

# Women's Suffrage in the West

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This lesson will focus on:

- where women won the right to vote in the West
- when and what type of voting rights—full or partial—women won in the West
- important suffragists in the West

**Part I** helps define the American West through a mapping activity (**Part A**). State Suffrage Cards (**Part B**) are used to add to the map the type of suffrage women won in western states along with when they won it. A guided analysis of the information on the map on full and partial suffrage (**Part C**) follows with a written summary using claims, evidence, specific evidence and examples (**Part D**).

**Part II** evaluates the 19th Amendment, looking at which western states ratified the amendment, adding the information to the map.

**Part III** provides an investigation into important women and suffrage organizations in each state's fight for suffrage with student presentations and class analysis on the strategies suffragists used to actively win the right to vote.

**Part IV** offers an exploration of important women in students' lives who may have stood up for something or fought for something they believed in through a brief interview and creation of an "Important Woman" card that can be posted in class or sent to the individual.

# Women's Suffrage in the West

Women's suffrage—the right to vote—was not part of the United States Constitution until the 19th Amendment was passed in 1920. The 19th Amendment added to the Constitution:

*the right of the citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of sex.*

In other words, no state or the United States federal government can take away or limit a female's right to vote. However, long before the 19th Amendment, women won full suffrage (can vote on anything) or partial suffrage (can vote only on certain things) in territories and states across the West.

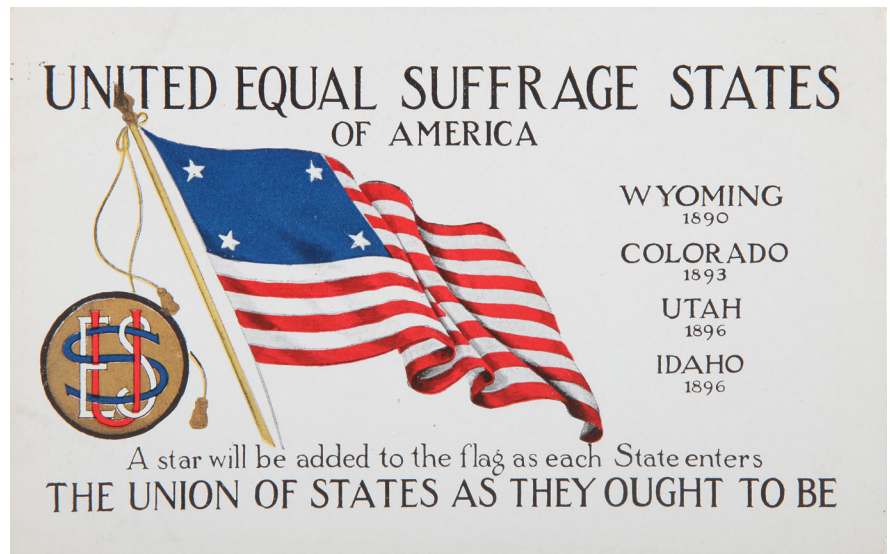
The West led the way for women's suffrage in the United States beginning with the women's suffrage law of 1869 in the Territory of Wyoming. Women won the full right to vote in some Western territories from 1869 to 1920, before the national women's suffrage amendment. In other areas in the West, where women hadn't received full suffrage yet, women won the partial right to vote in local school, city and presidential elections.

By the time of the 19th Amendment's passage, women in 23 of the 24 western territories/states had already won some type of voting rights. In 14 of those western territories/states, women had full suffrage. In comparison, women in many states east of the Mississippi River were still fighting for full or partial suffrage. Only 3 states—Massachusetts, New York, and Michigan—had full suffrage when the 19th Amendment was ratified, making women's right to vote part of the U.S. Constitution.

Despite the West's advancements for women through suffrage, the right to vote didn't apply to all women in western states and territories. Even the 19th Amendment did not include women's suffrage for all. In 1920, Native Americans and Asian immigrants in the U.S. were not considered United States citizens. So state and federal laws and guarantees to rights such as suffrage didn't apply to them.

In addition, after the 19th Amendment passed, many states created local laws that limited the rights of Black and Latina women to vote such as literacy tests, taxes, and voting laws requiring an understanding of the English language. Although the 1965 Voting Rights Act made these voting restrictions illegal, new limitations on voting exist today. Like women suffragists of the past, women and men continue to fight for equal suffrage for all.

Although women gained representation with the right to vote, they still faced inequality and discrimination economically as well as in the workplace, education system, and healthcare system. Individual women and organizations have fought against these unfair laws and continue to do so today.



