

Reading *Mama Went to Jail for the Vote*

Reading Guide, page 1 of 4

Read the “Directions” sheet for step-by-step instructions.

SUMMARY

During this activity, you and your child will actively read *Mama Went to Jail for the Vote*, using the suggested reading strategies.

WHY

Through this activity, your child will build reading skills, develop vocabulary, and learn about the woman suffrage movement and the importance of voting.

TIME

- 30 minutes

RECOMMENDED AGE GROUP

This activity will work best for children in kindergarten to 4th grade.

YOU NEED

- This Reading Guide
- Step Back in Time sheets (*attached*)
- *Mama Went to Jail for the Vote* book, written by Kathleen Karr and illustrated by Malene Laugesen

CHALLENGE WORDS

- **bloomers:** full loose pants worn by women and girls especially in the past (illustration on page 2, where Susan Elizabeth holds up her skirt)
- **suffragist:** a person in the past who worked to get voting rights for people who did not have them
- **politician:** someone who is active in government, usually as an elected official
- **saloon:** a barroom or a place of business for the sale of alcoholic drinks
- **population:** the number of people who live in a place

More information at <http://americanhistory.si.edu/ourstory/activities/suffrage/>.

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CHALLENGE WORDS (CONTINUED)

- **candidate:** a person who is trying to be elected to public office
- **crusade:** a major effort to change something
- **ornament:** a way to make something look more attractive and less plain
- **picket:** a person or group of people who are standing or marching near a place to protest something
- **dignity:** the quality of being worthy of honor or respect
- **fricassee:** a dish of small pieces of meat cooked in liquid and served in a thick white sauce
- **voting precinct:** any one of the sections that a town or city is divided into when people vote in an election

PARENT PREPARATION

- If you have time, read *Mama Went to Jail for the Vote* yourself before sharing it with your child. Also read the notes on the last page of the book and the **Step Back in Time** sheets.
- If you have time, preview some of the reading suggestions below. Pick just a few suggestions that look interesting and fun for you.

BEFORE YOU READ

- Talk together about the front cover of the book.
 - What do you think is going on in the picture?
 - Who do you think is the “Mama” from the title? Who is the main child character?
 - Talk about the title: When do people get sent to jail? What does it mean to vote?

DURING READING

- Early in the story, Susan Elizabeth says, “Mama liked to make statements. Papa and I learned to live with them.” As you read, look out for different “statements” Mama

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makes through her words or actions.

- Listen for some of the disagreements between Mama and Papa. Who does Susan Elizabeth agree with? What are some of the reasons Papa gives for his opinions? What are Mama's reasons?

AFTER YOU READ

- Does anyone in your family feel strongly about an issue like Mama and Susan Elizabeth? What is the issue? What "statements" does your family make to show these feelings?
- "Perspective" describes who is telling the story, and whose "point of view" is being represented. Susan Elizabeth is the storyteller in this book. How would this story be different if it was told by Mama? Take a page from the book and try to imagine how Mama would tell the story.
 - What would Mama be thinking? ("I hope Susan Elizabeth will . . .")
 - What would Mama be doing? ("At the jail, I was . . .")

Tip You can tell Susan Elizabeth is the storyteller because the word "I" represents things that happen to Susan Elizabeth. On the first two pages, the author uses the illustrations and discussion between Susan Elizabeth and Mama to show the reader who is telling the story.

- According to the **Step Back in Time** sheets, how long has it been since women were granted the right to vote? Subtract 1920 from this year. Count out pennies, pieces of cereal, paperclips, or other small objects equal to the number of years since women were granted the right to vote.

Tip Small children often have trouble understanding large numbers. Counting, using objects, can help develop this understanding.

You could also count out the number of years since other events, such as the number of years since your child, you, or your parents were born.

For more challenge, how many decades has it been since women were granted the right to vote? One decade is equal to ten years.

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- Take another look at the illustrations on next few pages. Some of the objects in these illustrations are similar to things that have been collected by the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of American History. On the next few pages, look at the side-by-side illustrations from the book and photographs of real museum objects.

