



DBQ: Women's Suffrage

Using Evidence

Theme:
Women's Suffrage

Historical Context: Soon after the US Civil War, the 15th amendment was passed, extending voting rights to African American males. Women around the nation rallied prior to the passage of this amendment to spark a women's rights movement that extended into the early decades of the 20th century. Citing the ideals of the Declaration of Independence & the US Constitution, women such as Susan B Anthony, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, and other women suffragettes [a woman seeking the right to vote through organized protest] began the task of trying to convince legislatures, both state and federal, to grant women the right to vote in elections.

NAME _____

DOCUMENT-BASED QUESTION

This question is based on the accompanying documents. The question is designed to test your ability to work with historical documents. Some of these documents have been edited for the purposes of this question. As you analyze the documents, take into account the source of each document and any point of view that may be presented in the document. Keep in mind that the language used in a document may reflect the historical context of the time in which it was written.

Task:

Using the information from the seven documents in part A and your knowledge of US history, write an essay in Part B in which you

Compare and contrast the arguments for and against women's suffrage in the late 19th & early 20th centuries.

- Provide and *analyze* at least two arguments for women's suffrage.
- Provide and *analyze* at least two arguments against women's suffrage.

- ***compare and contrast*** means "to express similarities and differences"
- ***analyze*** means "to determine the nature and relationship of the component elements"

Part A: Short answer questions - Analyze the documents and answer the short answer questions that follow each document.

Document 1

A Petition for Universal Suffrage

To the Senate and House of Representatives:

The undersigned, Women of the United States, respectfully ask an amendment of the Constitution that shall prohibit the several states from disenfranchising [prevent a group of people from voting] any of their citizens on the ground of gender. In making our demand for suffrage, we would call your attention to the fact that we represent fifteen million people - one half of the entire population of the country - intelligent, virtuous, native-born American citizens and yet not provided with political recognition.

The Constitution classes us free people and counts as whole persons in the basis of recognition and representation; and yet we are governed without our consent, unlike men. We are compelled to pay taxes without appeal when laws do not suit us, and punished for violations of the law without choice of judge or representatives to make the laws...

Source: Suffrage Petition (1866) Rochester, NY

- 1) What are **TWO** reasons the petition states with regards to why women should have the right to vote?

a) _____

b) _____

- 2) How is "...paying taxes without appeal when laws do not suit us" (last paragraph) **similar** to the American revolutionary war cry "no taxation without representation"?

Document 2

“But the women of this nation are educated equally with the men, and have their political opinions. ...I do not believe you can find a score of women in the whole Nation - who have not opinions on the pending presidential elections. We all have opinions....we all have parties; some like one party and one candidate and some another. Women... they will think and act for themselves, and when they are enfranchised they will divide upon all political questions as do intelligent, educated men...”

“We are starving for the ballot; give us the ballot in order that we may get bread, and an honest, upright living. We are born of the same parents as men; raised in the same family. We are possessed of the same loves and animosities as our brothers, and we inherit equally with them the substance of our fathers. So long as we are minors the government treats us as equals, but when we come of age, when we are capable of knowing and feeling the difference the boy becomes a free human being, responsible alone to God for his life, while the girl remains a slave...Is this just? is it not indeed, barbarous?”

