

# The Woman Suffrage Movement— A Document-Based Question

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*For use in conjunction with “The Trial of Susan B. Anthony,” by Ann D. Gordon, available at <http://www.fjc.gov/history/home.nsf>. A unit in the Teaching Judicial History Project, developed by the Federal Judicial Center in partnership with the American Bar Association’s Division for Public Education.*

## Document-Based Question

In November 1872, Susan B. Anthony voted in a United States election. Subsequently she was arrested, tried, convicted, and sentenced to pay a fine of \$100.00 and the costs of prosecution. To what extent did this event advance the cause of woman suffrage? Analyze the factors that contributed to the level of success ultimately achieved.

Directions: Use the documents below, your knowledge of the period from 1865–1873, and your knowledge of the Susan B. Anthony unit to construct your response. Essays should cite key pieces of evidence from the documents.

### *Document A*

Now, I believe it is a woman’s right to have a voice in all the laws and regulations by which she is to be *governed*, whether in Church or State; and that the present arrangements of society, on these points, are *a violation of human rights, a rank usurpation of power*, a violent seizure and confiscation of what is sacredly and inalienably hers. . . . *If Ecclesiastical and Civil governments are ordained of God, then I contend that woman has just as much right to sit in solemn counsel in Conventions, Conferences, Associations and General Assemblies, as man—just as much right to sit upon the throne of England, or in the Presidential chair of the United States . . . .*

Source: Letter from Angelina Grimké to Catharine Beecher, 2 October 1837. *The Public Years of Sarah and Angelina Grimké: Selected Writings, 1835–1839*, ed. Larry Cephlaire (New York: Columbia University Press, 1989), 197.

### *Document B*

Where lieth woman’s sphere—Not there  
Where strife and fierce contentions are,  
Not in the wild and angry crowd,  
Mid threat’nings high and clamors loud;  
Nor in the halls of rude debate  
And legislation, is *her* seat. . . .

What then is woman's sphere? The sweet  
And quiet precincts of her home;  
Home!—where the blest affections meet,  
Where strife and hatred may not come!  
Home!—sweetest word in mother-tongue.  
Long since in verse undying sung!

Source: "Woman's Sphere." Printed in *The Ladies' Repository: a Monthly periodical devoted to Literature, Arts, and Religion*, vol. 5, Issue 4, 1845, p. 104.

Document C

820

HARPER'S WEEKLY.

[May 16, 1868.



HOW IT WOULD BE, IF SOME LADIES HAD THEIR OWN WAY.

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Advertisement for Lead-Encased Block Tin Pipe, highlighting its durability and safety.

Advertisement for The Finest Diamonds, featuring artistic mountings and a large selection.

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A NEW KNIFE. This Knife is forged—Handle and Blade—from one bar of steel, is heavily plated with silver, and is the strongest, most durable, and cheapest knife in the market.

Referring to the above advertisement, we desire to comment the use of the "NEW KNIFE." It is all the American claim for it, and will prove satisfactory.

DAVIS COLLAMORE & CO., Wholesale and Retail.

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Advertisement for A SAFE, CERTAIN, AND Speedy Cure for NEURALGIA, AND ALL NERVOUS DISEASES.

Advertisement for HOUSE-FURNISHING UTENSILS, including China and Glass Ware.

Advertisement for Bassford's The Finger of Fate, featuring Captain Mayne Reid.

Advertisement for Merchants' Bankers, offering services and interest rates.

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Source: Harper's Weekly May 16, 1868.

*Document D*

All persons born or naturalized in the United States and subject to the jurisdiction thereof, are citizens of the United States and of the State wherein they reside. No State shall make or enforce any law which shall abridge the privileges or immunities of citizens of the United States; nor shall any State deprive any person of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law; nor deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws.

Source: U.S. Constitution, Fourteenth Amendment, section 1 (ratified in 1868).

*Document E*

The activity of the advocates of female suffrage is in no degree abating, but rather on the increase. It is probably that very few comprehend the measure of this activity, and the broad fields on which it is being displayed. Not only the ignorant and vulgar, but many comparatively well informed people probably suppose that the advocacy of woman's claim to the suffrage is confined to a few able but erratic women, who are agitating the subject to acquire notoriety. Whether friendly or averse to the movement, the quicker one disabuses his mind of that notion the better for his side of the case. Not only do many of our most influential divines and literary men rank among the friends of the movement, but, also, what gives promise to its advocates of speedy success, many of our legislators and politicians.

Source: *Rochester Evening Express*, editorial, November 27, 1872.

*Document F*

I have to say that should it be my good fortune to be elected, and should our party with its grand platform of principles be successful in the contemplated election, it will be my earnest effort to promote and maintain equal political privileges to every class of our citizens irrespective of sex, color or nationality, and to make of this great and glorious Country in truth what it has so long been in name, "the land of the free and the home of the brave."

Source: Belva Lockwood, platform for presidential candidacy, 1884. *Second to None: A Documentary History of American Women*, vol. 2, ed. by Ruth Barnes Moynihan, Cynthia Russett, and Laurie Crumpacker (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1993), 33.

*Document G*

"From your knowledge of American women, do you find that the majority are in favor of woman suffrage or opposed to it?" Mr. Bok was asked.

