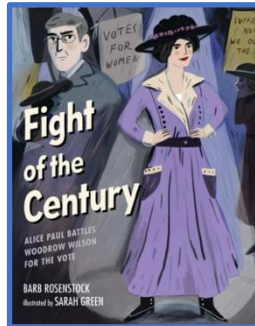


Long-Form Teacher's Guide for
Fight of the Century: Alice Paul Battles Woodrow Wilson for the Vote
by Barb Rosenstock and illustrated by Sarah Green



Book Synopsis

When Woodrow Wilson was elected President, he didn't know that he would be participating in one of the greatest fights of the century: the battle for women's right to vote. The formidable Alice Paul was a leader in the women's suffrage movement and saw President Wilson's election as an opportunity to win the vote for women. She battered her opponent with endless strategic arguments and carefully coordinated protests, calling for a new amendment granting women the right to vote. With a spirit and determination that never quit—even when peaceful protests were met with violence and even when many women were thrown in jail—Paul eventually convinced President Wilson to support her cause, changing the country forever. Cleverly framed as a boxing match, this book provides a fascinating and compelling look at an important moment in American history.

Historical Background

Alice Paul was born on January 11, 1885 to Tracie and William Paul in New Jersey. Raised as a Quaker, she and her siblings learned the importance of equality and education, believing that women and men were equal and deserved equal rights in society. In the early 1900s, Alice attended the Universities of London and Birmingham and while there she joined the Women's Social and Political Union, a suffragette organization founded by Emmeline Pankhurst in 1903. (It is important to note that the term “suffragette” was only used in relation to the suffrage movement in England, while the term “suffragist” was used in relation to the movement in the United States). While in England, Alice Paul learned the ways of militant suffragettes, getting arrested multiple times for her involvement and often going on hunger strikes whenever imprisoned. When she returned stateside, Alice brought those tactics with her and employed them in order to draw attention to the fight for a federal suffrage amendment. In 1913, the fight had been ongoing for sixty-five years with little success in gaining national suffrage for women. As the new decade approached, Alice Paul and her followers were beginning to question the methods of the previous generation. Waiting patiently and allowing for time to pass without success no longer sat well with the younger generation of suffragists. So, Alice Paul and her associates organized a suffrage

parade the day before Woodrow Wilson was to be inaugurated as President of the United States. However, the parade was not fully welcoming to all women, with Ida B. Wells and others being asked to march at the end of the parade. Fortunately, this did not stand and according to the *Crisis*, “eventually colored women marched according to their State and occupation without hindrance.” The aftermath of the parade drew attention to the movement, just as Alice Paul had intended. However, it wasn’t until 1917 that the movement gained constant national attention. That year, the National Woman’s Party, run by Alice Paul and Lucy Burns, organized women known as the “Silent Sentinels” to picket outside of the White House for women’s suffrage. These women stayed standing in all weather, against many forms of assault. Eventually, the women were arrested for trivial offenses such as blocking traffic, and those arrests led to the events of November 14th which came to be known as “The Night of Terror.” That night and the following week were recounted by many of those who were present, including Lucy Burns who wrote day-by-day experiences onto smuggled paper and others who wrote about the experience in their autobiographies. The events that occurred at the Occoquan Workhouse prompted the public to pressure then President Wilson to support the suffrage amendment, calling it “... An Act of Right and Justice.” With the support of President Wilson and the backing of the public, the 19th Amendment was brought to the House and to the Senate, where Tennessee became the 36th state to ratify, thus adding the amendment to the Constitution and making it illegal to deny the vote based upon sex.

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:

- **Who is Alice Paul? How is she different from other suffragists?**
 - Alice Paul was born on January 11, 1885 as the oldest of four children to Quaker parents William Paul and Tacie Parry. After her education, she joined British suffragists Christabel and Emmeline Pankhurst in their protests in England, which led her to be arrested for the cause seven times. She then returned to the United States determined to win women the right to vote. Impatient with the pace of the movement in the US, Alice Paul and her followers were beginning to question the methods of the previous generation. Waiting patiently and allowing for time to pass without success no longer sat well with the younger generation of suffragists. Alice formed the National Woman’s Party (NWP) and their group was the first to target a president to support the cause (Rosenstock, p. 6-8; Author’s Note) by marching on his inauguration in March of 1913. Paul and her

group did not stop there; Alice Paul and the many suffragists in her corner organized and finally, in 1918, Wilson decided to support the suffrage amendment which later became the 19th Amendment in 1920. (See: “Conversations with Alice Paul.” <https://alicepaul.org/audio-interview/> and “Who Was Alice Paul”: <https://alicepaul.org/who-was-alice-paul/>)