Source: Susan B Anthony - Address to Congress 1884

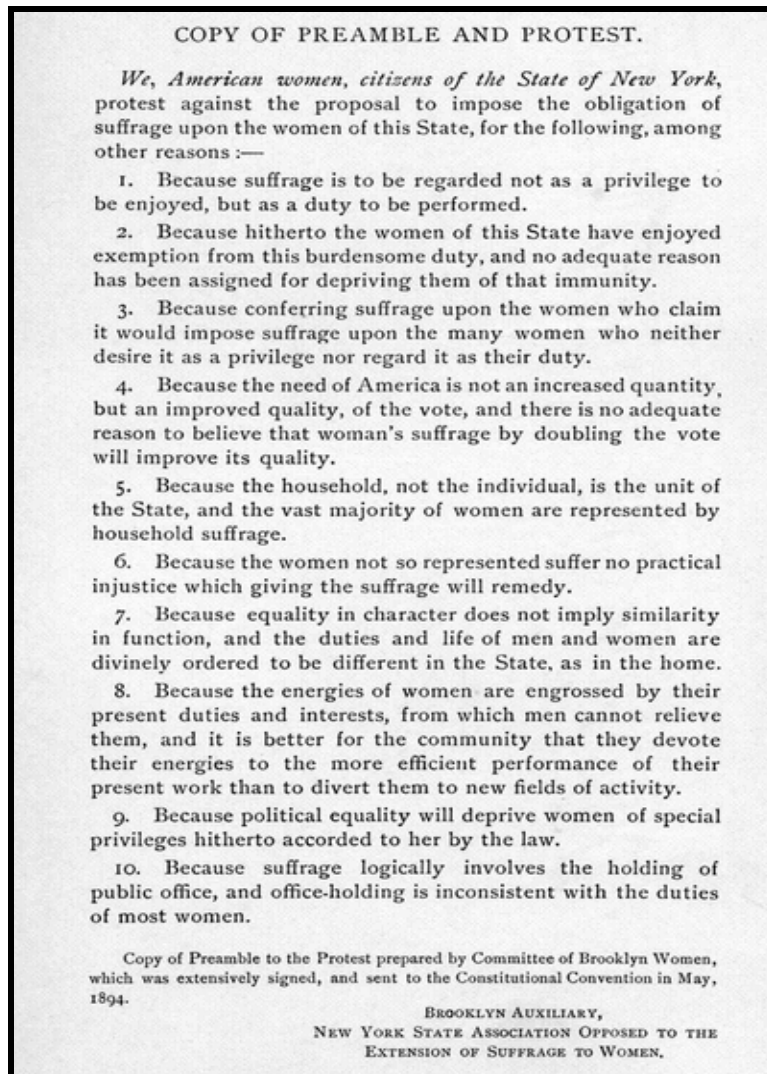
1) According to Susan B Anthony's testimony - what are three ways in which women are equal to men?

a. _____

b. _____

c. _____

Document 3



Brooklyn Auxillary, NYS Association Opposed to the Extension of Suffrage to Women - 1894

1) According to document 3 above, what are **two** reasons why this Brooklyn Auxiliary group are anti-women's suffrage?

a. _____

b. _____

2) Would the authors of documents 1 & 2 agree or disagree with the content of document 3 (above)? Cite textual evidence from each document to support your claims.

Document 4a

"In Colorado after women were granted suffrage... Several important results followed. Both political parties were induced to put up cleaner, better men, for the women would not stand a notoriously corrupt or unclean candidate.

...It has not made women mannish; they still love their homes and their children just the same as ever, and are better able to protect themselves and their children because of the ballot.

Second, they have not become swaggerers and insolent on the streets. They still teach good manners to men ... Suffrage has increased the understanding of the community at large of the problems of good government.

It has not absolutely regenerated society, but it has improved it!

The great doctrine of the American Republic that "all governments derive their just powers from the consent of the governed" justifies the plea of one half of the people - the women - to exercise suffrage. The doctrine of the American Revolutionary War that taxation without representation is unendurable justifies women in exercising the suffrage."

Source: US Senator Robert Owens Speech in Favor of Women's Suffrage 1910

1) According to Senator Owens, what are **three** positive impacts of women voting in Colorado?

(a) _____

(b) _____

(c) _____

Document 4b

...The question of woman suffrage should be summed up in this way: Has granting the ballot to women in the two suffrage states where they have had it for forty years brought about any great reforms or great results? No...

Have the slums been done away with? Indeed no.

Are the streets better cleaned in the states where women vote? No, they are quites as bad as in New York City...

Have women purified politics? No...

Have women voted voluntarily? Some do; thousands are carried to the polls otherwise, they would not vote!

....Are there laws on the statue books that would give women equal pay for equal work? No, and never will be.

Are women treated with more respect in the four suffrage states than elsewhere? No...

Source: National League for Civic Education of Women - Mrs. Gilbert Jones *A Woman Assails Woman Suffrage* (1910)

- 1) Is the speaker of this source a man or a woman? What does this tell you about the Anti-Woman's suffrage movement?

- 2) According to Mrs. Jones, what impact has women's suffrage had on communities where it was granted? How does she use this to argue against women's suffrage?

