

## Film Viewing Study Guide for California Women Win the Vote, 1911

*This study guide is in the making, so please feel free to email me*

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*for either my answers to these questions, or your feedback and what you did in your class. I will send you another one of our films for your contribution. Those titles are listed on our website: [www.wishtarfilms.com](http://www.wishtarfilms.com). As well as give you credit in our publicity. **A transcript for the 27 minute version is also available by an email request to [mwheelock@sbcglobal.net](mailto:mwheelock@sbcglobal.net); be sure to check our website [www.wildwestwomen.org](http://www.wildwestwomen.org) for more films or go to our distributor: [www.ishtarfilms.com](http://www.ishtarfilms.com). Please like our film company on FACEBOOK [www.facebook.com/ishtarfilms](http://www.facebook.com/ishtarfilms)***

*Thank you for any input to this study guide. I also attach a study guide from the National Women's History Project, which is an excellent website to obtain more materials on Women's History. [www.nwhp.org](http://www.nwhp.org) they also have a "newspaper" Gazette for more information*

**Basic Information:** The full version of the film is 39 minutes long, so if you have a short class, perhaps give some background on Women's Suffrage the day before and then have questions for them to answer for homework, after they view the film, as there might not be a lot of time for discussion. The 27 minute version should fit in class time well. (You can also preview the 39 minute film, and select certain scenes to focus on. The film is divided into sections.\* **Focus of the Film:** Primarily the California Equal Voting Rights campaign from Jan 1911 to October 1911, but there are references to the start of the Suffrage movement, how the West added to that movement, what stimulated Women to demand their full rights, and the energy and inspiration that California women created in the drive for a federal amendment in 1920.

**Background:** Orient viewers to the beginning of the cry for Equal Suffrage (1848—Seneca Falls, NY). By the time California was to hold its second suffrage referendum (The first one of 1896 went down to defeat, mostly from the Northern men --San Francisco area which was the most populated section of the state in 1890's-- and Railroad and liquor interest – defeated by 20,000 votes).

**ONLY FIVE STATES ALLOWED WOMEN TO VOTE in 1911:** Wyoming, Utah, Colorado, Idaho and Washington, states with only a small population of women.

The outstanding aspect of the California Suffrage movement is that the Right for Women to vote was by referendum to the voters – all male; most of the other suffrage states granted women the right to vote by legislative decisions, where only a handful of state political men were involved.

Questions: 1. What do you know about the right to vote in America? Could women always vote? What about men? Refer to the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> Amendment as well. Who could vote?

2. How is a right granted? (By law and legislative action or by referendum on a ballot which voters approve. – all depending on a state. ) Voting rights for Women were first granted state by state until there was a Federal Amendment to the Constitution , the 19<sup>th</sup> in 1920. Please note that a Federal Amendment has to be ratified by 75% of the states, so states are very important in our Democratic Process.

3. What rights do you see today which are still under the need for approval?

After viewing:

1. What are some tactics the California suffragists used? Which ones of these do we still employ today to for elections and ballot initiatives today?
2. What arguments for and against suffrage were presented? How would you argue either of these sides? (These arguments are not as full in the 27 minute version, but have class try to figure out why men would not want women to vote. In a way it is similar to why Whites hesitated about giving Blacks full voting rights.

*Many answers for this: 1. Women would vote against liquor. In fact many women were against liquor because their fathers and husbands would drink up the family's resources. 2) Women would provide cheaper labor in the burgeoning new industrial age, and men felt their jobs threatened. 3) Women would lose their dependency on men, and men needed to still feel in control. 4) women would become "sexless" and lacking in emotion and therefore – really changed. 5) Men would lose their dominant position not only in the household but also in government and society.*

Why should Women have the right to vote? What advantages would women bring to the society and government if they have the right to vote? Have student write a speech supporting or arguing against women's right to vote. Make sure they can articulate good reasons. This precision of argument was very strong in the Suffrage movement. They did not just scream out "This is my right", but really did logical debates.

3. The way to unite the state on the issue of Suffrage for Women was to get diverse groups onboard the cause by showing how the Right to Vote would aid all causes and groups. Take the various groups – working, club women, homemakers, college- educated and professional women, African-American,

Spanish and foreign born – and show how the Right for Women to vote would be good for their concerns. Why is Women's suffrage good for men too?

4. Have students discuss what is their favorite tactic or scene. Notice that working on a political issue helps develop their values and self-confidence. (as in the Canvasser and Soap box speaker). Note also that these women had no experience or education in this arena of political action, but they invented, they strategized, they took the risks, because they believed in what they were doing and in The Rightness of the Cause. How do they think that this big victory in California would aid the Suffrage movement throughout other states and towards the Federal amendment.

If you teach History and want to follow this campaign to the Amendment, try our film VOTES FOR WOMEN. ([www.ishtarfilms.com](http://www.ishtarfilms.com)) which takes an overview of the entire Suffrage Movement.

5. What are they willing to work for today? You can address all sorts of current issues: marriage equality, the environment and business, war, local issues like closing down a park, etc. Each student should announce something that she/he would be willing to be an activist on. You can even have them write letters to their legislators – local, state, or national. This action gives them a sense of power and participation.
6. Some student can investigate what is the percentage of eligible voters registered and then what percentage of them vote. How does America compare to other Democracies? We are low in our rank – at about 38% in last major election. Why don't more Americans vote? What about Women's vote? (needs some research on current times) How does age, education, races, gender effect the why people vote?
7. Are there issues which women are more interested and supported of than men and visa versa? Why would this division be so?
8. Which faction or group do they identify most with? Or feel most strongly about why that group would join the suffrage movement.
9. If you have women viewers, ask, why is it important and empowering for them to view their history? Did your audience know about this suffrage withholding issue?

Thank you for your purchase of CALIFORNIA WOMEN WIN THE VOTE. Spread the word, and don't forget to VOTE!!!

Next Page from National Women's History project. More materials there on this CA suffrage Campaign. [www.nwhp.org](http://www.nwhp.org) for more downloads.

## **California Woman Suffrage Suggestions Activities and Lessons for Teachers: From the National Women's Project.**

1. Download the **CA Woman Suffrage Gazette** from our website [www.nwhp.org](http://www.nwhp.org) and make copies for all your students.
2. Have your students to look at the map of California counties on page 5 of the Gazette.
  - Please note that for reasons we haven't been able to discover Amador County's results were not included in the list. The number of counties on the map and the tally of the counties that voted will not match.
3. Ask how many counties are there in California?
4. Ask how many counties voted yes and how many counties voted no for the Woman Suffrage Amendment?
5. Ask how they think the county in which they live would vote today?
6. Invite a local historian or librarian to talk with your class about who worked for woman suffrage in your community.
7. Have your class write to the community newspaper and request that they write about the history CA Woman Suffrage in your community.
8. Download **California Women Win the Vote THE THREE DAY WAIT (4 th Grade Version)**
  5. Download **California Women Win the Vote THE THREE DAY WAIT (General Audience)**
9. Have your students design a plaque that could be used to designate where a person involved in the women suffrage movement lived or where important activities occurred.
10. Have your class create a walking tour of places that were important in the campaign for woman suffrage.

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