

Long-Form Teacher's Guide for
The Hope Chest
by Karen Schwabach



Book 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! Suffrs 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?

Historical Background

During the hot, steamy, late July of 1920, Suffrs and Antis arrived in Nashville, TN, to establish competing headquarters in the venerable Hermitage Hotel. National American Woman Suffrage Association (NAWSA) president Carrie Chapman Catt arrived to coordinate this final campaign. Josephine Anderson Pearson, president of both the Tennessee State Association Opposed to Woman Suffrage and the Southern Women's League for the Rejection of the Susan B. Anthony Amendment, led the Antis. As returning legislators arrived for the special session, they were buttonholed by representatives of both groups, asked to sign pledges, and were awarded the appropriate color rose to affix to their collars. Suffrs distributed yellow roses to mark their supporters; Antis handed out red. Yet the largest number of legislators declared themselves undecided. Many of them apparently found their way to a certain eighth floor suite staffed by anti-suffrage lobbyists where, despite prohibition, unlimited quantities of spirits could be enjoyed. Rumors of bribery and beatings, of attempts to lure legislators away from the capitol with bogus messages about sick children, circulated in the heated air as the special session approached and allies shifted

allegiances. One key supporter, House Speaker Seth Walker, who was scheduled to introduce the resolution for ratification, changed his mind at the last moment. After weeks of lobbying, the final tally taken by the Suffs revealed that the Tennessee Senate was safe, with votes to spare. But the House remained a toss-up. At noon on August 9th, Governor Roberts called the 99 House members and 29 Senators of the 61st Tennessee General Assembly into an extraordinary session. The galleries were packed with women wearing yellow and red roses. After the governor's message urging ratification "in justice to the womanhood of America" was read, the legislature adjourned for the day. The following day a joint resolution for ratification was introduced in the House and in the Senate, where it was referred to the respective Committees on Constitutional Amendments. A motion by Antis in each House, meant to delay any swift action, scheduled a joint public hearing for the evening of August 12th, two days later. Both houses adjourned for the day. On the third day, a resolution by Antis in the House to delay consideration of ratification until "the will of the people can be heard in county conventions" was tabled by a vote of 50-37. No other action was taken. On day four, August 12th, a resolution sponsored by Antis, declaring any action by the House, for or against ratification, would "violate the spirit" of the state Constitution, was tabled. Again, the vote was 50-37. Both houses adjourned until the evening's joint public hearing. Before a huge crowd, women leaders of the Suffs and the Antis, legislators, and business leaders all made public appeals. Following the meeting, the Senate Committee on Constitutional Amendments, in emergency session, voted 8-2 to report the 19th Amendment favorably in the State Senate the next day. On day five, the State Senate, after three hours of debate, passed the resolution for ratification with 25 ayes, 4 nays, and 2 not voting. Both Houses adjourned until Monday. The weekend brought intense lobbying by the activist women, who were determined to ensure that none of their supporters left town or fell victim to the blandishments of the other side. Over the weekend, national leaders, including President Wilson, and both presidential nominees, Governor Cox and Senator Harding, hastened to notify Tennessee's Governor and Speaker Seth Walker of their continuing support for ratification. Upon reconvening on Monday, the House postponed action, awaiting the report from their Committee on Constitutional Amendments, which was scheduled to meet in a night executive session. Lobbyists were now working feverishly, offering business loans, lucrative jobs, and political appointments. Legislators vigorously avoided the women—Suffs and Antis alike. Polls, checked and rechecked, had become useless. No one knew where anyone stood. A deadlock at the night session of the House committee was averted only after two absent members were rounded up to make the vote 10-8 to report the amendment favorably to the House. On the seventh day, a motion to concur with the Senate Joint Resolution 1, ratifying the 19th Amendment, was offered. Debate was cut off mid-afternoon by Speaker Walker's motion to adjourn until the next morning. The motion carried 52-44. The crowds gathered early on August 18. Of the 99 House members, three were absent. The last Suffs' poll showed they could count on only 47 votes. With 96 members present and voting, that was not enough. The Antis would have 49. During several hours of speeches and debate, Rep. Joseph Hanover of Memphis, the floor leader who kept the pro-suffrage votes together and who had run for office to help win the right to vote for his mother, stated: "Ours is the great Volunteer State, and women from the East, West, North, and South are looking to us to give them political freedom. The entire world has cast its eyes on Tennessee. This is a moral question, and that's why I'm here

