

TRACING

THEMES

Women and Political Power

In their families and in the workplace, in speeches and in print, countless American women have worked for justice for all citizens. Throughout the history of the United States, women have played whatever roles they felt were necessary to better this country. They also fought to expand their own political power, a power that throughout much of American history has been denied them.

1770s

PROTEST AGAINST BRITAIN ►

In the tense years leading up to the Revolution, American women found ways to participate in the protests against the British. Homemakers boycotted tea and British-made clothing. In the painting at right, Sarah Morris Mifflin, shown with her husband Thomas, spins her own thread rather than use British thread. Some businesswomen, such as printer Mary Goddard, who produced the official copies of the Declaration of Independence, took more active roles.



1848

SENECA FALLS ►

As America grew, women became acutely aware of their unequal status in society, particularly their lack of suffrage, or the right to vote.

In 1848, two women—Elizabeth Cady Stanton, shown above, and Lucretia Mott—launched the first woman suffrage movement in the United States at the Seneca Falls Convention in Seneca Falls, New York. During the convention, Stanton introduced her Declaration of Sentiments, in which she demanded greater rights for women, including the right to vote.



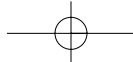
1920

THE RIGHT TO VOTE ►

More than a half-century after organizing for the right to vote, women finally won their struggle. In 1920, the United States adopted the Nineteenth Amendment, which granted women the right to vote.

Pictured to the right is one of the many suffrage demonstrations of the early 1900s that helped garner public support for the amendment.





1972–1982

THE EQUAL RIGHTS AMENDMENT MOVEMENT ▶

During the mid-1900s, as more women entered the workforce, many women recognized their continuing unequal status, including the lack of equal pay for equal work. By passing an Equal Rights Amendment, some women hoped to obtain the same social and economic rights as men.

Although millions supported the amendment, many men and women feared the measure would prompt unwanted change. The ERA ultimately failed to be ratified for the Constitution.

**ERA
YES**



2001

WOMEN IN CONGRESS ▲

In spite of the failure of the ERA, many women have achieved strong positions for themselves—politically as well as socially and economically.

In the 107th Congress, 62 women served in the House and 13 served in the Senate. Shown above are Washington's senators Patty Murray (left) and Maria Cantwell in 2000.



THINKING CRITICALLY

CONNECT TO HISTORY

1. Synthesizing How did women's political status change from 1770 to 2001?

 SEE SKILLBUILDER HANDBOOK, PAGE R19.

CONNECT TO TODAY

2. Researching and Reporting Think of a woman who has played an important role in your community. What kinds of things did this woman do? What support did she receive in the community? What problems did she run into? Report your findings to the class.



RESEARCH LINKS

CLASSZONE.COM