Let Us Vote!

An exciting play shows how women won the right to vote, 100 years ago

About the Play

Levels:
Guided Reading Level: T
DRA Level: 50

Learning Objectives:
Students will read a historical fiction play about women’s suffrage and identify why the right to vote is important to the characters.

Key Skills: Characters’ motivations, vocabulary, fluency, key idea, compare and contrast, supporting details, author’s craft, cause and effect, synthesizing, narrative writing

Content-Area Connections:
Social Studies: women’s suffrage, voting rights

Standards Correlations
This article and lesson support the following Common Core anchor standards: R.1, R.2, R.3, R.4, R.5, R.7, W.2, SL.1, SL.2, L.6

For more standards information—including TEKS—go to Storyworks Digital.

Your Teaching Resources

Use these powerful teaching tools for in-class or remote instruction. Find them in this story’s Resources tab.

- New! Learning Journey Slide Deck! This ready-made slide deck combines the article, video, and interactive questions. Share it with students as is or customize it to your liking.

Audio
- Text to speech

Video
- “Timeline of Voting Rights”

Slideshows
- Text Features Slideshow
- Vocabulary Slideshow

Skill-Building Activities to share digitally, print, or project
- Vocabulary
- Close-Reading and Critical-Thinking*
- Core Skills Workout: Characters’ Motivations
- Research Kit
- Comprehension Quiz*

*Available on two levels
Step-by-Step Lesson
Close Reading, Critical Thinking, Skill Building

1. Preparing to Read

Watch a Video and Preview Vocabulary

- Assess prior knowledge and introduce the topic of voting rights by discussing the following questions:
  * Why do people vote? (to choose leaders to represent us in government)
  * Who has the right to vote today? (Anyone 18 years or older can vote, although some states ban voting by people who have been in prison for a serious crime.)
  * Have women always been allowed to vote? (No, women were given the right to vote 100 years ago. Before that, they were not allowed.)
  * Why do you think it’s important to have the right to vote? (Answers will vary, but students might say that having the right to vote gives us a voice in deciding who our leaders will be and what decisions they make that will affect our lives.)
- Show or assign the video “Timeline of Voting Rights.”
- Show the Vocabulary Slideshow or have students complete the Vocabulary Skill Builder to introduce domain-specific words having to do with standing up for a cause. Highlighted words: suffragists, protest, picketing, harassing, democracy, allies, pressured
- Call on a volunteer to read aloud the Up Close box for the class.

2. Reading the Play

- Assign parts and read the play aloud as a class. Remote learning tip: If students are learning from home, have them video chat to read the play in small groups, doubling up on some of the small roles if necessary. Alternatively, have pairs of students read it aloud with each other on a phone call. After reading, discuss the close-reading and critical-thinking questions.

Close-Reading Questions
The following questions can be shared in printable or interactive form from the Resources tab.

1. According to the Prologue, what are some of the things that women could not do during the time the play is set, in the early 1900s? (key idea) It was difficult for women to own homes or hold the same kinds of jobs as men. Additionally, women were not allowed to vote.
2. In Scene 2, the police arrest Aunt Kate and the other suffragists because they will not stop picketing. Compare and contrast Franny’s reaction toward her aunt’s arrest with her cousins’ reactions. Why do you think they react differently? (compare and contrast) Maud and Roy are not alarmed about their mother’s arrest. Roy notes that “she gets arrested all the time,” and Maud explains to Franny how the process works. Franny, on the other hand, is horrified. As an outsider, new to Washington, D.C., and just beginning to learn about the fight for women’s suffrage, she does not yet understand that going to jail was a common occurrence for the suffragists and that they believed going to jail was worth the cause of fighting for the vote.

3. In Scene 3, how does Aunt Kate ease Franny’s concern that women should be helping the war effort instead of protesting? (supporting details) Aunt Kate explains that if women are given the right to vote, the country will be stronger than ever. Women will have a say in what happens with the war.

4. In Scene 3, we find out what motivates Aunt Kate to attend protests. What is her motivation? (character’s motivation) Aunt Kate attends protests out of love and honor for her sister Anna, Franny’s mother, who passed away. Anna attended meetings of the Woman’s Suffrage Association and wanted Franny to grow up in a world where women had rights. Aunt Kate explains that “After she [Anna] died, I swore I would do anything to make this country a better place for you and Maud.”

