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## 100 Greatest Women of Rock and Roll



VH1 Music Studio  
Cable in the Classroom

Lesson for Music Classes, Grades 7-12

### Lesson 1

Note to Teachers: The programs viewed in conjunction with these lesson plans may include references, consistent with the eras portrayed, to substance abuse, violent acts, and topics of a sexual and/or political nature. Because this may be considered inappropriate for classroom use in some communities, you are encouraged to review the programs before presenting them to your students, and if necessary, choose those sections that enhance your lesson and are acceptable for use in your classroom

### Objective

- Students will discuss women's history and the suffrage movement.
- Students will discuss the influence of women in music.
- Students will connect the history of women's suffrage to the importance of women in music.

#### National Standards for Music Education

6. Listening to, analyzing, and describing music.
7. Evaluating music and music performances.
8. Understanding relationships between music, the other arts, and disciplines outside the arts.
9. Understanding music in relation to history and culture.

## Materials

- VHS VCR Player
- Television
- Audio playback equipment
- VH1's *100 Greatest Women of Rock & Roll*, Episodes 3 and 4
- Web-based lesson materials
- Copies of timeline of "One Hundred Years toward Suffrage: An Overview" (included with lesson), or transparency and projector
- Pencils/pens and paper (students)
- Teacher selected recordings by Ruth Brown and Joan Baez, and by contemporary R&B female artists such as Mary J. Blige, Aliyah, or Lauryn Hill (optional)

### Prior Knowledge:

- Students have experience discussing vocal quality and musical expression.

## Procedures

1. Ask students to think of one woman, famous or non-famous, whom they believe to be courageous, intelligent, and creative. What other qualities do these women possess? Would the world be different without their influence? Why do you consider them to be influential?
2. Distribute copies of "One Hundred Years Toward Suffrage: An Overview" to students, or display it on transparency. Lead students in a discussion of the timeline, drawing their attention to key points. Suggest to students that women have similarly been making great strides in music. Use the following points as needed to relate to the timeline:

Women throughout history have been "seen and not heard." It wasn't until the twentieth century that American women were "granted" the right to vote, to have an "official" voice in our country. This mind-set is visible in many areas of life, reinforcing the stereotype of "a man's world." However, time and time again, women have proven that this statement is false. Women such as Harriet Tubman were saviors, helping slaves escape to freedom through the Underground Railroad. Therese Bonney captured the images of World War II through the camera lens, while Gloria Steinem gave a voice to the changing role of women in the 1960s and into the present. Women like Aretha Franklin used their talents to make the entire world listen to what they had to say.

3. Show VH1's *100 Greatest Women of Rock & Roll*: Episode 3 with Julianna Margulies, #60 - Ruth Brown segment, and Episode 4 with Courtney Cox, #27 - Joan Baez segment.

4. As seen in the segment, Ruth Brown was an essential part of the civil rights movement. She fought to gain recognition in a time where not only her gender would count against her, but her race as well. She is a pioneer, musically and politically, with a powerful and emotional voice. Lead students in a brief discussion of her vocal quality and musical expression. How was her strength of voice an asset? (It may be helpful to play an additional teacher selected recording by Ruth Brown.)
5. Ruth Brown's music can be categorized as R&B (rhythm and blues). Have students share their personal opinions of the music, and connect to R&B musicians of today such as Mary J. Blige, Aaliyah, or Lauryn Hill. Although they are likely familiar with these contemporary artists, consider playing a teacher selected recording of one of their songs for comparison. Ask students to comment on any similarities or differences. Can they hear the roots of today through the voices of the past?
6. As Ruth Brown was a major influence throughout the civil rights movement, Joan Baez was indispensable during the 1960s anti-war movement. Her simple technique and clear voice sang the words of peace by which her generation lived. Joan Baez became a role model for future folk singer/songwriters who believed that music could convey a message and make a difference in society. Ask students to critique her voice and style of music. What strengths did Joan Baez have that helped her to convey her message? Do you think she would have been as influential in a different time period? (It may be helpful to play an additional teacher selected recording by Joan Baez.)
7. As stated before, becoming equals in a "man's world" has been a long road for women, and becoming equals in the music business has been a struggle for female musicians. As the image of the "woman musician" began to evolve, so did the type of music for which they were becoming known. Gone were the days of stereotypical serenades, and here were the songs of real women everywhere. With this empowerment came the challenge of being "the boss." Women deserved the right to be in charge of their careers, money, and image. Ask students to suggest female musicians who they think helped change the stereotypes of women musicians, and women in general (e.g. Aretha Franklin, Madonna, Annie Lennox, Joan Jett, Stevie Nicks).

