

Exercise 1

In this first exercise, you can use selected **quotes** that tell you something about the history of women, their role in society and how that also changed, to sketch and record the most important developments in a timeline.

**Information for teachers:**

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| **Level** | From 8th grade |
| **Duration** | Min.- 1h /Max. project day |
| **Method/ Material** | Group work, plenary / enlarged copy of quotations and sources |
| **Aims** | The students should get a first **overview of the status of women in history**.  In a possible follow-up exercise, the students should gain a deeper understanding of the unequal relationships between men and women and the need to overcome them. |
| **Procedure** | **Find quote/author pairs:**   1. Each student is given either a quote or a source. The students try to the link quotations to the respective authors and look for their partners. 2. When the right pairs are found, the students should try to arrange the quotes chronologically. 3. Create a timeline on the wall/board. |
| **Possible extensions** | **Discussion**  **Group presentations:**   * Research and present background information on each quote/person.   **Develop scenes:**   * In small groups, the students * think about a short scene based on a quote/person (clarify W-questions)  and present it afterwards.   **Design collage** on the theme of "women's history” |

| **Quote** | **Source** |
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| *"As in all the churches of the saints, let your wives keep silence in the church; for they shall not be permitted to speak, but shall be subject, as also saith the law. If they want to learn something, let them ask their husbands at home. It is evil for women to speak in the church."* | Bible  1st Letter to the Corinthians - Chapter 14 - Verse 34 |
| *"Woman has the right to ascend the scaffold. She must equally possess the right to mount the rostrum."* | Olympe de Gouges (1784-1793), French. Revolutionary and women's rights activist. [Link](https://www.europa.clio-online.de/essay/id/fdae-1505) |
| *"The husband is the head of the family. (...) The wife receives the name of the husband and enjoys the rights of his status. She is obliged to follow the husband to his residence, to assist in housekeeping and acquisition to the best of her ability, and, as far as domestic order requires, to follow the measures taken by him as well as to make him follow them."* | Family Law, General Civil Code (1811). [Link](https://stmk.spoe.at/history-friday-familienrechtsreform/) |
| *"According to the rule, the girl should stay in the bosom of the family all her youth until a man chooses her as his life companion. She does not need the wisdom of the world, because her destiny is not the world, but the house and the love of the man."* | Heinrich J. Hillebrand 1818, German philosopher and politician. [Link](https://www.edugroup.at/fileadmin/DAM/eduhi/data_dl/UP_5_Schulstufe_gesamt.pdf), S.8 |
| *"[…] But I think I must say that the sudden extension of the right to vote to all women would be an evil. [...] The right to vote: what a danger that the political discord will enter the families. But if one should think that the woman would be of the same opinion with the man anyway, then the whole suffrage is superfluous. [...]"* | Ignaz Seipel (1876-1932), theologian and politician. [Link](http://www.demokratiezentrum.org/fileadmin/media/Bildung/Unterrichtsbeispiele/Politik%20und%20Wahlen/Windischbauer_U-Bsp_27_weiblichen_Waehlerwillen.pdf) |
| *"Women will not attain their emancipation until they themselves struggle for it by their own efforts."* | Adelheid Popp (1869-1939), Austrian women's rights activist and socialist. [Link](https://www.diequerdenkerin.at/adelheid-popp/) |
| *"A momentous and all thinking women gratifying event has taken place. (...) She as a woman had to pass double tests and she passed them brilliantly."* | Newspaper article about Gabriele Possaner, first female doctor in Austria (1897). [Link](https://www.gabrielepossanner.eu/gabriele-possanner/) |
| *"There are people who are the absolute majority among the people and have the fewest seats in parliament. Ask the men why."* | Johanna Dohnal (1939-2010), Austrian feminist and politician. [Link](https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Johanna_Dohnal) |

Historians see the initial spark for women to represent their rights in public in 1848, in the "bourgeois revolution," when the middle classes in Austria generally began to demand political rights. Before that, a united, cohesive movement of women to represent their interests was unthinkable. But a growing education and a growing participation of women in economic life (economic crisis after Napoleonic wars, industrialization, ...) also promoted political interest.



Exercise 2 Stop and think - women were not allowed to ...

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| **QUESTION - Stop and think:**  *Which rights did women not have in Austria in the 19th century?*  Mark with a cross:  Women were not allowed to... |
| * marry * vote * be elected * make music in public * go on maternity leave * work without permission from father/husband * write for the newspaper * study |

From 1861 onward, the Empire of Austria had a parliament (Reichsrat) consisting of two chambers, the Herrenhaus and the Abgeordnetenhaus. The people had no say in the composition of the Herrenhaus because all members were appointed by the emperor. In the Chamber of Deputies sat representatives who were elected indirectly through electoral votes (curia system). The right to vote was not linked to gender, but to education and wealth. Thus, if a woman provided the necessary direct tax contribution, she could vote through a representative or proxy. However, there were very few of them.

In the middle of the 19th century, the first associations representing the interests of women were founded. Women were not officially allowed to be members of (political) associations or to participate in political meetings until the beginning of the 20th century. Despite this prohibition, they organized themselves in various women's associations. One example is the Viennese Women's Employment Association, which was founded in 1866. A first women's rights movement emerged in Austria. The goals of these women's movements were primarily to improve the living conditions of working women and to achieve equal participation in public, social and cultural life. In addition to the right to work, the right to earn their own money and the right to a school and university education, women also wanted the right to political participation - the right to vote.