For more activities and information about *Mama Went to Jail for the Vote* and the woman suffrage movement, visit <http://americanhistory.si.edu/ourstory/activities/suffrage/>.

Mama Went to Jail for the Vote by Kathleen Karr. Illustrations by Malene Laugesen. Used by permission of Hyperion Books for Children.

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Step Back in Time, page 1 of 2

For more information, visit the National Museum of American History Web site <http://americanhistory.si.edu/ourstory/activities/suffrage/>.

Voting is one of the main ways that people can direct the government and change laws.

Women had voted in some colonies and early states but after 1807 no women could vote in the United States. In 1848 a group of women, and men, concerned with women's right held a convention and signed the Declaration of Sentiments. The Declaration was modeled after the Declaration of Independence and demanded rights for women, including the right to vote. Despite their efforts, women could only vote in nine states by the time the parade in this story takes place.

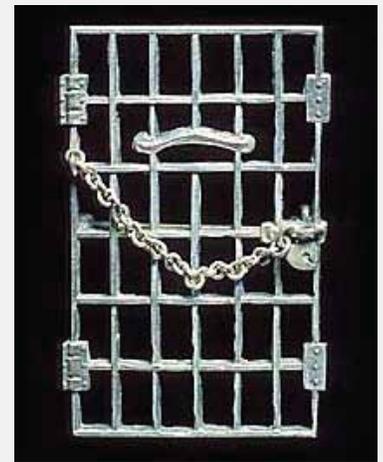
Woman suffragists were the first group to organize pickets outside of the White House. They created banners and stood

outside the White House gates to show the signs to the President and members of the public.

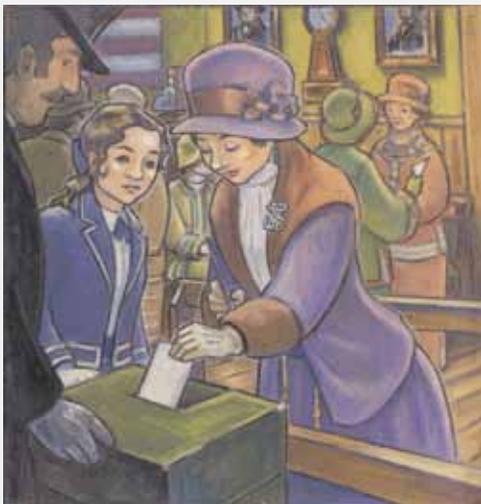
Although they were peaceful, some who disagreed with their protests sometimes started fights and hurt the suffragists.

Throughout the woman suffrage movement, over 150 suffragists were put in jail, mostly in Virginia and Washington, D.C. Life in the jails was tough and dirty, and the women weren't treated well.

Some women wanted to show the American public how unfair it was that they were in jail, so they refused to eat while behind bars. They were



Jailed for Freedom pin
The National Museum of American History owns three "Jailed for Freedom" pins that belonged to Lucille Calmes, Amelia Walker, and Alice Paul.



Mama voting at the precinct
from *Mama Went to Jail for the Vote*

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forcibly fed by their jailers. After they were let out of jail, the suffragists were given special “Jailed for Freedom” pins, to show proudly that they had stayed in jail to help get the right to vote for women.

Alice Paul, one of the leaders in the protests, had been a part of the women’s suffrage movement in England. When she came back to the United States, she reused some of the strong British tactics in the American woman suffrage movement.

It took many years for the women’s suffrage movement to change the minds of lawmakers and the public; but finally, in August 1920, the United States Constitution was amended to protect women’s right to vote.

