

# SUFFRAGETTE

Dear Educator,

Bring the fight for equality to life in your classroom with *Suffragette* – the stirring new film from Focus Features about the women who were willing to lose their jobs, their homes, their children, and even their lives for the right to vote.

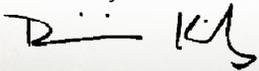
Opening in theaters this fall, *Suffragette* – the rare film to be written, produced, and directed by women – will empower all who are striving for social justice in our own day as they witness how British women helped launch a movement for change that defined political life worldwide in the 20th century.

This educational program, developed by curriculum specialists Young Minds Inspired (YMI) in cooperation with Focus Features, invites students to explore the connections between past and present as they discover how the Suffragettes set a precedent for taking on issues that still challenge us today.

*Suffragette* stars Academy Award nominee Carey Mulligan as a young working-class wife and mother who realizes that she must fight for her dignity both at home and at work through “deeds not words,” Academy Award nominee Helena Bonham Carter, Golden Globe Award nominee Brendan Gleeson, British Independent Film Award winner Anne-Marie Duff, BAFTA Award winner Ben Whishaw, and three-time Academy Award winner Meryl Streep as Emmeline Pankhurst, the historic leader of the Women’s Social and Political Union.

We encourage you to share this resource with other teachers at your school. Although the materials are copyrighted, you may make as many copies as you need for educational purposes. Please let us know your opinion of this program by returning the enclosed reply card or by responding at [ymiclassroom.com/feedback-suffragette](http://ymiclassroom.com/feedback-suffragette). Your comments help us provide free educational programs that make a real difference in students’ lives.

Sincerely,



Dr. Dominic Kinsley  
Editor in Chief  
Young Minds Inspired



**FOCUS**  
FEATURES



Question? Contact YMI toll-free at 1-800-859-8005, or by email at [feedback@ymiclassroom.com](mailto:feedback@ymiclassroom.com).

## TARGET AUDIENCE

- College women's studies, history, and social studies classes/programs
- High school history and social studies classes/programs

## PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

- To examine the history of women's rights and the right to vote
- To examine the message of empowerment embraced by all those who value equality
- To explore the film's connections to modern history and current events and present-day mechanisms for change

## PROGRAM COMPONENTS

- This teacher's guide
- Three reproducible student activity sheets
- A colorful wall poster for display in your classroom

- Common Core standards alignment for grades 8-12 available at [ymiclassroom.com/suffragette](http://ymiclassroom.com/suffragette)
- A reply card for your feedback, or reply online at [ymiclassroom.com/feedback-suffragette](http://ymiclassroom.com/feedback-suffragette)

## HOW TO USE THIS PROGRAM

Photocopy this teacher's guide and the three student activity sheets before displaying the poster in your classroom. Use the poster to introduce *Suffragette*. Tell students that these activities will enhance their viewing of *Suffragette*.

**Enter the Essay Contest:** Encourage your students to go to <http://suffragette-myvoice.com> to enter the *Suffragette* "My Vision, My Voice" Essay Contest for high school students. Students submit a 750-1000 word essay about their vision for the future of women, with one student winning a \$1,000 scholarship.



## ACTIVITY ONE CREATED EQUAL

This activity sets the stage for viewing *Suffragette* by taking students back to a time, less than 100 years ago, when few women anywhere in the world had equality with men. First, have students investigate the Suffragette movement in the United Kingdom and compare/contrast with current equality movements in the United States and around the world. Next, have students complete a short true/false quiz on women's rights in the Suffragette era and in the United States today. (Answers for the Suffragette era: 1. True, 2. True, 3. False, 4. False, 5. False, 6. True, 7. True, 8. True, 9. False, 10. True)

Use the quiz to prompt discussion about where and why women still have not achieved equal status in society. Broaden this discussion to explore women's equality around the world in places like Nigeria, India, Saudi Arabia, and Brazil, and how the issue of women's equality may play a part in the coming U.S. Presidential election.