- **Who is Woodrow Wilson? How would you describe his relationship to Alice Paul?**
 - Woodrow Wilson was born on December 28th, 1856 as the third child of minister Joseph Ruggles Wilson and Janet “Jessie” Woodrow. After struggling in his own education, he became a professor and later the governor of New Jersey which led him to his role as the President-elect and finally 28th president of the United States.
 - Wilson’s relationship with Paul starts with mild irritation and builds to contention and finally partnership. When Paul marches with the suffragists on the day before his inauguration, Wilson decides to fight back by “welcoming” them to the White House where he dismisses their concerns: “The president never thinks about votes for women. The president works on important issues. The ladies must let him get back to running the country” (Rosenstock, p.13). After ignoring the women for three years, Wilson then has to face the “Silent Sentinels” and instructs police to round up the suffragists for “blocking the sidewalk” (Rosenstock, p. 25). After many citizens began to disagree with Wilson, he finally weakened his position against Paul and joined her to fight for women’s suffrage.
- **What obstacles does Alice Paul face in the fight for voting rights? What strategies do the suffragists use to fight against these obstacles?**
 - Alice Paul and the suffragists face the obstacle of being assaulted at the 1913 parade: “Angry men spill into the street. They push, pinch, spit, and throw lit cigars at the marchers” (Rosenstock, p. 10). They are brushed off and lectured to in meetings with the president which leads to him ignoring them for three years (Rosenstock, p. 12-17). Finally, they are assaulted again and arrested as part of the “Silent Sentinels.” Paul serves a seven-month sentence (Rosenstock, p. 24-25).
 - Alice Paul and the suffragists used many strategies to fight back--first they used the power of protest in the march on Wilson’s inauguration, and next they persistently met and discussed their concerns. They hung a huge banner off the balcony during Wilson’s annual address to Congress. They shifted their headquarters right across from the White House. When ignored, the Votes for Women petition was sent to Congress and in 1917, Paul and eleven others formed “Silent Sentinels,” picketing for their right to vote and using Wilson’s own rhetoric for foreign democracy against him. After being arrested, Paul even used the strategy of a hunger strike to finally influence others to speak up for Wilson to act progressively towards granting women’s suffrage.
- **How does the battle between Alice Paul and Woodrow Wilson lead to the ratification of the 19th amendment?**

- Alice Paul specifically targeted President Wilson for support of women's right to vote. Because this battle was long and difficult and in the public spotlight, Wilson eventually felt the pressure of the public to join Paul rather than fight against her public demonstrations. Their battles brought to light the hypocrisy of allowing women to help in the war effort and the U.S.'s rhetoric for democracy abroad when significant portions of their own population could not participate in the democratic process. These battles between Paul and Wilson influenced the joining of forces to support the suffrage amendment in January 1918 that later became law as the 19th amendment.

Teaching with Primary and Secondary Source Documents

“Disgraceful Scenes” at the Parade

Share this article about the 1913 parade from the *Women's Journal and Suffrage News*. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Woman_Suffrage_Procession#/media/File:Woman's_Journal_of_March_8,_1913.jpg

Ask students to consider the title of the article and to think about what they learned from reading the picture book on Alice Paul. How were the suffragists treated at the parade--what were the “disgraceful scenes”? Tell students that some of the marchers were tripped and violently attacked, while police on the parade route did little to help. By the end of the day, over 100 women had to be hospitalized for injuries. (Also refer to the picture book, which states “Angry men spill into the street. They push, spit, and throw lit cigars at the marchers. *Go home where you belong!*”)

Who were the Silent Sentinels?