The woman suffrage movement’s nonviolent protests were sources of inspiration for Mohandas Gandhi, while he worked for independence in India, and Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., while he worked for equal rights during the civil rights movement in the United States.

amended: changed the words and often the meaning of a law

movement: a series of organized activities in which many people work together to do or achieve something

tactics: an action or method that is planned and used to achieve a particular goal

***Mama Went to Jail for the Vote* is a work of historical fiction.**

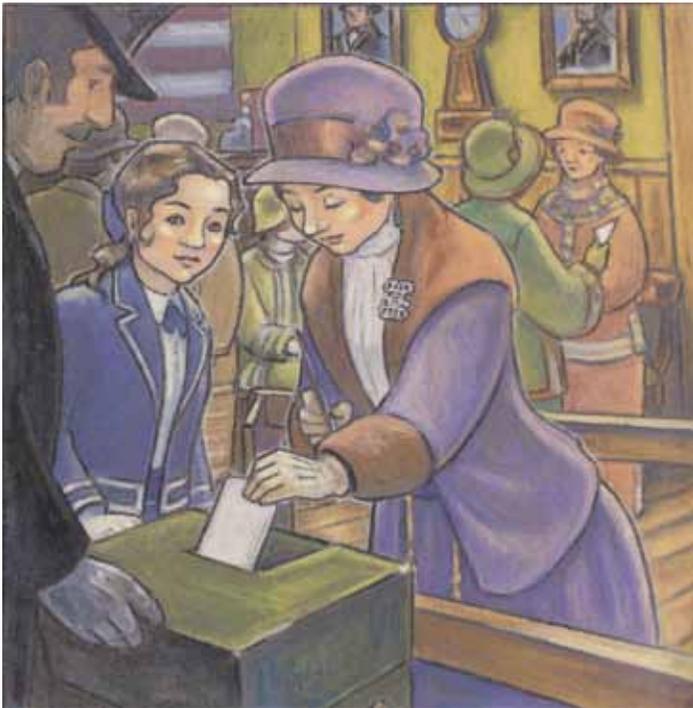
In historical fiction, make-believe stories are set against a backdrop of real events or incorporate them into the story. This means that sometimes things are changed to suit the story or make it more dramatic.

Although there was a woman on a white horse in the suffrage parade it wasn’t really Mama. The rider was a Washington lawyer named Inez Milholland Boissevain. When she later died while traveling to promote woman suffrage she was considered to be a martyr to the cause.

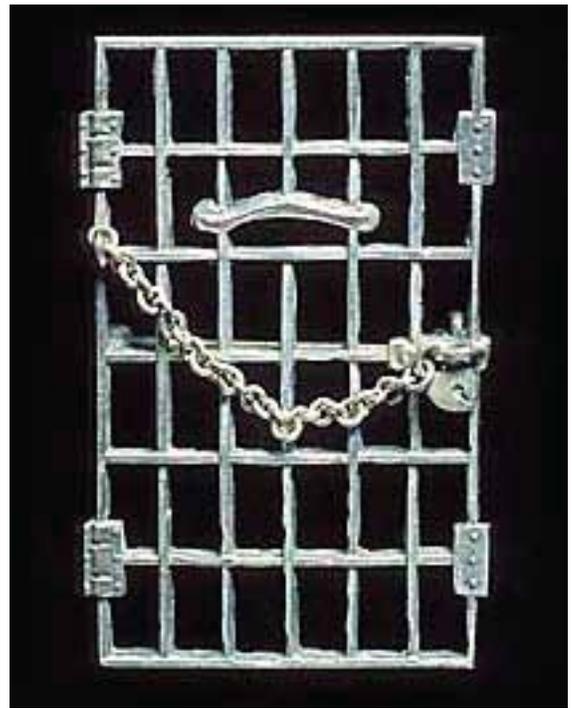
Purple, white, and yellow were the colors used in the parades and by the pickets of the National Woman’s Party although purple, white, and green were used in other places like New York and Connecticut.

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Illustrations and Museum Artifacts, page 1 of 5



Mama at the voting precinct
from *Mama Went to Jail for the Vote*



Jailed for Freedom pin
Department of Politics and Reform
National Museum of American History
Smithsonian Institution

More information at <http://americanhistory.si.edu/ourstory/activities/suffrage/>.

