

**Focus Question**

Why were women not allowed to vote before 1920?

**Essential Question**

What brought about women’s suffrage in the United States?

**Background Knowledge**

Review of constitutional rights and the voting process, vocabulary instruction, and reading an excerpt from the constitution of the Colorado Woman’s Suffrage Association

**Sources 1-12**

- 3 excerpts from the Woman’s Suffrage Association
- 2 excerpts from Denver Newspaper
- Photos of Colorado Suffragists
- Illustrated Suffrage political advertisement
- Photos after Colorado women win the right to vote

**Sources 13-20**

- Photos from the national women’s suffrage movement
- Map of women’s voting rights as of 1914
- Election Day cartoon from after women won the vote
- Centennial of Women’s Suffrage in CO poster

**Strategy Instructions:**

- Discussion
- Close Read
- Group Analysis
- Photo Analysis
- Seek, Find, Discuss
- Act It Out
- Activating Our Now

Students will answer focus question and essential question in a wrap-up discussion in groups of two or three.

**Assessment:**

Students will follow RAFT protocol to write letters in the perspective of a women’s suffrage supporter.

Elementary Classroom Primary Source Set  
Women's Suffrage  
4th Grade Teacher Guide

Grade Level:  
4<sup>th</sup>

**Essential Question:** What brought about women's suffrage in the United States?

**Supporting Questions:**

1. Why did women want the right to vote?
2. Through what process did women have to go in order to legally gain the right to vote?
3. Why did women have to petition for suffrage in so many different ways?
4. What differing perspectives did people have toward women's suffrage?
5. How does women's suffrage relate to today?

**Source 1: Record Book/Ledger**

[Excerpt from The Constitution of the Colorado Woman Suffrage Association](#)

The Constitution of the Colorado Woman Suffrage Association

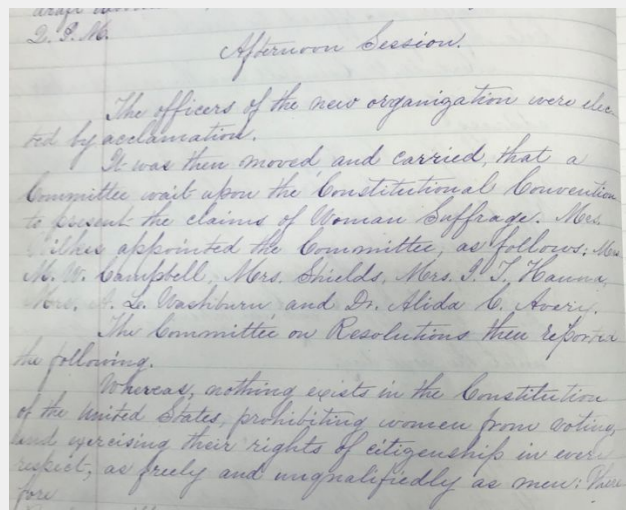
Article 1. Believing that women might enjoy the same legal rights and privileges as men: That so long as women are denied the elective franchise, they suffer a great wrong, and society a deep and incalculable inquiry, the undersigned agree to unite in an association to be called - the Colorado Woman Suffrage Association.

Article 2. The object of this association shall be to procure the right of suffrage for women and the effect such changes in the law as shall place women, in all respects, in an equal legal setting with men...