voting for this amendment.” When the motion was made to table the motion to concur with the Senate action, the vote was 48-48; the motion to table failed on the tie vote. Walker immediately called for a vote on the original motion, assuming it would be defeated by the same tie vote. But as the roll call unfolded, a young legislator named Harry Burn changed his vote to aye. The measure passed 49-47. The 19th Amendment had achieved its 36th and final ratification. Fittingly, it was a mother’s plea that saved the 19th Amendment. Harry Burn, at 24 years old, the youngest member of the Tennessee Assembly, had received a note from his mother that morning. Febb Ensminger Burn was a widow, a landowner, and a taxpayer. The tenant farmers who leased her land could vote, while she could not. She knew her son had been hearing from his constituents, who were overwhelmingly opposed to suffrage, so she decided to write, too. (Source: <https://www.brookings.edu/essay/the-perfect-36-tennessee-delivers-suffrage-for-women/>)

Tennessee Social Studies Standards and Practices

Standard 5.47. *Identify Tennessee’s role in the passage of the 19th Amendment, including the impact of Anne Dallas Dudley and Harry Burn.*

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).
 - 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) and for females to know anything about war or politics (p. 27). Mrs. Renwick thinks women are supposed to have lots of children and men are supposed to protect women, and how can men do that if women “go about being doctors and reporters and demanding to vote?” (p. 28).
 - Much of what the anti-suffragists (the Antis) believe is summed up in the song Violet hears at the train station in Nashville: “Women have husbands; they are protected/Women have sons by whom they’re directed/Women have fathers; they’re not neglected/Why are they wanting to vote? (p. 122).
 - The Antis had effective propaganda—imploping “gallant” men to “do their utmost to protect the rights of Southern womanhood” (p. 134). The Antis also denigrated the suffragists as child labor law advocates and Prohibitionists who would not protect employers’ and whiskey distillers’ rights if they got the vote.
 - Struggles also include getting the Susan B. Anthony Amendment passed in Congress—the Amendment’s 40-year history, from 1878-1918, gets mentioned on pp. 13-14.
 - Struggles also include the split over the 15th Amendment—one of the Antis’ pamphlets argues that “there are more colored women than colored men in the South, so giving women the vote will increase the colored vote” (p. 172).
 - Also, the Antis sometimes bribed politicians with money and alcohol to secure support for their side. As Violet overhears an Anti say, “I think we can count on Speaker Seth Walker from here on in...He no longer hearkens to the cry of the suffrage siren. We’ve got him listening to something else [gold coins]” (p. 134). Also, the Antis intercepted telegrams from the Suffs, paying messengers money to see the messages Suffs were sending each other or preventing the messages from getting to their destinations.
- **What strategies do the suffragists use to fight for women’s rights?**

- Suffragists worked on multiple fronts. Alice Paul tells Violet that she has to stay in Washington, DC, to “keep pressure on the president, on both political parties, and on Governor Cox and Senator Harding...the two presidential candidates” (p. 71). The National Worker’s Party, led by Alice Paul in Washington, DC, picketed in front of the White House and held hunger strikes to gain attention for the movement and to pressure President Wilson. The suffragists “troubled Woody Wood as we stood, as we stood!” (p. 86). (Use another book in the lit kit, *Fight of the Century*, to learn more about Alice Paul!).
- Both Suffs and Antis lobbied politicians to secure support for their side. Chloe tells Violet her car is “amphibious, like a frog” because she has driven it “right through streams...when I’ve been up in the mountains, hunting down Tennessee legislators in their dens” (p. 141).
- Violet spies for the Suffs.
- Chloe is assigned to “squire around” Harry T. Burn, a legislator from McMinn County. Violet also helps keep Mr. Burn’s attention away from the Antis. The Tennessee Suffs guarded the special House committee that was voting to send the bill to the floor for a vote (p. 204).
- Violet rounds up two legislators who ran away from the Capitol to avoid voting.
- **Why was Tennessee’s “Perfect 36” a milestone in the movement?**
 - With 35 states having ratified the 19th Amendment, only one more state was needed. Tennessee had agreed to hold a special session of their legislature to consider ratification—due in large part to the pressure put on President Woodrow Wilson by Alice Paul and the National Worker’s Party in Washington, DC. Because of this pressure, President Wilson asked Governor Roberts of Tennessee to call the special session. North Carolina called a special session, too, but there was a much stronger women’s suffrage organization in Tennessee. Tennessee was the final state needed to ratify the 19th Amendment.