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Mama getting arrested at the protests
from *Mama Went to Jail for the Vote*



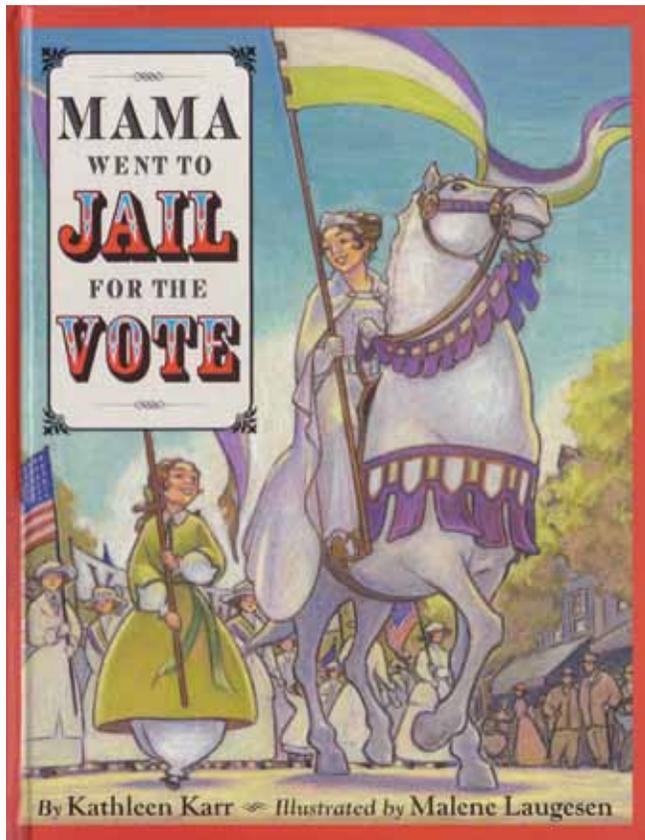
Suffrage Sash

Department of Politics and Reform
National Museum of American History
Smithsonian Institution

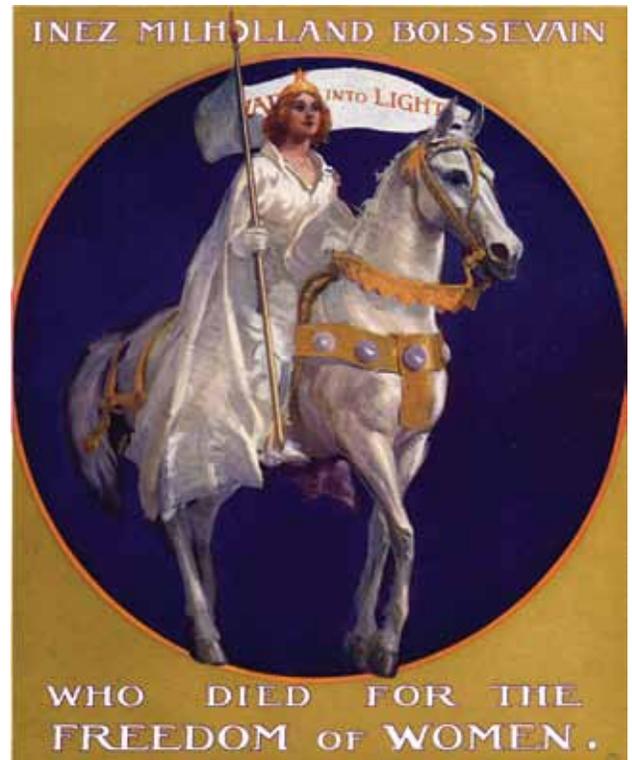
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Cover of *Mama Went to Jail for the Vote* that shows Mama and Susan Elizabeth at a suffragist parade



Poster commemorating Inez Milholland (see the note on the Step Back in Time sheet)

Department of Politics and Reform
National Museum of American History
Smithsonian Institution

More information at <http://americanhistory.si.edu/ourstory/activities/suffrage/>.

