Investigating Women's Political Advances
Lesson Plan

Subject Areas: Social Studies and Math

Grade Levels: The lesson can be adapted for grades 6–12 (ages 11–18).

Time: At least one 50-minute class period; time outside of class as necessary

Lesson Objectives:

Students will:

• Make conclusions based on data presented in tables and plots (graphs).
• Analyze relationships between fields of data including women's current and historical participation in government and elections.
• Learn to apply a line of best fit and analyze the relationship between plots and their correlation coefficients.
• Explain their findings in writing and visual slide shows.

Standards:

National Council for the Social Studies Standards\(^1\):

The Ten Themes of Social Studies

Theme 2: Time, Continuity, and Change

• Social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of the past and its legacy.

Theme 6: Power, Authority, and Governance

• Social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of how people create, interact with, and change structures of power, authority, and governance.

Common Core State Standards\(^2\):

Common Core State Standards for Mathematics:

Mathematical Practices

• Reason abstractly and quantitatively.
• Use appropriate tools strategically.

Measurement and Data

• Represent and interpret data.

College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards for Writing:

Standard 6. Use technology, including the Internet, to produce and publish writing and to interact and collaborate with others.
Overview:
After World War I, American women at last achieved the right to vote, for which suffragists like Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton had struggled for decades. But women in the United States were not the first or the last in the world to achieve this right. In this lesson, students will explore the Women’s Political Advances database in InspireData to learn when and where women have achieved powers such as the right to vote and hold office. Then they will conduct further research to explain the observed trends and better understand how the political powers women have achieved have been the result of countless dedicated women and men around the world. Discoveries and ideas will be documented in annotated slide shows.

Preparation:
- This lesson requires the InspireData® software application published by Inspiration Software, Inc. You can download a 30-day trial at http://www.inspiration.com/InspireData.
- Access to library resources and/or the Internet might also be helpful for student research.
Lesson:

1. Ask students to vote by a show of hands on whether they believe women have always had the right to vote in their country. If not, how and when do they believe women achieved this right? Tell them that in today’s lesson they will be investigating that question and others related to the political advances of women worldwide.

2. Open InspireData’s Women’s Political Advances database:

   InspireData Starter>Databases> Social Studies> Women’s Political Advances.

3. Read the table notes and discuss the contents of the table, examining field notes as necessary and defining any unknown terms. Point out that the database contains information on women’s political participation and when they first gained political rights and power for nearly all of the world’s countries.

4. Point out the Possible Investigations in the table notes that students will be exploring today, such as:
   • In what region(s) and/or countries did women first earn suffrage rights, and what might explain these early gains?
   • In which of the most developed nations had women achieved at least partial suffrage by 1920?
   • In what decade(s) did significant numbers of countries first give women the right to vote and have women serving in government? What factors might have contributed to these achievements?
• In how many countries do women participate in government at high levels in multiple branches? Do the countries with high levels of women in office seem to share any other characteristics? What factors could contribute to the level of women’s participation in government?

5. As a demonstration, click the Plot View button on the Toolbar to switch to Plot View, and analyze the data. Your demonstration should include how to select plot types via the buttons on the Toolbar.

Note: If you and/or your students are new to InspireData, open the Slide Sorter in the lower-right and demonstrate how to click through the examples.
6. Explain that students will be creating slides with notes that describe the data. Demonstrate how to use the Notes area to record an analysis for each plot. Click on the Notes button in the lower right to open the area. Be sure to show students how to capture a slide for each plot, including their notes, by clicking the Slide Sorter button to open the Slide Sorter and then the Capture Slide button.

7. Demonstrate how map-like axis plots can be generated by clicking X Axis and selecting Longitude, and clicking Y Axis and selecting Latitude. Then the Color by Field feature can be used to give a geographically based view of a third variable, such as the year women gained the right to vote. By analyzing the plot, students should be able to observe that many of the European countries were the first to grant suffrage rights to women, while countries in Africa, the Middle East, and Oceania tended to trail behind. What historical, economic, and geographical factors could have contributed to these trends?
8. Divide the class into teams of two or three and ask teams to create at least six slides with written analyses of the plots. Tell students that the quality of their writing is important in addition to their analysis of the data, so they should write in complete sentences and be as clear as possible.

9. After students have created their slide shows, have each group research one of the countries in the database, such as one that achieved women's suffrage prior to 1920, to determine which historical factors and individuals contributed to the early achievements. These details can be added to the notes in relevant slides and then the slide can be updated in the Slide Sorter. To do so, students click the down arrow on the relevant slide and choose Update Slide.

10. If time allows, have students present their slide shows to the class. Ask each team to present the three slides they think are the most interesting and explain why.

11. Conclude the lesson with a discussion of what students have learned about the political advances of women. Ask how the political lives of women in your country and around the
world have changed in the last 100 years. What factors and individuals made these changes possible? What are the prospects for continued political advances for women in the future?

Adaptations/Extensions:

- Have students create a chronology or timeline in Inspiration® pointing out key developments in the political advances of women, such as the first year another country gave women the right to vote and the first year American women earned that right. Students can include details from additional research, such as the contributions by important individuals who have fought for more political power for women (such as Susan B. Anthony) or served in office (such as Margaret Thatcher, Benazir Bhutto, or Golda Meir).

- Begin the lesson by showing a clip from one of the films depicting the fight by women to gain suffrage, such as Iron Jawed Angels. Ask about the kinds of sacrifices that women who wanted to gain political power had to make.

- Encourage students to analyze the Countries of the World database so they have a better idea about how levels of economic and social development differ in countries and regions worldwide (InspireData Starter>Databases>Social Studies>Countries of the World). Ask how levels of development might have impacted women’s efforts to gain political power. There is also a Countries of the World example database with many sample plots, such as a map-like plot as discussed in step 6: InspireData Starter>Learn to Use>Example Databases>Countries of the World.

- Refer students to the InspireData handouts for help with plotting and analysis (Help>Documentation>Handouts). You may want to print one or more sets of the cards to make them available for students.

- For younger students, consider analyzing more of the data as a whole class, at least until students understand the process. The entire lesson could also be conducted as a class.

1 © Copyright 2010. The Themes of Social Studies. National Council for the Social Studies. All rights reserved. Learn more online at http://www.socialstudies.org/standards.