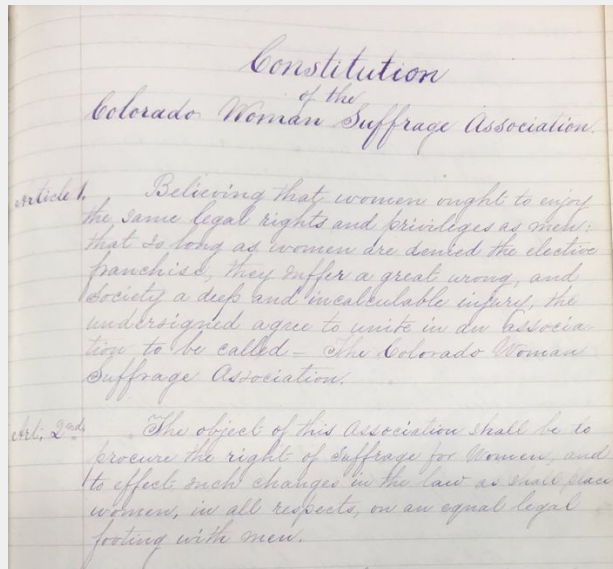
**Source 2: Record Book/Ledger**

[Excerpt from the Afternoon Session Minutes from the Annual Meeting of the Colorado Woman Suffrage Association - January 10, 1876 in Denver, Colorado](#)

"...Whereas nothing exists in the Constitution of the United States prohibiting women from voting and exercising their rights of citizenship in every respect, as freely and unqualifiedly as men..."



Courtesy of History Colorado



Courtesy of History Colorado

**Source 3: Newspaper Article**  
[Excerpt from Denver newspaper - February 3, 1876](#)

Memorial to the Constitutional Convention. The following memorial was read by Judge Bromwell in the Convention, February 8.

*Gentlemen:*

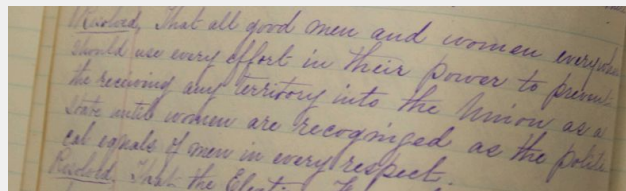
In behalf of the Colorado Woman Suffrage Association, your memorialists desire to make the following inquiries:

Are women included in "the people" mentioned in the Bill of Rights?

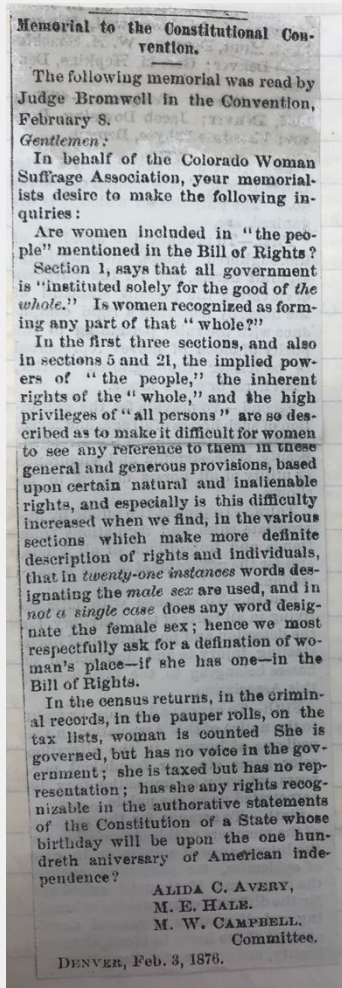
Section 1 says that all government is "instituted solely for the good of *the whole*." Is women recognized as forming any part of that "whole?"

**Source 4: Record Book/Ledger**  
[Excerpt from the Afternoon Session Minutes from the Annual Meeting of the Colorado Woman Suffrage Association - January 10, 1876 in Denver, Colorado](#)

"Resolved, That all good men and women everywhere should use every effort in their power to prevent the receiving any territory into the union as a state until women are recognized as the political equals of men in every respect."



Courtesy of History Colorado



Courtesy of History Colorado

**Source 5: Photograph**

**Men and women for the cause!**

Image of women and men gathered in front of a tent with American flags and a suffrage sign



Courtesy of History Colorado

**Source 6: Newspaper Article**

**Excerpt from the Denver Daily Times - January 29, 1877**

**WOMAN SUFFRAGE**

-----  
Address of the Rev. Dr. B. F. Crary, at the Suffrage Convention.