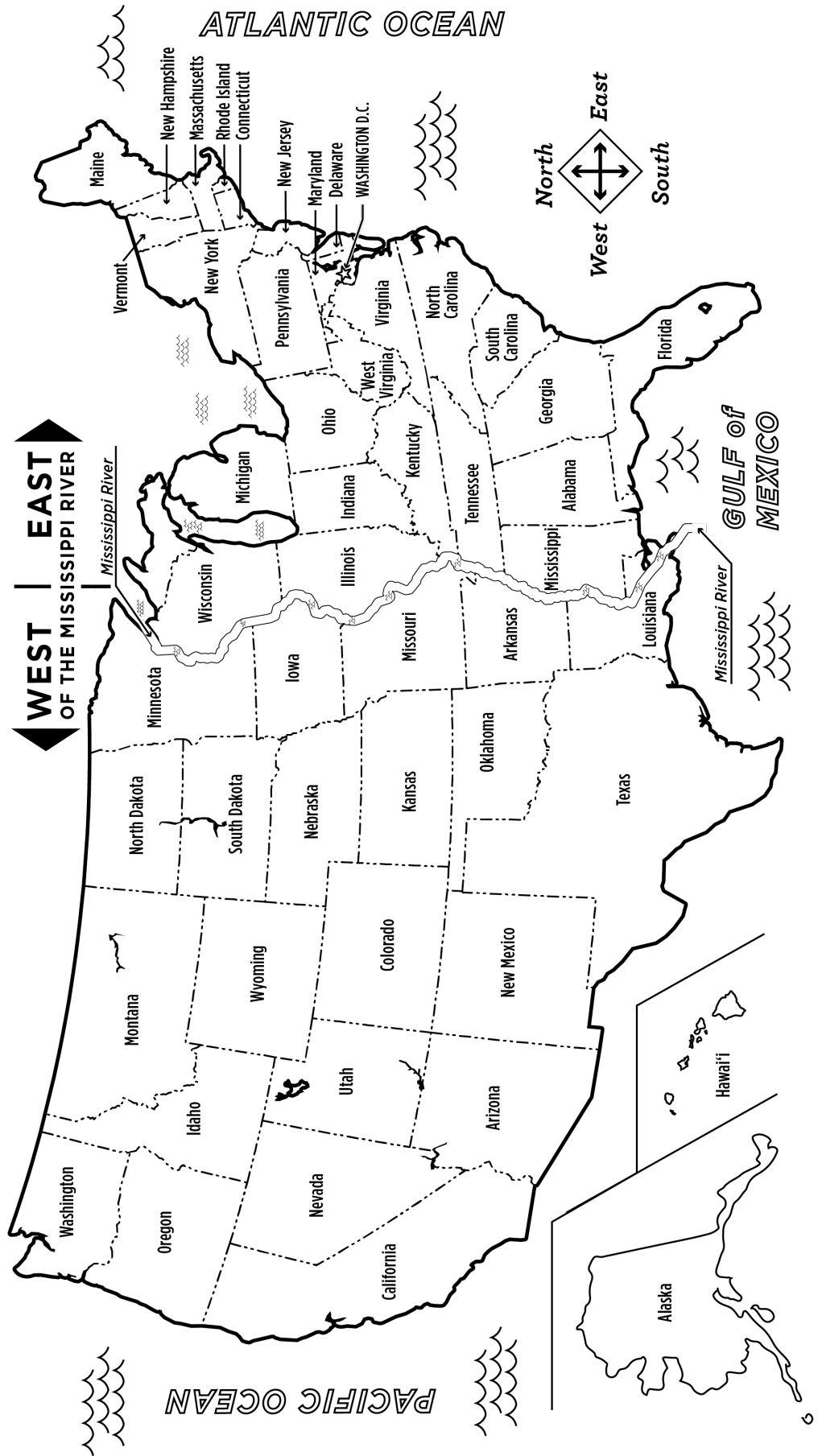
# Women's Suffrage in the West

## Part I-A: What is the American West?

To understand how western states in the United States led the way for women's suffrage, we need to answer the question What is the West? The Autry Museum defines the West as everything west of or to the left of the Mississippi River as shown on this map.

Task: Trace the line of the Mississippi River. How many states are in the West?

### SUFFRAGE IN THE WEST MAP



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## Part I-B: Mapping Suffrage in the West

**Task:** Use State Suffrage Cards to find the information to map out what type of women's suffrage (full or partial) women won in states in the West along and when. Document the answers on the map from Part I-A.

1. In which territories did women win **full suffrage**—the right to vote—**before statehood**?

- Classmates read their State Suffrage Card and share with the class if their state answers the question.

