

## Seneca Falls and Suffrage: Teaching Women's History with Comics

suf·fra·gist: A person who supports and protests for the right to vote

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### Description

Chester Comix has created comic strip panels especially for the National Women's History Museum exploring the importance of the Seneca Falls Convention and four people—Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Lucretia Mott, Frederick Douglass and Sojourner Truth—who were 19<sup>th</sup> century leaders in the struggle for equality and equal rights. In this lesson, students will explore the Convention and imagine living at a time in the United States when women did not have important legal rights; including the right to vote. Students will learn how the Convention marked the beginning of the Suffrage Movement; a model of peaceful activism that eventually led to the passage of the 19th Amendment almost 72 years after the Seneca Falls convention. Through using the history and ideas shared in the comic panels as well as the techniques demonstrating how to teach through comics, the students will work collaboratively to research, gain a richer understanding of women's suffrage, and create their own comic panels exploring the outcomes of the Suffrage movement by illustrating the 1913 Woman Suffrage Procession or the ratification of the 19th Amendment in August 1920.

**Time:** 4 One-hour periods

**Grade Level:** 5<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup>

### Objectives:

- Students will understand that the goal of the Suffrage Movement was to **enfranchise** American women by giving them the right to vote.
- Using the information and ideas gathered from the Seneca Falls comic strip, students will identify the purpose of the meeting at Seneca Falls and discuss the contributions of Frederick Douglass, Lucretia Mott, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, and Sojourner Truth to the suffrage movement.
- Students will compare the purpose of the Declaration of Sentiments to the Declaration of Independence.
- Working collaboratively or individually, students will research and create a comic panel(s) illustrating the 1913 Woman Suffrage Procession or a comic panel(s) about the signing of the 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment—how did women feel?
- Students will keep a vocabulary diary to recognize and review words that describe historical events they are discussing.

This curriculum relevant lesson will require students to write narratives and use effective techniques and descriptive details to develop real or imagined experiences and use concrete words and phrases to convey historical events.

## Prerequisites

Students should have a basic knowledge of the struggle for women’s rights, abolition, the Declaration of Independence, and America’s legacy of peaceful activism and protest for equality. Suggestion: as a class, you review [Woman Suffrage Timeline](#) for an overview of the suffrage movement. (Suggested Activity 1)

## Materials:

- ChesterComix Seneca Falls comic
  - [Full Color](#)
  - [No Color/No Words](#)
- Smartboard and/or overhead projector
- Colored Pencils
- Sticky notes
- Blank comics page and/or online comic creator such as [Comic Maker](#), [Read Write Think](#), or [picklebums](#).
- Graphic Organizers:
  - [See, Say, Think 1](#)
  - [See, Say, Think 2](#)
  - [How does it Relate?](#)
  - [What is that Word?](#)
  - [Vocabulary Guide](#)

## Vocabulary

It is advisable to front load vocabulary words; especially for ELL students. The Graphic Organizer, [What is that Word](#), can be used to help students identify and find the definition for unknown words. You can also ask students to keep a “Vocabulary Journal” to identify new words and to help build their vocabulary. Use the [Vocabulary Guide](#) to identify words and concepts that may be unfamiliar to students. Encourage students to use a vocabulary diary or the [What is that Word](#) worksheet to build their knowledge and understanding of the words used in the lesson.

When looking at the comics, students can feel out the meaning based on the context and action taking place. **Encourage students to look at any actions or objects** in the panel that illustrate what is happening in the story to help them define the word.

## Procedures

### Day 1

#### **Getting Started: Introduce your students to the Suffrage Movement.**

Encourage your students to imagine a time when American women could not vote and had no voice in electing officials who made the laws that govern the nation.

#### **If possible, project on screen:**

*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.*

Explain that this sentence changed history. It is from the 19<sup>th</sup> amendment which was **ratified** (passed) on August 18, 1920; 133 years after the ratification of the Constitution! Over the course of those 133 years and despite the fact that they were declared citizens of the United States under the 14<sup>th</sup> Amendment—women—by law, could not vote. Ask students to reflect on the condition of women who had no say in deciding their future. They could not vote for any elected office from President to local officials, even the dog catcher! The law did not allow women to have a voice in the day to day laws which impacted their lives.

Until well into the 1800s, women were “**disenfranchised**”. Their property became that of their husband when they married. Very few had a formal education. Even the wages they earned belonged to their husband and they did not have the right to vote.

How do you think women felt about that?