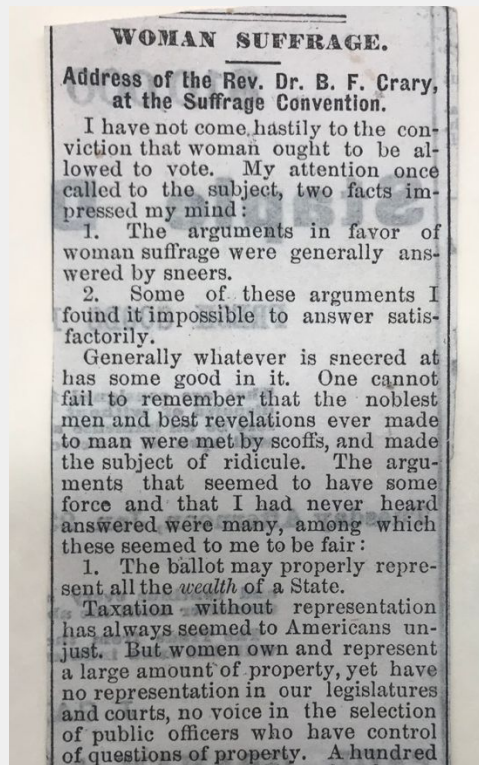
I have not come hastily to the conviction that woman ought to be allowed to vote. My attention once called to the subject, two facts impressed my mind:

1. The arguments in favor of woman suffrage were generally answered by sneers.
2. Some of these arguments I found it impossible to answer satisfactorily.

Generally, whatever is sneered at has some good in it. One cannot fail to remember that the noblest men and best revelations ever made to man were met by scoffs, and made the subject of ridicule. The arguments seemed to have some force and that I never heard answered were many among which seemed to be me to be fair:

1. The ballot may properly represent all the *wealth* of a state.

Taxation without representation has always seemed to Americans unjust. But women own and represent a large amount of property, yet have no representation in our legislatures and courts, no voice in the selection of public officers who have control of questions of property.



Courtesy of Colorado Historic Newspapers Collection and History Colorado

**Source 7: Newspaper Article**  
[Excerpt from Daily Tribune - February 7, 1877](#)

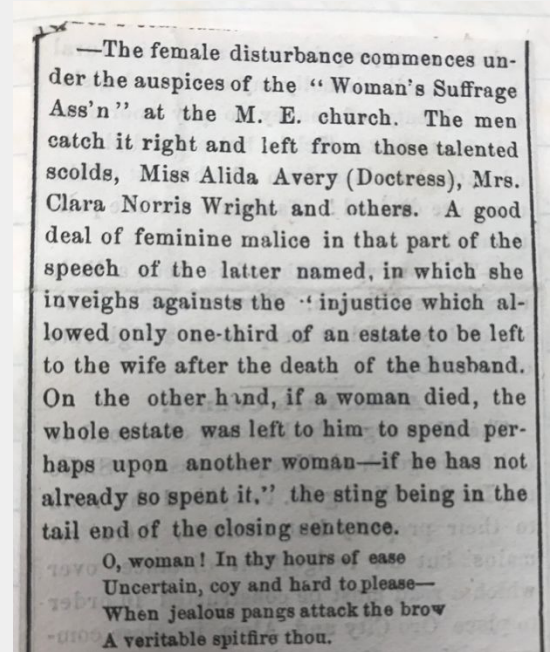
---The female disturbance commences under the auspices of the "Woman's Suffrage Ass'n" at the M. E. church. The men catch it right and left from those talented scolds, Miss Alida

**Source 8: Photograph**  
[Political advertisements on Champa Street in Downtown Denver during the National Women's Suffrage Movement](#)

Image of horses, one pulls a wagon, with banners that read: "Democrat" and White

Avery (Doctress), Mrs. Clara Norris Wright and others. A good deal of feminine malice in that part of the speech of the latter named, in which she inveighs against the "injustice which allowed only one-third of an estate to be left to the wife after the death of her husband. On the other hand, if a woman died, the whole estate was left to him to spend perhaps upon another woman---if he has not already so spent it." the sting being in the tail tail end of the closing sentence.

Oh woman! in thy hours of ease  
 Uncertain, coy and hard to please---  
 When jealous pangs attack the brow  
 A veritable spitfire thou.