On the map,

- Color those territories yellow (or shade in the states with a pencil) on the map.
- Write the territorial date on the map and label it "Territory."
- Write the date when women won the right to vote before statehood on the map and label it "Vote."

2. In which states did women win **full suffrage**—the right to vote—**after statehood, but before the 19th Amendment** (August 1920).

- Classmates read their State Suffrage Card and share with the class if their state answers the question.

On the map,

- Color those states light green (or put dots in the states with a pencil) on the map.
- Write the statehood date on the map and label it "Statehood."
- Write the date when women won the right to vote after statehood, but before the 19th Amendment on the map and label it "Vote."

3. In which states did women win the **partial suffrage**—the right to vote—**before the 19th Amendment** (August 1920) through voting in the following type of elections: a) presidential b) city c) school d) tax issues.

- Classmates read their State Suffrage Card and share with the class if their state answers the question.

On the map,

- Color those states light blue (or put diagonals in the states with a pencil) on the map.
- Write the statehood date on the map and label it "Statehood."
- Write the date when women won the partial right to vote before the 19th Amendment on the map and label it with the type or types of voting right - "Schools" or "President" "Tax" or "City."

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## Part I-C: Analyzing Suffrage in the West

### Task #1: *Count them up.*

Students use the information on their map to answer the following questions:

In 1920, prior to the U.S. 19th Amendment guaranteeing women's suffrage,

1. How many territories/states had full suffrage? \_\_\_\_\_
2. How many territories/states had partial suffrage for presidential elections? \_\_\_\_\_
3. How many territories/states had partial suffrage for city elections? \_\_\_\_\_
4. How many territories/states had partial suffrage for school elections? \_\_\_\_\_
5. How many territories/states had partial suffrage for tax issues? \_\_\_\_\_

As a check, students hold up their **State Suffrage Cards** as the teacher asks one of the questions. The rest of the class counts the number of students holding up their **State Suffrage Cards** and documents them in on their paper.

### Task #2: *Who was the first?*

*The teacher will guide students in an activity to determine which states were first in winning full and partial suffrage. Students write the answers to the questions below as they complete the class activity.*

1. What was the first territory with full suffrage? \_\_\_\_\_
2. What was the first state with full suffrage: \_\_\_\_\_
3. What was the first state with partial suffrage for presidential elections? \_\_\_\_\_
4. What was the first state with partial suffrage for city elections? \_\_\_\_\_
5. What was the first state with partial suffrage for tax issues in elections? \_\_\_\_\_
6. What was the first state with partial suffrage for school elections? \_\_\_\_\_

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## Part I – D: Claim-Evidence-Specific Evidence for Women's Suffrage in the West

Using the following sentence starters, students (with teacher guidance) write a claim with evidence and specific evidence on “How the West led the way in women's suffrage.”

**Claim:** The West led the way for women's suffrage.

**Evidence:** By the time of the 19th Amendment's passage (1920), there was some type of suffrage in 23 out of the 24 territories/states in the West.

**Specific Evidence:** Women won full suffrage in \_\_\_\_\_ (number) territories/states which meant \_\_\_\_\_.

**Example:** The first territory where women won full suffrage was in \_\_\_\_\_ (place) in \_\_\_\_\_ (date).

**Example:** The first state where women won full suffrage was in \_\_\_\_\_ (place) in \_\_\_\_\_ (date).

**Evidence:** While women did not win full suffrage in all territories/states in the West, they still won partial suffrage in \_\_\_\_\_ (number) states by 1920.

**Specific Evidence:** In \_\_\_\_\_ (number) territories/states in the West women won suffrage in presidential elections while in \_\_\_\_\_ territories and states women won the right to vote in municipal/city elections.

**Example:** The first territory/state where women won suffrage in presidential elections was in \_\_\_\_\_ (place) in \_\_\_\_\_ (date).

**Example:** Women first won the right to vote in municipal/city elections in \_\_\_\_\_ (place) in \_\_\_\_\_ (date).

**Specific Evidence:** Women also won suffrage in school elections in \_\_\_\_\_ (number) territories/states and could vote on tax issues in \_\_\_\_\_ (number) states.

**Example:** The first territory/state where women won suffrage in school elections was in \_\_\_\_\_ (place) in \_\_\_\_\_ (date).

**Example:** Women first had the right to vote on tax issues in \_\_\_\_\_ (place) in \_\_\_\_\_ (date).

# Women's Suffrage in the West

## Part II: Ratification of the 19th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution

### AMENDMENT TO THE CONSTITUTION, 1920.

BAINBRIDGE COLBY,

August 26, 1920.