Alice Paul was brave. In order to achieve her goal of winning the right to vote for women, she sometimes did things that no one had dared to do before. In 1917, through her organization, the National Woman's Party, Alice Paul organized hundreds of women to come together in a very public display of protest in front of the White House. No one had ever dared to picket in front of the White House, but Alice Paul did. Remember, as a Quaker, Alice Paul believed in acts of peace and non-violence. She wanted to bring greater attention to the suffrage movement, and she did not want people to be harmed. She and many other suffragists stood peacefully and silently on the sidewalk in front of the White House to picket in support of their right to vote. Because these women did not speak but let their signs and sashes convey their message, they were called “Silent Sentinels.” They practiced non-violent protest to avoid conflicts with people who were upset with their brazen public protest. Beginning on January 10th, 1917, the Silent Sentinels stood outside the gate of the White House, 6 days a week, 8 hours a day, rain or shine, throughout most of that year. After months of picketing, the suffragists were arrested by police on the charge of blocking traffic. The fact is that the Silent Sentinels were standing silently on the sidewalk, and the crowd of onlookers and hecklers surrounding the suffragists were blocking traffic on the street. It is important to note that the Silent Sentinels were NOT arrested for picketing. Picketing, a form of free speech, is a protected right in the United States through the 1st Amendment of the U.S. Constitution (from alicepaul.org).

Share the photographs at this source with students: 1917 Suite: Silent Sentinels and the Night of Terror: Blackbird v17n1: #gallery.

<https://blackbird.vcu.edu/v17n1/gallery/1917-suffrage/intro-page-night-of-terror.shtm>

- Ask: Can you read the words on the banners? What do they mean? Why do you think the women started quoting President Wilson's own words? What is picketing? Have you ever seen people picket? What does non-violent protest mean? Remember the women were silent. How did the banners speak for them? What did the sashes worn by many women symbolize?

How Were Suffragists Treated in Jail?

In the spring of 1917, Alice Paul and 168 other suffragists were arrested and sent to jail. While in jail, the women were treated badly. The jail cells were disgusting and filthy. Conditions were deplorable: blankets and clothes were washed only once per year, food contained bugs and weevils, and access to fresh air was not available. After her arrest, Alice led the jailed women on a hunger strike to draw attention to their cause. Some suffragists choose to participate in the hunger strike with her. A hunger strike is a non-violent form of protest where an individual refuses to eat and sometimes drink. This action is done to bring awareness to issues important to the person or people who are refusing to eat. The women who chose to go on a hunger strike were forcibly fed three times per day through a very painful process. First, each woman was restrained. Next, a doctor inserted a tube into the nose of the woman, guiding the tube down her throat. After the tube was inserted, a nurse would pour a mixture of uncooked eggs (e.g., liquid) and milk through a funnel into the tube. This process directed the mixture into the stomach of the woman, bypassing the mouth. The forced feeding process caused the women great pain, and left many with lifelong medical issues, including Alice Paul. (from the Alice Paul Institute, alicepaul.org)

Share this primary source document with students: Paul, Alice. *Being Fed Through Nostrils is Described by Alice Paul, Young American Suffragette*. Clipping. London, England, December 1909. From Library of Congress, *Miller Nawsa Suffrage Scrapbooks, 1897 to 1911*. Website, <https://www.loc.gov/resource/rbcmil.scrp6014301/>, Accessed December 27, 2020.

- Ask students: How do you feel when you have not eaten? What do you think of the treatment of the suffragists in jail?

Suffrage for All?

The stories of African-American women and other women of color during the suffrage movement are rarely told. Ida B. Wells, a journalist and staunch defender of women's rights, was not allowed to march at the front of the 1913 parade in Washington, D.C. She was told, "to the back of the line or not at all." Eventually, though, she joined the Illinois delegation as it marched by. In addition, President Wilson--a supporter of Jim Crow laws--enjoyed the first-ever film screening in the White House. For this occasion, Wilson selected a stark symbol of racist ideas, D.W. Griffith's film, *The Birth of a Nation*, which was based on Thomas Dixon's popular novel *The Clansmen*. The silent film depicted Reconstruction as an era of corrupt Black supremacists petrifying innocent Whites. Wilson praised the film, and the film ultimately led to real-life lynchings of Black men and the revitalization of the KKK.

These circumstances allow for tough conversations. Wilson famously said, “Liberty is the fundamental demand of the human spirit,” and when World War I started, he sought a Declaration of War against Germany so that the world would “be made safe for democracy.” Yet women couldn’t vote and African Americans, not that many years out of human bondage, were leaving the South in great numbers to escape Jim Crow laws that maintained segregation and disenfranchised African Americans. What did Wilson mean by “liberty” and “democracy”? White women suffragists often turned Wilson’s words back on him to argue for suffrage. Their banners asked, “How long must women wait for liberty?” and “How can the president fight for democracy around the world when half his own citizens can’t vote”?