Courtesy of History Colorado

Republican on Ballot" on the 1700 block of Champa Street in Denver, Colorado. Signs on the nearby buildings read: "Plumbing," "Enterprise Hand Laundry," "Aurum Assay Office," and "Undertaking."



Courtesy of History Colorado

**Source 9: Photograph**

**[Colorado woman picketing in 1890](#)**

Image of a woman with a sign reading, "COLORADO WOMEN ARE CITIZENS"

**Source 10: Illustrated Political Ad**

**[Women's Suffrage political advertisement in Colorado during the election of 1893](#)**

Image of a woman representing the state of Colorado speaking to the voting men, with women behind her. Includes the words, "DON'T FORGET THE WOMEN WHEN YOU VOTE ON TUESDAY." "EQUAL RIGHTS! EQUAL RESPONSIBILITIES! EQUAL SUFFRAGE!"



Courtesy of the Denver Public Library



Courtesy of the Library of Congress

**Source 11: Photograph**

**[Colorado women voting/standing outside the polling place in 1893](#)**

Image of well-dressed men and women sit and stand on the porch of a building with signs that reads: "Polling Place, Ward and District 9, Precinct 1" and "Election Notice." The women wear long dresses and hats. The men wear suits and hats.



**Source 12: Artifact**

**[Ballot Box from 1903](#)**

National Ballot Box; 1903 General Election Ballot Box

Wooden box with glass cylinder inset supported by four wood supports. Has a slot in the hinged lid.



Courtesy of History Colorado

Courtesy of the Denver Public Library

**Source 13: Photograph**

**Suffragettes in 1910 driving a car with a "Votes for Women" sign attached to the back**

Image of women in an automobile with flags and a sign that reads "VOTES FOR WOMEN"



Courtesy of History Colorado

**Source 14: Photograph**

**"Penn[sylvania] on the Picket Line," 1917**

Image of fourteen suffragists in overcoats on picket line, holding suffrage banners in front of the White House. One banner reads: "Mr. President How Long Must Women Wait For Liberty". White House visible in background.



Courtesy of Library of Congress



**Source 15: Photograph**

**Woman picketing for the cause, 1910s:  
Mary Windsor Penn, 1917**

Image of Mary Winsor, standing outside, holding a banner that reads: "To Ask Freedom for Women is Not a Crime. Suffrage Prisoners Should Not be Treated as Criminals."



Courtesy of the Library of Congress

**Source 16: Photograph**

**Women march in Suffrage Parade in New York on May 4, 1912**

Image of women and a baby marching down a street dressed in white with flags, flowers, and pennants that say "VOTES FOR WOMEN"



Courtesy of the Library of Congress

**Source 17: Photograph**

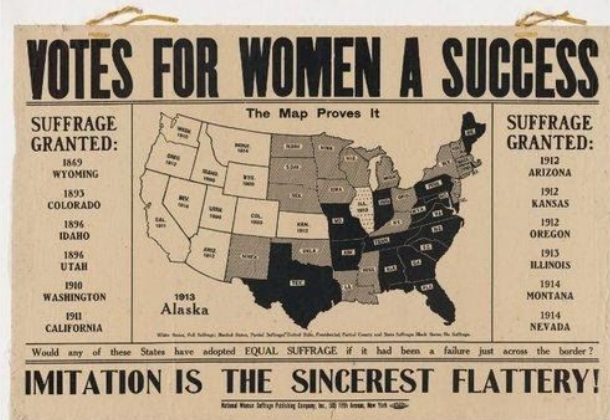
**Colorado women campaigning for national women's suffrage in the early 1900s**

Image of women standing in front of a billboard that reads,

"WOMEN OF COLORADO  
YOU HAVE THE VOTE  
GET IT FOR WOMEN OF THE NATION  
BY VOTING AGAINST WOODROW WILSON [...]   
THEIR PARTY OPPOSES NATIONAL [WOMEN'S]  
SUFFRAGE"

