

Women's Suffrage Movement

Expanded lesson guidance for a reading and discussion activity on the history of women's voting rights.

Recommended level	Grades 5-13; adaptable for lower and upper secondary classes
Duration	1-2 class hours
Subjects	English, Geography and Economics, History, Civic / Political Education, gender equality education
Method	Reading, gap-fill activity, pair or team discussion, plenary reflection
Competencies	Subject knowledge

Learning aim

Students receive an introductory overview of the struggle for women's suffrage and see how demands for political participation developed within broader social and political movements. The lesson connects historical milestones with questions of equality, citizenship, and democratic representation.

Materials

Copies of the gap-fill text *Women's Suffrage*; optional vocabulary support or dictionaries; and a board or projector for the final discussion.

How the activity works

- Give students the English gap-fill text and allow them to complete it individually, using context clues to supply the missing words.
- Pause to clarify unfamiliar vocabulary, names, and historical references. Depending on the class level, this can happen before the task, during it, or in a short follow-up.
- Ask students to compare their answers in pairs or small teams, then move from the language task to the historical content of the text.
- In small groups, students discuss the key ideas of the reading with the help of guiding questions. Encourage them to distinguish between facts, surprising details, and open

questions.

- Bring the class back together for a plenary exchange. Invite students to say which information was new to them, what they found striking, and what they would like to explore further.
- If useful, close with a brief comparison between the global history outlined in the text and one specific national case, such as Austria or another country studied in class.

Suggested discussion prompts

- What is the difference between *suffragists* and *suffragettes*?
- How do *equal suffrage* and *universal suffrage* differ?
- Which country is commonly identified as the first to introduce universal suffrage?
- Before full voting rights were granted, what political rights did women gain in some places?
- Which legal, political, or social strategies were used to keep women away from the ballot box?
- How did countries in Europe observe, imitate, or resist suffrage reforms taking place elsewhere?

Extension for older students

Older students can use the text as a starting point for a short research project on the women's suffrage movement in one country. Their findings can be turned into a poster, exhibition panel, or short presentation for display in the school building.

Source / Credit

Adapted from Philipp Leeb, Renate Tanzberger, and Bärbel Traunsteiner, *Gender - Gleichstellung - Geschlechtergerechtigkeit* (Vienna: Edition polis, 2014). Updated March 5, 2022.

Link

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Women%27s_suffrage