SECRETARY OF STATE OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

TO ALL TO WHOM THESE PRESENTS SHALL COME,  
GREETING:

KNOW YE, That the Congress of the United States at the first session, sixty-sixth Congress began at Washington on the nineteenth day of May in the year one thousand nine hundred and nineteen, passed a Resolution as follows: to wit—

Nineteenth Amendment to the Constitution. Preamble.

#### JOINT RESOLUTION

Proposing an amendment to the Constitution extending the right of suffrage to women.

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled (two-thirds of each House concurring therein), That the following article is proposed as an amendment to the Constitution, which shall be valid to all intents and purposes as part of the Constitution when ratified by the legislatures of three-fourths of the several States.

Amendment proposed to the States. Art. 1, p. 302.

#### “ARTICLE —.

“The right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of sex.

Right of citizens to vote not to be abridged on account of sex.

“Congress shall have power to enforce this article by appropriate legislation.”

Enforcement.

And, further, that it appears from official documents on file in the Department of State that the Amendment to the Constitution of the United States proposed as aforesaid has been ratified by the Legislatures of the States of Arizona, Arkansas, California, Colorado, Idaho, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Maine, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New Mexico, North Dakota, New York, Ohio, Oklahoma, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, Washington, West Virginia, Wisconsin and Wyoming.

State ratifying proposed Amendment.

And, further, that the States whose Legislatures have so ratified the said proposed Amendment, constitute three-fourths of the whole number of States in the United States.

Declaration.

NOW, therefore, be it known that I, Bainbridge Colby, Secretary of State of the United States, by virtue of and in pursuance of Section 205 of the Revised Statutes of the United States, do hereby certify that the Amendment aforesaid has become valid to all intents and purposes as a part of the Constitution of the United States.

Certificate of adoption as part of the Constitution. R. S., sec. 205, p. 33.

IN TESTIMONY WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the seal of the Department of State to be affixed.

Done at the City of Washington, this 26th day of August, in the year of our Lord one thousand nine hundred and

[SEAL.] twenty.

BAINBRIDGE COLBY.  
1823

*United States' Secretary of State's recognition of ratification of the 19th Amendment to the United States Constitution.*

Congress must introduce an amendment and pass a proposal to amend the United States Constitution.

The proposal to amend the Constitution must pass with 2/3 vote of the House of Representatives and 2/3 vote of the Senate.

Once Congress passes the proposal to amend the Constitution, 3/4 of states' legislatures must approve the amendment.

On May 19, 1919, the U.S. House of Representatives passed a joint resolution (agreement) of Congress to amend the Constitution to include women's suffrage.

On June 4, 1919, the U.S. Senate passed the resolution sent to them by the House of Representatives.

On June 5, 1919, the 19th Amendment was sent to the states for ratification (approval). At the time, there were only 49 states—Alaska and Hawaii were territories. In order for the 19th Amendment to become part of the Constitution, 36 of the 49 states needed to ratify it.

On August 18, 1920, Tennessee was the 36th state to ratify the 19th Amendment.

On August 26, 1920, The United States Secretary of State certified (made legal) the ratification of the 19th Amendment. All states were required to give women the right to vote.

**Task:** Look at the excerpt from the document and then circle the western states below that ratified the 19th Amendment. Look at the map from Part I-A and put a star in those western states that ratified the 19th Amendment. How many western states ratified the 19th Amendment? \_\_\_\_\_ of 24

Arizona, Arkansas, California, Colorado, Idaho, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Maine, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New Mexico, North Dakota, New York, Ohio, Oklahoma, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, Washington, West Virginia, Wisconsin, and Wyoming

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## Part III-A: Individual Stories in the Fight for Suffrage in the West

Students will select an individual or organization on their State Suffrage Card to research and present to their peers. Students should focus on how the individual or organization fought for women's suffrage.

**Task:** Choose an individual or organization on the State Suffrage Card to research, take notes and prepare to present in the class presentation collage.

**Step 1: Choose an individual or organization.** The descriptions of the individuals and organizations on the State Suffrage Cards will help you choose an individual or organization to research.

**Step 2: Research.** The sources on the State Suffrage Cards are a good starting point to learn about suffrage in the state. Additional research on the individual will be required. Research should be on the individual or organization's fight for women's suffrage (not the background information).

**Step 3: Take notes on individual or organization.** Use the following questions to help you take notes on the women's suffrage activist individual or organization.