*Aretha Franklin is a true example of a female musician who helped break the mold: a talented woman who broke through the barriers of a segregated nation and a biased industry. Lesson plans based specifically upon Aretha Franklin's successes and struggles can be found at [www.vh1musicstudio.com/specials.html](http://www.vh1musicstudio.com/specials.html).*

8. Ask students to consider what we are celebrating during National Women's History Month (March). As an activity, have them think of one event they personally connect with in terms of women's history. Why is it important to them? Assign students to also identify at least one female musician, mentioned today or from the current music scene, and one of their songs to which they most relate. Why did they choose that song? What meaning does it hold for them? (It may be helpful for them to note their thoughts on paper.)
9. As closure, lead students in a discussion connecting the importance of women's history with the important influence that female musicians have had on society. Have them share the thoughts they wrote down during the previous activity.

# One Hundred Years toward Suffrage:

## An Overview

compiled by E. Susan Barber

### 1776

Abigail Adams writes to her husband, John, who is attending the Continental Congress in Philadelphia, asking that he and the other men--who were at work on the Declaration of Independence--"Remember the Ladies." John responds with humor. The Declaration's wording specifies that "all men are created equal."

### 1820 to 1880

Evidence from a variety of printed sources published during this period--advice manuals, poetry and literature, sermons, medical texts--reveals that Americans, in general, held highly stereotypical notions about women's and men's roles in society. Historians would later term this phenomenon "The Cult of Domesticity."

### 1821

Emma Hart Willard founds the Troy Female Seminary in New York--the first endowed school for girls.

### 1833

Oberlin College becomes the first coeducational college in the United States. In 1841, Oberlin awards the first academic degrees to three women. Early graduates include Lucy Stone and Antoinette Brown.

### 1836

Sarah Grimké begins her speaking career as an abolitionist and a women's rights advocate. She is eventually silenced by male abolitionists who consider her public speaking a liability.

### 1837

The first National Female Anti-Slavery Society convention meets in New York City. Eighty-one delegates from twelve states attend.

### 1837

Mary Lyon founds Mount Holyoke College in Massachusetts, eventually the first four-year college exclusively for women in the United States. Mt. Holyoke was followed by Vassar in 1861, and Wellesley and Smith Colleges, both in 1875. In 1873, the School Sisters of Notre Dame found a school in Baltimore, Maryland, which would eventually become the nation's first college for Catholic women.

### 1839

Mississippi passes the first Married Woman's Property Act.

### 1844

Female textile workers in Massachusetts organize the Lowell Female Labor Reform Association (LFLRA) and demand a 10-hour workday. This was one of the first permanent labor associations for working women in the United States.

**1848**

The first women's rights convention in the United States is held in Seneca Falls, New York. Many participants sign a "Declaration of Sentiments and Resolutions" that outlines the main issues and goals for the emerging women's movement. Thereafter, women's rights meetings are held on a regular basis.

**1849**

Harriet Tubman escapes from slavery. Over the next ten years she leads many slaves to freedom by the Underground Railroad.

**1850**

Amelia Jenks Bloomer launches the dress reform movement with a costume bearing her name. The Bloomer costume was later abandoned by many suffragists who feared it detracted attention from more serious women's rights issues.

**1851**

Former slave Sojourner Truth delivers her "Ain't I a Woman?" speech before a spellbound audience at a women's rights convention in Akron, Ohio.

**1852**

Harriet Beecher Stowe publishes Uncle Tom's Cabin, which rapidly becomes a bestseller.

**1859**

The successful vulcanization of rubber provides women with reliable condoms for the first time. The birth rate in the United States continues its downward, century-long spiral. By the late 1900s, women will raise an average of only two to three children, in contrast to the five or six children they raised at the beginning of the century.

**1861 to 1865**

The American Civil War disrupts suffrage activity as women, North and South, divert their energies to "war work." The War itself, however, serves as a "training ground," as women gain important organizational and occupational skills they will later use in postbellum organizational activity.