Teaching with Primary and Secondary Source Documents

The Traveling Trunk: Tennessee’s “Perfect 36”

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: <https://tnmuseum.org/understanding-womens-suffrage-tennessees-perfect-36>

Teachers can reserve/request the 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. Teachers can reserve the trunk here:

<https://tnmuseum.org/reserve-a-trunk>

Teachers can also obtain lesson plans to use with items in the trunk here:

https://assets.speakcdn.com/assets/2588/tsm_suffrage_2018_digital.pdf

Susan B. Anthony's "On Women's Right to Vote"

In one of Chloe's letters to Violet, she writes "...it looks as though Congress is going to take up the Susan B. Anthony Amendment when it reconvenes. That's the amendment poor Miss Anthony wrote back in 1878. Congress voted it down back then—to think women could have gotten the vote forty years ago!" (p. 13). Explain to students that Susan B. Anthony was a prominent leader in the women's rights movement. She, along with Elizabeth Cady Stanton, founded the National Woman's Suffrage Association (NWSA), which advocated for giving women the right to vote. In November 1872, Anthony voted in the presidential election. Two weeks later, she was arrested. After her indictment, Anthony gave her famous "On Women's Right to Vote" speech, which can be found here: <https://www.nolo.com/legal-encyclopedia/content/anthony-vote-speech.html>

In the speech, Anthony invoked the preamble to the U.S. Constitution, pointing out that it addresses "We, the people, and not We, the male citizens." She argued that those countries that denied women the right to vote were oligarchies. At the end, she challenged her detractors to answer this question: Are women persons? During her trial, Anthony was unable to testify on her behalf, since women's testimony was not considered to be competent. Instead, her lawyer presented her arguments. She was convicted of casting an illegal vote and fined \$100. Anthony refused to pay the fine, stating, "May it please your honor, I will never pay a dollar of your unjust penalty. Resistance to tyranny is obedience to God." The trial allowed Anthony to disseminate her arguments in support of women's suffrage to a much larger audience. Her speech and her continued advocacy for women's rights paved the way for Congress' eventual ratification of the 19th Amendment in 1920, which finally gave women the right to vote. Read the speech with students and discuss the following questions:

- Why did Susan B. Anthony vote when it was against the law?
- What can you infer from the text about why Susan B. Anthony gave this speech?"
- What do you think: Did people believe that "women are persons" during the time of this speech? How do you know?
- How do you think Susan B. Anthony made a difference for women?

- Do you think the 19th Amendment was rightly called the “Susan B. Anthony Amendment”?

“Meeting Myrtle”; “In the Jim Crow Car”; and “Dead Horse Alley”

In Chapter 3, Chloe meets Myrtle, who attends the Girls’ Training Institute. Violet initially calls Myrtle a “Black girl” but then corrects herself to say “colored.” Explain that what is acceptable for white people to call African Americans and for Black people to call themselves has evolved over the last century. The standard term has shifted from “Negro” to “Colored” to “Black” to “African American” to “People of Color” as people have sought to redefine themselves and their place in America. While “colored” might have been acceptable in the early 1900s (the time period of *The Hope Chest*), it is offensive today to single Black people out as “colored.” That, in part, is because of the painful segregationist history associated with the term prior to the mid-1960s. “Colored-only” restrooms and water fountains are examples of harmful relics of the Jim Crow South that Black people had to fight—and die for—to remove from American culture. Readers see Jim Crow laws at work in *The Hope Chest*, as Myrtle is not allowed to sit in the white passenger train cars, nor is she allowed to stay at the Hermitage Hotel with Violet. Violet reflects at one point that Myrtle and Violet seem to have similar situations ahead of them—marriage or becoming a maid—but Violet doesn’t seem to understand that because of her race/skin color, Myrtle is not afforded the same rights, opportunities, or privileges as Violet (p. 39). [As the story progresses, Violet’s understanding changes. Later in the novel, Violet says, “...the world seemed to have been set up so that Myrtle and Violet would always be on different sides of an invisible line” (p. 200)]. Discuss with students what Violet and Myrtle have in common as girls, but also discuss how their experiences might differ due to their race/skin color.