**Source 18: Map**

**Map showing U.S. states and territories where women can and cannot vote as the National Women's Suffrage Movement gains momentum, 1914.**



Harvard University, Schlesinger Library on the History of Women in America, W602335\_1

Courtesy of Harvard University



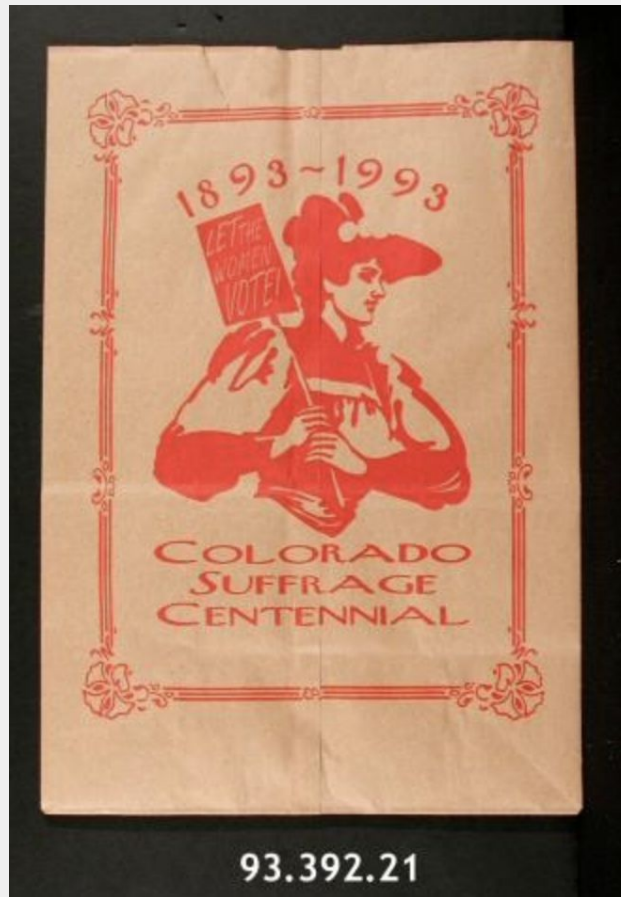
Courtesy of the Denver Public Library

**Source 19: Cartoon - Ink-print of an engraving of a photograph**  
**"Election Day!", 1909**

Image showing a woman leaving the house to vote on election day while her distraught husband is left behind to tend to the children and house by himself. A plate has been broken, both children are crying and even the cat is in a panic. Hanging in a frame on the wall in the background: Votes for Women and written on a ballot in the bottom right hand corner: Hen Party: "For President -- Mrs. Henry Peck -- Vice President -- Mrs. Wm. Nagg -- For Governor -- Mrs. Thos Katt."

**Source 20: Paper Bag with Illustration**  
**Colorado Suffrage Centennial 1893-1993**

Image of a woman holding a sign reading "LET THE WOMEN VOTE" accompanied by the dates "1893-1993" and words "COLORADO SUFFRAGE CENTENNIAL"



93.392.21

Courtesy of History Colorado



Courtesy of the Library of Congress

### **Background Knowledge/Contextual Paragraph for Teachers**

As students study American History, they learn that people have been discriminated against (and continue to be). In the case of women's suffrage, women were not allowed to vote (nationally) before 1920 because of institutionalized gender discrimination. This discrimination was rooted in the United States Constitution, which declared that white men were the only eligible voters. Over 140 years later, (white) American women gained national, equal suffrage rights with men through the passage of the Nineteenth Amendment. The Nineteenth Amendment specifies that women have an equal right to vote; however, that right was kept from African American Women and Native American Women until later (women in Colorado fought for and won the right to vote in 1893 - but it also only applied to white women) The Nineteenth Amendment, passed in 1920, increased women's civic-engagement opportunities and sparked further changes in women's equality.

