AP United States History
Document-Based Question Exercise

19th Amendment

August 2020
Note: The following document is adopted from the AP U.S. History College Board Examples

United States History
Section II
Total Time – 1 hour, 30 minutes

Question 1 (Document-Based Question)

Suggested reading period: 15 minutes
Suggested writing period: 40 minutes

These questions are based on the accompanying documents. The documents may have been edited for the purpose of this exercise.

In your response you should do the following:

- **Thesis:** Present a thesis that makes a historically defensible claim and responds to all parts of the question. The thesis must consist of one or more sentences located in one place, either in the introduction or in the conclusion.
- **Argument Development:** Develop and support a cohesive argument that recognizes and accounts for historical complexity by explicitly illustrating relationships among historical evidence such as contradiction, corroboration, and/or qualification.
- **Use of Documents:** Utilize the content of at least six documents to support the stated thesis or a relevant argument.
- **Sourcing the Documents:** Explain the significance of the author’s point of view, author’s purpose, historical context, and/or audience for at least four documents.
- **Contextualization:** Situate the argument by explaining the broader historical events, developments, or processes immediately relevant to the question.
- **Outside Evidence:** Provide an example or additional piece of specific evidence beyond those found in the documents to support or qualify the argument.
- **Synthesis:** Extend the argument by explaining the connections between the argument and one of the following
  - A development in a different historical period, situation, era, or geographical area.
  - A course theme and/or approach to history that is not the focus of the essay (such as political, economic, social, cultural, or intellectual history).

1. How did the Women’s Suffrage movement align with other elements of the Progressive movement and world events of the early 20th Century?

2. Did ratification of the 19th Amendment go far enough to guarantee all American women the right to vote? Why or why not?
Background Information

The summary below is for background information. Analysis of it is not required and will not count toward the required documents.

The 19th Amendment was the first step in guaranteeing all American women the right to vote. Achieving this milestone required a lengthy and difficult struggle; victory took decades of agitation and protest. Beginning in the mid-19th century, several generations of woman suffrage supporters lectured, wrote, marched, lobbied, and practiced civil disobedience to achieve what many Americans considered a radical change of the Constitution. Few early supporters lived to see final victory in 1920.

Beginning in the 1800s, women organized, petitioned, and picketed to win the right to vote, but it took them decades to accomplish their purpose. Between 1878, when the amendment was first introduced in Congress, and August 18, 1920, when it was ratified, champions of voting rights for women worked tirelessly, but strategies for achieving their goal varied. Some pursued a strategy of passing suffrage acts in each state—nine western states adopted woman suffrage legislation by 1912. Others challenged male-only voting laws in the courts. Militant suffragists used tactics such as parades, silent vigils, and hunger strikes. Often supporters met fierce resistance. Opponents heckled, jailed, and sometimes physically abused them.

By 1916, almost all of the major suffrage organizations were united behind the goal of a constitutional amendment. When New York adopted woman suffrage in 1917 and President Wilson changed his position to support an amendment in 1918, the political balance began to shift.

On May 21, 1919, the House of Representatives passed the amendment, and 2 weeks later, the Senate followed. When Tennessee became the 36th state to ratify the amendment on August 18, 1920, the amendment passed its final hurdle of obtaining the agreement of three-fourths of the states. Secretary of State Bainbridge Colby certified the ratification on August 26, 1920, changing the face of the American electorate forever.

Despite the success of the suffrage movement, obstacles remained for black women. In much of the country, hurdles like poll taxes and literacy tests kept many black women voters disenfranchised until the passage of the 1965 Voting Rights Act, which outlawed discriminatory voting practices carried out by individual states.
Document 1

Source description: Joint Resolution proposing an amendment to the Constitution extending the right of suffrage to women passed by the U.S. Senate, 19 May 1919.

H. J. Res. 1.

Sixty-sixth Congress of the United States of America;
At the First Session,
Begun and held at the City of Washington on Monday, the nineteenth day of May, one thousand nine hundred and nineteen.

JOINT RESOLUTION
Proposing an amendment to the Constitution extending the right of suffrage to women.

Passed by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled (two-thirds of each House concurring therein),
That the following article is proposed as an amendment to the Constitution, which shall be valid to all intents and purposes as part of the Constitution when ratified by the legislatures of three-fourths of the several States.

"ARTICLE"

"The right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of sex.
"Congress shall have power to enforce this article by appropriate legislation."

Speaker of the House of Representatives.

Vice President of the United States and
President of the Senate.
THE FEDERAL AMENDMENT

Do you realize that the Federal Amendment aims at woman's suffrage through the legislatures, and is not referred to the people?

Do you realize that, if the Federal Amendment passes this session of Congress by two-thirds majority, it will be referred to the states, and, if ratified by the legislatures of three-fourths of the states, woman suffrage becomes the law of all the states?

Do you realize that woman suffrage has been defeated by 14 states through the will of the people since 1913?

Do you realize that the passage of the Federal Amendment will not only nullify the will of the people in these states, but give no opportunity for Rhode Island and many other states to vote on the question at all?

Do you realize that the politicians and not the people decreed presidential suffrage to Rhode Island?

