



MUSEUM OF EARLY
TRADES & CRAFTS

Additional Program information for

Time of Change: Voting Rights in Early N.J.

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Best for 6th to 12th grade

At METC

Outreach

Live Virtual

Digital Written Lesson Plan

Digital Video Lesson Plan

Unique in the new United States, New Jersey allowed anyone who met the property requirement to vote from 1776 to 1807. This program explores the significance of the fact that some women and African Americans voted in N.J. long before this was allowed on a national level and looks at what changed, and why, in the early 19th century.

STANDARDS & PRACTICES

New Jersey Social Studies Learning Standards

6.1.5.CivicsDP.2: Compare and contrast responses of individuals and groups, past and present, to violations of fundamental rights (e.g., fairness, civil rights, human rights).

6.1.8.CivicsHR.4.a: Examine sources from a variety of perspectives to describe efforts to reform education, women's rights, slavery, and other issues during the Antebellum period.

6.1.12.HistorySE.2.a: Construct responses to arguments in support of new rights and roles for women and for arguments explaining the reasons against them.

Seeking Diverse Perspectives; Presenting Arguments & Explanations; Using critical thinking to make sense of problems and persevere in solving them

C3 Framework for Social Studies State Standards

D2.His.4.6-8. Analyze multiple factors that influenced the perspectives of people during different historical eras.

D2.His.5.6-8. Explain how and why perspectives of people have changed over time.

Common Core Standards

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.6-8.RH.4 Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including vocabulary specific to domains related to history/social studies.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.6-8.RH.2 Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of the source distinct from prior knowledge or opinions.



PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

Students will:

1. Understand why the right to vote is a crucial part of citizenship in a democracy
2. Analyze and compare the language used for and against allowing women to vote between 1776 and 1918
3. Examine primary sources to understand the 18th and 19th century debates around voting rights.

SUGGESTED PRE-PROGRAM ACTIVITY

Hold an election!

Have your class hold an election about something that has a direct impact on them. It can be a very small issue but try to choose something that they wouldn't normally have a say in, or control over. Offer 3 to 5 options for them to choose from. Make sure it is something that you can actually honor the results of!

Some options include:

Where to go on the next school trip (either in-person or virtually)

What color/theme everyone in the class will wear for the next school party/event

The due date of the next assignment

Who gets to leave the classroom first every day for the next week

Tally the results and be sure to honor the winning choice. Then discuss with your students:

- How did it feel to vote for something?
- What did you think about having a say in an issue (even a small one) that you wouldn't normally have any input on?
- Did you feel like your voice mattered?



SUGGESTED POST-PROGRAM ACTIVITIES

Explaining suffrage

Now that your students have learned about one example of suffrage being granted, then taken away, challenge them to explain to a family member the concept of suffrage and its importance. Encourage them to discuss voting rights with that individual. Ask them to write a short reflection about the experience, including the response of the family member they talked to. Did that person have any stories about voting, or voting rights (positive or negative)?

Debating Voting Rights

Have your students imagine they are part of the New Jersey Legislature in 1867 and 1868, hearing Lucy Stone's address and reading her petition. Review these documents and the Legislature's response. You may also want to review the earlier arguments against women voting (see links to the full text of these below).

Then, assign each student to either support or oppose Stone's arguments and hold a debate. Students can be creative in their arguments, but should draw on the actual reasons used in the 18th and 19th centuries to argue for or against giving women the right to vote. Encourage them to think not only about the merits of each side, but the quality of each argument. Which side did a better job making their case? After each side presents its arguments, hold a vote.

After the debate, discuss with your students how this might relate to their lives today. Does any of the language around voting rights in the 19th century show up in 21st century debates around voting and voting rights?

[William Griffith's 1799 arguments](#), including why the vote should be taken away from women, Courtesy of the New Jersey State Library. *See in particular pages 33 and 34 (pages 3-4 of the PDF).*

[Lucy Stone's 1867 Address to the New Jersey Legislature](#), Courtesy of the Library of Congress.

[Lucy Stone & Antoinette Blackwell's 1868 petition to the New Jersey Legislature](#), and their response, Courtesy of the New Jersey State Library.



Taking action

Ask your students to consider the question: If someone takes something away from you, what would you do to change it or to get it back? Think broadly with this: the “something” could be a physical thing, a right/privilege, an activity, etc.

1. Have your students work individually or in small groups to brainstorm ideas.

These could be relatively minor things (ie: Your parents used to allow you to walk to the bagel shop down the street on your own, but now they do not) or something more substantial, like losing a job.

It could be something that impacts just them, or which impacts a broader group of people in the city/state/country/world.

This could be something that was actually taken away, or they could imagine something that **could** be taken away and how they would feel about that.

2. Once they have their issue, have them consider **why** it was taken away? Was the reason a good one? For example, maybe you lost the right to hang out with your friends during the pandemic, but your parents did that to keep you safe.
3. Then have them discuss what actions they could take to try to get back what they lost. Is there someone specific they could talk to or write to? Could they make a speech to a certain group, or post a video online? Do they need to work together with others facing the same issue?
4. Have them share the “lost” thing that they picked and what actions they would take to get it back.

If you have any questions or require any additional information, please feel free to contact the METC Education Department at 973-377-2982, x12 or education@metc.org