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Illustration of a suffrage parade
from *Mama Went to Jail for the Vote*



Postcard with a photograph of the 1913
suffrage parade in Washington, DC
Department of Politics and Reform
National Museum of American History
Smithsonian Institution

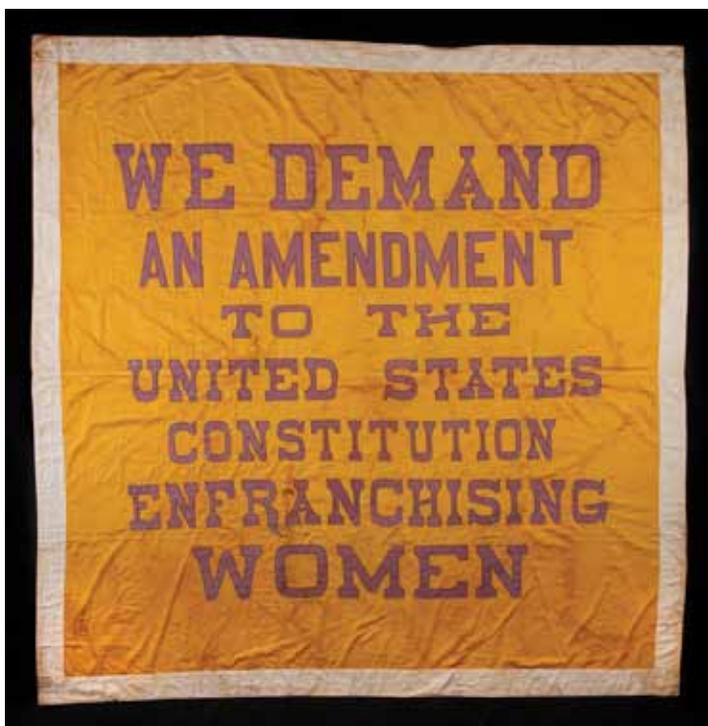
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Illustration of a suffrage parade
from *Mama Went to Jail for the Vote*



Woman suffrage banner
Department of Politics and Reform
National Museum of American History
Smithsonian Institution

More information at <http://americanhistory.si.edu/ourstory/activities/suffrage/>.

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For Teachers, page 1 of 2

Read the “Reading Guide” sheets for step-by-step instructions.

OBJECTIVES

The students will be better able to:

- Read for understanding.
- Describe motivations for, objections to, and key tactics of the woman suffrage movement.
- Distinguish between past, present, and future time.

STUDENT PERFORMANCE CRITERIA

- Discussion exhibits understanding of story and historical details.
- Discussion exhibits understanding of vocabulary in the context of the story.

STANDARDS

NCHS History Standards

K-4 Historical Thinking Standards

- 1A: Distinguish between past, present, and future time.
- 1D: Measure and calculate calendar time.
- 3B: Compare and contrast differing sets of ideas.
- 3C: Analyze historical fiction.
- 3F: Analyze illustrations in historical stories.

K-4 Historical Content Standards

- 4A: The student understands how the United States government was formed and the nation’s basic democratic principles set forth in the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution.
- 4B: The student understands ordinary people who have exemplified values and principles of American democracy.

IRA/NCTE Language Arts Standards

1. Students read a wide range of print and non-print texts to build an understanding of texts, of themselves, and of the cultures of the United States and the world; to acquire new information; to respond to the needs and demands of society and the

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workplace; and for personal fulfillment. Among these texts are fiction and nonfiction, classic and contemporary works.

3. Students apply a wide range of strategies to comprehend, interpret, evaluate, and appreciate texts. They draw on their prior experience, their interactions with other readers and writers, their knowledge of word meaning and of other texts, their word identification strategies, and their understanding of textual features (e.g., sound-letter correspondence, sentence structure, context, graphics).

21st-Century Skills

Information, Media, and Technology Skills

- Information Literacy
- Media Literacy