5. In Scene 5, what details does the author use to describe the Night of Terror? Why do you think she includes them? (author’s craft) Hazel is “thrown against the bars of [her] cell,” Lucy “spent the whole night in handcuffs,” and Aunt Kate is “slammed into a bench. Twice.” The author wants people to understand how terribly the suffragists were treated while in jail. It is outrageous that they were treated with such violence simply because they were fighting for more rights for women.

6. In Scene 6, what causes the bystanders to support the protesters? (cause and effect) Maud, Roy, and Franny publish a letter from the protesters in The Suffragist newspaper. The letter explains the many ways in which the women were mistreated while in jail. For example, when they refused food, guards forced them to eat as they gasped and choked. The bystanders are shocked to hear about the suffragists’ mistreatment.

7. According to the Epilogue, how did the protesters’ time in jail help the movement? (cause and effect) The cruelty the women faced in jail captured America’s attention and caused thousands of people to join their cause. In 1920, women’s right to vote became law.

Critical-Thinking Questions

8. Describe Franny’s attitude toward the suffrage movement at the beginning and end of the play. What events cause her feelings to change? (character’s motivations) At the beginning of the play, Franny believes that the protesters should be spending their time helping the war effort. By the end of the play, Franny has joined the movement; she helps publish a letter exposing how the women were mistreated in jail and even makes purple, white, and gold sashes (a clothing item worn by suffragists) for herself and Aunt Kate. After she reads a letter revealing that
her late mother was a suffragist and then witnesses her aunt’s mistreatment, she begins to understand why women must fight to have the same rights as men.

9. Read the sidebar “How Black Women Stood Up for Justice.” How did Ida B. Wells and other Black women help expand voting rights for everyone? (synthesizing) Ida B. Wells refused to be sent to the back of a march for voting rights or to be excluded from the fight for suffrage. By forming an organization of Black women to fight for the vote, she helped expand voting rights for all women, both Black and white.

10. Aunt Kate and other suffragists were arrested for blocking traffic, even though they weren’t blocking traffic. Why did they choose to go to jail instead of paying a fine? What would you do if you were Aunt Kate? (characters’ motivations) They chose to go to jail because they wanted to show they weren’t breaking the law but only exercising their rights in a democracy to express themselves. Answers will vary for the second question.

Note to teacher: You might choose to ask students if they heard about—or participated in—any recent protests for Black Lives Matter or other causes and discuss why people have been protesting. In what ways have these protests been similar to the ones in the play?

3. Skill Building and Writing

Featured Skill: Characters’ Motivations

● Assign the Characters’ Motivations Skill Builder and have students complete it in class or for homework. They will then be prepared to respond to the writing prompt on page 25.

Great Ideas for Remote Learning

● Gather a group in your remote classroom for a virtual play reading. Share the play on your screen and assign parts. To keep track of who is reading which part, students might change their screen names to their character’s name. Then read the play aloud together. Encourage students to be expressive as they read! Repeat with other groups until all students have had a chance to participate.

● Have students write a draft of their response to the writing prompt on page 25 on a Google doc, then exchange drafts with a partner in the class. They can make suggestions on the doc in “suggesting” mode.
**Differentiate and Customize**

**For Struggling Readers**
After reading the play in a small group, work together to make a timetable of what happened at different points during Franny’s stay with her cousins. Plot each scene on the timetable.

**For ELL Students**
This play has many characters, and it may be hard for ELL students to keep track of them. After reading the play, work with students to write a short description of Franny, Aunt Kate, and Maud. You might suggest words they could use, such as **bold**, **daring**, **uncertain**, **helpful**, **quiet**, or others.

**For Advanced Readers**
Invite students to pretend they are the judge’s daughter or son. They should write a short speech explaining why he was wrong to sentence the suffragists to 60 days in jail.

**Can’t-Miss Teaching Extras**

**Learn About the 2020 Election!** Be sure to have students visit the [Scholastic Election 2020 site](https://www.scholastic.com/election2020), where they can learn about the candidates, the issues, the election process, and more. Plus, they can cast their own ballots in the Scholastic Kids Vote!

**Create Artwork** Each time a state voted to ratify the 19th Amendment, members of the National Woman’s Party sewed a star on their ratification banner. On [this website](https://www.scholastic.com), students can design their own ratification star that represents them.