**NOTE: The following strategies and activities are included for 4th Grade; however, all sources in the Set are included for your use for differentiation and/or extension. See also the 3rd and 5th Grade Teacher Guides for ideas to differentiate or extend your lessons.**

## Building Background Knowledge for the Students

### SOURCES 1-2

1. To bring up and build upon students' background knowledge of voting rights lead a classroom discussion with these or similar questions:
  - a. What do you know about the voting process?
  - b. Where does it take place?
  - c. Who has the right to vote in the United States? Who doesn't?
  - d. Have those groups of people always had the right to vote?
2. Following the class discussion, ask them who or what decides who has the right to vote. Explain that you have an excerpt to read from the Colorado Woman's Suffrage Association that was written when Colorado women were fighting for the right to vote in the 1890s.
3. Read the **excerpt of The Constitution of the Colorado Woman Suffrage Association (Source 1)** and the **excerpt from the Afternoon Session Minutes from the Annual Meeting of the Colorado Woman Suffrage Association - January 10, 1876 in Denver, Colorado (Source 2)** scaffolding as needed.
4. Determine how you will instruct vocabulary. It can either be front-loaded before reading the excerpt or instructed after the reading depending on your own vocabulary culture (e.g, a literacy activity to level the language; underline/highlight words they don't understand.).
5. Relate the concept of voting to their own community or family. Have students vote in class to understand the process. Ask how decisions are made in their own families or friend groups.
6. Divide the students into groups. Tell them that each group needs to come up with hypotheses about how they think women might go about achieving the object of their suffrage association. Give them five minutes for brainstorming and have each group choose a writer to record their ideas.
7. Then, have the groups report their ideas to the class.

### STRATEGY INSTRUCTION:

SOURCES 1-2 (See above in Building Background Knowledge for the Students)

- **Discussion:** Excerpts from the Constitution of the Woman Suffrage Association  
Source 1: Record Book/Ledger - Excerpt from The Constitution of the Colorado Woman Suffrage Association  
Source 2: Record Book/Ledger - Excerpt from the Afternoon Session Minutes from the Annual Meeting of the Colorado Woman Suffrage Association - January 10, 1876 in Denver, Colorado

- (As in Building Background Knowledge for the Students) Lead a discussion followed by group activity about women’s suffrage as above. Read the excerpts from the Constitution of the Woman Suffrage Association (Sources 1 and 2) to the students. Explain that the constitution excerpts express the motivations for women to gain the right to vote. Then lead into the lesson by briefly explaining the context behind the women’s suffrage movement, in Colorado and nationally.

**SOURCES 3-4**

- **Close Reading**

**Source 3: Excerpt from Denver Newspaper - February 3, 1876**

**Source 4: Excerpt from the Afternoon Session Minutes from the Annual Meeting of the Colorado Woman Suffrage Association - January 10, 1876 in Denver, Colorado**

- Provide each of the sources (Sources 3-4) in a Google Classroom folder or document. The students will individually use a Close Read Protocol (Material 2) on the page to aid their investigation of the article. Questions to guide their close read will be as follows: Who is in Source 3, and what are they doing? What questions are the suffragists asking the judges in Source 3? Why do these questions matter for their right to vote? According to Source 4, what do the suffragists want men and women to do? Scaffolding/language leveling may be necessary.

**SOURCES 8-12:**

- **Photo Analysis: See, Think, Wonder**

**Source 8: Photograph - Political advertisements on Champa Street in Downtown Denver during the National Women’s Suffrage Movement**

**Source 9: Photograph - Colorado woman picketing in 1890**

**Source 10: Illustrated Political Ad - Women’s Suffrage political advertisement in Colorado during the election of 1893**

**Source 11: Photograph - Colorado women voting/standing outside the polling place in 1893**

**Source 12: Artifact - Ballot Box from 1903**

- A power-point presentation with the primary source pictures (Sources 8-12 [the women's suffrage movement *in Colorado*]) can be created and used in this next section of the lesson. Students will be asked to take a few minutes to look at the pictures and complete a See, Think, Wonder about each. Using the See, Think, Wonder Photo Analysis Sheet (Material 4) have students analyze each photo.