Exercise 3 Stop and think -. Women's rights and concerns

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| **QUESTION - Stop and think:**  *What rights did women demand back then? Can you imagine why?* |
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| *How is it today? Are there still demands/issues today that are of urgent concern to women?* |
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Exercise 4 Stop and think - Cartoon

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|  | Cartoon 1907: "Frauenrecht (Zum Verbot des Frauenstimmrechtsvereines): They are allowed to give birth to the citizens of the state, they are allowed to nurse, care for and teach them, they are allowed to feed themselves like men through work, but woe betide them as soon as they wish to vote.”  Image: StBKA |
| *Who do you think is the author/who is the addressee of this cartoon from 1907??* | |
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| Briefly summarize the key message of this cartoon in your own words | |
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In 1907, all male citizens were finally granted universal and equal suffrage, regardless of wealth class. This reform abolished the so-called "curia system" and thus also the right to vote for the few wealthy women. Discrimination against women in political terms thus reached its peak. Women from all social classes now increasingly campaigned for their right to co-determination. Social Democratic women, who were influenced above all by the international socialist women's suffrage movement, increasingly organized demonstrations. On March 19, 1911, the largest women's demonstration in Austrian history marched along Vienna's Ringstrasse: 20,000 women and men demanded: - Women's suffrage!

The women's rights movement was now at its peak and penetrated all social strata. Even middle-class women became involved in the suffrage movement, primarily through petitions and writings.



Exercise 5 - Stop and think – Opportunities to get involved

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| **QUESTION - Stop and think:**  *What opportunities did women have to fight for their rights?* |
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| *What is it like today? What opportunities are there today / do you know of to stand up for equality?* |
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Exercise 6 – Timeline

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| 🖉**ACTIVITY:**  *Now plot the events in women's history that are most important to you on a timeline.* |
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Exercise 7- Countries compared:

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| 🖉**ACTIVITY - Countries compared:**  *1) Using the table, find out:..*   * in which European country the right to vote was introduced first * in which European country the right to vote was introduced last * in which non-European country the right to vote was introduced first * in which non-European country the right to vote was last introduced |
| |  |  | | --- | --- | | 1893 New Zealand  1902 Australia  1906 Finland  1913 Norway (since 1907 restricted)  1915 Denmark, Island  1924 Mongolia  1930 South Africa  1931 Spain, Portugal  1932 Maldives  1934 Turkey, Brazil, Cuba  1935 India (1950 unrestricted)  1937 Philippines, Pakistan  1942 Dominican Republic  1944 France  1945 Bulgaria, Japan, Liberia, Italy  1946 Yugoslavia, Rumania, Kenya  1947 Argentina, China, Venezuela, Mexico | 1917 Canada, Russia  1918 Austria, Germany, Great Britain  1919 Netherlands, Hungary  1920 Czechoslovakia, USA  1921 Sweden  1948 Belgium, Israel, Korea, Niger  1952 Greece, Bolivia  1956 Egypt, Syria, Mali  1960 Cyprus, Gambia  1963 Iran  1971 Switzerland  1980 Iraq  1984 Liechtenstein  2001 Bahrain  2005 Kuwait  2011 Saudi-Arabia | |
| *2) Take an atlas and mark all the countries on the silent world map....*   * that had introduced women's suffrage by 1918 green. * that had introduced women's suffrage by 1945 yellow. * that had introduced women's suffrage by 1963 orange. * that introduced women's suffrage after 1963 red.   *What did you notice / find interesting?... Here is space for your comments and thoughts:* |
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Exercise 8 – Film tip: Debate on women's suffrage

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| *Want to learn more about the debate for and against women's suffrage and how it was debated in one of our neighbouring countries even into the 1970s?*  *Here's a tip on a film that tackles this topic:*  *The Divine Order (CH, 2017)?* |

Women's suffrage in 1918 proved to be a milestone in politics and society. However, the actual equality of women and men only took place step by step. The women's movement experienced a major setback during National Socialism.

It was not until the Second Republic was established in 1945 that Austrians were once again entitled to elect a parliament and thus a representation of the people. The electoral law was based on that of the First Republic.

In any case, it was the Social Democrats of the First Republic who theoretically prepared those reforms that could only be realized decades later. For example, the equality of boys and girls in education, the reform of abortion or the family law reform of the 1970s.



Exercise 9 – Austria in the interwar years

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| *Do you want to learn more about Austria in the interwar years and the conflicts between the Social Democratic and Christian Social camps?*  *The ORF documentary "Austria I" by Hugo Portisch and Sepp Riff gives a very accurate picture of those turbulent years with numerous original film recordings.* |

Today, Austrian citizens are allowed to vote after reaching the age of 16. Regardless of how much money they have and which social class they belong to, each of their votes cast is worth the same.

Historically, women's rights were and are not a matter of course. They had to be fought for with great difficulty. And there is still a lot to be done. Although women are now legally equal to men, there is still a clear need to catch up in many areas: The demands for equal pay for work of equal value, women in leadership positions and adequate representation in political bodies, for example, have still not been adequately met.