



A Union of Professionals

**2008 Historic Election: A Teachable Moment
AFT Designed Lesson Plan**

**Why the Election of President Barack Obama Is a Significant Event in
the History of the United States of America**

Grades: 5-8

Content areas: Language arts and social studies

Objectives: Students will understand the influence of historical events and leaders of the civil rights and the women's suffrage movements on the 2008 presidential campaign and election.

Materials needed: Copy of the 15th and 19th amendments to the U.S. Constitution, AFT timeline Web site on women's suffrage and the civil rights movements

Instructional procedures:

- Hand out to students copies of the 15th and 19th amendments to the U.S. Constitution (provided on the following page).
- Ask students to read the amendments and facilitate a discussion around the meaning of each amendment by asking a series of questions, such as:
 - What do you think each amendment means?
 - How have historical events influenced or been influenced by each amendment?
 - How does each amendment relate to the recent campaign and election of Barack Obama?
- Using the timeline Web resource from the AFT (www.aft.org/tools4teachers/americaelects/rights-timeline.htm), have students research the events and political leaders who influenced or were influenced by the passage of the 15th and 19th constitutional amendments. Revisit the questions from above with the class to see if students have any additional insights.
- Have students write an editorial or blog from the perspective of a civil or women's rights activist about the campaigns of Barack Obama, Hillary Clinton, or Sarah Palin in the 2008 presidential election.

Extension activity

Keep a chart of cabinet positions as they are selected. When President Obama forms his new cabinet, have students keep track of names, positions, political party, gender and ethnicity of each appointee. Have students discuss the makeup of the new cabinet in comparison with the cabinets of previous administrations.

Article XV

[Proposed 1869; Ratified 1870]

Section. 1. 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 race, color, or previous condition of servitude.

Section. 2. The Congress shall have power to enforce this article by appropriate legislation.

Article XIX

[Proposed 1919; Ratified 1920]

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.