## ACTIVITY TWO DEEDS NOT WORDS

This activity provides students with background on the Suffragettes in the U.K., whose tactics differed sharply from those of suffragists in the United States. Students are introduced to Emmeline Pankhurst and her "deeds not words" campaign that included civil disobedience, vandalism, and hunger strikes — but not threats to human life. Use the statements denouncing and endorsing the Suffragettes, taken from primary sources, to prompt student debate on how we would react to the Suffragettes' tactics today. Ask students to compare those tactics with the tactics employed by various civil rights and social justice activists today — for example, the gay rights movement, Occupy Wall Street, Black Lives Matter and others protesting police brutality. To conclude, ask students to create a position statement outlining the tactics they would use in a struggle for equality.

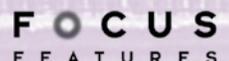
## ACTIVITY THREE I AM A SUFFRAGETTE

This activity focuses on Maud Watts, the fictional character whose story is at the center of *Suffragette*. It uses examples from the film to preview how Maud's commitment to the movement becomes more passionate as she realizes she should have the right to equal pay but that her

disenfranchisement makes it impossible for her to enact positive change. She is a woman on a journey of self-discovery, self-empowerment, and self-actualization as a mother, a wife, and as an employee. Students witness how Maud comes to stand up for what's right, speak out against what's wrong, and take action to create change. Explore what motivates this character at each stage in her development, what obstacles — external and internal — she must overcome, what sacrifices she makes, and what she gains in the process. Ask students to create a case study of a current human rights movement — either in the United States or abroad — that has been effective, how it originated, and what events helped propel it. Have students discuss how a similar process of personal growth may be possible today through social media. As a step toward such growth, invite students to make a commitment to a cause of their choice through the social media campaign for *Suffragette*.

## RESOURCES

Movie Website: [SuffragetteTheMovie.com](http://SuffragetteTheMovie.com)  
Social Action Website: [FightsNotOver.com](http://FightsNotOver.com)  
Social Action Essay Contest Website: <http://suffragette-myvoice.com>



# ACTIVITY 1

# CREATED EQUAL

*Suffragette*, opening this fall, is a stirring drama that empowers all who are striving for equality in our own day and age. After decades of peaceful protest had achieved nothing in the struggle to gain the vote for women in Great Britain, a group of women became rebels as their only route to change.



Photo by Cintia Barenho

## 1. DISCOVERY

Use these resources to learn more about the political struggle portrayed in *Suffragette*. What are some parallels and differences between the Suffragettes and activists for social justice today?

- **Learn about the leader of the Suffragette movement, Emmeline Pankhurst:**  
[www.bbc.co.uk/history/historic\\_figures/pankhurst\\_emmeline.shtml](http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/historic_figures/pankhurst_emmeline.shtml)
- **Examine artifacts of the Suffragettes:**  
[http://news.bbc.co.uk/local/london/hi/people\\_and\\_places/history/newsid\\_8680000/8680305.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/local/london/hi/people_and_places/history/newsid_8680000/8680305.stm)
- **Learn why London was called "Suffragette City":**  
[www.museumoflondon.org.uk/explore-online/pocket-histories/suffragette-city-how-did-votes-women-campaign-affect-london-19061914/](http://www.museumoflondon.org.uk/explore-online/pocket-histories/suffragette-city-how-did-votes-women-campaign-affect-london-19061914/)
- **Tour the Suffragette exhibit at The Museum of London:**  
<http://collections.museumoflondon.org.uk/Online/group.aspx?g=group-18146>
- **Learn about the Women's Social and Political Union:**  
[www.historylearningsite.co.uk/the-role-of-british-women-in-the-twentieth-century/womens-social-and-political-union/](http://www.historylearningsite.co.uk/the-role-of-british-women-in-the-twentieth-century/womens-social-and-political-union/)
- **Explore primary sources on the Suffragettes at the British Library:**  
[www.bl.uk/learning/histcizen/21cc/struggle/suffragettes1/suffragettes.html](http://www.bl.uk/learning/histcizen/21cc/struggle/suffragettes1/suffragettes.html)

## 2. DISCUSSION

How do women's rights in the era of *Suffragette* compare to women's rights today? Indicate whether the statements listed below were true or false for women in Great Britain in the first decades of the 20th century. Then take a second look and indicate which are true or false for women in the U.S. today. Discuss how and where the struggle for equality has achieved its goals or must continue.

