

Teaching with Primary Sources Assessment

Grade Level: High School (9-10)

Standard(s) or Objectives: CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.9-10.4 Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative, connotative, and technical meanings; analyze the cumulative impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.9-10.5 Analyze in detail how an author's ideas or claims are developed and refined by particular sentences, paragraphs, or larger portions of a text (e.g., a section or chapter).

Library of Congress or Morris Special Collections Resources:



Votes for Women Broadside. Women's Political Union, January 28, 1911
<https://www.loc.gov/resource/rbcmil.scrp7003401/#seq-1>

Topic Background:

The campaign for women's suffrage began...in the 1820s and 30s...all sorts of reform groups were proliferating across the United States...and in many of these, women played a prominent role.
 Excerpted from: <http://www.history.com/topics/womens-history/the-fight-for-womens-suffrage>

The determination of these women to expand their sphere of activities further outside the home helped legitimate the suffrage movement...The first state to grant women complete voting rights was Wyoming in 1869. Three other western states—Colorado (1893), Utah (1896), and Idaho (1896)—followed shortly after...prior to 1910, only these four states allowed women to vote...some reformers were impatient with the pace of change [and] adopted the more militant tactics of its English counterparts, picketing and conducting mass rallies and marches to raise public awareness and support...

Excerpted from: <http://history.house.gov/Exhibitions-and-Publications/WIC/Historical-Essays/No-Lady/Womens-Rights/>

On June 4, 1919, the United States Senate approved the 19th amendment to the Constitution, which states, "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."

Excerpted from: http://www.loc.gov/teachers/classroommaterials/primarysourcesets/womens-suffrage/pdf/teacher_guide.pdf

Source(s) Used:

The source used for this assessment is the text from a broadside published by the Women's Political Union in 1911. The broadside depicts a policeman holding back both a university-educated woman and a mother, from casting votes, while allowing a line of convicts to cast theirs. The broadside questions the justice of allowing convicts the "protection of the ballot," while denying respectable women the same.

Answer Key:

Question 1 – D

Question 2 – C

Votes for Women Broadside (1911)

Convicts Out-Rank Women

There has been a general belief, which we suffragists have helped to spread, that women are classed politically with idiots and criminals. That is an error. The man who has lost his right to vote through being convicted of a crime, can, when freed from prison, become the object of executive clemency and be restored to full citizen rights.

By a stroke of the pen, Gov. White have to eighty-one ex-convicts the power to vote.

Women are out-classed by criminals in the state of New York.

When our investigators visited the office of the Secretary of State to look up the crimes and sentences of these newly made rulers of women, every official who helped in the search expressed the deepest sympathy with these ex-convicts. They argued that these unfortunates ought to get back their full rights of citizenship, for they "needed the protection of the ballot." The tender-hearted men on Capitol Hill were amazed that we thought so too, for they had supposed our desire for information was prompted by a spirit of vindictiveness.

Not at all. We think a man who has faced his punishment, and has succeeded in getting on his feet again after his fall, and is trying to be a decent member of society, should not have to fight the battle of life with the stigma of disfranchisement upon him.

But we hold with conviction deep as life itself that women, law-abiding women, should also be freed from the stigma of political outlawry.

With confidence, we challenge every voter in the State of New York to give one sound reason why the four men who committed rape on women should be made the political rulers of the victims of their lust.

Questions:

1. The broadside states:

"The man who has lost his right to vote through being convicted of a crime, can, when freed from prison, become the object of executive clemency and be restored to full citizen rights."
Which statement best describes the use of the word "clemency?" (CCSS. RI.9-10.4)

- Ex-convicts will never have a place in civilized society and will doubtless be shunned.
- Ex-convicts may receive reduced sentencing or parole if government officials are lenient.
- Ex-convicts may be rehabilitated, but will always suffer the disgrace of their crimes.
- Ex-convicts can be forgiven of previous crimes and returned to society in full citizenship.

2) Addressing New York's voters, the broadside challenges them to:

"give one sound reason why the four men who committed rape on women should be made the political rulers of the victims of their lust."

Why does the author choose to end the message this way? (CCSS.RI.9-10.5)

- It demonstrates the author's faith in the successful rehabilitation of ex-convicts.
- It shows how author genuinely wants a voter to reply and answer the question.
- It shows that, based upon gender, victims of crime can have fewer rights than their attackers.
- It demonstrates how women are made vulnerable to laws that favor male interests.