**SOURCES 17-18:**

- **Timeline**

**Source 17: Photograph - Colorado women campaigning for national women’s suffrage in the early 1900s**

**Source 18: Map - Map showing U.S. states and territories where women can and cannot vote as the National Women’s Suffrage Movement gains momentum, 1914.**

- Assign each student a state of the United States (if need be, some students can be given two states to look for). Put source 18 up on a projection or pass around printouts. Give students three or so minutes to absorb the map and locate their state(s). Help the students understand that the map shows which states have and have not approved women’s suffrage. Show them source 17 before or after and explain that women in states that already approved women’s suffrage were petitioning and campaigning for their fellow females in other states. Then on a whiteboard or extra-long piece of poster paper, make a timeline with the outlines of women’s suffrage on it (1869 women in Wyoming win the right to vote, 1893 Colorado women win the right to vote, 1920 all (white) women in the US win the right to vote, and can include the centennials if you have room). Have students come up one by one and place their state on the timeline based on when they approved women’s suffrage. Have the students whose states have yet to approve women’s suffrage stand to one side so that students can visually see the country divided over the issue. Then have the students representing states that had yet to approve women’s suffrage come up one at a time and place a guess of when they would approve it on the timeline. You can reveal if they were close after all the students have placed their state on the timeline by using this map from 1919: <https://brilliantmaps.com/1919-womens-suffrage-victory/>

**SOURCE 19:**

- **Act It Out!**

- **Source 19: Cartoon - Ink-print of an engraving of a photograph - "Election Day!", 1909**

- Put Source 19 up on a projection or pass around printouts. Give students a minute or two to absorb the illustration. Ask them what they think is going on in this scene. Whose portrayal of election day is it (from whose point of view [“point of view” may need scaffolding])? What does this illustration mean (i.e. women eventually won the right to vote)? Have students form groups of five. Instruct students to act out what they think is happening in this scene using five characters: the mother, the father, child 1, child 2, and the announcer. The announcer (narrator) of each group will lead the group (do the writing) in collaborating on a script for the scene. The group will practice acting it out. Give students 15-20 minutes to work in their group and practice then have each group perform their scene for the class. A follow-up activity (possibly homework) could be to draw their own family reacting to this or a different issue.

**SOURCE 20:**

- **Activating Our Now**

- **Source 20: Paper Bag with Illustration - Colorado Suffrage Centennial 1893-1993**

- Evaluate the poster on the bag from the Women’s Suffrage Centennial in Colorado (Source 20). Allow students to each have a copy, either in a Google Classroom folder or a printed copy. Ask “What is the purpose of a poster?” Ask students to think about why the designer/creator of this poster chose: the specific design, the color used, and the symbol of the women’s petition (the picket sign). Tell students that they will now be the creators of their own *national* women’s suffrage centennial poster. They will be creating one, similar to Source 20, to commemorate the centennial of national women’s suffrage. Give each student a

few pieces of paper and spread colored pencils on the tables/desks. Give students 5 minutes to brainstorm their idea and then 10 minutes to complete their designs. Students must include one of the following: a symbol of the suffragette's petitions (i.e. picket signs, constitutional amendments, etc.), a feature of the future of women's rights, or a feature of women's rights in the past (or the lack thereof). This could be counted as a summative assessment. It could also be completed for a homework assignment.

**Strategy Instruction Differentiation:**

The texts can be further modified for students who need more literacy support; vocabulary should be instructed based on your student's needs.

**RAFT Writing:**

- Students will complete a final writing project using the RAFT (Role, Audience, Format, & Topic) structure. Students will write a letter from the perspective of a Coloradan who supports the National Women's Suffrage Movement. Before the students begin their writing piece, prime their thinking with a short activity (e.g, Turn and Talk; Think, Write, Pair, Share) allowing them to make connections to something that is meaningful to them today. (e.g., the student wants to have a say in what they eat for dinner; what time they go to bed; what activities they want to do but can't; or that they want a pet?) Students have a choice to write a letter to a family member or friend in a state where women were not allowed to vote, to a newspaper explaining why they support the women's suffrage movement, or to a politician who is against the women's suffrage movement.
  - Using RAFT protocol, students plan, draft, revise, edit, publish,

**Assessment:**

Answer Inquiry Question & RAFT Writing (see above)

- Have students write a letter from the perspective of a Coloradan who supports the National Women's Suffrage Movement. Students have a choice to write a letter to a family member in a state where women cannot yet vote, to a newspaper explaining why they support the women's suffrage movement, or to a politician who is against the women's suffrage movement. Students must include why they think women's suffrage is important or how they think it will positively affect the future.

