740)

**Anna Alene Clemons' correspondence** with the National Woman's Party, 1920, Library of Congress, microfilm (1979) reel 5

**"Votes for Women" sash**, PC.1618, State Archives of N.C.,  
[digital.ncdcr.gov/Documents/Detail/grosgrain-ribbon-sash-vote-for-women/762601?item=%27%27&from=my-account](https://digital.ncdcr.gov/Documents/Detail/grosgrain-ribbon-sash-vote-for-women/762601?item=%27%27&from=my-account)

**The North Carolina Convention of the National Suffrage Association Annual Report**, 1919, Gertrude Weil papers, PC.1488, State Archives of N.C.,  
[digital.ncdcr.gov/Documents/Detail/annual-reports-equal-suffrage-association-of-north-carolina-from-1914-1920/763702?item=763740](https://digital.ncdcr.gov/Documents/Detail/annual-reports-equal-suffrage-association-of-north-carolina-from-1914-1920/763702?item=763740)

### Transcriptions

- The North Carolina Convention of the National Suffrage Association Annual Report
- Anna Alene Clemmons correspondence,  
<https://documents.alexanderstreet.com/d/1000688566>

### Folder Contents

- **Background: Women’s Suffrage, 1920**
- **Activity: Annotation Worksheet**
- **Activity: The Women’s Suffrage Debate**
- **Activity: Make Your Own Political Cartoon**
- **Activity: Selections & Questions**
- **Activity: Anna A. Clemons—Southport’s Secret Suffragist**
- **Activity: Sash & Slogan**

### **Supplies**

Projector (optional)

Magazines, fabric scraps, markers, etc. (optional)

Sample “Votes for Women” sash (included)

materials for students to make their own sashes such as crepe paper, ribbon, construction paper, markers, scissors, tape or safety pins

### **Lesson Preparation**

- Review the primary sources, transcription, related materials, and slides to determine which options are appropriate for your students. Note that this box contains a variety of options from which teachers can select, based on available time, learning goals, and student capacities.
- Access original documents and transcription to project for the class and zoom in as needed. These may be found via online links or as files on the accompanying flash drive.
- Keep answer keys at hand for any handouts you choose.
- Vocabulary terms for this lesson may be posted or projected to discuss as a class. If you prefer to distribute an individual handout, copy and modify the relevant list in

the **Glossary** (found in **Cross-Lesson Activities** folder) to print as a reference for each student or to create a quiz.

- Make copies of any handouts you choose:
  - **Background: Women's Suffrage, 1920** can be printed double-sided. Note: slides can substitute for background worksheets and may be more appropriate for upper levels. If selecting this worksheet, print a copy for each student.
  - Primary Sources: **The North Carolina Convention of the National Suffrage Association Annual Reports**. The transcription is 5 pages and may be printed double-sided for individual work with the **Document Analysis** worksheet and the **Activity: Annotation Worksheet**. Select images from **Campaign Ephemera** in the **Primary Sources** folder to print and distribute for individual work.
  - **Activity: Annotation Worksheet** may be printed for individual work, a copy for each student.
  - **Document Analysis** worksheet (found in the cross-lesson activity folder) is an optional assignment for individual work with one or more political cartoons or the annual report transcription. Print double-sided 1 copy for each student for each document assigned.
  - If completing **Activity: Constitutional Timeline**, found in the **Cross-Lesson Activities** folder, as individual work, print page 3 for each student. If discussing as a class, replicate the chart on a large piece of paper to tape to the wall.
  - **Activity: The Women's Suffrage Debate** can be printed double-sided to distribute to each student. Additional paper for notes may be necessary.
  - **Activity: Make Your Own Political Cartoon** may be printed double-sided, 1 for each student, or instructions presented in class for students to create digitally or on a blank piece of paper.
  - **Activity: Selections & Questions** may be used as a shorter assignment in place of the annotation worksheet. Review to decide if it would work better for your class as a worksheet for individual students or to divide into groups for jigsawing. If so, there are 4 selections and corresponding questions, in addition to a final reflection paragraph assignment. Print the necessary copies for pairs or small groups to read and discuss. Cut pages in half to distribute.

- **Activity: Anna A. Clemons—Southport’s Secret Suffragist** includes transcriptions of 5 letters. If preparing as a worksheet, print double-sided to distribute the 2 page front & back handout to each student.
  - **Activity: Sash & Slogan** can be printed as a single-sided instruction set for student groups. Example: print 7 for 28 students.
  - **Exit Tickets**—print single-sided and cut, 4 tickets per page (8 copies for 30 students). The 2 choices can be distributed in the same class or used for 2 different classes, if the lesson extends multiple days.
- Prepare craft materials for **Activity: Sash & Slogan**.

## Background Knowledge

(5 minutes)

Ask students: *Why is the vote important? Who decides those who can vote?* Student answers will vary but will include that in a democracy, voters decide who can vote.

