In the mid-nineteenth century, the Declaration of Independence’s promise that all men are created equal had not yet been extended to significant portions of America’s citizens. Many African Americans remained enslaved, and Native Americans, Asians, and women lacked equal rights. The movement for women’s suffrage gathered momentum with the Seneca Falls Declaration and the efforts of reformers such as Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Lucretia Mott, and Susan B. Anthony. Women suffrage was initially considered a radical proposal that seemed to threaten the foundations of family life and social order. Men and women in the suffrage movement faced ridicule, hostility, and violence. The push for women’s suffrage, which began in 1830s, would not reach fruition until the ratification of the Nineteenth Amendment in 1920.

Teacher Directions

1. Students, in small teams, discuss the following questions.
   - Who were Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Lucretia Mott?
   - What was the Seneca Falls Declaration?
   - Who was Susan B. Anthony?

2. Make sure students understand the following points in discussing the questions.

   Stanton and Mott organized the Seneca Falls Convention, which called for woman suffrage. The Seneca Falls Declaration, which was patterned after the Declaration of Independence, stated that all men and women are created equal. Susan B. Anthony, a skilled organizer, was a major figure in the crusade for woman’s suffrage.
Teacher Directions

1. Distribute copies of the play *Failure Is Impossible* by Rosemary H. Knower to students. (The script is available at the National Archives web site @ http://www.nara.gov/education/teaching/women/script.html.)

2. Explain that the play provides an overview of the woman suffrage movement, introduces important people in the fight for woman suffrage, and describes events in Wyoming, the first state to grant women the right to vote.

3. Using the Reader Theatre technique, assign different students to read the various roles in the play. Assign a part to every student, even if you must divide the role of the narrator. Allow a few minutes for students to silently read just their parts in preparation for the Reader Theatre. If necessary, teammates can assist each other with word pronunciations.

4. Following this short practice time, the students read the play aloud.

*Note to the Teacher:* You may use the script as a radio show, have the students wear placards with the name of their characters, or just sit in a circle and read the play.

Teacher Directions

1. Write the motto of Stanton and Anthony’s weekly newspaper, the *Revolution*, on the chalkboard: “Men Their Rights and Nothing More—Women their Rights and Nothing Less.”

2. Ask the students to discuss the following question.

   - What do you think Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony meant by those words?

Teacher Directions

1. Share the following information with students.

   Many early reformers, including Lucretia Mott, Lucy Stone, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Angelina and Sarah Grimké, and Susan B. Anthony were active in the abolitionist movement. Often, it was their experiences in this movement that convinced them of the need for greater rights for women, including suffrage.

   After the Civil War, many reformers hoped that both African Americans and women would be granted the right to vote. The Fifteenth Amendment gave the vote to African American men—but not to women. Some suffragists supported this amendment, but others, such as Susan B. Anthony, refused to support the amendment unless it included women.
2. Students debate in their small teams whether or not woman suffragists should have supported the Fifteenth Amendment, which extended the right to vote only to African American men and not to women.

Teacher Directions

Use the following activities with your students.

**Art** — Students create posters or a collage depicting the individuals and events of the woman suffrage movement.

**Math** — Students develop a campaign strategy for a law they would like to have passed. How would they go about getting publicity for the idea and raising money for the campaign? Students develop a campaign timeline and a budget.

**Library** — There are several methods by which citizens can get legislation or constitutional amendments passed. The various organizations within the suffrage movement tried all of them. Students research the methods prescribed by their own state constitution for citizen-initiated legislation.

**Library** — Students research and share information about a key personality, organization, or event in the women’s suffrage movement.

**Expressive Arts** — Students stage a mock debate on woman suffrage.

**Citizenship** — Students invite a representative from the League of Women Voters to speak about that organization, which was founded in 1920. What kinds of issues has the LWV advocated locally in the past ten to twenty years?