Twelve Reasons Why Women Should Vote

1. BECAUSE those who obey the laws should help to choose those who make the laws.
2. BECAUSE laws affect women as much as men.
3. BECAUSE laws which affect WOMEN are now passed without consulting them.
4. BECAUSE laws affecting CHILDREN should include the woman's point of view as well as the man's.
5. BECAUSE laws affecting the HOME are voted on in every session of the Legislature.
6. BECAUSE women have experience which would be helpful to legislation.
7. BECAUSE to deprive women of the vote is to lower their position in common estimation.
8. BECAUSE having the vote would increase the sense of responsibility among women toward questions of public importance.
10. BECAUSE hundreds of thousands of intelligent, thoughtful, hard-working women want the vote.
11. BECAUSE the objections against their having the vote are based on prejudice, not on reason.
12. BECAUSE to sum up all reasons in one—IT IS FOR THE COMMON GOOD OF ALL.

VOTE FOR WOMAN SUFFRAGE

GIVE THIS TO A FRIEND AND ASK HIM TO VOTE FOR IT

MASSACHUSETTS WOMAN SUFFRAGE ASSOCIATION

Headquarters: 585 Boylston St., Boston

H. W. S. Publishing Co., Inc.

Source: Massachusetts Woman Suffrage Association

(Note: The original version of this flier did not include a Reason 9.)

- 1) According to *document three*, some anti-suffragettes believed that women didn't need the right to vote "...Because the energies of women are engrossed by their present duties and interests (at home - caring for families) from which men cannot relieve them, and it is better for the community that they devote their energies to the more efficient performance of their present work than to divert them to new fields of activity." What are **TWO** arguments cited in this 1915 flier above that are in opposition to this anti-suffragette stance from document 3?

a. _____

b. _____

Document 6

"Woman suffrage would result either in a needless political muddle or in a social and political turmoil which would tend to weaken the State, to stir up discord in society and in the home, and would put obstacles in the way of progress which the wisest statesmanship might fail to overcome..."

The grant of suffrage to women is repugnant to instincts that strike their roots deep in the order of nature. It runs counter to human reason, it flouts the teachings of experience and the admonitions of common sense. Although women have other capacities without numbers held in equal distinction and some in higher honor, they have never possessed or developed the political faculty. Without the counsel and guidance of men, no woman ever ruled a state wisely or well. The defect is innate [a characteristic they are born with] and one for which a cure is both impossible and not to be desired. That they lack the genius for politics is no more to their discredit than man's handiness in housewifery and in the care of infants....

Let there be no mistake as to the import of this argument. It is not in the remotest manner based upon the assumption or belief that woman is man's inferior, either intellectually or in any other way. It rests upon the established fact that man's work is different from women's work, and that in his work and in his striving in his own particular field that give man the qualifying knowledge essential to intelligent voting...."

Source: New York Times Editorial February 7th 1915

- 1) Are the authors of this editorial in support of or against a woman's right to vote? Cite textual evidence to support your claims.

- 2) What are the three consequences the author suggests would occur if women were granted the right to vote?

(a) _____

(b) _____

(c) _____

Document 7



Source: EW Gustin By Popular Demand: Votes for Women! (1919)

- 1) According to this political cartoon - what could be **ONE** negative impact of women's suffrage on American society?

Part B: Women's Suffrage

Soon after the US Civil War, the 15th amendment was passed, extending voting rights to African American males. Women around the nation rallied prior to the passage of this amendment to spark a woman's rights movement that extended into the early decades of the 20th century. Citing the ideals of the Declaration of Independence & the US Constitution, women such as Susan B Anthony, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, and other women suffragettes began the task of trying to convince legislatures, both state and federal, to grant women the right to vote in elections.

Task:

Using the information from the seven documents in part A and your knowledge of US history, write an essay in Part B in which you:

Compare and contrast the arguments for and against women's suffrage in the late 19th & early 20th centuries.

- Provide and *analyze* at least two arguments for women's suffrage.
- Provide and *analyze* at least two arguments against women's suffrage.

- ***compare and contrast*** means "to express similarities and differences"
- ***analyze*** means "to determine the nature and relationship of the component elements"

Guidelines:

In your essay, be sure to:

- Develop all aspects of the task
- Incorporate information from at least **four** documents
- Incorporate relevant outside information
- Support the theme with relevant facts, examples, and details
- Use a logical and clear plan of organization, including an introduction and a conclusion that are beyond a restatement of the theme