

GRADE 9 LESSON 4: VOTES FOR WOMEN - AT CITY HALL

Topic: Winnipeg Women Get the Vote!

Brief description: Most students will not know that women got the vote in city government long before they got the vote for provincial or federal elections. Winnipeg was a progressive place. This lesson introduces some of Manitoba's women leaders and helps students to place women voters in Winnipeg on a timeline for Canada (and the world).

CONTENT OUTCOMES

Students will...

Pathways Describe how and when women got the vote in Winnipeg elections.

KH-032 Describe the ways in which the status of women in Canada has changed since the early 20th Century.

*Include: Bill C-31 and the status of Aboriginal women, **suffrage**.*

PROBABLE VOCABULARY

civic

franchise

suffrage

suffragist

suffragette

Note: "Suffragette" was not a term used by most Canadian women's groups.

- They associated the term with women in countries such as Britain who chained themselves to lampposts and were very militant.
- They also saw "suffragette" as a diminutive feminine title.
- There were both male and female suffrage workers in Manitoba.

Suggested vocabulary activity: Three-Point Approach (*Success for All Learners*, p. 6.36)

Equipment:

- computer access
- *The Canadian Encyclopedia* or reference books
- *Heritage Minutes* video
- paper, pencils
- art supplies

ACTIVATING/INTRODUCTORY ACTIVITIES

- Students are asked why they think that women were not allowed to vote in city elections in the early days.
- Discuss and list the possible reasons.
- Why did Winnipeg City Council start to discuss the idea of votes for women in 1884?

ACQUIRING AND APPLYING KNOWLEDGE

- Students are asked to examine a timeline showing when women got the vote in various parts of Canada. (See **Votes for Women Timeline - Canada Gr. 9, Worksheet No. 4**)

- Show a video about how women got the vote in Manitoba or about Nellie McClung or other suffrage worker or some of the *Heritage Minutes* dealing with the changes in women's lives.
- Students are asked to use the information on *Pathways* and the timeline to do one of the following and display the finished products as part of a Gallery Walk about *How Women Got the Vote*:

Individual Students

(a) Write an article for a Winnipeg paper in 1888 when women first voted in a City election. You are a supporter of votes for women so you will praise Winnipeg for being so far ahead of other places in Canada. Write a headline for your article.

or

(b) Write an article for a Winnipeg paper in 1888 when women first voted in a City election. You are against the idea of women voting so you will give all the reasons why women shouldn't vote. Women should never be elected to office. Write a headline for your article.

or

(c) You are the secretary for a women's group in Winnipeg in 1884. Write a letter to Mr. James French thanking him for putting forward the idea that women should vote and giving him some more reasons for women's suffrage.

or

(d) Interview a modern woman who has been elected as Mayor or Councillor. Find out about why she ran and the advice she would give to you if you were running for Mayor or Council.

Groups

(a) Design and make placards for a parade to City Hall to support the idea of votes for women. Each placard should give a reason why women should have the vote. Display your placards.

or

(b) Prepare and present a skit showing people arguing about whether women should be able to vote in Winnipeg.

or

(c) Make a W chart to display what you have learned about women in Winnipeg government. (A W chart is made from several pieces of cardboard taped together in the shape of a W. Each side of the chart has information about a particular part of the topic. Some sides can be: What is the topic? When and where did it take place? Who were the important people? What is important about this topic? Why should we remember it?)

Display the charts along with other projects.

(d) Make an illustrated timeline to show when women got the vote in Winnipeg.

or

(e) Discuss why you think the City of Winnipeg was willing to grant women the right to vote in 1887.

Extension

- Research and write about Nellie McClung or some other suffragist in Manitoba.
- Look in Canadian cartoon books to find cartoons about women getting the vote. Display some of the cartoons and write an explanation about what each one means.
- Invite a woman mayor, councillor or school trustee to your class to discuss how she got elected and what her work is like.
- Plan a **Votes for Women Day** to celebrate the fact that Winnipeg women were eligible to vote earlier than women in most other parts of the world. Early suffragists often used yellow as one of their colours because it "let light into dark corners."
(Check **Votes for Women Timeline – International Gr. 9, Worksheet No. 5**)