



HISTORICAL DEBATE—WOMEN’S SUFFRAGE

(45 minutes)

OBJECTIVE

Students debate women’s suffrage.

MATERIALS

A large piece of newsprint or butcher paper

GET READY

- ✓ See “The Right to Vote” in the Appendix.

INSTRUCTIONS

- ✓ Hold a debate: “Resolved, that women should be allowed to vote” as though the students lived in the early 1900s when women still did not have the right to vote.
- ✓ Use formal debate rules or the following:
 - ✓ The teacher is the arbitrator and determines the length of the debate.
 - ✓ Each student who is debating is arbitrarily assigned to the affirmative or negative side. (Have about four or five students in each group.)
 - ✓ Each group must prepare an opening and closing statement and designate a spokesperson to deliver them.
 - ✓ Each student who is debating must research and present at least one factual statement.
 - ✓ Have the groups take turns giving statements and making rebuttals until closing statements are given.
- ✓ After the last closing statement, engage the class in a discussion of women’s suffrage.
 - ✓ Hang up a large piece of newsprint and label it as illustrated:

KNOW	WANT TO KNOW

- ✓ Ask each student to write statements on small pieces of paper and stick them on the KNOW and WANT TO KNOW sections. Discuss these.
- ✓ Instruct your students to divide the research into specific topics and assign smaller groups to research them.
- ✓ Continue discussion for a few days to move papers from WANT TO KNOW to KNOW on the bulletin board.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- ★ *What were some of the more successful arguments made during the debate? Why?*
- ★ *What did you learn through this activity that surprised you?*
- ★ *What other groups had to fight for the right to vote?*
- ★ *Why do people fight for the right to vote?*
- ★ *Why has it taken so long for some groups to secure the right to vote?*
- ★ *How would you feel if you were denied the right to vote?*

MORE!

An excited class in Tempe, Arizona, wore costumes representing the early 1900s to make their debate more real.

Allow your class to make many decisions by voting.