Visit the excellent website

<https://www.socialcircleschools.com/userfiles/269/Jim%20Crow%20handout%20war%20up.pdf> to access primary source documents and lessons for teaching elementary-aged students about Jim Crow laws. (Also consider sharing Ida B. Wells’ experience of suing a railroad company when she was forcibly removed from a white passenger car. See *Ida B. Wells: Let the Truth Be Told* book and accompanying guide in this lit kit).

Also, in Ch. 6 of the novel, Violet and Myrtle hear Alice Paul and Miss Dexter arguing. Myrtle suspects it is about the fact that Paul and Dexter are helping a Black girl when Miss Dexter says, “I’m only saying that this is exactly the sort of gesture that loses us sympathy in the South” (p. 73). Violet thinks Myrtle is being too sensitive, which shows she is naïve about race relations and the role(s) race relations play in Myrtle’s life and in the fight for suffrage. Teachers might want to take some time to talk about how the fight for women’s suffrage split over the 15th Amendment, which granted men, including Black men—but not women, white or Black—the right to vote. Suffragist Lucy Stone supported the 15th Amendment and argued that it was “the Negro’s hour,” and that Black male voting rights should come first. Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton did not agree and argued that any constitutional amendment that did not grant women’s suffrage was unacceptable. If anyone was deserving of the vote, it was “educated” white women. Stanton in particular argued that African Americans were ignorant of the laws and customs of the U.S. political system, and that it was “a serious question whether we had better stand aside and see ‘Sambo’ walk into the kingdom [of

civil rights] first." African American women like Frances Ellen Watkins Harper criticized both sides of the debate for ignoring the unique position of Black women in America. During a National Women's Convention in 1866, Harper declared that "You white women speak here of rights. I speak of wrongs. I, as a colored woman, have had in this country an education which has made me feel as if I were in the situation of Ishmael, my hand against every man, and every man's hand against me." (Source: <https://www.nps.gov/articles/000/why-the-women-s-rights-movement-split-over-the-15th-amendment.htm>).

Have students do a close reading of pp. 96-97 in *The Hope Chest*. What is Mrs. Merganser saying about Black women getting the right to vote? Also consider what Violet wonders on p. 114: "Violet wondered why Miss Dexter was able to imagine such a perfect world and not imagine a place for Myrtle in it." Teachers may also have students consider the conversation between Chloe and Violet on p. 173, where Chloe says "There are tons of colored suffragists...but they've been asked to stay out of sight" (p. 173).

**Use the supplementary books in this lit kit--*Finish the Fight* and *Lifting as We Climb*--to learn more about Frances Ellen Watkins Harper. Also, consider reading another core text in the kit, *Lillian's Right to Vote: A Celebration of the Voting Rights Act of 1965*, to help students consider the long history/struggle for Black people to get the right to vote.

Government & Civics

Standard 5.54. *Describe the structure of Tennessee's government, including the role of each of the three branches, the governor, and state representatives.*

Passing an Amendment

On p. 13 in the novel, Chloe writes in one of her letters to Violet that the Susan B. Anthony Amendment needs a 2/3 vote of both houses of Congress to pass, which means it's "going to be a huge knock-down, drag-out fight." Chloe continues, "And Congress has defeated it before. If they do pass it, it will go to the states for ratification. And then it will be part of our U.S. Constitution" (p. 13-14). Discuss with students why Chloe says it will be a "fight," and also consider the history of the amendment and its journey from 1878 to 1918. Have students create a timeline, charting the 40 years of the amendment's journey, and also considering why Congress defeated it—and how so—in the past.

Alternatively, have your students close-read pp. 71-73 and page 204 in *The Hope Chest* and list as many facts as they can about how a Constitutional amendment is passed. Also read "Article V of the Constitution" with students: <https://www.archives.gov/federal-register/constitution/article-v.html> Talk to students about what had to happen in Tennessee for the 19th Amendment to become part of the Constitution. Ask students: Why was it important for the amendment to become part of the Constitution? What did Miss Paul mean when she said (p. 71): "Now it's all come down to Tennessee"?

