

The Seneca Falls Convention and the Declaration of Sentiments

Women's Rights Movement

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Grade Level	8th Grade	**Time Frame**	2-3 class period(s)
Subject	Social Studies	**Duration**	150 minutes
Course	U.S. Government		

Essential Question

What roles have women played in advancing civil rights historically and currently? What issues addressed during the women's rights movement remain relevant today?

Summary

In this lesson about the women's rights movement, students familiarize themselves with the experiences of women in the 19th century. Next, students interact with a short video summarizing the significance of the Seneca Falls Convention and the Declaration of Sentiments as the formal kickoff of the women's rights movement. Then, students analyze the Declaration of Sentiments to determine the goals and ideals of the women's rights movement, supporting their answers with text evidence. To extend their learning, students then consider to what extent some of the grievances women noted in the Declaration of Sentiments have been redressed today.

Snapshot

Engage

Students examine a list of laws and practices that shaped the experiences of women in the 19th century.

Explore

Students watch a video to determine the significance of the Seneca Falls Convention and the Declaration of Sentiments.

Explain

Students analyze the Declaration of Sentiments to determine the goals and ideals of the women's rights movement.

Extend

Students evaluate to what extent some of the grievances in the Declaration of Sentiments have been rectified.

Evaluate

Students return to the lesson's essential questions and create a response.

Standards

Oklahoma Academic Standards (Social Studies Practices (8th Grade))

8.9: The student will analyze the social and economic transformations of the early nineteenth century.
8.9.5: Identify the ideals, significance,and key leaders of the Second Great Awakening and the Women's Suffrage Movement, including the Declaration of Sentiments and the leadership of Susan B. Anthony, Elizabeth Cady Stanton,and Sojourner Truth.

Attachments

- Laws-and-Practices-in-the-U-S-in-1848-Shaping-the-Lives-of-Women - Spanish.docx
- Laws-and-Practices-in-the-U-S-in-1848-Shaping-the-Lives-of-Women - Spanish.pdf
- Laws-and-Practices-in-the-U-S-in-1848-Shaping-the-Lives-of-Women.docx
- Laws-and-Practices-in-the-U-S-in-1848-Shaping-the-Lives-of-Women.pdf
- Seneca Falls Convention and the Declaration of Sentiments.pptx
- The-Declaration-of-Sentiments - Spanish.docx
- The-Declaration-of-Sentiments - Spanish.pdf
- The-Declaration-of-Sentiments.docx
- The-Declaration-of-Sentiments.pdf
- The-Seneca-Falls-Convention-and-the-Declaration-of-Sentiments-Note-Catcher - Spanish.docx
- The-Seneca-Falls-Convention-and-the-Declaration-of-Sentiments-Note-Catcher - Spanish.pdf
- The-Seneca-Falls-Convention-and-the-Declaration-of-Sentiments-Note-Catcher-Teacher.docx
- The-Seneca-Falls-Convention-and-the-Declaration-of-Sentiments-Note-Catcher-Teacher.pdf
- The-Seneca-Falls-Convention-and-the-Declaration-of-Sentiments-Note-Catcher.docx
- The-Seneca-Falls-Convention-and-the-Declaration-of-Sentiments-Note-Catcher.pdf
- Women-s-Rights-Today-Handout - Spanish.docx
- Women-s-Rights-Today-Handout - Spanish.pdf
- Women-s-Rights-Today-Handout-Blank - Spanish.docx
- Women-s-Rights-Today-Handout-Blank - Spanish.pdf
- Women-s-Rights-Today-Handout-Blank.docx
- Women-s-Rights-Today-Handout-Blank.pdf
- Women-s-Rights-Today-Handout-Teacher.docx
- Women-s-Rights-Today-Handout-Teacher.pdf
- Women-s-Rights-Today-Handout.docx
- Women-s-Rights-Today-Handout.pdf

Materials

- Lesson Slides (attached)
- Laws and Practices in the U.S. in 1848 Shaping the Lives of Women (attached, one per student)
- Internet access to view What Happened at the Seneca Falls Convention? video
- The Seneca Falls Convention and the Declaration of Sentiments Note Catcher (attached, one per student)
- The Seneca Falls Convention and the Declaration of Sentiments Note Catcher Teacher (attached)
- The Declaration of Sentiments (attached, one per student)
- Women's Rights Today Handout (attached, one per student)
- Women's Rights Today Handout (Blank) (attached, one per student, optional)
- Women's Rights Today Handout (Teacher) (attached)