**Colorado Academic Social Studies Standards:**

- SS.4.1.2 Construct a timeline of the major events in Colorado history.
- SS.4.1.2 Explain the relationship between major events in Colorado history and events in United States history during the same era.
- SS.4.1.2 Describe both past and present interactions among the people and cultures in Colorado. For example: American Indians, Spanish explorers, trappers/traders, and

settlers after westward expansion.

- SS.4.1.2 Describe the impact of various technological developments. For example: changes in mining technologies, transportation, early 20th century industrial developments, and mid- to late-20th century nuclear, and computer technologies.

**Colorado Reading & Writing Standards:**

RWC10-GR.6-S.2-GLE.2-EO.c.ii: Trace and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, distinguishing claims that are supported by reasons and evidence from claims that are not. (CCSS: RI.6.8)

RWC10-GR.6-S.1-GLE.1-EO.d: Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 6 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly. (CCSS: SL.6.1)

RWC10-GR.6-S.4-GLE.2-EO.a: Accurately identify own assumptions, as well as those of others

RWC10-GR.6-S.4-GLE.3-EO.b: Take control over their thinking to determine when thinking should be questioned and when it should be accepted. (intellectual autonomy)



### Close Reading of Sources 3 and 4

#### Source 3

**Excerpt from Denver newspaper - February 3, 1876**

Memorial to the Constitutional Convention.  
The following memorial was read by Judge Bromwell in the Convention, February 8.

*Gentlemen:*

In behalf of the Colorado Woman Suffrage Association, your memorialists desire to make the following inquiries:

Are women included in “the people” mentioned in the Bill of Rights?

Section 1 says that all government is “instituted solely for the good of *the whole*.” Is women recognized as forming any part of that “whole?”

#### Source 4

**Excerpt from the Afternoon Session Minutes from the Annual Meeting of the Colorado Woman Suffrage Association - January 10, 1876 in Denver, Colorado**

“Resolved, That all good men and women everywhere should use every effort in their power to prevent the receiving any territory into the union as a state until women are recognized as the political equals of men in every respect.”

Who is in Source 3, and what are they doing?

What questions are the suffragists asking the judges in Source 3?

Why do these questions matter for their right to vote?

According to Source 4, what do the suffragists want men and women to do?

### Photo Analysis: Sources 8-12 ~ See, Think, Wonder

**See:** What do you **see**? What details stand out?

**Think:** What do you **think** is going on? What makes you say that?

**Wonder:** What does this make you **wonder**? What broader questions does this image raise for you?

**Source 8**

**Photograph: Political advertisements on Champa Street in Downtown Denver during the National Women's Suffrage Movement (Courtesy of History Colorado)**



**See:**

**Think:**

**Wonder:**

**Source 9**

**Photograph: Colorado women picketing in 1890 (Courtesy of Denver Public Library)**



**See:**

**Think:**

**Wonder:**

**Source 10**

**Photograph: Women's Suffrage political advertisement in Colorado during the election of 1893 (Courtesy of the Library of Congress)**



**See:**

**Think:**

**Wonder:**

**Source 11**

**Photograph: Colorado women voting/standing outside the polling place in 1893 (Courtesy of Denver Public Library)**



**See:**

**Think:**

**Wonder:**

**Source 12**

**Artifact: Ballot Box from 1903 (Courtesy of History Colorado)**



**See:**

**Think:**

**Wonder:**

What specific things did Colorado women do to petition for the right to vote?

Did they win the right to vote in Colorado?