	True	False
1. Working class women were expected to marry young, care for their home and children, and help support the family.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Women did not have universal access to free and public education.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Women could not file for divorce without their husband's consent.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. In wartime, women were prohibited from working in munitions factories.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Women were forbidden to organize to promote their cause.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. Authorities could force-feed women prisoners who engaged in hunger strikes to promote their cause.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. Men who assaulted women protesters were rarely, if ever, punished.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. The law transferred a woman's wealth and property to her husband when she married.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. Women received pay equal to men for their work.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10. Women were allowed custody of their children if they divorced their husband.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are the statements above true or false today for women in Nigeria? India? Saudi Arabia? Brazil? What would a Suffragette say on the subject of worldwide women's rights today?</li> <li>• How will issues related to equality for women impact the next Presidential election in the United States?</li> <li>• What public policies, if any, are necessary to help women in the United States and why?</li> <li>• How could social media be used to help bring about those public policies?</li> <li>• Why was a peaceful approach to securing women's rights successful in the United States but not in Great Britain?</li> <li>• In what part of the world are women's rights most at risk and why? What can be done to help them? What can be done to change this?</li> </ul>		



Photo by Al Jazeera English

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## MOTHERS DAUGHTERS REBELS

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**IN THEATERS THIS FALL**

## ACTIVITY 2

## DEEDS NOT WORDS

The inspirational and stirring film *Suffragette* tracks the story of the foot soldiers of a civil rights movement in Great Britain — women who were forced into a dangerous game of cat-and-mouse with an increasingly brutal government. Opening this fall and starring Carey Mulligan, Helena Bonham Carter, and Meryl Streep, *Suffragette* will empower all who are striving for equality in our own day and age.

As shown in the film, the British suffragettes adopted tactics sharply different from those of the women's suffrage movement in the United States. Determined to force change, Emmeline Pankhurst (played by Meryl Streep) launched a “deeds not words” campaign that used civil disobedience, hunger strikes, and vandalism — but not threats to human life — to demand public attention and challenge the legal authority that denied women social equality.

## 1. DISCOVERY

Use these resources to learn more about the Suffragettes’ “deeds not words” campaign. What reactions would such a campaign provoke today?

• **Read “Fourteen Reasons for Supporting Women’s Suffrage” (c. 1918):**

[www.bl.uk/learning/images/makeanimpact/suffragettes/large12615.html](http://www.bl.uk/learning/images/makeanimpact/suffragettes/large12615.html)

• **Learn about those who opposed the Suffragettes:**

[www.bl.uk/learning/histcitizen/21cc/struggle/suffrage/sources/source7/opponentsview.html](http://www.bl.uk/learning/histcitizen/21cc/struggle/suffrage/sources/source7/opponentsview.html)

• **Learn how the fight for women’s suffrage spread across Europe:**

[www.dhr.history.vt.edu/modules/eu/mod02\\_vote/context.html](http://www.dhr.history.vt.edu/modules/eu/mod02_vote/context.html)

• **Examine a timeline of women’s suffrage in Britain:**

[www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/education/britain1906to1918/timeline/g4\\_timeline.htm](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/education/britain1906to1918/timeline/g4_timeline.htm)



Photo by Jose A. Navas

## 2. DISCUSSION

Debate the following statements denouncing and endorsing the Suffragettes.

- “Well, in Great Britain, we have tried persuasion, we have tried the plan of showing... that we are capable people. We did it in the hope that we should convince them and persuade them to do the right and proper thing. But we had all our labour for our pains, and now we are fighting for our rights, and we are growing stronger and better women in the process. We are getting more fit to use our rights because we have such difficulty in getting them.”  
— Emmeline Pankhurst, “Why We Are Militant”  
([http://www.dhr.history.vt.edu/modules/eu/mod02\\_vote/evidence\\_detail\\_03.html](http://www.dhr.history.vt.edu/modules/eu/mod02_vote/evidence_detail_03.html))
- “The woman voter would be pernicious to the State not only because she could not back her vote by physical force, but also by reason of her intellectual defects. A woman’s mind arrives at conclusions on incomplete evidence; has a very imperfect sense of proportion; accepts the congenial as true, and rejects the uncongenial as false; takes the imaginary which is desired for reality; and treats the undesired reality which is out of sight as nonexistent — building up for itself in this way, when biased by predilections and aversions, a very unreal picture of the external world.”  
— Almroth Wright, *The Unexpurgated Case Against Woman Suffrage* ([www.dhr.history.vt.edu/modules/eu/mod02\\_vote/evidence\\_detail\\_05.html](http://www.dhr.history.vt.edu/modules/eu/mod02_vote/evidence_detail_05.html))

Following are similar statements on some campaigns for equality in our own day. How do the positions expressed here and the tactics employed in today’s world compare to those from a century ago?