Why Vote?

Have students discuss why voting today is important. Have students consider the following questions:

- What are elections? When are elections? How do we elect leaders?
- Who votes? How do you vote? Where do you vote?
- Why should people vote? Why is voting an important responsibility for citizens?
- What does the governor do?
- What do state representatives do?
- Who are our current elected leaders?
- What is the government? Why does government matter?
- Has a woman ever been the governor of TN? Who are the women in the TN state legislature?
- Why is it significant that Kamala Harris is Vice-President of the US?

Also, explain to students that the women's suffrage movement led to increased representation of women in Congress. In 1922, one woman (for a short period of time) and 99 men comprised the US Senate. But women's representation has increased over the years. In 2017, 105 (78 Democrats, 27 Republicans) women held seats in the United States Congress, comprising 19.6% of the 535 members; 21 women (21%) served in the United States Senate, and 84 women (19.3%) served in the United States House of Representatives. Ask students: how do these numbers compare to today?

Teachers may want to read the supplementary texts in the lit kit, *What's the Big Deal About Elections?* by Ruby Shamir and illustrated by Matt Faulkner; *Vote for Our Future!* by Margaret McNamara and illustrated by Micah Player; and *Kamala Harris: Rooted in Justice* by Nikki Grimes and illustrated by Laura Freeman

Geography

SSP.06. 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

From Susquehanna to Nashville

Have students use a map to track the route Violet takes to find her sister, Chloe, and/or to track the route of the Hope Chest. Where is Susquehanna? What does the name "Susquehanna" refer to? What is the origin of the name? Chloe writes in one of her letters to Violet that gasoline costs 20 cents/gallon. Ask students how that compares with today's gas prices. Teachers may also want to read the book *Around America to Win the Vote: Two Suffragists, A Kitten, and 10,000 Miles* to students. This book tells the story of Nell Richardson and Alice Burke, who set out from New York City in 1916 (two years prior to the events in *The Hope Chest*) in a little yellow car, embarking on a bumpy, muddy, unmapped journey ten thousand miles long. They took with them a teeny typewriter, a tiny sewing machine, a wee black kitten, and a message for Americans all across the country: Votes for Women! The book and accompanying guide are also in the lit kit.

State-by-State: Who Can Vote?

On p. 5 in *The Hope Chest*, Chloe writes to Violet that in 1918, women can vote in sixteen states, including New York and the territory of Alaska. On p. 71, Miss Alice Paul, Violet, and Myrtle look at a map of the US, where stars are penciled in on 35 of the 48 states that had ratified the Susan B. Anthony Amendment. Violet says “The...35 came so fast” (p. 72). But Miss Paul tells her that “we’ve been losing [states], too” (p. 72). Violet traces the states that don’t have stars—there are 13. Explain that 36 states are needed for the amendment to become part of the Constitution. Ask students: why 36 states? Also, using a map of the US, have students star the 35 states (and/or color them yellow) that ratified the amendment and use another symbol (or pink color) to mark the other 13. Break students into small groups to research some history about a particular state’s journey to ratification, or to learn about why a particular state had yet to ratify the amendment. Who were the key women in these states working for women’s suffrage? Also, Violet says “There are a lot of states here that could become number thirty-six. Why Tennessee?” Pose this question to students.

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. *Something Meaningful*

Both Chloe and Violet want to do something meaningful with their lives. In *The Hope Chest*, Violet thinks making blankets for French orphans “seemed like the most important thing she had ever done in her life. She felt as though she was part of something huge, something vital, something that involved the whole world” (p. 10). Violet also says her friend Flossie wanted to be a reporter, like Nellie Bly, “who filed news from the trenches” (p. 26). Have students write about something meaningful they could do in their lives either right now or in the future—something that could affect positive change in the world and for others.