“Neither. The greater part of American women . . . are absolutely indifferent to it. They do not regard the subject as either an important question, or a question at all for that matter. And when they do write or speak of it an overwhelming percentage are opposed to it and express themselves in no uncertain terms.”

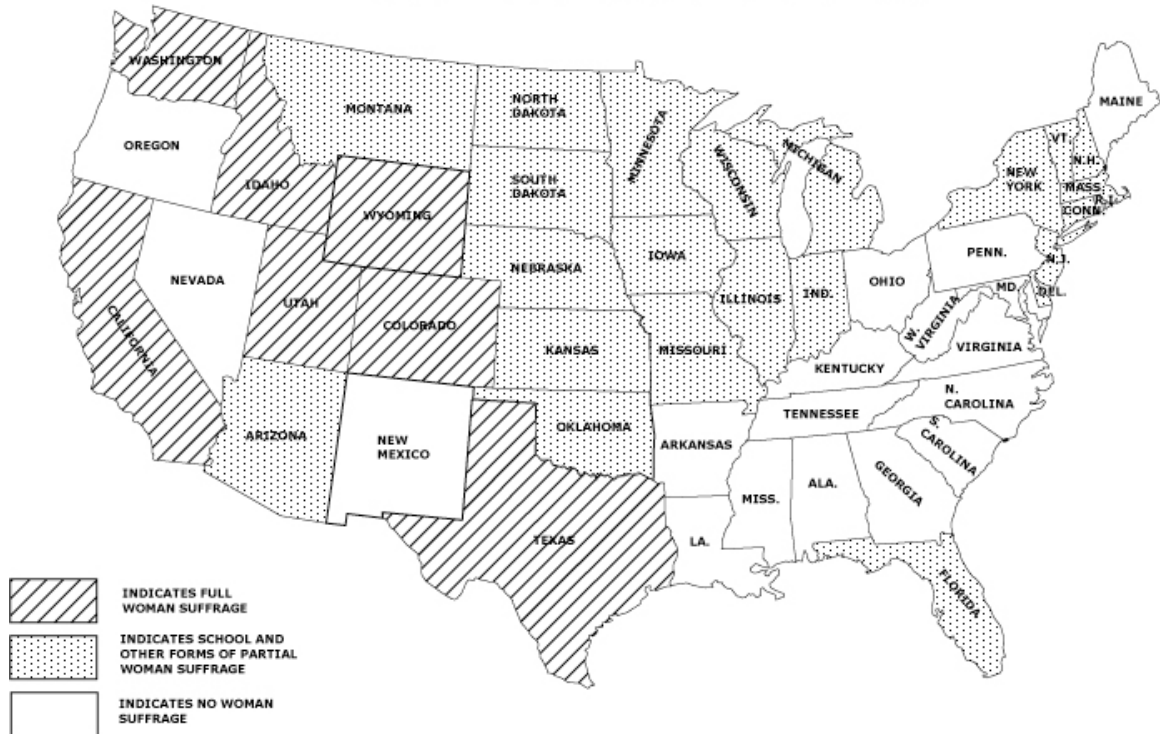
“Why, would you say, are they opposed to or indifferent to the ballot?”

“Because the average American woman is too busy. Take the average wife or mother who has, say, two or three children and a home of her own. She likes her books, she is fond of music, she may have a taste for pictures. That woman is busy; she has not an idle hour in the day. You cannot interest her in extraneous subjects because there are too many things of a vital nature that are distinctly woman’s own questions that take up all her time. And when you talk to her, as I have scores of times, about the ballot she invariably replies: ‘Oh, that is for my husband to attend to’ . . . That is the invariable attitude of the average home-loving American woman, and all the suffragists cannot budge her an inch from that position.”

Source: New York Times, interview with Edward W. Bok, April 18, 1909. Reprinted in *American Women: Their Image (1900–1930s)* (New York: Cambridge Book Company, 1973), 36–40.

Document H

Map Showing the Progress of Woman Suffrage



Source: Map Showing the Progress of Woman Suffrage, in *New York Times*, October 13, 1911. Reprinted in *American Women: Their Image (1900–1930s)* (New York: Cambridge Book Company, 1973), 40.

Document I

It was the National Woman Suffrage Association which introduced the Federal amendment, now discussed as though it were a new discovery, and this was done in 1875. It has been introduced in each succeeding Congress, and ardently supported. . . . Neither the leaders in the movement nor the great majority of the rank and file are laboring under any delusions as to the true status of woman suffrage in this country today. Our victories this year in securing the indorsement of both the political parties have not blinded us to the fact that there is still a tremendous battle to be fought.

Source: “Crisis in Suffrage Movement” by Carrie Chapman Catt, September 3, 1916. Reprinted in *American Women: Their Image (1900–1930s)* (New York: Cambridge Book Company, 1973), 44–45.

*Document J*

The women of the country have accepted the burden that the Food Administration and the President himself have thrust upon them. They have assumed responsibility for the saving of food, for its right use, for its proper preparation. They realize that the situation has become critical; that there is not enough food in Europe; that the soldiers of the Allies must be maintained in full strength, and their wives and children at home must not face famine; that the friendly neutrals must not be starved; and that our own army in France must never lack a needed ounce of food.

Source: Preface written by the U.S. Food Administration, March 7, 1918, in Mabel Dulon Purdy, *Food and Freedom: A Household Book* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1918).