- “We need to de-militarize this situation—this kind of response by the police has become the problem instead of the solution. I obviously respect law enforcement’s work to provide public safety, but my constituents are allowed to have peaceful protests, and the police need to respect that right and protect that right.”  
— Missouri Senator Claire McCaskill in the wake of the riots in Ferguson ([www.mccaskill.senate.gov/media-center/news-releases/mccaskill-in-ferguson-time-to-de-militarize-this-situation](http://www.mccaskill.senate.gov/media-center/news-releases/mccaskill-in-ferguson-time-to-de-militarize-this-situation))
- “The United States Supreme Court ruled...that the Constitution guarantees every American the right to marry the person they love. Even with this ruling, GLAAD will continue to push for accelerated acceptance of LGBT people, couples, and families across the U.S. Marriage equality is a benchmark, and not a finish line.”  
— Gay & Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation ([www.glaad.org/marriage](http://www.glaad.org/marriage))

Now, debate how people today would react to the Suffragettes’ tactics in comparison with how people react to the tactics advanced by the groups cited above.

Finally, create a position statement outlining the approach you would use in a struggle for an equality issue of your choosing (e.g., gay marriage, prison reform, religious liberty, etc.).

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IN THEATERS THIS FALL



Photo by Janelle Bouie

## ACTIVITY 3

## I AM A SUFFRAGETTE

Suffragette Maud Watts (played by Carey Mulligan), the main character in this fall's stirring new Focus Features film, *Suffragette*, makes life-changing personal choices and risks her own safety to ensure that women's rights will be recognized and respected for generations to come.



Photo by AmoritaMaharaj

## 1. DISCOVERY

Watch the *Suffragette* trailer at [www.SuffragetteTheMovie.com](http://www.SuffragetteTheMovie.com) for a preview of Maud's journey from powerlessness to self-empowerment as she steadily deepens her commitment to the cause — by standing up for what's right, speaking out against what's wrong, and taking action to create change.

- A working-class wife and mother, Maud toils at a laundry with her husband, Sonny. One day, making a delivery, she gets caught up in a Suffragette protest and recognizes a co-worker among the agitators. Until that moment, Maud had little interest in the cause, but now she begins to see that it is really a struggle for women's dignity, both at home and in the workplace.
- Maud proves her commitment to the cause when she speaks in Parliament about the indignities she has suffered because of inequality, and again when she is arrested in the protest that follows Parliament's vote against women's rights. Returning home from her night in jail, Maud finds herself facing a husband who feels betrayed and neighbors who consider her a criminal.
- Maud's resolve is strengthened by Emmeline Pankhurst, the Suffragette leader, who emerges from hiding with an electrifying public speech that galvanizes her followers: "I incite the women of Britain to rebellion....Never surrender. Never give up the fight." Answering the call, Maud becomes an activist in the struggle, determined to force change.

## 2. DISCUSSION

- Do you agree with the tactics used by Maud Watts and the Suffragettes? Would you have acted in a similar fashion? Why or why not?
- Identify modern-day crusaders who have taken radical steps to promote their cause. Do you consider their actions justified? effective?
- Discuss how social media can be mobilized to promote change. To what extent can social media provide an avenue for action? In what ways can social media strengthen personal commitment?
- Identify a social issue that is important to you. Consider why you are especially drawn to this issue and to what lengths you are willing to go in order to see a positive change. Write and share a position statement that succinctly expresses your feelings about the issue and the change you'd like to see. Will you post your position statement on social media? Why or why not?
- Continue the Suffragette movement for equality in today's world. Go to [FightsNotOver.com](http://FightsNotOver.com)



Photo by Slowking4

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