**1865 to 1880**

Southern white women create Confederate memorial societies to help preserve the memory of the "Lost Cause." This activity propels many white Southern women into the public sphere for the first time. During this same period, newly emancipated Southern black women form thousands of organizations aimed at "uplifting the race."

**1866**

Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony form the American Equal Rights Association, an organization for white and black women and men dedicated to the goal of universal suffrage.

**1868**

The Fourteenth Amendment is ratified, which extends to all citizens the protections of the Constitution against unjust state laws. This Amendment was the first to define "citizens" and "voters" as "male."

**1869**

The women's rights movement splits into two factions as a result of disagreements over the Fourteenth and soon-to-be-passed Fifteenth Amendments. Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony form the more radical,

New York-based National Woman Suffrage Association (NWSA). Lucy Stone, Henry Blackwell, and Julia Ward Howe organize the more conservative American Woman Suffrage Association (AWSA), which is centered in Boston. In this same year, the Wyoming territory is organized with a woman suffrage provision. In 1890, Wyoming was admitted to the Union with its suffrage provision intact.

### **1870**

The Fifteenth Amendment enfranchises black men. NWSA refuses to work for its ratification, arguing, instead, that it be “scrapped” in favor of a Sixteenth Amendment providing universal suffrage. Frederick Douglass breaks with Stanton and Anthony over NWSA’s position.

### **1870 to 1875**

Several women--including Virginia Louisa Minor, Victoria Woodhull, and Myra Bradwell--attempt to use the Fourteenth Amendment in the courts to secure the vote (Minor and Woodhull) or the right to practice law (Bradwell). They all are unsuccessful.

### **1872**

Susan B. Anthony is arrested and brought to trial in Rochester, New York, for attempting to vote for Ulysses S. Grant in the presidential election. At the same time, Sojourner Truth appears at a polling booth in Grand Rapids, Michigan, demanding a ballot; she is turned away.

### **1874**

The Woman’s Christian Temperance Union (WCTU) is founded by Annie Wittenmyer. With Frances Willard at its head (1876), the WCTU became an important force in the fight for woman suffrage. Not surprisingly, one of the most vehement opponents to women’s enfranchisement was the liquor lobby, which feared women might use the franchise to prohibit the sale of liquor.

### **1878**

A Woman Suffrage Amendment is introduced in the United States Congress. The wording is unchanged in 1919, when the amendment finally passes both houses.

### **1890**

The NWSA and the AWSA are reunited as the National American Woman Suffrage Association (NAWSA) under the leadership of Elizabeth Cady Stanton. During this same year, Jane Addams and Ellen Gates Starr found Hull House, a settlement house project in Chicago’s 19th Ward. Within one year, there are more than a hundred settlement houses--largely operated by women--throughout the United States. The settlement house movement and the Progressive campaign of which it was a part propelled thousands of college-educated white women and a number of women of color into lifetime careers in social work. It also made women an important voice to be reckoned with in American politics.

### **1891**

Ida B. Wells launches her nation-wide anti-lynching campaign after the murder of three black businessmen in Memphis, Tennessee.

### **1893**

Hannah Greenbaum Solomon founds the National Council of Jewish Women (NCJW) after a meeting of the Jewish Women’s Congress at the Columbian Exposition in Chicago, Illinois. In that same year, Colorado becomes the first state to adopt a state amendment enfranchising women.

**1895**

Elizabeth Cady Stanton publishes *The Woman's Bible*. After its publication, NAWSA moves to distance itself from this venerable suffrage pioneer because many conservative suffragists considered her to be too radical and, thus, potentially damaging to the suffrage campaign. From this time, Stanton--who had resigned as NAWSA president in 1892--was no longer invited to sit on the stage at NAWSA conventions.

**1896**

Mary Church Terrell, Ida B. Wells-Barnett, Margaret Murray Washington, Fanny Jackson Coppin, Frances Ellen Watkins Harper, Charlotte Forten Grimké, and former slave Harriet Tubman meet in Washington, D.C. to form the National Association of Colored Women (NACW).

**1903**

Mary Dreier, Rheta Childe Dorr, Leonora O'Reilly, and others form the Women's Trade Union League of New York, an organization of middle-and working-class women dedicated to unionization for working women and to woman suffrage. This group later became a nucleus of the International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union (ILGWU).

