



**Susan B. Anthony
Classroom Guide**

Introduction: Susan B. Anthony was a leader of the movement for women's rights who dedicated her life to gaining the right to vote for American women. Born in Massachusetts in 1820, Anthony believed strongly in the need for women to have economic independence and access to civil rights. She met fellow women's rights advocate Elizabeth Cady Stanton in Seneca Falls, New York in 1851 and they united together on a mission to achieve equal rights for all American women. Anthony and many of her followers in the suffrage movement believed that the federal government, rather than individual states, was responsible for giving women the legal right to vote. This one hour biography tells Anthony's story, from her childhood through her rise as an advocate for women's rights. Historians describe her historical context and discuss how her strategies and ideas transformed over time.

During the Civil War, many advocates for women's rights supported the abolition of slavery and were disappointed that the 14th and 15th amendments passed after the war did not grant women the right to vote. In 1869, Anthony and Cady Stanton formed the National Woman Suffrage Association and traveled broadly in an effort to educate other women on the importance of this issue. Anthony regularly lobbied Congress to support women's suffrage, and she influenced a new generation of women's rights advocates. Though she died in 1906 and did not live to see her dream fulfilled, Anthony inspired the women's rights movement, helping pave the way for the 19th Amendment which finally solidified women's voting rights in 1920. This program is an excellent introduction to Anthony's life and legacy; teachers may want to use clips from this program for course units and lesson plans on related topics.

Curriculum Links:

Susan B. Anthony would be useful for American history, Women's History, American culture, and social studies courses. It is appropriate for 7th grade and above.

Vocabulary:

Using a dictionary (www.merriamwebster.com) or an encyclopedia, students may want to define or explain the significance of the following terms from this program:

- Abolitionism
- Civil rights
- Convention
- Pioneer
- Quakerism
- Suffrage
- Temperance
- 19th Amendment
- Frederick Douglass
- Seneca Falls Convention
- Elizabeth Cady Stanton

Discussion Questions:

1. What was the importance of Quakerism in Susan B. Anthony's life? In what ways was Quakerism different from other religions at the time?
2. What did American society expect of women in the 1800's? What rights did men possess that women did not in the 1800's?
3. What was the Jacksonian Revolution and what effect did it have on Anthony?
4. How did Anthony become involved in the abolitionist movement? Who were the Daughters of Temperance? How did Anthony's work and involvement in the abolitionist and temperance movements affect her career?
5. What was the significance of the convention at Seneca Falls in 1848?
6. Why did Anthony wear only black in front of audiences? What is the significance of her red shawl?
7. What were the terms of the 14th Amendment? How did the 14th Amendment create a rift between anti-slavery and women's rights movements?
8. What important lesson did Anthony learn from the abolitionist movement?
9. What were Anthony's goals in registering and voting in 1872? How did Anthony lose the chance to bring her case to the Supreme Court? What were some of the benefits of her trial? How did the women's movement change under Anthony over the course of the 19th Century? What changes in life did women experience in Anthony's lifetime?
10. What sacrifices did Susan B. Anthony make in order to pursue her goals? How do you think she afforded to be an activist her entire life?
11. Why do you think it is important that people remember and study Susan B. Anthony's life today? Do you think she will be remembered in 100 years?

Extended Activities

1. *Turning Points in Women's History*

From the Declaration of Independence through today, there have been countless milestones in the struggle for equality for American women. In small groups, ask students to create a timeline marking 10-15 important events in U.S. women's history. These timelines can be presented in bullet point format, in PowerPoint, or as illustrated timelines on roll-out paper or poster-board.

2. *Taking it to Court*

As the fight for women's voting rights heated up, Susan B. Anthony and some of her followers decided to test the system by voting in the 1872 Presidential election. Anthony and several other women were arrested and the next year she pleaded her case in front of U.S. Circuit Court Judge Ward Hunt. Anthony's passionate testimony is an excellent primary source for understanding the arguments she made for the right of women to vote. Visit History.com [here](#) to view a dramatic reading of Anthony's testimony featured in the HISTORY

- documentary *The People Speak*. Ask students to write a short response paper after viewing this clip, or write a letter from Judge Hunt's perspective responding to Anthony's testimony.
3. ***Susan B. Anthony: One on One***
Ask students to imagine they were able to interview Susan B. Anthony, and to write 5 questions they would ask her about her historical context and the fight for the right to vote. Have students share these questions with the larger class or group. Students can also conduct mock interviews with one another based on these questions.
 4. ***On the Eve of the Vote***
The 19th Amendment guaranteed the right of women to vote. It was a long road through the political process before this amendment was finally ratified in 1920. Ask students to write an op-ed or letter to the editor from the perspective of a suffragette, making the argument in written form about why women deserved the right to vote.

Additional Resources

Websites

Bio Channel site on Women's History:

<http://www.biography.com/womens-history/index.jsp>

History Channel website on Women's History:

<http://www.history.com/topics/womens-history-month>

Women's History resources from the Library of Congress:

<http://womenshistorymonth.gov/>

National Archives Our Documents page on the 19th Amendment:

<http://www.ourdocuments.gov/doc.php?flash=false&doc=63>

National Archives Lesson Plan on Susan B. Anthony petition:

<http://www.archives.gov/education/lessons/woman-suffrage/anthony-petition.html>

Books

Evans, Sara. *Born for Liberty: A History of Women in America* (Free Press, 1997)

Ruiz, Vicki, and Ellen Carol DuBois, eds. *Unequal Sisters: A Multicultural Reader in U.S. Women's History* (Routledge, 2007)

Sheer, Lynn. *Failure is Impossible: Susan B. Anthony in Her Own Words* (Times Books, 1996)

Woloch, Nancy. *Women and the American Experience* (McGraw-Hill, 2005)