

# Women's Suffrage in the West

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## Part I: Background – Voting Rights in the United States Constitution

**Task:** Individually, in groups, or as a class (per your teacher's instructions), read through the following excerpts and answer the questions that follow.

Suffrage—the right to vote—is a right guaranteed in most democratic constitutions. However, the United States Constitution does not say citizens have the right to vote. Instead, the Constitution infers, or suggests the right to vote for representatives in the legislature, the U.S. Congress.

“The House of Representatives shall be composed of Members **chosen every second Year by the People of the several States ...**” Article I Section 2, United States Constitution.

“The Senate of the United States shall be composed of two Senators from each State, chosen by the Legislature thereof, ...” changed in 1913 to “**elected by the people** thereof, ...” Article I Section 3, United States Constitution. Amendment XVII (17), United States Constitution.

The Constitution gives states the power to make laws and rules about voting and elections but says the federal government can change or alter those laws through Congress.

“The times, places and manner of **holding elections for Senators and Representatives, shall be prescribed in each state** by the legislature thereof; but the Congress may at any time by law make or alter such regulations.” Article I Section 4, United States Constitution.

In 1870, Congress created the first change to voting through an amendment, or addition to the Constitution. The Fifteenth Amendment gave African American men the right to vote.

“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 race, color, or previous condition of servitude** - The Congress shall have the power to enforce this article by appropriate legislation.” Amendment XV (15), Sections 1-2, United States Constitution.

**Who had the right to vote in the United States per the Constitution and amendments prior to the 19th Amendment in 1920? (Use the bolded sections from the text to help you).**

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**How did the 19th Amendment (excerpted below) change the right to vote in the United States in 1920?**

“The right of **citizens** of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States **or any state** on the account of **sex**.” Amendment XIX (19), United States Constitution.

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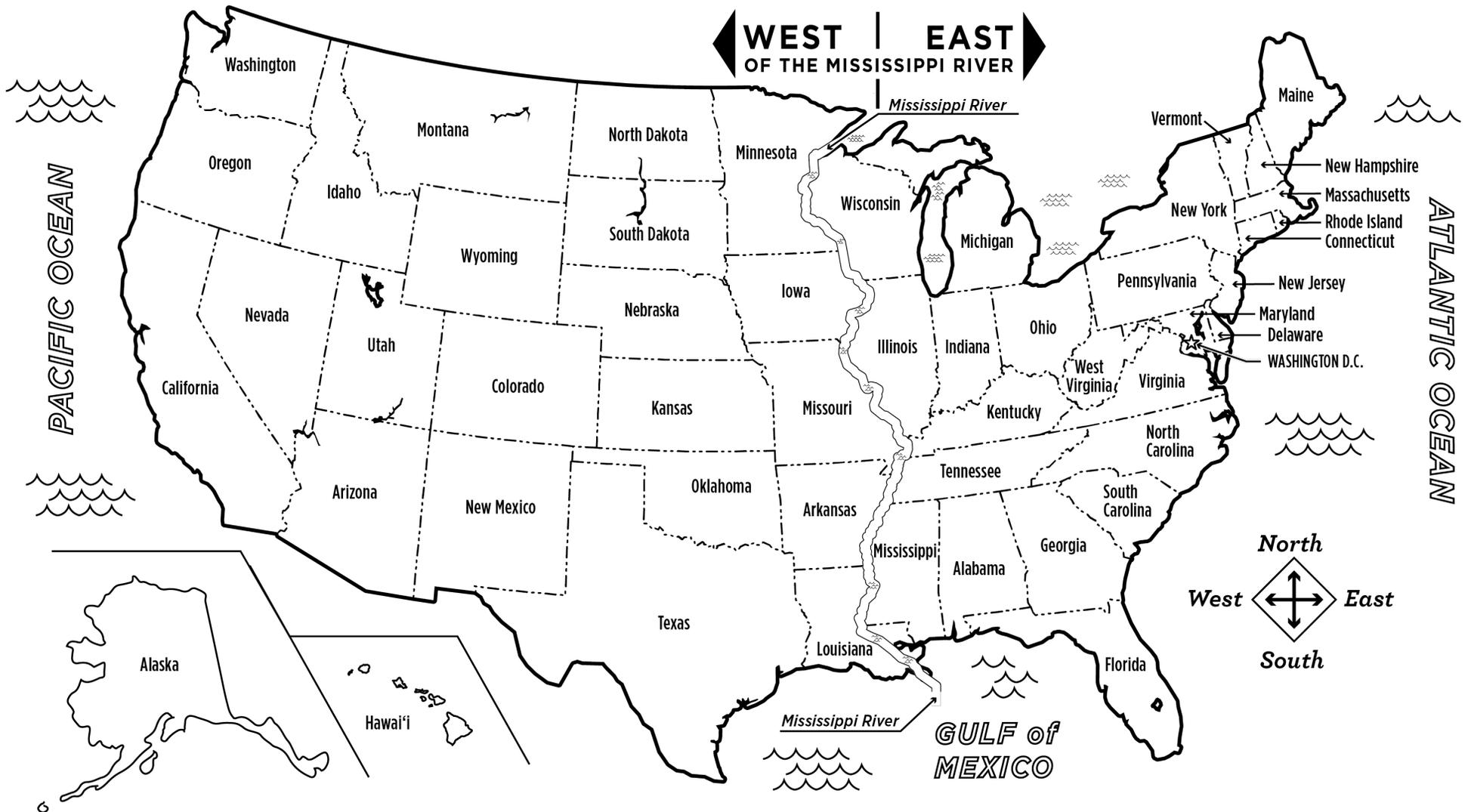
# Women's Suffrage in the West

