

## Susan B. Anthony Day

### Objectives:

- Students will recognize the importance of women suffrage.
- Students will demonstrate knowledge of significant historical events.
- Students will identify the Fifteenth and Nineteenth Amendments.
- Students will acknowledge the important works of Susan B. Anthony.

### Background:

Susan B. Anthony Day, February 15th, is a commemorative day to celebrate the accomplishments of a great leader in the movement for women's right to vote. Susan Brownell Anthony was born February 15, 1820 to Daniel and Lucy Anthony in Adams, Massachusetts. Susan was one of the seven children in her family, five girls and two boys. Her father manufactured cotton. Susan was even able to work for a short time in the cotton mill as a young girl. Susan had strong Quaker background and therefore supported social reform. Her father believed it was just as important for his daughters to receive a good education as it was for his sons. At an early age Susan was sent away to school to study. At that time one of the few jobs a woman could hold was a teacher. She began teaching school in New York, at the early age of 14. As a teacher, she earned \$2.50 a week compared to the \$10.00 a week her male colleagues earned. She felt equal pay should be received for equal work.

Following the panic of 1837, in which Susan's family lost their cotton mill, she moved home to help her family regain their financial security. Her family later moved to Rochester, New York. While at home she strongly supported and participated in the abolition and the temperance movements. However, she often found it difficult for women to do much with these social issues because they were unable to vote.

In 1851, Susan was introduced to Elizabeth Cady Stanton, a women's right advocate. The two women became good friends and worked side by side for many years in support of women's suffrage. Susan B. Anthony felt very strongly about women's right to public speech and gave many powerful speeches throughout the country. Often she would use the Constitution as a resource in her persuasive speeches. She was known for saying "the constitution says, We the people...!', not We the male citizens...!'"

In 1869 the Fifteenth amendment was ratified. This stated that black men were now allowed to vote. Women's suffrage advocates were outraged that black men could now vote, yet women still could not. Following the ratification of the fifteenth amendment, Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton organized the National Woman Suffrage Association (NWSA). The NWSA was open to all who wanted to join, both men and women. The NWSA published a newspaper, *The Revolution*, with its motto, "Men, their rights, and nothing more: women their rights, and nothing less".

The fifteenth amendment stated that "all citizens" could vote. Susan B. Anthony along with other women felt they too should be classified as "citizens." In 1872 Susan B. Anthony and 15 other women registered and voted in the 1872 presidential election in Rochester, New York. was set for June. Susan felt her voting was justified since she was a "citizen." During the time prior to the trial, Susan was busy giving speeches and trying to persuade any potential juror. The trial

was held in a small town outside of Rochester. Susan was not allowed to speak for herself and fined \$100 which she vowed she would never pay. She never went to jail. However, no appeal was ever made to the Supreme Court. If an appeal had been made and had turned in Susan's favor, women would have been given the right to vote then.

Susan B. Anthony became the president of the National American Women's Suffrage Association (NAWSA) in 1892 and served until 1900. Susan continued to keep the issue of women's right to vote alive by touring nearly every state and giving public speeches wherever she went. During her 60 years of service for women's suffrage, she gave approximately 75-100 speeches a year.

Susan B. Anthony died March 13, 1906, at the age of 86, before the amendment was passed giving women the right to vote. In 1920, the Nineteenth amendment, often referred to as the Susan B. Anthony Amendment was passed giving all women the legal right to vote. Susan B. Anthony's birthday, February 15th is now a commemorative day to remember the great leader and work she did for the women's right movement.

### Procedures:

**A. Simulation Activity.** Introduce students to unit on Susan B. Anthony and women's suffrage through the following simulation. (Simulation adapted from: Hauser, M., Hauser, J. (1994, September/October). Women and Empowerment. Social Studies and the Young Learner, 1-3).

Begin by telling the students that it is time to select a new book for the class story time. Hold up two options that the students may choose from and briefly describe each book. Explain to the class that today you are going to use ballots to vote on which book to read. Ballots are what we use to vote in elections. Show the ballots to the students. The names of the books are printed on the ballots. When students are ready to begin, pass out the ballots only to the boys. Explain to the class that girls are not allowed to vote in this "election." After the boys have voted, collect and tally the ballots. Debrief students on simulation. Discuss as a class, how the girls felt about not voting. Should the girls have to agree with the boys vote? Is this discrimination? What if only the girls could vote? Encourage students to share their thoughts and ideas. Make sure that all students understand the importance of letting both girls and boys vote. Introduce Susan B. Anthony and the concept of women's suffrage. Mention that she also felt it was unfair that women were not able to vote. She was a leader in the women's right to vote movement and gave many speeches about her beliefs.

**B. Slogans.** Divide the class into small groups. Have the students create a slogan for women's rights or the importance of both girls and boys voting. Write the slogans up in a poster format and hang them in the classroom.

**C. Brainstorm.** Draw the KWL diagram on the board. Use the KWL diagram to brainstorm as a class. List what the students "know", what they "want" to know, and what they want to "learn" about Susan B. Anthony.

**D. Mini-lecture.** Talk to the students about Susan B. Anthony and give them background information about her life. Use the map of the United States and of New York, to point out important places (where she grew up, where she went to school and where significant events took place). Explain what women's suffrage is and review comments from simulation activity

about why it is important for both girls and boys to vote. Discuss important historical events that took place in Susan B. Anthony's life and during the women's rights movement. Talk about the two amendments, the fifteenth and the nineteenth amendment, that affected the women's rights movement. Look up the two amendments in the Constitution. For clarification have the students make a time line portraying significant events. (Chronological list in Appendix.) They may choose to draw pictures with the dates to help remind them what took place. Review with verbal questioning as necessary.

**E. Writing Activity.** Pass out the "Tribute to Susan" papers to the students. Explain to the class that we have discussed some important things that Susan B. Anthony has done. Have each student write a tribute or a letter to Susan B. Anthony. The students can use their creativity in writing the tributes or letters. Allow the students to do additional research if they wish to. When students have completed the letters and/or tributes to Susan B. Anthony compile them into a book entitled "Our Tribute to Susan."

**F. Application Activity.** As a class think of something that the students as a whole want to change. Some examples may include "more recycling" or "read for fun." Have the students develop a slogan or motto to go along with the change they want to make. As a class write a newspaper, similar to The Revolution that Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton wrote.

Each student can write an article about why they think (there should be more recycling) and why it is important. Include slogan or motto in the newspaper. Share copies of the newspaper with other classes in the school.

**G. Closing Discussion.** Review with the students by asking them what they have learned about Susan B. Anthony and what she did for women's suffrage. Students should also be able to identify Fifteenth and Nineteenth Amendments and their importance. Allow students to openly respond in discussion.

**Chronological list for time lines (other information may be included)**

- 1820 Susan B. Anthony was born.
- 1851 Susan B. Anthony met Elizabeth Cady Stanton, and joined women's suffrage movement.
- 1869 Fifteenth Amendment was passed, NWSA was formed.
- 1872 Susan B. Anthony voted in presidential election and was arrested.
- 1892 Susan B. Anthony became president of NAWSA.
- 1906 Susan B. Anthony died at age 86.
- 1929 Nineteenth Amendment was passed, giving women right to