A Vote, Unevenly

Weigh evidence and interpretations of the Nineteenth Amendment.

AWH.P.1.2.B "Evaluate points of agreement and disagreement from reliable information and expert interpretations used to answer supporting questions related to content knowledge."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline a point both interpretations accept, circle where they disagree, and number two pieces of evidence that help you evaluate their claims.

What Changed in 1920?

1. In 1920, the United States ratified the Nineteenth Amendment. It barred states from denying the vote because of sex. The National Archives preserves its text, reliable evidence of that legal change. The Library of Congress preserves records of barriers faced by Black voters, including women. To answer the supporting question, "How much did the amendment change women's voting in 1920?" researchers must compare the law with evidence of access to polls. Both kinds of records matter, but they answer different parts of the question.

2. One expert interpretation emphasizes the amendment's immediate reach. It treats the end of sex-based voting bans as a sweeping national change, even though some states had already allowed women to vote. A second expert interpretation stresses the amendment's limits. It argues that the law did not give all women a usable vote in 1920. Poll taxes, literacy tests, and intimidation still kept many Black women from the polls in the South. The interpretations agree that the law changed, but they judge its immediate impact differently.

3. To weigh the interpretations, look at what each source can prove. The amendment's wording supports the claim that a legal barrier fell across the nation. Records of discriminatory voting practices support the claim that legal permission did not guarantee access. Neither source, by itself, tells us how many additional women voted that year. A stronger answer separates the change in law from the change in participation, then explains why both matter. That distinction keeps a broad claim about victory from erasing women who still faced barriers.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. What point do both interpretations accept, and which record supports it?

2. Where do the interpretations disagree about the amendment's immediate impact?

3. Which interpretation do the Library of Congress records strengthen, and why?

4. Why can neither kind of record alone settle how many more women voted in 1920?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

A museum plans a caption saying, “In 1920, all American women gained the vote.” Write a four-sentence replacement caption that weighs both interpretations, cites two different facts from the passage, and explains what the available evidence cannot establish.

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PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline a point both interpretations accept, circle where they disagree, and number two pieces of evidence that help you evaluate their claims. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	What point do both interpretations accept, and which record supports it?	**Both accept that the law changed. The amendment text preserved by the National Archives supports that point.**
2	Where do the interpretations disagree about the amendment's immediate impact?	**The first emphasizes a sweeping national legal change. The second stresses that barriers kept many women from using the vote.**
3	Which interpretation do the Library of Congress records strengthen, and why?	**They strengthen the second interpretation because records of voting barriers show that legal permission did not guarantee access.**
4	Why can neither kind of record alone settle how many more women voted in 1920?	**The amendment text establishes a legal right, while records of barriers show obstacles. Neither counts additional voters.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

The Nineteenth Amendment barred states from denying the vote because of sex, a major national legal change. Yet poll taxes, literacy tests, and intimidation still kept many Black women from the polls in the South. The first interpretation captures the reach of the new law, while the second better captures the limits of access. The amendment text and records of barriers do not establish how many additional women voted in 1920.

Accept responses that distinguish a nationwide change in law from unequal access to voting. For the caption, look for four sentences, two passage-based facts, both interpretations, and a clear limit of the evidence.