**1911**

The National Association Opposed to Woman Suffrage (NAOWS) is organized. Led by Mrs. Arthur Dodge, its members included wealthy, influential women and some Catholic clergymen--including Cardinal Gibbons who, in 1916, sent an address to NAOWS's convention in Washington, D.C. In addition to the distillers and brewers, who worked largely behind the scenes, the "antis" also drew support from urban political machines, Southern congressmen, and corporate capitalists--like railroad magnates and meatpackers--who supported the "antis" by contributing to their "war chests."

**1912**

Theodore Roosevelt's Progressive (Bull Moose/Republican) Party becomes the first national political party to adopt a woman suffrage plank.

**1913**

Alice Paul and Lucy Burns organize the Congressional Union, later known as the National Women's Party (1916). Borrowing the tactics of the radical, militant Women's Social and Political Union (WSPU) in England, members of the Woman's Party participate in hunger strikes, picket the White House, and engage in other forms of civil disobedience to publicize the suffrage cause.

**1914**

The National Federation of Women's Clubs--which by this time included more than two million white women and women of color throughout the United States--formally endorses the suffrage campaign.

**1916**

NAWSA president Carrie Chapman Catt unveils her "winning plan" for suffrage victory at a convention in Atlantic City, New Jersey. Catt's plan required the coordination of activities by a vast cadre of suffrage workers in both state and local associations.

**1916**

Jeannette Rankin of Montana becomes the first American woman elected to represent her state in the U.S. House of Representatives.

### **1918 to 1920**

The Great War (World War I) intervenes to slow down the suffrage campaign as some--but not all--suffragists decide to shelve their suffrage activism in favor of "war work." In the long run, however, this decision proves to be a prudent one as it adds yet another reason to why women deserve the vote.

### **August 26, 1920**

The Nineteenth Amendment is ratified. Its victory accomplished, NAWSA ceases to exist, but its organization becomes the nucleus of the League of Women Voters.

### **1923**

The National Woman's Party first proposes the Equal Rights Amendment to eliminate discrimination on the basis of gender. It has never been ratified.

#### Sources:

William H. Chafe, *The American Woman: Her Changing Social, Economic, and Political Roles, 1920-1970*; Nancy Cott, *The Grounding of Modern Feminism*; Thomas Dublin, *Women at Work: The Transformation of Work and Community in Lowell, Massachusetts, 1826-1860*; Sara M. Evans, *Born for Liberty: A History of Women in America*; Eleanor Flexner, *Century of Struggle: The Woman's Rights Movement in the United States*, rev. ed.; Debra Franklin, *The Heritage We Claim: College of Notre Dame of Maryland, 1896-1996*; National American Woman Suffrage Association (NAWSA) Collection, Rare Books Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.; Anne Firor Scott and Andrew Scott, *One Half the People: The Fight for Woman Suffrage; "From Parlor to Politics,"* permanent exhibit at the Museum of American History, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.; and Dorothy Sterling, ed. *We Are Your Sisters: Black Women in the Nineteenth Century*. Zophy, Angela Howard and Frances M. Kavenik, eds. *Handbook of American Women's History*.

TIMELINE MAY BE FOUND AT <http://lcweb2.loc.gov/ammem/naw/nawstime.html>

#### Supplemental Resources:

Definitions, biographical information, and historical information for the *100 Greatest Women of Rock & Roll* lesson series has been excerpted primarily from the following sources:

- [www.webster.com](http://www.webster.com)
- [www.vh1.com](http://www.vh1.com)
- Women in Early Music: <http://150.252.8.92/www/iawm/pages/>
- Women in Music: informational Web site with contacts and mentoring, [www.womeninmusic.com/](http://www.womeninmusic.com/)
- [www.library.wisc.edu/libraries/WomensStudies/othsubj.htm](http://www.library.wisc.edu/libraries/WomensStudies/othsubj.htm)

## National Standards for Music Education

1. Singing, alone and with others, a varied repertoire of music.
2. Performing on instruments, alone and with others, a varied repertoire of music.
3. Improvising melodies, variations, and accompaniments.
4. Composing and arranging music within specified guidelines.
5. Reading and notating music.
6. Listening to, analyzing, and describing music.
7. Evaluating music and music performances.
8. Understanding relationships between music, the other arts, and disciplines outside the arts.
9. Understanding music in relation to history and culture.



These standards-based materials are provided through a partnership with MENC: The National Association for Music Education. This lesson plan was created by MENC member Amy Rosenthal, Vocal Music, Cayuga Elementary, Lake Grove, NY.