By the mid-1900s, hundreds of thousands of women protested for the right to vote. They were called **Suffragists**.

*Ask: Can anyone name an important Suffragist?*

*Ask: Can you think of another group of people that suffered the same injustices that women did?*

**In 1848, the Suffragist Movement formally began with the Seneca Falls Convention.**

#### **Activity**

As a class, look at the [Woman Suffrage Timeline](#). Students will share out what they learned and their thoughts with each other. If time permits, allow a 10-minute share out discussion with the class as a whole. **What surprises the students?**

## Day 2

### Activity One: Reading History through Comics

**Time:** One-hour

#### Materials:

- Smart board or overhead projector,
- Chester Comix *The Seneca Falls Convention* w/ words blanked out and w/ words included
- Graphic organizers:
  - *See, Say, Think #1*
  - *How Does it Relate?*
- Sticky notes

#### Getting Started:

Before beginning the activities, ask your students:

- Do you like comic books? Have them give examples
- Visit [Chester Comix Tar Heel Tales pg. 4](#)
  - Do comic books have heroes? What do they think makes someone a hero?
  - Can you be a hero without super powers?

**Full Group Activity:** Each student should have a graphic organizer ([See, Say, Think #1](#))

Project the Seneca Falls Convention comix with the words blanked out

1. If desired, provide each student with a copy of the blanked out comics.
2. Tell the students to carefully look at each panel. Model this by doing a picture walk through of the first few panels, pointing out facial expression, activities, objects and details. Discuss what these things could mean. Have students complete the picture walk and record their observations on the **What Do I See** portion of the worksheet.
3. Ask students to share some of the things they see and what they think that it means.
4. Tell students that to use their observations to make predictions about the panel's story. Allow 5 minutes for the students to share their ideas and predictions.
5. Project the Seneca Falls Convention comix with the words included. Read the panels together as a class. Have students note details that they think are important in the **What Does It Say** portion of the graphic organizer.
6. Post the question: **How does the Seneca Falls Convention relate to one or more of the following; the Abolition Movement, Activism, Civil Rights, Equality and Suffrage.** Discuss with the class what to look for, find at least one example as a group. Give students time to fill out the **What Do I Think** portion of the graphic organizer.
7. Divide the students into **Think, Pair, Share** groups (pairs or triads) to discuss their answers and ideas. Each student should write at least two connections they observe on sticky notes. (10 minutes).

Groups should then share out as a class. Use the [How Does It Relate Graphic Organizer](#). Depending on the size of the class and your normal template for group work; group share can be done in a number of ways;

1. Enlarge the [How Does It Relate graphic organizer](#) to poster size and list student responses in the topic area.
2. Use a document camera to project the [How Does It Relate graphic organizer](#) on the board and have students use sticky notes to place their responses.
3. Post each topic in a different place in the room and have students move to a topic and provide an example their group has brainstormed from the [How Does It Relate graphic organizer](#).
4. Post the graphic and use sticky notes as the students' exit ticket. Students should be able to state and explain their position using text evidence.

## Day 3

### Activity Two: Reading History through Comics

**Time:** One hour

**Materials:**

- Graphic organizers [See, Say, Think #2](#)
- Chester Comix: Seneca Falls Convention, Frederick Douglass, Lucretia Mott, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, and Sojourner Truth

**Review**

**“What happened at the Seneca Falls Convention?” “Why is this Convention historically important?” “Who were the “big names” at the Convention?”**

Give students time to review their graphic organizers from Day 1 and confer with their table group. Each group will share one or two key facts. (10 minutes)

Students will be working in table groups for this activity. Each group will receive one Chester Comix panel; either Frederick Douglass, Lucretia Mott, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, or Sojourner Truth. Explain to the group that is assigned Sojourner Truth that although she is a vital part of the Suffrage Movement; she wasn't at Seneca Falls, the first Women's Rights Conference ever held in the United States. Ask them to use their inferencing skills to answer the questions: Why do you think she is part of this story? Why do you think other conferences were held in Massachusetts and Ohio just a few years later? Why do you think Sojourner Truth was asked to speak? What do you think Sojourner Truth represents in this comic.

NOTE: Students can find out more about her “Ain't I A Woman Speech” at the [Sojourner Truth Institute](#), the [Sojourner Truth Project](#), or [listen to the speech here](#).

Ask students to give a few examples of how Sojourner Truth was able to answer the arguments that people made as to why women shouldn't have equal rights.

*(Suggest: **this activity would be appropriate for the whole class**)*

Groups will follow the same procedure as Day One using the [See, Say, Think #2 graphic organizer](#).