Engage

Teacher's Note - Lesson Context

This lesson is meant as an introduction to the women's rights movement. It focuses on the Seneca Falls Convention and the Declaration of Sentiments as initial acts that formalized the movement for women's rights in the United States. We encourage you to follow this lesson with a more in-depth study of the leadership of Susan B. Anthony, Sojourner Truth, Harriet Tubman, and the contributions of many others, as well as how the intersectionality of gender with race, class, and other identities shaped the women's rights movement. For further context surrounding the women's rights movement and especially the often untold stories, please view Suffrage At 100: A Visual History, recently published by The New York Times.

Divide students into groups of four. Display **slide 3**. Pass out the **Laws and Practices in the U.S. in 1848 Shaping the Lives of Women Handout.** Give students a few minutes to read over the list with their groups. Next, ask student groups to use the S-I-T strategy to identify and discuss a surprising fact or idea, an interesting fact or idea, and a troubling fact or idea. Decide in advance whether or not you want students to record their responses or simply have a discussion. If you choose to have students record their answers, it is suggested that students explain why something is surprising, interesting, or troubling. When ready, call on each group to share at least one of the "laws and practices" they found surprising, interesting, and/or troubling. Invite student groups to share their reasoning with the class. Follow up student contributions to the discussion with questions that will help students understand how all of these laws and social norms oppressed women, making it very difficult for women to advance their own freedom.

Possible Student Responses - S-I-T Strategy

S - We were surprised that in most states it was legal for a man to use violence against his wife because today we believe violence is wrong and illegal. I - We thought it was interesting that all women experienced oppression because of their gender, but other parts of their identities, like race, caused them to either experience some advantages or greater oppression. T - We thought it was troubling that women could not vote; therefore, they had very little power to change any of the other inequalities they faced.

Conclude this discussion by making the point that all women in the 19th century experienced oppression. Some women experienced greater oppression than others depending on aspects of their identities besides gender, such as race and class. In the 19th century, for example, a wealthy, highly educated, White woman experienced oppression because of her gender. However, her oppression was often mitigated by the advantages she experienced because of her class, education level, and race. On the other hand, an enslaved Black woman also experienced oppression because of her gender, but her oppression was compounded by her race and status as an enslaved person. From varied experiences of oppression such as these, women began to resist and organize to demand change that would further their economic, political, and social freedom.

After a discussion of oppression, display **slide 4** and advise students that the lesson focuses on the beginning of the women's rights movement in the United States. Advise students to consider the following essential questions: What roles have women played in advancing civil rights historically and currently? What issues addressed during the women's rights movement remain relevant today? Display **slide 5** to identify the learning objectives for the lesson.

Explore

After establishing through discussion the wide array of rights denied to women in the 19th century, note that women became increasingly organized in response to these events. Give each student a copy of **The Seneca Falls Convention and Declaration of Sentiments Note Catcher**. Display **slide 6.** Introduce the video about the beginnings of the women's rights movement. Ask students to look at the Note Catcher, and point out the "Seneca Falls Convention" and "Declaration of Sentiments" sections. Invite students to consider the following questions as they watch the video. What is the Seneca Falls Convention? Why is it important? What is the Declaration of Sentiments? Why is it important? Assign students to fill in each section with information from the video. Display **slide 7** to show the video, which provides a brief summary of the early women's rights movement, including the significance of the Seneca Falls Convention and the Declaration of Sentiments.

Embedded video
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TcYhuG1y3bc

After viewing the video, ask students to share the information they recorded in their small groups. They may modify or add to their answers at this time. When students are ready, ask several groups to share out their answers for the Seneca Falls Convention. Repeat the process for the Declaration of Sentiments. At this point, clarify any misconceptions or add any missing information to the conversation. Invite students to refine their answers based on the class discussion. See **The Seneca Falls Convention** and the **Declaration of Sentiments Note Catcher (Teacher)** for possible student responses.

