



## Enduring Understanding

By using the past to inform the present, students learn critical thinking skills necessary to detect bias in the media as well as obtaining a deeper understanding of the ideas of citizenship, free speech, civil rights, suffrage, women's history, patriarchy, and more.

## Essential Questions

- What is bias?
- How is bias used to influence opinions?
- How do political cartoons reflect social struggles?
- How do individuals' choices on media sources influence their understanding of issues?

**The Hook:** <https://youtu.be/co6qKVBciAw>

## Exercise:

Given a series of political cartoons, posters, and pamphlets, students are asked to sort them for publication in three different "newspapers" of the day. Students then must explain their reasoning.

**The Right Stuff:** A newspaper whose editorial board maintains a conservative view when reporting the news of the day. "Change for the sake of change is pointless."

**The Changing Times:** A newspaper whose editorial board maintains a liberal view when reporting the news of the day. "Forward, because one foot in the past is too many."

**The Balanced Diet:** "Report the facts, not the opinions."

Before students begin:

## Background on Women's Suffrage:

Women's suffrage, or women's right to vote, ended (after seven decades of struggle) in victory for the suffragists in 1920 with the ratification of the 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment to the US Constitution. Through protest marches, letter writing campaigns, and state-level victories, women succeeded in their pursuit of this inalienable right of citizenship. As in any social movement, there were men and women on both sides of the issue, and political cartoons of the time reflected this divide.

## Understanding Political Cartoons:

Teachinghistory.org provides an excellent resource designed to help students understand what political cartoons are and how they are used. Consider going over the ideas below before beginning this exercise.

"Students need to understand that political cartoons are expressions of opinion. They use all sorts of emotional appeals and other techniques to persuade others to accept those opinions. They cannot be treated as evidence either of the way things actually were or even of how everyone else felt about the way things were. They are evidence only of a point of view, often a heavily biased point of view."

<http://teachinghistory.org/teaching-materials/teaching-guides/21733>

Collecting, Preserving and Sharing Stories Since 1846

816 State Street Madison, Wisconsin 53706

[wisconsinhistory.org/whspress](http://wisconsinhistory.org/whspress)

## Vocabulary

- bias
- conservative
- fact
- inalienable
- influence
- liberal
- opinion
- ratification
- suffrage
- suffragette
- suffragist

## Extension

Studies have shown that students are more engaged when the lessons of the past apply to their current lives. In the case of bias, PBS has created an engaging lesson to help students identify bias in current media.

- PBS Newshour:  
<http://www.pbs.org/newshour/extra/lessons-plans/decoding-media-bias-lesson-plan/>
- Allsides.com: For independent analysis research, Allsides.com is a news site that chooses current stories and places analysis from the left, center, and the right side by side to invite comparison: <https://www.allsides.com/unbiased-balanced-news>

## Image Resources

### For:

1. <https://www.wisconsinhistory.org/Records/Image/IM96611>
2. <https://www.loc.gov/resource/cph.3b49106/>
3. <https://www.loc.gov/resource/cph.3b49099/>
4. <https://www.loc.gov/resource/ppmsca.28028/>
5. <https://www.loc.gov/resource/cph.3b23212/>

### Against:

6. <https://www.wisconsinhistory.org/Records/Image/IM1932>
7. <https://www.loc.gov/resource/cph.3b49134/>
8. <https://www.loc.gov/resource/cph.3b49095/>
9. <https://www.loc.gov/resource/cph.3b49087/>
10. <https://www.loc.gov/resource/ppmsca.27952/>

### Open for interpretation:

11. <https://www.loc.gov/resource/cph.3b49085/>
12. <https://www.loc.gov/resource/cph.3b49105/>
13. <https://www.loc.gov/resource/cph.3b49090/>
14. <https://www.loc.gov/resource/cph.3a51845/>

<b>The Changing Times</b> Forward, because one foot in the past is too many.	<b>The Balanced Diet</b> Right, wrong, or somewhere in- between	<b>The Right Stuff</b> Change for the sake of change is pointless.