Do you realize that election expenses have been doubled in Illinois since the women have voted there?

Do you realize that the population of Rhode Island is more than 50% foreign, and that these people may be the special prey of pacifists and anti-American influences?

Do you realize that every pacifist is a suffragist, and that the women of the West voted for Wilson because he had kept us out of war?

Do you realize that many leading suffragists, like Jane Addams, are pacifists, and that many suffragists before the New York election said, if women had the vote they would stop the war?

Do you realize that the vote of New York state, outside of New York city, defeated woman suffrage by nearly 4,000?

Do you realize that it was the unprecedented increase in the socialist vote in New York city, 142,000 against 36,000 (the highest previous vote), which gave woman suffrage to New York state?

Do you realize that every socialist is a suffragist, and that socialism in New York city is anti-Americanism, many leaders having left the socialist party, denouncing it as anti-American?

It is the right of our Representatives at Washington to learn if their constituents are opposed to the passage of the Federal Amendment for woman suffrage at this time.

As a patriotic American, will you not ask them to vote against the Federal Amendment, to the end that every issue may be subordinated to the one great purpose of winning the war?

Ellen F. Vanderbilt

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Source description: Resolution of Seattle Women’s Union Card and Label League, 3 December, 1917

Seattle Union Card and Label League
and
Trades Union Auxiliary
Local No. 1

Seattle, Wash., December 3, 1917

Hon. Wesley Jones, Senator
Washington, D.C.

Dear Sir:

At the last meeting of the Seattle Women’s Union Card and Label League we were instructed to forward the following resolution:

Whereas, Women are requested to take men’s places in industry, to give up their sons, husbands and sweethearts for the liberty of these United States, and

Whereas, There are a vast number of women who have not the freedom of the ballot to assure them of the liberty they have ever helped to gain, and realizing the women who go down into the “Valley of the Shadow of Death” to bring their sons into the world cannot bring forth the best citizenship while feeling themselves not a part of that citizenship, therefore, be it

Resolved, That Congress be urged to pass the Susan B. Anthony Amendment at this session as a means to the better carrying on of the war. Why delay this legislation by a state by state process?

We hope this will meet with your approval, and we remain

Most respectfully yours,

Emith Levi,
Maud Gareabaer,
Cecilia Orr,
Committee.
Document 4

Source description: Petition from women of Macon, Georgia protesting the Women’s Suffrage Amendment

CITY OF MACON, COUNTY OF BIBB,
STATE OF GEORGIA.

TO THE CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES:

The petition of the undersigned respectfully shows:

1. That there is pending before Congress a bill to amend the Constitution of the United States, the purpose of which is to confer the right of suffrage upon the women of our Country.

2. The women of Georgia whose names are signed hereto, and on the list of the petitioners hereto attached, wish hereby to register their solemn protest against the said proposed amendment to our National Constitution. We believe that the proposed amendment is dangerous and hurtful to the best interests of our Country and especially to the South, in that the inevitable result of the legislation proposed would be to destroy white supremacy and States' rights.

Believing that the best interests of the homes, of society, of our State, and of the Nation, demand that this proposed legislation should be defeated, we, therefore, hereby earnestly petition the Senators of the United States and the Representatives in Congress to vote against this amendment that is fraught with so much danger to the peace and happiness of our Section.

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Document 5

Source description: Resolution of R.I. Union Colored Women’s Clubs Supporting the Federal Woman Suffrage Amendment

RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, The women of one-fourth of the States of
the Union are entitled to vote for President in
November; and

WHEREAS, The women of Australia, New Zealand, a
large part of Canada and several important European
countries, now vote upon equal terms with men; and

WHEREAS, The unenfranchised women of the United
States are as intelligent, law abiding and patriotic
as any women in the world, be it

RESOLVED: That we, the citizens of Providence, R.I. in mass
meeting assembled at Congdon St. Church do hereby
call upon all candidates for member of the
House or Representatives and the United States
Senate to pledge their aid, if elected, by vote
and influence to secure the submission of a
Federal Woman Suffrage Amendment for ratification
by the Legislature of the several States.

[Signatures]

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Document 6

Source description: Telegram from Augustus C. Johnson in Favor of the Abolition of the Poll Tax, 16 May 1962
NEGRO VOTER IN THE SOUTH

THE FACTS

There are 4,900,000 Negroes of voting age in the South.

Only 25% of adult Negroes vote compared with 60% white adults.

54% of potential Negro voters are in the South. Texas has the largest number registered — 266,818.

Mississippi has the lowest number — 20,000.

Literacy tests have replaced the White Primaries as a means of curbing the Negro vote. Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana, North Carolina, South Carolina and Virginia now have literacy laws.

To vote, a Negro depends largely on the registrar’s sense of justice or prejudice.

Louisiana once ranked first in number of Negroes (18%) of total registration. “Challenging” Negro registrants by legal devices has changed this.

In one Parish (county) during 1956, the voter rolls were “purged” reducing the number of Negro voters from 5,782 to 593.

Political representation from the South influences national legislature far out of proportion to the number of voters.

With less than 7,000,000 voters, the South elected 92 Congressmen in 1952.

It took more than 18,000,000 voters to elect 113 Representatives from the North.