## Part II - 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



# *Women's Suffrage in the West*

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## **Part III-A: Paths to Suffrage in the West**

Notes on Infographic: Three Paths to Women's Suffrage in States

1. Written into the constitution. How it works:

How the process could fail:

2. Put to a vote by the people in an initiative. How it works:

How the process could fail:

3. Passed by the legislature and then approved by voters through a referendum. How it works:

How the process could fail:

# Women's Suffrage in the West

## Part III-B: Analyzing Suffrage in the West

This activity will help answer the following questions about Women's Suffrage in the West:

- Which states in the West led the way for women's suffrage?
- What type of suffrage (full or partial) did they win?
- How was suffrage won in these states?

### Table A: Full Suffrage Prior to Statehood

In which states did women win full suffrage before they became a state, as a U.S. Territory?

**Task #1:** Use the *Suffrage in the West* map to fill out the last column for the date women won full suffrage in each territory.

STATE NAME	U.S. TERRITORY/STATEHOOD DATE	FULL SUFFRAGE FOR WOMEN DATE
Wyoming	1869 (territory); 1890 (state)	
Utah	1848 (territory); 1896 (state)	
Washington	1853 (territory); 1889 (state)	
Alaska	1912 (territory); 1959 (state)	

**Task #2:** Classmates who have the states in the table should use information on their State Suffrage Card to find the answers to the following questions and share with their classmates.

1. Why was women's suffrage revoked in **Utah** Territory? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. Why was women's suffrage revoked in **Washington**? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. Why was different about the **Alaska** Territory? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. Why is **Wyoming** important? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. How did women win the right to vote in each of these territories? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Summary Question:** What does this data and information tell you about women's **suffrage prior to statehood**?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

# Women's Suffrage in the West

**Table B: Full Suffrage Before the 19th Amendment**

**In which states did women win full suffrage before the passage of the 19th Amendment to the United States Constitution in 1920?**

**Task #1:** Use the *Suffrage in the West* map to fill out the last column for the date women won full suffrage in each state.