Teachers might want to ask students: “If someone is fighting for something good but does something bad, should we still celebrate them?” Teachers might also want to delve into why white suffragists moved away from supporting/including Black women who also fought for the right to vote. Why did white women suffragists think supporting Black women would hurt the movement? What are the connections between the 15th and 19th Amendments?

- Resources: <https://www.aclu.org/blog/womens-rights/celebrate-womens-suffrage-dont-whitewash-movements-racism>
- <https://www.npr.org/2011/03/25/134849480/the-root-how-racism-tainted-womens-suffrage>
- <https://www.washingtonpost.com/outlook/2019/06/04/how-racism-almost-killed-womens-right-vote/>
- <https://www.nps.gov/articles/african-american-women-and-the-nineteenthamendment.htm>

Geography

SSP.o6. Develop geographic awareness by:

- Analyzing the spatial relationships between people, circumstances, and resources
- Examining how geographic regions and perceptions of the regions change over time

Give students a blank map of the United States. Then, using “A Brief Timeline of Women’s Suffrage in the US” located in the back of the picture book (and other research), have students label each state with when it granted women’s suffrage. Students may also want to label any time that women suffrage was denied or defeated. Ask students: What do you notice when looking at the labeled map? Who were the women in these states who were working for suffrage? Who was the governor at the time? What were pro- and con-arguments used in these states? Do these states have women leaders in government positions today?

Exploring the Book

Teachers might:

- Change the order

- Select steps you believe would be best for your students
 - Add ones that you feel are important
1. Read and talk about the title of the book. Draw attention to “Battle of the Century.” Which century is being referred to? Provide a brief introduction to Alice Paul and Woodrow Wilson. For example, mention that Alice Paul fought more than five long years for women’s right to vote during the story. She even went to jail! Woodrow Wilson served as our 28th president during those five years described in the book. He and Alice worked together closely to ratify the 19th amendment, as depicted towards the end of this nonfiction narrative. Draw attention to the physical features and demeanors of Alice Paul and Woodrow Wilson images. What are the messages you sense in the portraits? Have students describe the mood of the book based on the somber opaque colors.
 2. Introduce the author and illustrator. Briefly incorporate information about their backgrounds. Author Barb Rosenstock is the author of many picture book biographies, including *Otis and Will Discover the Deep Secret Kingdom*, *Dorothea’s Eyes*, *Ben Franklin’s Big Splash*, and *The Streak: How Joe DiMaggio Became America’s Hero*. Her picture book about Kandinsky, *The Noisy Paint Box*, won the 2015 Caldecott Medal. Sarah Green is an illustrator and designer from San Francisco. She graduated from RISD in 2014 and now splits her time between her hometown of San Francisco and Vancouver, Canada, with her fluffy, tiny cat by her side. This will help to humanize the book. There is also some information about the author/illustrator on the back flap of the book. Below is a website link for the author. Two areas of interest that might be relevant to students is that Barb Rosenstock, an award-winning author who was a former 4th grade teacher, is obsessed with history. Sarah Green, the illustrator, loves history, research, and nature.
 - Barb Rosenstock: <https://barbrosenstock.com/about-barb/full-bio/>
 3. Pull off the book jacket and note that the jacket and the book have the same design. Examine the jacket’s front and back sections and mention that they are two separate pieces of artwork. Since you have discussed the front of the book, show students that there is a quote which will serve as the heartbeat of the nonfiction narrative. Have students predict what is going to happen in the book based on the art and information on the front and back covers.
 4. Share the endpapers of the picture book. Endpapers consist of a two-page spread in the front and back of the book. The endpapers’ color is known as “aliceblue” which is perfect for this book. Look at the color and discuss what types of feelings they evoke. Maybe somber, pensive, antique, etc.
 5. Read aloud and/or picture-walk the story. (You might do both.) Be sensitive to your students’ needs and curiosities and briefly pause to address those areas. You might interject your thinking aloud to make sure everyone comprehends the story. However, do this sparingly because you want students to discover and enjoy the overall story for themselves. During the read aloud, highlight how the illustrations enhance and complement the nonfiction narrative. Sarah Green was “inspired by lithographs from the 1900s-1920s and old boxing advertisements and illustrations” to historically set the tone for the book.

