THE CONSTITUTION WITH CARL

Volume 20 - The Nineteenth Amendment - Women Vote

Women Vote

Central question: Who fought for the vote, and what did the amendment change in law?





For seventy two years, American women asked their country for the vote. They held conventions, signed petitions, marched in parades, and knocked on the doors of legislatures, most of them knowing they would never live to cast a ballot themselves. In August 1920, the Nineteenth Amendment wrote their request into the Constitution.

This book tells the campaign honestly, and it reads the amendment's words carefully. The words are short. What they changed in law is exact, and what they did not change matters too. You have met this pattern of words before: the Fifteenth Amendment, in Volume 16, promised the vote could not be denied or abridged on account of race. This amendment copies that pattern and changes one ground. Watch how the two books fit together.

One guardrail runs through the whole book, and Carl will hold it on every page: this book never says every woman could freely vote starting in 1920. The words became law in 1920. For many women, other rules still stood between them and the ballot box, and page 15 names those rules and the years they finally fell.

For ages 7 to 11. Level Up boxes reach to age 13.

START HERE

Meet Carl and the Four Strands

Carl the Cardinal is Suffrage Carl in this volume. He wears a plain sash across his chest, the way the marchers wore theirs in the long campaign, and he holds a blank ballot high. The ballot is blank on purpose. Carl's books never tell a voter how to vote. His job in this volume is to tell the story of how the ballot came into women's hands, and to read the exact words that put it there.

The four strands, kept separate

Strand	What it is
THE WORDS	The amendment itself, in ORIGINAL WORDS, plus a PLAIN LANGUAGE EXPLANATION set apart from it.
THE HISTORY	The campaign from Seneca Falls in 1848 to Tennessee in 1920, told from the records.
COURTS HAVE SAID	Named cases with years. This is interpretation by judges, labeled as interpretation.
STILL DEBATED	Real disputes that remain. Stated fairly, never as settled fact.

How to use this book

- Read the words aloud first. Then read the explanation.
- Write, draw, point, or dictate your answers. All of those count.
- The people in the history pages are real, and their dates are checked. The voters in the activities are fictional, and the counting exercises use the real tallies from 1919 and 1920.
- Keep the labels straight. The amendment is the words. Minor and Leser are what courts have said. Whether the work is finished is still debated, and page 14 gives that argument to both sides.
- Family Talk is where the family viewpoint lives. It is never presented as a court holding.

CARL'S PROMISE AND PRACTICE LENS

Carl reads every voting amendment twice. First he asks: **what did the words promise?** Then he asks: **what was practiced afterward?** You used this lens in Volume 16, on the Fifteenth Amendment, and in Civics No. 8, where the timeline of the vote growing lives. This volume's main activity, on page 15, is built on those same two questions.

MEET CARL BOX

Carl holds the ballot high because somebody's grandmother carried a sign instead. Most of the women in this book never voted. They worked for a right they handed to their daughters. Carl's sash has no lettering because the credit belongs to thousands of ordinary people, in hundreds of towns, across seventy two years, and no single name fits on a sash.