## Procedure

- Ask students *how women gained the vote in 1920?* Answers will vary but may include that men voted for women’s suffrage, women’s organizations garnered support for the issue, and women’s wartime responsibilities proved their value as full citizens. (5 minutes)
- Find the **Glossary** in the “Cross-Lesson Activities” folder. Review, project, or distribute terms necessary to understand the document. Discuss any additional terms that cause students comprehension difficulty during the lesson. (5 minutes)
- Distribute the primary source transcription, **The North Carolina Convention of the National Suffrage Association Annual Reports**. Have students read and highlight/underline phrases that help answer the questions: *How did the pro-suffrage cause organize? How did the cause gain support?* (10 minutes)
- Pass out **Document Analysis** sheets. These can be used for individual political cartoons in the ephemera set and/or with the transcription of the **N.C. Convention of the National Suffrage Association Annual Reports**. Allow students to come to their own conclusions about each document. (15 minutes)
- Distribute **Activity: Annotation Worksheet**. Students should refer to the sections they marked in their reading of the **Annual Reports**. (15 minutes)

- Complete the wall chart as a class or allow time for students to complete the 1920 section of **Activity: Political Participation Chart** individually. Ask: *Who is missing?* If continuing to work with the DocsBox for additional lessons, have students keep their completed chart (or keep the class chart) for future review. (10 minutes)
- Pass out **Background** worksheets and allow students to complete fact-check questions. Review answers using key. Note that content projected with slides or digital files and class discussion may be more appropriate for advanced students. (15 minutes)
- Project slides or digital files of the 2 broadsides for class discussion or pass out **Activity: The Women's Suffrage Debate**. Note: if completing as a student worksheet, students will likely need notebook paper to have space re-write the lists in their own words. (15 minutes)
- Discuss instructions as a class or distribute **Activity: Make Your Own Political Cartoon**. Encourage students to be creative with their cartoons by using markers and/or collage materials. (10-30 minutes)
- If desired, distribute **Activity: Selections & Questions** to individuals or a selection/question to small groups for jigsawing. Allow time for groups to read and discuss among themselves before facilitating a whole-class discussion. Allow time for students to write a paragraph to the final prompt and use examples discussed. (30-40 minutes)
- Distribute as worksheets or project for discussion, **Activity: Anna A. Clemons—Southport's Secret Suffragist**. (15 minutes)
- Project or distribute directions to student groups for **Activity: Sash & Slogan**. Allow time to complete this craft and present work to the class or in groups (30-40 minutes)
- Pass out **Exit Tickets**. Allow time to complete before collecting. Choose an option or use both if lesson extends multiple days: (5 minutes)
  - *If you were a woman in 1920 who could vote for the first time, what would you vote for?*
  - *What additional right would you propose?*

## Modifications

- Student pages/worksheets could be shared with students needing to take notes individually, with vision issues, or who have issues focusing (even if the slides are being used collectively).
- Students could be paired with a higher-achieving or differently behaving student for extra support.
- Students could be given extension activities if they finish early or are high-achieving and need more challenging or independent work. These can be done independently or collaboratively.

## Extension Options

- Have students choose a North Carolina woman involved in the suffrage movement. They may research or choose from those on the background sheet—Gertrude Weil, Lillian Exum Clement, or Charlotte Hawkins Brown—or select another N.C. woman elected to office in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Encourage students to write a page biography detailing major accomplishments, influence on their local and national community, and how their work relates to today.
- Have students formulate arguments for or against women's suffrage and give them 3 minutes each at a podium for a debate. An extra addition: have students wear the sashes they made with slogans of their choice.
- Considering Anna Clemmons' challenge and correspondence to solicit help, write a letter about an issue you care about to an organization or government official. Where could you turn for assistance? How would you persuade the recipient that your problem is important?
- Describe a contemporary political/social issue that affects local or state politics. What would be a more "modern" version of promoting a cause than a sash? Come up with a plan or strategy to promote this cause.

## Field Trip Connections

**Charlotte Hawkins Brown Museum**, originally a boarding school for African American students founded by a prominent advocate for African American and women's suffrage, [historicsites.nc.gov/all-sites/charlotte-hawkins-brown-museum](https://historicsites.nc.gov/all-sites/charlotte-hawkins-brown-museum).

**State Capitol**, a few women followed Lillian Exum Clement to work as legislators here before the new State House opened in 1963. Governor Beverly Perdue also had an office here, 2009-2013, [historicsites.nc.gov/all-sites/north-carolina-state-capitol](https://historicsites.nc.gov/all-sites/north-carolina-state-capitol).

## Recommended Resources

Britannica, "Is there a Difference Between a Suffragist and a Suffragette?," [britannica.com/video/difference-suffragist-suffragette/-259238](https://www.britannica.com/video/difference-suffragist-suffragette/-259238)

Digital exhibit and timeline, "1914-1920: A Path to Victory," [exhibits.lib.unc.edu/exhibits/show/organized-womanhood/suffragenc/1914](https://exhibits.lib.unc.edu/exhibits/show/organized-womanhood/suffragenc/1914)

Charlotte Hawkins Brown, "What the Negro Woman Asks of the White Woman of North Carolina," Charlotte Hawkins Brown Papers, Schlesinger Library, Radcliffe Institute, Harvard University. Brown's speech to the Federation of White Women's Clubs, Charlotte, May 1920. [exhibits.lib.unc.edu/exhibits/show/organized-womanhood/suffragenc/racism](https://exhibits.lib.unc.edu/exhibits/show/organized-womanhood/suffragenc/racism)

Swannanoa Valley Museum's digital exhibit on Lillian Exum Clement, [history.swannanoavalleymuseum.org/lillian-exum-clement/](https://history.swannanoavalleymuseum.org/lillian-exum-clement/)

Biographical manuscript about Lillian Exum Clement Stafford, PC.2084, State Archives of N.C., [digital.ncdcr.gov/Documents/Detail/biographical-manuscript-for-lillian-exum-clement-stafford/770191?item=770198](https://digital.ncdcr.gov/Documents/Detail/biographical-manuscript-for-lillian-exum-clement-stafford/770191?item=770198)

Biographical sketch of Gertrude Weil, [ncpedia.org/weil-gertrude](https://ncpedia.org/weil-gertrude)

Southport Historical Society, dramatization of Anna Clemons based on *Southport's Secret Suffragist* by Liz Fuller, [youtube.com/watch?v=TvRQ8L1mEo4](https://youtube.com/watch?v=TvRQ8L1mEo4), 1 hr.