6. Discuss the time period the book represents. Share the portraits of Alice Paul and Woodrow Wilson from the Author's Note. Have students guess Alice's (1885) and Woodrow's (1856) birth years. Note that the 19th amendment was ratified in 1920 which was one hundred years ago. Also remind students that "century" is in the title of the book. You can share the rich author's note and backmatter that has Alice Paul's and Woodrow Wilson's biographies, a detailed timeline of Women's Suffrage in the United States with photographs, and two-page spread with an extensive bibliography and source notes. It is also important for students to know that the portraits and photographs are primary sources.
7. After the read aloud, entertain questions and mention two or three of the main points in the story.
8. Revisit the backmatter more closely.
9. Show students Alice Paul's and Woodrow Wilson's timeline entries and assign students to personalize them. Refer to the "Timeline Activity" for directions. (See "Timeline Activity" on the CCYAL website and in Appendix in Curriculum Guide book).
10. Entertain questions and encourage connections and comments.
11. Provide closure for the book according to your students' needs and interests.

Interdisciplinary Activities

Use some of the following activities to help students integrate their reading experiences with other curriculum areas. These can also be used for extension activities, for advanced readers, and for building a home-school connection.

English Language Arts/Writing

Creative Writing

1. *Policing Peaceful Protests*

Pretend that you are a citizen of Washington, D.C. when Woodrow Wilson is President. You read a story in the newspaper about Alice Paul and other suffragists being put in jail for peacefully protesting. Write a letter to the editor of the newspaper in which you explain why jailing peaceful protestors is wrong. You might want to use one or more of the rights guaranteed in the U.S. Constitution to explain your case.

2. *A Dramatic Discussion*

Write a scene as though it's a scene in a play with the characters of Alice Paul and Woodrow Wilson. Write a conversation in which they argue about women's right to vote, with Paul arguing for it and Wilson arguing against it.

Academic Writing

1. *The Long March to Suffrage*

At the end of the book is a two-page timeline showing the path to women's suffrage from 1776 to 1920. Read the timeline and choose one item from it which you find interesting. Research the item, and then write a paragraph explaining what you learned about it.

2. *Unfinished Business*

In 1923, Alice Paul wrote the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA), a proposed amendment to the U.S. Constitution that stated that women have the same rights as men under the

law. However, all these years later, the ERA still has not been added to the Constitution. Go to <https://www.equalrightsamendment.org/history> and watch the 5-minute film trailer on the page. Also, feel free to click around the site to learn more about the ERA. Then write a paragraph in which you answer this question: Why do you think the film is called *The Equal Rights Amendment: Unfinished Business for the Constitution*? Why might someone think of the ERA as “unfinished business?”

Art/Media

1. *Color Symbolism.*

The endpapers’ color is known as “aliceblue” which is perfect for this book. Look at the color and discuss what types of feelings they evoke. Maybe somber, pensive, antique, etc

2. *Lithographs and Advertisements*

The work and colors for this book were inspired by lithographs from the 1900s-1920s and old boxing advertisements and illustrations. In the “About the Art” section at the back of the picture book, we also learn: “The sharp, black lines were incorporated to give the story a sense of motion and activity, as well as to incorporate aesthetic themes from competitions, given the book’s title which also refers to many famous boxing matches of the 20th and 21st centuries. As a class, look at early 20th century lithograph advertisements, such as

<http://faculty.uml.edu/sgallagher/homeads1859-1929.htm> and boxing advertisements, such as

<https://i.pinimg.com/originals/f2/01/92/f2019219494b011947467c53a66924e2.jpg>

<https://i.pinimg.com/236x/7e/27/17/7e2717634de7f54d565629ed7be2468b--boxing-postersboxers.jpg>

Ask students to think about how the illustrator might have been inspired by the lithographs and boxing advertisements. Where does the reader see this inspiration in the book?

**If you are reading *The Hope Chest* to/with your students, this would make a great children’s picture book pairing! Alice Paul makes an appearance in *The Hope Chest*! A teacher’s guide for *The Hope Chest* is available at the CCYAL website and in the traveling lit kit.

