



**The first women's movement  
Suffragist struggles in the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries**

**Chronology:** The status of women in England

- 1792 Mary Wollstonecraft's *Vindication of the Rights of Women* presents the first clear statement of the need for political and civil equality for women
- 1832 First female suffrage petition presented to Parliament by Mary Smith
- 1857 Matrimonial Causes Act sets up divorce courts. Women obtained limited access to divorce, though, unlike men, this could only be obtained on a specific cause other than adultery. Rights of access to children after divorce extended. Women given right to their property after a legal separation or a protection order given as a result of husband's desertion
- 1867 The Manchester Women's Suffrage Committee was established
- 1867 John Stuart Mill published speech on *Admission of Women to Electoral Franchise* followed by *The Subjection of Women* (1869)
- 1872 Local women suffrage societies united to form a Central Committee of the National Society for Women's Suffrage
- 1873 Custody of Infants Act extended access to children to all women in the event of separation or divorce
- 1882 Married Women's Property Act allowed women to own and administer their property
- 1884 Married Women's Property Act makes a woman no longer a "chattel" but an independent and separate person
- 1886 Guardianship of Infants Act
- 1889 Emmeline Pankhurst (1858-1928) founded the Women's Franchise League
- 1894 Local Government Act. Women eligible to vote for parochial councils
- 1897 Foundation of National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies, a federation of existing women's suffrage groups under the presidency of Mrs Millicent Fawcett (1847-1929)
- 1903 Foundation of the Women's Social and Political Union (WSPU) by E.Pankhurst and her two daughters, named the Suffragette Movement
- 1918 The Representing People Act gave more representation to women (8.5 millions over 30 years)
- 1928 Equal Franchise Act, universal suffrage was granted to all women

## **Chronology:** Woman Suffrage in the United States

- 1820s In her writings *Course of Popular Lectures* and *Free Enquirer* Fanny Wright's advocated vote for women, birth control, more liberal divorce laws, free secular education
- 1869 The National Woman Suffrage Association (NSWA) was formed by Elizabeth Cady Stanton (1815-1902) and Susan B. Anthony
- 1870 Lucy Stone, Julia Ward Howe and other leaders formed the American Woman Suffrage Association
- 1890 Wyoming became the first state to grant women the right to vote
- 1890 Suffragists came together in a new organisation, the American Woman Suffrage Association (NAWSA), led by Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony
- 1893 Colorado granted women the right to vote
- 1896 followed by Idaho and Utah
- 1910 to 1912 Washington, California, Kansas, Oregon and Arizona followed the lead of the other western states by enfranchising women
- 1913 Alice Paul founded the Congressional Union and later renamed it the National Woman's Party
- 1917 New York opened the way to the states east of the Mississippi River in adopting universal suffrage
- 1918 Woodrow Wilson announced that women's suffrage was urgently needed as a "war measure"
- 1920 Universal woman suffrage, Nineteenth Amendment

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