2. *“Aftermath,” by Siegfried Sassoon*

Siegfried Sassoon was commissioned into the Royal Welsh Fusiliers in May 1915 and went to France, fighting in the Battle of the Somme at Mametz Wood. He survived the war and died in September 1967. Read the poem aloud to students. Ask students to consider the title. What are the multiple meanings of the word “aftermath”? How does the title of the poem help to convey different ideas of Sassoon’s experience of the war and how he remembers it? Ask students: would Mr. Martin in *The Hope Chest* agree or disagree with the poem? Also consider having students start a sentence with the phrase, “I remember...” and then describe a detail about the time (day, year, larger context) they are living in. Tell students to imagine they are sending this one detail about the present day into the future for people to read. What will students want to say to people in the future about today?

Academic Writing

1. “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.

2. 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. Use the supplementary books *Finish the Fight* and *Lifting as We Climb* in the kit to help students learn more about Mary Church Terrell and other Black women who fought for suffrage. Use the core book *Fight of the Century* in the lit kit to learn more about Alice Paul and her (in)famous battles with President Woodrow Wilson to win suffrage for women. The primary source (newspaper article) about Alice Paul that Violet references in *The Hope Chest* (p. 68) is used as a resource in the accompanying teacher’s guide for *Fight of the Century*.

3. The Suffs and the Antis

During the week prior to the vote in the Tennessee House of Representatives, the two opposing sides set up headquarters in the Hermitage Hotel which was located one block from the Capitol. Both sides held rallies, parties, and luncheons to convince legislators to vote the way they wanted. All of Nashville was buzzing with excitement about the upcoming vote. One observer said that the Battle of Nashville during the Civil War was like a “five o’clock tea party” compared to the suffrage fight that summer. Read or re-read Ch. 10 in *The Hope Chest* and brainstorm with students “Reasons for Suffrage” and “Reasons against Suffrage.” Discuss the reasons for both the pro- and anti-suffrage arguments. Ask students: Who were some of the major leaders for and against the vote? Why did they take the side they took? Have students decide for themselves reasons why they are for or against women’s right to vote and write a paragraph explaining their position.

Art/Media

Draw a Picture of the Hope Chest

Readers learn in *The Hope Chest* that a hope chest is a big wooden trunk that a girl is supposed to fill with things she’ll need when she marries—tablecloths and bed linens and dishes, etc. When Chloe and Violet’s grandmother, Granny Mayhew, passes away, she leaves \$250 each to Violet and Chloe for their hope chests and \$500 to their brother,

Stephen, for his education. Readers learn that Chloe used her “hope chest” money to buy a used Model T Ford that she called the “Hope Chest” (p. 22). Discuss with students why this is significant for Chloe—at one point Chloe tells Violet the car is “my freedom” (p. 141). The car is described on p. 140—“dark green, with black fenders and running boards and a black collapsible roof. It was a runabout, with a leather front seat big enough to hold a driver and a passenger but no backseat. Instead, there was an open space behind the cab, which had been fitted with a small wooden truck bed.” Have students draw a picture of the car and/or some of the escapades Chloe has in the car (e.g., getting two flat tires when driving out to Long Island, p. 15, or “driving through streams” in Tennessee, p. 141, or learning how to start the car, p. 197, or Violet driving the car, p. 215). Also, look at the picture of Miss Maude Younger’s Ford on p. 265 in the “Historical Notes” section of the book. Teachers may also want to read the book *Around America to Win the Vote: Two Suffragists, A Kitten, and 10,000 Miles* to students. This book tells the story of Nell Richardson and Alice Burke, who set out from New York City in 1916 (two years prior to the events in *The Hope Chest*) in a little yellow car, embarking on a bumpy, muddy, unmapped journey ten thousand miles long. They took with them a teeny typewriter, a tiny sewing machine, a wee black kitten, and a message for Americans all across the country: Votes for Women! The book and accompanying guide are also in the lit kit.

Compare Book Covers

There are at least three different covers for the book, *The Hope Chest*. Show students all three covers and discuss the differences among the covers. Have students vote for their favorite cover and explain why. Then have students draw their own covers for the book and vote on the class favorite.

**If you like *Hope Chest* by Karen Schwabach, be sure to check out her latest book, *Starting from Seneca Falls*, which features Elizabeth Cady Stanton! Also, the children’s picture book—*The Voice that Won the Vote: How One Woman’s Words Made History*—which is in the lit kit, is a great pairing with *The Hope Chest*.