Teacher's Note - Additional Class Discussion Points

Consider asking students how the women's rights movement relates to the abolitionist movement. It is important to make the point that many women were active in the abolitionist movement and found themselves in a strange position. For example, they tried to convince lawmakers to make slavery illegal, yet they themselves could not vote or hold office. Thus, the formally organized women's rights movement began. The women's rights movement and the abolitionist movement remained connected for many years, until a schism over the 14th and 15th Amendment split the movements. You can point out that Frederick Douglass, who was mentioned in the video, was one of the most prominent abolitionists of the time and also a fierce supporter of women's rights.

Explain

Distribute copies of the **Declaration of Sentiments** to each student. Ask students to read the first three paragraphs together in their groups. When students have had a chance to read, bring students back together. Display **slide 8** and ask them: What is familiar about these first three paragraphs?

Possible Student Responses

Ideally, students will recognize that the first three paragraphs of the Declaration of Sentiments are almost identical to the Declaration of Independence. They may note familiar ideas, such as equality, natural or inalienable rights, consent of the governed, the social contract, and the right to challenge and change a government that does not protect a person's natural rights in effort to improve the existing government or make a new one. Additionally, in the same way that the colonists believed the British government abused and denied their rights, women state in the Declaration of Sentiments that their rights have been abused and denied by men in American society.

Once you have heard responses from students, fill in any missing information or points about the similarities between the Declaration of Independence and the Declaration of Sentiments. Next, display **slide 9** and ask the class: What point were the authors of the Declaration of Sentiments trying to make by modeling their declaration of women's rights after the Declaration of Independence?

Possible Student Responses

Students should point out that modeling the DOS after the DOI is a powerful and symbolic choice because the Declaration of Independence is one of America's founding documents and the very ideas described in it were used to justify separation from Great Britain and the formation of a representative democracy in the place of British rule. In an effort to legitimize the women's rights movement, women used the same basic principles in the Declaration of Independence to justify their own rebellion against the American political system.

When you feel your students have a good grasp of the first part of the Declaration of Sentiments, invite students to scan the remainder of the document. Students should notice that the document follows the structure of the Declaration of Independence with a set of grievances each beginning with the word "he." Remind students that in the Declaration of Independence, the grievances were against the British government, and "he" specifically referred to King George III. In the Declaration of Sentiments, "he" refers to the general male population in the United States.

Ask students to find their Note Catcher and display **slide 10**. Explain to them that they are going to read the rest of the Declaration of Sentiments with their groups. Once they finish reading through it, based on what they have gleaned from the document as well as the video and class discussions, student groups should create a one-sentence statement summarizing the ideals and goals of the women's rights movement. They should record this response in the "Ideals and Goals of the Women's Rights Movement" section of the Note Catcher. Specify that their response should be as specific as possible, rather than something like "women wanted equality." See the Note Catcher (Teacher) for possible student responses.

Next, students need to work with their groups to find text evidence to support their statement. Students can either directly quote specific words and short phrases from the Declaration of Sentiments, or they may paraphrase the document, putting the ideas into their own words. You might also want students to do both. The text evidence they find should be recorded in the "Text Evidence" section of the Note Catcher. Again, see the Note Catcher (Teacher) for possible student responses.

Teacher's Note - Chunking

If you think your students would benefit from chunking this part of the lesson, bring your students back together as a whole class after groups have filled in the "Ideals and Goals of the Women's Rights Movement" section. Ask each group to share their statement with the class. At this point, you can ask students to make any necessary changes to their responses before moving on to the next part.

Next, ask each student group to share their "goals" statement as well as at least one piece of text evidence to support their response. Please fill in any information or important details that students missed. Please see the Note Catcher (Teacher) for possible responses.

Conclude the class discussion by summarizing that the goal of the women's rights movement was to achieve social, economic, and political equality for women and that this movement would span decades, as women continued to advocate for their rights into the 20th and 21st centuries, both before and after women won the right to vote in 1920.

