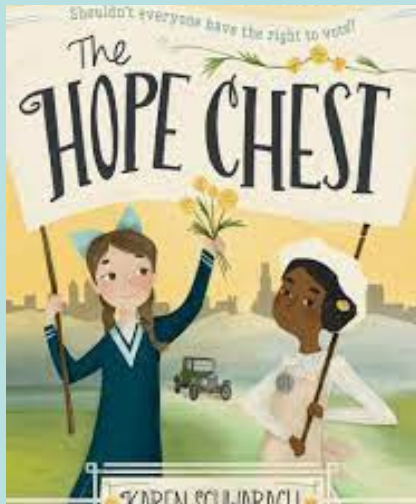


Women's Suffrage 100th Anniversary

TEACHER'S GUIDE

UTK Center for Children's and Young Adult Literature

City of Knoxville Suffrage Seed Fund • East Tennessee Historical Society • Knox County Schools



ABOUT THE BOOK

Genre: **Historical Fiction**
Grade Level: **3-7**
Age range: **8-12 years**
Lexile: **800L**
Publisher: **Yearling, 2009**

Content Specific Vocabulary

Suffrage: (n) The right to vote

Amendment: (n) A change made to the U. S. Constitution

19th Amendment: (n) Gave women the right to vote

Ratify: (v) To approve and give formal sanction to

Ballot: (n) A slip of paper (now electronic) on which a voter marks his or her vote



THE UNIVERSITY OF
TENNESSEE
KNOXVILLE

CENTER FOR CHILDREN'S AND
YOUNG ADULT LITERATURE

The Hope Chest

Written by Karen Schwabach

Synopsis

Violet Mayhew is a proper young lady—who's on the run from her parents. In 1917, every young woman was expected to get married. But Violet's sister, Chloe, didn't. Instead of linens for her hope chest, she bought a car, drove to New York City, and never returned. Violet's parents said Chloe had turned into the "Wrong Sort of Person." Three years later, Violet wants to find her sister so she follows her trail from New York City all the way to Tennessee, where Chloe is fighting for the right of women to vote. And what a fight it is! Suffs and Antis are doing everything they can to sway legislators to their side. Violet is hanging out with people whom her parents would definitely find unacceptable. But if she's becoming the "Wrong Sort of Person," why does it feel so right?

Tennessee Social Studies Standards and Practices

Standard 5.09

Analyze the major goals, struggles, and achievements of the Progressive Era, including: Prohibition (18th Amendment), women's suffrage (19th Amendment), and the lack of child labor laws.

Essential Questions:

What were the major goals, struggles, and achievements of the women's suffrage movement? What did suffragists hope to achieve? What obstacles stood in their way? What are some milestones in the movement?

Sub-questions:

- **What are the major goals of the women's suffrage movement?**
 - Violet finally understands why fighting for the vote is so important when she makes the connection that she can vote against things like war: "Suddenly Violet understood why all these women were riding to Nashville on a train. It was so that women would never again have to sit by in silence while men made decisions they didn't like—whether it was Father deciding that Chloe couldn't go to college or the government deciding that people's sons had to go fight in France whether they wanted to or not" (p. 118).
- **What are the struggles that suffragists face?**
 - Struggles include beliefs about what women should do and are capable of. Violet's parents tell her to "be seen and not heard and to speak only when spoken to" (p. 3).
 - Violet's father also warns Chloe that voting will cause her to "lose her femininity" as voters will be attacked by "gangs of hoodlums" and she will have to "drag [her] skirts through the mud and muck of national politics" (p. 4).



After Reading Extension Activities

“You Don’t Always Lose”

Read the quotation from p. 82 in the book to students: “Even when you don’t win, you don’t always lose. Remember that.” Discuss with students—encourage students to use examples from their own life to explain why they agree or disagree.

As a follow-up to the discussion, have students write an opinion piece analyzing the quotation and discussing whether Violet would agree with Mr. Martin by the end of the book.

Other Women to Know

Readers of *The Hope Chest* meet many important women--Nellie Bly, Lillian Wald, Alice Paul, Lucy Burns, Anne Dallas Dudley, Frances Ellen Watkins Harper, Florence Kelly, Carrie Chapman Catt, Mother Jones, and Mary Church Terrell, just to name a few.

Assign small groups of students to each woman to conduct research and learn more about the person they are assigned. Have students write a few paragraphs about this person and consider why the author of *The Hope Chest*, Karen Schwabach, might have wanted readers to know about this person.

Standards and EQ’s continued

- Chloe’s parents think she should be happy to marry, but Chloe wants to do “something meaningful with her life” (p. 9). Chloe doesn’t want to “turn into a good little helpmeet, hosting dinner parties and having babies and never again having a thought or idea or dream of my own” (p. 15). Chloe says “there’s a difference between liking men and wanting to have them run your whole life” (p. 15).
- Men joke about women voting, using demeaning stereotypes (e.g., women are indecisive; women are gossipers; women can’t think for themselves): “Can you imagine if women were actually allowed to vote? Elections would have to go on for days, with all those women standing in the voting booths, not being able to make up their minds;” “Not only that, but they’d be standing up on their tippy toes, trying to peer into the other booths to see who the other women were voting for” (p. 10).
- Both Chloe and Violet want college educations, but their father is against college for girls. Chloe writes in one of her letters, “College arms you to fight the great battles” (p. 12-13).
- Men (but not all men—in the book, Mr. Martin is a suffragist!) weren’t the only ones against suffrage—many women opposed it, too. In the book, in Ch. 2, Mrs. Renwick thinks it’s “revolting” for a female to become a doctor (p. 26).

Teaching with Primary Sources

- **The Traveling Trunk: Tennessee’s “Perfect 36”** <https://bit.ly/3hxvFYz>
 - On August 24, 1920, Tennessee became the “Perfect 36.” That is, it became the final state needed to ratify the 19th Amendment which gave women the right to vote in America. The story of how Tennessee became the “Perfect 36” is re-told in *The Hope Chest* and also through the lessons and materials available in the “Traveling Trunk” project created by the Tennessee State Museum
 - Teachers can reserve/request the trunk (<https://tnmuseum.org/reserve-a-trunk>) and will receive:
 - An exact replica of a pro-suffrage banner made in Tennessee
 - Primary source political cartoons and photographs related to Tennessee’s suffrage movement
 - A copy of the letter Febb Burn sent to her son Harry encouraging him to vote yes on suffrage
 - 20 yellow and 20 red roses for students to wear in support or protest of suffrage
 - Reproduction of a pro-suffrage sash
 - Using the items in this trunk, students will interact and learn from primary sources. These materials are exact replicas of materials used during the fight for women’s suffrage. Students will use these primary source materials to learn about this critical movement in our nation’s history and re-enact the events leading up to the critical vote on August 18, 1920. They will learn how Harry Burn, a young representative from Niota, Tennessee, changed his vote from “no” to “yes” which won women across America the right to vote. On that date, Tennessee delivered women’s suffrage and forever became known as the “Perfect 36.” Your students will hold suffrage and anti-suffrage rallies and recreate that critical vote.



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Find a more comprehensive curriculum guide with additional instructional activities, interdisciplinary projects, and supplemental materials here: <https://ccyal.utk.edu/lit-kits/womens-suffrage-lit-kit/>

