Work, Vote, Limits

World War I service and the reach of the Nineteenth Amendment

SS24.US2.2b "Describe the changing roles and rights of women in the United States that resulted from their contributions to World War I and ratification of the Nineteenth Amendment."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline two kinds of wartime work, circle one change in women's roles and one change in voting rights, and number two limits on those changes. Use your marks to track what changed and what did not.

Service, Suffrage, and Unequal Change

1 In 1917, as the United States entered World War I, women took on visible work in a nation at war. Some assembled military supplies in factories or filled office jobs left open by men who joined the armed forces. Others served as nurses near the fighting or organized food conservation drives at home. These contributions challenged the claim that women's proper place was only in the home. Yet wartime opportunity was uneven: women of color often faced discrimination in hiring, pay, and assignments. When soldiers returned, many women were pushed out of wartime jobs.

2 Women had demanded voting rights for decades before the war. During the conflict, suffragists argued that people who supported the nation through work and service should help choose its leaders. Some organizations lobbied Congress and state lawmakers; others picketed the White House, risking arrest. In 1918, President Woodrow Wilson publicly backed a federal suffrage amendment, citing women's wartime service. Their service strengthened an existing movement, but it did not secure the vote by itself. Congress approved the amendment in 1919, and enough states ratified it in 1920. The Nineteenth Amendment barred denying a citizen the vote on account of sex.

3 After ratification, many women could vote in federal and state elections, giving them a new formal way to influence laws and leaders. But the amendment did not remove every obstacle at the polls. In the South, officials used poll taxes, literacy tests, and intimidation to prevent many Black women, as well as Black men, from voting. Some women also remained excluded from citizenship, a separate requirement for voting. Nor did a ballot guarantee equal pay or lasting access to wartime jobs. Women's roles had expanded, but the new voting right operated within older inequalities.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How did two kinds of wartime work challenge an older view of women's roles?

2. How did wartime contributions strengthen the campaign for voting rights without starting that campaign?

3. What voting right did the Nineteenth Amendment establish, and why could many Black women in the South still be kept from voting?

4. How did women's wartime job opportunities and their voting rights change differently after the war?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

A proposed school exhibit says, “The war gave all women equality.” Write an 80 to 105 word exhibit label explaining why that claim is misleading. Connect wartime contributions to the voting rights movement, and explain one lasting legal change and one continuing limit.

ANSWER KEY

Work, Vote, Limits

GRADE 11 · SS24.US2.2b

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline two kinds of wartime work, circle one change in women's roles and one change in voting rights, and number two limits on those changes. Use your marks to track what changed and what did not. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did two kinds of wartime work challenge an older view of women's roles?	**Factory and office work placed women in jobs beyond the home, while nursing near the fighting showed that women could serve close to the war.**
2	How did wartime contributions strengthen the campaign for voting rights without starting that campaign?	**Women had demanded the vote for decades. Suffragists used women's wartime service to argue for political participation, and Wilson cited that service when he backed an amendment.**
3	What voting right did the Nineteenth Amendment establish, and why could many Black women in the South still be kept from voting?	**It barred denying citizens the vote on account of sex. Poll taxes, literacy tests, and intimidation still prevented many Black women in the South from voting.**
4	How did women's wartime job opportunities and their voting rights change differently after the war?	**Many women were pushed out of wartime jobs when soldiers returned, but the ratified amendment established a lasting constitutional protection against voting discrimination based on sex.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

The claim “The war gave all women equality” overlooks both earlier activism and later barriers. Women had organized for the vote long before World War I. During the war, their nursing, factory work, and food conservation efforts made arguments for political participation harder to dismiss. Congress passed the suffrage amendment in 1919, and states ratified it in 1920, prohibiting voting discrimination based on sex. Yet some women lost wartime jobs, while poll taxes, literacy tests, and intimidation kept many Black women from voting. Greater visibility and a constitutional right did not erase inequality.

Accept other passage-supported examples of wartime work and barriers. Responses should distinguish the amendment's legal protection from equal access to voting, jobs, or pay.