STATE NAME	U.S. TERRITORY/STATEHOOD DATE	FULL SUFFRAGE FOR WOMEN DATE
Wyoming	1869 (territory); 1890 (state)	
Colorado	1876 (state)	
Idaho	1862 (territory); 1890 (state)	
Utah	1850 (territory); 1896 (state)	
Washington	1853 (territory); 1889 (state)	
California	1850 (state)	
Arizona	1912 (state)	
Oregon	1859 (state)	
Kansas	1861 (state)	
Alaska	1898 (territory); 1959 (state)	
Montana	1889 (state)	
Nevada	1914 (state)	
Oklahoma	1907 (state)	

**Task #2:** Use the table and classmates to answer the following questions.

Look at Table B.

1. In many of these territories and states, partial suffrage was won prior to full suffrage. Which states that had full suffrage by 1920 also had partial suffrage?

- School elections: \_\_\_\_\_
- Municipal/city elections: \_\_\_\_\_
- Tax issues: \_\_\_\_\_

Classmates who have the states in the table should use information on their State Suffrage Card to find the answers to the following questions and share with their classmates.

2. How did women win the right to vote in each of these states? Put a tally mark or the state abbreviation next to the options as your classmates share the answers from the State Suffrage Card.

- Women's suffrage was written into the **state constitution**: \_\_\_\_\_
- Women's suffrage was an **initiative** where voters in the state put forth the suffrage question directly to voters: \_\_\_\_\_
- Women's suffrage was a **referendum** where voters in the state required the suffrage law passed by the legislature to be approved by voters: \_\_\_\_\_

**Summary Question:** What does this data and information tell you about the states where women won **full suffrage** before the 19th Amendment (1920)?

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# Women's Suffrage in the West

**Table C: Partial Suffrage Before the 19th Amendment**

**In which states did women win partial suffrage before 1920?**

**Task #1:** Use the *Suffrage in the West* map to fill out the last column for the date women won partial suffrage in each state.

STATE NAME	FULL SUFFRAGE FOR WOMEN	PARTIAL SUFFRAGE – local elections (school, city, taxes)	PARTIAL SUFFRAGE – President of the U.S.
Louisiana	1920 (with 19th Amendment passage); ratified: June 1970		
New Mexico	1920 (19th Amendment passage); ratified: Dec. 1919		
Nebraska	1920 (19th Amendment passage); ratified: August 1919		
Minnesota	1920 (19th Amendment passage); ratified: Sept. 1919		
North Dakota	1920 (with 19th Amendment passage); ratified: Dec. 1919		
Iowa	1920 (with 19th Amendment passage); ratified: July 1919		
Arkansas	1920 (with 19th Amendment passage); ratified: July 1919		
Texas	1920 (with 19th Amendment passage); ratified: June 1919		
Missouri	1920 (19th Amendment passage); ratified: July 1919		

**Task #2: Use the table and classmates to answer the following questions.**

Look at Table C.

1. In many of these states, partial suffrage was won prior to full suffrage. Which states won partial suffrage prior to 1920 for the following?

- School elections: \_\_\_\_\_
- Municipal/city elections: \_\_\_\_\_
- Tax issues: \_\_\_\_\_
- Presidential elections: \_\_\_\_\_

Classmates who have the states in the table should use information on their State Suffrage Card to find the answers to the following questions and share with their classmates.

2. Were there other political efforts to gain full suffrage prior to the 19th Amendment? Put a tally mark or the state abbreviation next to the options as your classmates share the answers from the State Suffrage Card.

- State Constitution: Attempts to have suffrage written into constitutions at constitutional conventions: \_\_\_\_\_
- State Legislature: Suffrage bills or amendments introduced to the legislature but never passed: \_\_\_\_\_
- Initiative: Suffrage Amendment put to a vote by the people but not approved by voters: \_\_\_\_\_
- Referendum: Suffrage Amendment put to a vote by the people after passing the legislature but not approved by voters: \_\_\_\_\_

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**Task #3:** There is one state we haven't heard from. Look at the map. What state is it? \_\_\_\_\_

Why is this state different than all the others in how women's suffrage was won? \_\_\_\_\_

*Summary Question:* What does this data and information tell you about the states where women won only **partial suffrage** before the 19th Amendment (1920)?

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## Part III - D: Making a Claim About Suffrage in the West

Use the evidence from Part III - C to make a claim about women's suffrage in the West.