Explain to them that the **What Do I Think** should be used to explain the importance of their featured person to the success of the Convention. (30 minutes)

Each group will share their featured person with the class, highlighting the contributions to the Seneca Convention. (20 minutes) Project each group's assigned panel during read out so that every student can follow the story and ideas.

Remind the class that the lesson opened with the questions, **What Makes Someone a Hero?** Ask them after reading and discussing these comic panels: **Who do you think is a hero? Why?**

## Day 4

### Activity Three: Reading History through Comics

**Time:** one hour

**Materials:**

- graphic organizers
- computers or ipads
- Access to internet for research and/or library reference materials
- Blank comics page and/or online comic creator such as [Comic Master](#), [Read Write Think](#), or [picklebums](#).

**Activity: Moving forward to the Vote (can be completed as homework)**

Working collaboratively or individually, students will research and create a comic panel(s) illustrating and explaining the:

- 1913 Woman Suffrage Procession
- OR the signing of the 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment

**The comic panel(s) must reference, in some way, Seneca Falls.** Students will share out their comic with the class. If possible, project each student panel to share with the class.

**Potential Image Sources for Reference:** Hundreds of free source images are available on line that can be used for this project. Students should search:

- **1913 Woman Suffrage Procession images**
- **Ratification of the 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment images**

### Extension Activity

(Grades Six and up). **Essential Declarations in American History**

Give students copies of both the **Declaration of Independence** and the **Declaration of Sentiments** and ask them to compare the opening paragraphs of each document. In what ways are the documents similar? How are they different?

Ask the students to examine each document's "resolutions". In what ways are the similar? If they have the same or similar purpose; what is the intent of the document? Why do they think Elizabeth Cady Stanton chose to frame the document in this way?

**Assignment:** Students will create a brief presentation—encourage creativity: comic panel, power point, or blog post addressing the topic: ***The Declaration of Sentiments: Independence for All.***

## Standards

### Grade 5

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.5.1.A

Introduce a topic or text clearly, state an opinion, and create an organizational structure in which ideas are logically grouped to support the writer's purpose.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.5.1.B

Provide logically ordered reasons that are supported by facts and details.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.5.3

Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, descriptive details, and clear event sequences.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.5.3.A

Orient the reader by establishing a situation and introducing a narrator and/or characters; organize an event sequence that unfolds naturally.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.5.3.B

Use narrative techniques, such as dialogue, description, and pacing, to develop experiences and events or show the responses of characters to situations.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.5.3.C

Use a variety of transitional words, phrases, and clauses to manage the sequence of events.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.5.3.D

Use concrete words and phrases and sensory details to convey experiences and events precisely.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.5.3.E

Provide a conclusion that follows from the narrated experiences or events.

C3

D2.Civ.2.3-5. Explain how a democracy relies on people's responsible participation, and draw implications for how individuals should participate

D2.Civ.8.3-5. Identify core civic virtues and democratic principles that guide government, society, and communities.

D2.Civ.12.3-5. Explain how rules and laws change society and how people change rules and laws.

D2.His.3.3-5. Generate questions about individuals and groups who have shaped significant historical changes and continuities.

D2.His.4.3-5. Explain why individuals and groups during the same historical period differed in their perspectives.

D2.His.2.6-8. Classify series of historical events and developments as examples of change and/or continuity.

D2.Civ.8.6-8. Analyze ideas and principles contained in the founding documents of the United States, and explain how they influence the social and political system.

D2.Civ.14.6-8. Compare historical and contemporary means of changing societies, and promoting the common good.

D2.His.3.6-8. Use questions generated about individuals and groups to analyze why they, and the developments they shaped, are seen as historically significant.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.5.3

Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, descriptive details, and clear event sequences.



CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.5.3.A

Orient the reader by establishing a situation and introducing a narrator and/or characters; organize an event sequence that unfolds naturally.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.5.3.B

Use narrative techniques, such as dialogue, description, and pacing, to develop experiences and events or show the responses of characters to situations.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.5.3.C

Use a variety of transitional words, phrases, and clauses to manage the sequence of events.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.5.3.D

Use concrete words and phrases and sensory details to convey experiences and events precisely.

National Core Art Standards

Anchor Standard 1. Generate and conceptualize artistic ideas and work.

Anchor Standard 8. Interpret intent and meaning in artistic work. \The student will communicate personal ideas, experiences, and narratives through the creation of works of art, using a variety of media.