Extend

Explain to students that now that they understand the severe limitation on the rights of women in the 19th century, which sparked the grievances in the Declaration of Sentiments, they are now going to turn their attention to the experiences of women today. Display **slide 11**. In the next activity, working in groups, students should look at at least three grievances from the Declaration of Sentiments and determine to what extent that grievance has been redressed or fixed. The groups must use evidence to support their answers. Distribute the **Women's Rights Today Handout**. The three grievances chosen represent three different aspects of equality - political, economic, and social.

Teacher's Note - Student Choice

In an effort to create more student choice in this lesson, you could assign two of the three grievances, and students could pick the third, or you could let students choose all three grievances to examine. The **Women's Rights Today Handout (Blank)** is available for students to write in their own grievances.

The first step is to review each of the three grievances, asking student groups to summarize these in their own words. This will ensure that students understand what they are evaluating.

When students understand the grievances, direct them to the Women's Leadership Fact Sheet published by the Center for American Progress. Explain to students that they can use both the fact sheet and their own observations and experiences to first determine to what extent they feel each grievance has been fixed and then as evidence to explain their reasoning. Student responses may vary, but it is important that their responses are supported with evidence and reasoning. While students work in groups to discuss and evaluate the grievances, they may have different opinions about the extent to which the grievances have been corrected today. See the **Women's Rights Today Handout (Teacher)** for possible student responses.

Teacher's Note - Center For American Progress Information

The Center for American Progress is a nonprofit organization and an independent nonpartisan policy institute. For more information about the Center for American Progress, visit their website.

Teacher's Note - Chunking

If you feel your students might benefit from chunking this part of the learning experience, you could have student groups work on the first grievance only and then come back together as a whole class to review. After a class review, you can then repeat the process for the second and third grievances.

After students have had sufficient time to analyze and evaluate each grievance, using a modification of the Three Stray, One Stays strategy, ask a pair of students from each group to rotate to another group. Students should take their Women's Rights Today handouts with them to the new group. Once the new groups have formed, each pair should take turns explaining their responses to each grievance. As students discuss the grievances, walk around the room to clarify any misconceptions, answer questions, and check for understanding. Determine how many times you would like the groups to rotate before students return to their original groups. You might also consider how much time you want them to stay at each group and whether you want them to discuss a certain grievance at each rotation rather than all of them.

Teacher's Note - Small And Whole Group Discussion Expectations

Before students begin their discussions with their peers, it is important to remind them of small and whole group discussion expectations, especially when it comes to discussing topics where everyone brings a different set of experiences and observations to the table. Remind students that it is important to listen to what others have to say and to consider their ideas and experiences. This does not mean they all have to agree. However, review with students respectful and civil ways to share an opposing opinion or idea. If these routines, skills, and expectations for discussion have not been established in your class, you might consider implementing Talk Moves before teaching this lesson or as you teach this lesson.

When students return to their home groups, give student groups a few minutes to refine their responses based on their conversations with their peers. Once they have discussed any new information or perspectives, call on each group to present at least one of their responses to the whole class. Ask follow-up questions to the groups and/or allow other students to offer differinng points of view. To conclude the discussion, make the point that while women experience more rights and equality than they did in the 19th century, there is still work to be done.

Evaluate

Display **slide 12**. Ask students to return to the essential questions posed at the beginning of the lesson - What roles have women played in advancing civil rights historically and currently? What issues addressed during the women's rights movement in the 19th century remain relevant today?

Ask students to respond to these questions as an Exit Ticket. Students could individually respond to one or both questions and turn in their written responses. If you choose to ask for a written response, be sure to communicate your expectations of this response in terms of using complete sentences, number of sentences, structure, etc. Alternatively, you could create a Padlet board or discussion post and ask that students post their responses digitally.

Lastly, these questions could be discussed as a whole class.

The Seneca Falls and Declaration of Sentiments Note Catcher and the Women's Rights Today Handout could also be collected and reviewed as assessments for this lesson.

Resources

- Edutopia. (2018, November 16). Encouraging academic conversations with talk moves. George Lucas Educational Foundation. https://www.edutopia.org/video/encouraging-academic-conversations-talk-moves
- Geiger, A. W., & Parker, K. (2018, March 15). For Women's History Month, a look at gender gains - and gaps - in the U.S. Pew Research Center. https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2018/03/15/for-womens-history-month-a-look-at-gender-gains-and-gaps-in-the-u-s/
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