Claim 1: The West led the way in women's suffrage because...

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Claim 2: However, suffrage in the West varied...

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# Women's Suffrage in the West

## Part IV: 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—

#### 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.

#### “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.

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

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.

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.

NOW, therefore, be it known that I, Bainbridge Colby, Secretary of State of the United States, by virtue 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.

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 the proposal to amend the United States Constitution with a two-thirds vote of both the House of Representatives and the Senate. (This can also be done by constitutional convention, but that has never been used). Once Congress passes the proposal to amend the Constitution, three-fourths 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. Thirty-six of the forty-nine states at the time had to ratify it (Alaska and Hawaii were territories). Tennessee was the thirty-sixth state to ratify the 19th Amendment on August 18, 1920. The United States Secretary of State certified the ratification on August 26, 1920. All states were required to give women the right to vote.

**Part IV-A:** Look at the excerpt from the document. Circle the western states below that ratified the 19th Amendment. On the map from Part II, put a star in those western states that ratified the 19th Amendment.

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

## Part IV-B: Making a Claim About the Ratification of the 19th Amendment in the West

Use the evidence from Part IV to make a claim about the ratification of the 19th Amendment in the West. Then add information to complete the counterclaim.

Claim: The West led the way in ratifying the 19th Amendment because...

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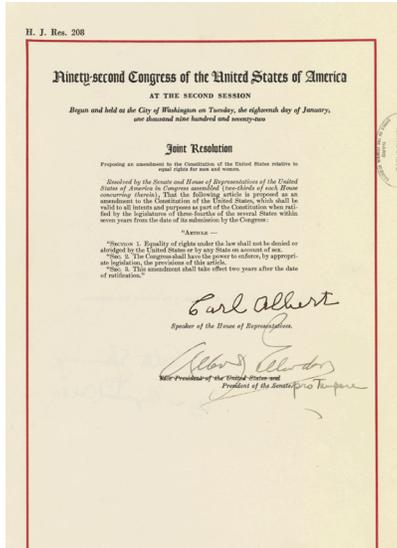
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Counterclaim: While the West led the way ratifying the 19th Amendment, one western state, \_\_\_\_\_, did not officially ratify it until 1970.

And two states, \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ did not ratify it because in 1920 they were U.S. Territories, not states.

# Women's Suffrage in the West

## Part V – A: Connect to Today Women's Equality Today



*Joint Resolution of March 22, 1972, Proposing an Amendment to the Constitution of the United States Relative to Equal Rights for Men and Women.*

August 2020 was the 100th anniversary of the 19th Amendment, which made women's right to vote in all states guaranteed by the U.S. Constitution. As you learned in this lesson, many women in western territories and states of the U.S. had some form of suffrage long before the 19th Amendment was passed in 1920.

Though women won the right to vote, did women achieve equality?

Many women didn't think so. In 1923, an Equal Rights Amendment was introduced in Congress to provide equality for all. It didn't pass. It has been reintroduced at every session of Congress since then. In 1972, the Equal Rights Amendment passed both houses of Congress and was submitted to the states for ratification. Unlike the 19th Amendment, which states ratified in 14 months, the Equal Rights Amendment had still not passed ten years later in 1982.

**Do women have equality today? Think about women in politics, property, marriage, jobs, sports, etc.**

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## Part IV – B: Researching Women's Equality Today

1. Research equal rights for women today.
2. Find a present-day example of an individual, organization, campaign, political action, protest, etc.
3. Pick an image that represents that person, organization, or campaign's fight for equal women's rights.
4. Add the image to a Class Collage (physical collage or digital collage).
5. Share out to classmates; classmates take notes.

## Making a Claim about Women's Equality Today

Use the evidence from Part IV to make a claim about the status of equality for women 100 hundred years after the ratification of the 19th Amendment in the West.

Claim: While the West led the way for full women's suffrage and the 19th Amendment made it a federal constitutional guarantee, it didn't mean equality for women. One hundred years later ...

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