



BBA LAW DAY IN THE SCHOOLS

Elementary School Lesson Plan

Adapted to Teach From Home 2020

This program is supported in part by the Boston Bar Foundation's Francis Moran Fund.

“Your Vote. Your Voice. Our Democracy.”

This year's theme is “Your Vote. Your Voice. Our Democracy.” At the elementary level, you will teach the students about women's suffrage and the importance of voting.

- Objectives:
- Introduce students to women's suffrage and voting rights
 - Identify appropriate examples of the power and importance of voting
 - Show students that even young people can make a difference

Materials: **Choose one of the following books:**

“Marching With Aunt Susan” by Claire Rudolf Murphy (Available on Amazon)

*An inspiring story of the fight for women's suffrage, based on the experiences of a real girl. All Bessie wants is to go hiking with her father and brothers. But it's 1896, and girls don't get to hike. They can't vote either, which Bessie discovers when Susan B. Anthony comes to town to help lead the campaign for women's suffrage. Stirred to action, Bessie joins the movement and discovers that small efforts can result in small changes—and maybe even big ones. Inspired by the diary of the real Bessie Keith Pond, a ten-year-old girl who lived in California during the suffrage campaign, author Claire Rudolf Murphy and illustrator Stacey Schuett offer a thought-provoking introduction to the fight for women's rights. A story of hope and determination, *Marching with Aunt Susan* reminds readers that society cannot evolve unless people—even young people—dare to take a stand.*

“If You Lived When Women Won Their Rights” by Anne Kamma (Available on Scholastic and Kindle)

*There was a time that girls and women in the United States could not wear pants, play sports on a team, ride a bicycle, or go to college. That all began to change in 1848, when American women (and some men) met in Seneca Falls, NY, at the first convention for women's rights held anywhere in the world. In the familiar question-and-answer format, this installment in the acclaimed *If You Lived* history series tells the exciting story of how women worked to get equal rights with men, culminating in the 19th Amendment to the Constitution and giving women the right to vote. Readers find out what life was like for girls in those days and meet the pioneering figures in the movement, including Lucy Stone, Susan B. Anthony, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Sojourner Truth, and Alice Paul.*

(Free trial for Scholastic Can be Found Here: <http://www.scholastic.com/digital/freetrial.htm>)

Lesson Plan:

I. Introduction and Reading the book of your choice to your student(s) [20-25 Minutes]

- Explain that you'll be reading a story about how women got the right to vote.
 - Explain that voting is how groups of people make important decisions by having their opinions counted.
 - Tell the student(s) that it has not been that long since certain people were not allowed to vote. In this story, girls want to be able to do everything boys can do, including voting when they grow up.
- Show the student(s) the cover of the book and ask them the following:
 - What are rights?
- a. Explain that Rights are the freedoms we have that are protected by our laws. In the United States, some rights include freedom of speech, freedom of religion, education, and the right for most U.S. Citizens to vote in elections at age 18. In this story, they'll hear about how girls fought for the right to vote when they were old enough.
 - Ask if the student(s) have ever heard of Susan B. Anthony?
- b. Explain she was a real person, who was born right here in Massachusetts! She believed that all people were born equal, so much so that she helped lead a movement that won women the right to vote!
 - Read the story to the student(s). Be sure to show the student(s) the pictures and ask if there are words or concepts they do not understand.

II. Activity [10 minutes]

- [This exercise is to demonstrate voting, so feel free to customize this activity for your student(s). This can be about anything: what they want for snack, who is the best cartoon character, whatever is important to your student. Please share your creative ideas or what it was your student(s) cared enough to vote about with the BBA at agebauer@bostonbar.org!]
- Let's take a vote! (Make sure you vote as well—especially if teaching this lesson plan to one child)
 - Explain to your student how the vote will work with whatever your chosen topic is. You could do a vote by a show of hands, a ballot using a piece of paper, or a tally.
 - Here are some examples to get you started:
 - What should you have for a snack?
 - Who is the best cartoon character?
 - Should there be a law that you must throw your trash in a trashcan (vs. being able to throw it on the ground)?
 - Should girls be allowed to do everything boys can do?

III. Debriefing The Story [15 minutes]

- For the discussion, review the story and students' reactions to the story and the passion for voting. You do not need to get through all the questions; they are just there to guide discussion. It's more important that the kids get to talk and express their ideas.

- Foster conversation by asking the following questions:
 - Why do you think voting was so important for the girls/women in the story?
 - Do you think they were ever afraid of speaking up?
 - Is there anything else you think they could have done?
 - What do you think would have happened if the girls/women didn't march for the right to vote? Do you think girls would be allowed to vote?
 - Do you think girls should be allowed to do everything boys can do?
 - Do you think it's important for everyone to be able to vote?
 - Why is it important that people are allowed to vote?
 - What actions did girls/women take to get the right to vote?
 - Have you ever voted for something?
 - What are some things that you think kids should be able to vote on?

IV. Women's Suffrage Overview [5 minutes]

- Ask the student(s) if they remember from your introduction what voting means.
 - Tell the students that they all have the right to vote, which means they can participate in important decisions across the United States. This is how people tell the government what they want. Susan B. Anthony told the world she believed everyone should be able to vote and because of people like her, many more people in Massachusetts, and all over the United States, will be able to vote when they are 18.
- If age appropriate, feel free to ask your student(s) if they can think of groups who may not be able to vote even today in the United States?
- Ask your student(s) how they feel about that?
 - Feel free to insert an example of a vote important to you.
- Tell the student(s) that in the United States, the right to vote is protected by the Constitution, a document that says the basic rules and rights of the government and people in the United States.
- Explain that now the Constitution protects the right to vote, but that it actually took a long time and a lot of hard work for United States men, women, and people of color to be able to vote—not just girls.
 - The 19th Amendment turns 100 this year! So, you can tell your student(s) women in the United States only got the right to vote 100 years ago, and that might seem like a long time, but women had been fighting for a very long time before that.
 - This is a good opportunity to review the 15th Amendment ratified in 1870.
- E.g. The 15th Amendment became a law after the Civil War ended, and allowed all men, regardless of race, be able to vote. It didn't work perfectly, but it was an important step towards equality.
 - This is also a good opportunity to introduce the 26th Amendment ratified in 1971.
- E.g. The 26th amendment is very recent law. It made it so you can vote at 18 years old, but before it was the law you had to be 21 to vote!
- Ask the students what they wish they could vote for, and please send back your responses to the BBA at agebauer@bostonbar.org.