- Name
- What territory(ies) and or state(s) fought for suffrage
- How they fought for women's suffrage
- What tactics they used to fight for women's suffrage

### Step 4: Presentation Collage

1. Write a short paragraph on the women's suffrage activist or organization to share with the class using the information in **Step 3**.
2. Pick an image that represent that person, organization or campaign's fight for equal women's rights.
3. Add the image to a Class Collage.
4. Write a two-sentence description of the women's suffrage activist or organization and put it on the Class Collage.

This is \_\_\_\_\_ (name), an important suffrage activist from \_\_\_\_\_ (territory/state). She fought for women's suffrage by \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ (what she did to fight for suffrage).

\_\_\_\_\_



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## Part III-B: Class Share Out

Students will share out their research on important women's suffrage activists in the West through a verbal presentation or on posters for a gallery walk.

**Task:** *Share out the information about the important suffragist or suffragist organization that you chose from the State Suffrage Card. Take notes on the type of activism used by all the suffragists shared by classmates and write a claim about women suffragists in the West.*

**Step 1: Share out.** Students share out their person or organization to the class either verbally or through a gallery walk.

**Step 2: Note Taking.** Students are assigned one of the categories of activism: Organize, Educate, Protest, Legally Challenge. Students take notes for their assigned category of activism while listening to their classmates present or doing a gallery walk of class collages using the “Notetaking Guide: How women or organizations fought for women's suffrage in the West.”

NOTETAKING GUIDE: HOW WOMEN OR ORGANIZATIONS FOUGHT FOR WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE IN THE WEST.	
ACTIVISM	NOTES FROM PRESENTATIONS COLLAGE
Organize (form organizations to support cause; existing organizations—i.e. churches become organizing channels)	
Educate (through media, newspapers; rallies for the public; organizations)	
Protest (defied the law; physically: marches, sit-ins; economically: boycott, strike; politically: petitions, lobbying for legislation)	
Legally Challenge (court cases)	

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## Part III-C: Making a Claim about Important Women Who Fought for Suffrage in the West

Students will make a claim about the important women who fought for suffrage in the West using the information from the class presentations or gallery walk.

Use the evidence from Part III-B to make a claim about how women fought for suffrage in the western states.

**Claim:** Women's suffrage was fought in the West in many ways such as \_\_\_\_\_

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## Part IV: Important Women in Your Life

Women suffragists were important women in history. They stood up for equality and fought for women's right to vote. This activity asks you to identify an important woman in your life and to interview them to find out if they have ever stood up for something they believed in or fought against something believed was wrong.

### Step 1: *Important Woman in My Life*

1. Who is an important woman in your life?
2. Why are they important?

### Step 2: *Interview*

Interview an important woman in your life. Ask them the following questions:

1. Have they ever stood up for or fought for something they believed in?
  - What was it that they stood up for or fought for—something they believed in?
  - How did they stand up for or fight for it?
    - » Did they “Organize” (form organizations to support cause; existing organizations – ie. Churches become organizing channels)? How?
    - » Did they “Educate” (through media -newspapers; rallies for the public, organizations)? How?
    - » Did they “Protest” (defied the law; physically: marches, sit-ins; economically: boycott, strike; politically: petitions, lobbying for legislation)? How?
    - » Did they “Legally Challenge it” (court cases)? How?
    - » Did they create “Art” (music, painting, poetry, etc.)? How?
  - Or did they fight for something they believed in through another way?

### Step 3: *Make an “Important Woman” Card*

Using the State Suffrage Cards as a model, create a card of the important woman in your life. You can use the following template.

# Women's Suffrage in the West

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*Important  
Woman  
Template Card*

*Options for  
Quick Info  
Section*

*Options for  
How Section*

## ***Important Woman***

### **IMPORTANT WOMAN'S NAME**

Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_

Place of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_

How I know this important woman: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

What they believed in: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

### **How this Important Woman brought change to her community:**

**Organized:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Educated:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Protested:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Challenged:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Created:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

# *Resources*

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Cloth sash promoting the women's suffrage movement, circa 1912. Purchase made possible by the 2006 Gold-level Acquisitions Committee and an anonymous donor. Autry Museum; 2006.25.1

Postcard supporting women's suffrage, published by the Cargill Company, circa 1896-1910. Purchase made possible by the 2006 Gold-level Acquisitions Committee and an anonymous donor. Autry Museum; 2006.25.4

Facsimile of the 1920 United States' Secretary of State's recognition of the ratification of the 19th Amendment to the Constitution, authorizing women's right to vote. From <https://loc.gov/rr/program/bib/ourdocs/images/41stat1823.pdf>; accessed Oct. 2020