

Handout A: Background Essay: Women in the Gilded Age Review Questions Answer Key

1. Social and economic changes occurring in the lives of Gilded Age women include:
 - Increasing numbers of women began entering the workforce: in factories, as domestic servants, on piecemeal work on garments. African-American women were restricted to working as servants or in agriculture.
 - Single, middle-class women were able to get positions as secretaries, store clerks, teachers, and nurses.
 - Women also began engaging in social reform such as the Women's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU), settlement houses, and National Consumers' League.
 - As more women began to enter the work force, women would also seek to form their own unions such as the International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union (ILGWU).
 - As women began organizing for various economic and social reforms, they met at Seneca Falls, New York in 1848 and issue a Declaration of Sentiments, aimed at securing equal rights for women, namely, the right to vote.
2. Different experiences of women in the workforce include the following:
 - Lower-class women who chose to work outside of the home were mostly confined to low-skill jobs in factories.
 - Few women were accepted into professions of law and medicine.
 - Women were not admitted into common labor unions such as the American Federation of Labor. Therefore, women would form their own unions within the workplace.
 - Eventually, some states implemented "protective legislation" for women. This legislation encompassed a number of laws aimed at things such as restricting the working hours of women to account for "physical inequality" between women and men.
3. There were a number of women's social movements during the Gilded Age and Progressive Era aimed at influencing a variety of areas in society. One of the first of these was the Women's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU) whose goal was to close saloons and end alcohol consumption. Jane Addams's Hull House and its staff sought to improve the assimilation process for immigrants. The National Consumers' League pressured stores to offer better pay for female clerks and other protective legislation for women in the workplace. Additionally, due to the inability to join the American Federation of Labor (AFL), Lilian Wald and other women would form the Women's Trade Union League to fight for the demands of working women. Another example of a woman led union was the International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union (ILGWU). Much like the Women's Trade Union League, the ILGWU aimed to improve the lives of working women in the garment industry.

4. At Seneca Falls in 1848, a group of women and men met and issued the Declaration of Sentiments, making women's suffrage one of the main demands. However, the women's suffrage movement would split in 1869 as the National Woman Suffrage Association desired a constitutional amendment to grant women's suffrage while the American Woman Suffrage Association desired to achieve women's suffrage at the state level. These movements would unite once again in 1890 and, together, would follow the state-by-state strategy. Despite successes, another split would occur in 1913 leading to the founding of the Congressional Union (later called the National Women's party) that would once again seek a constitutional amendment.
5. Women employed a variety of strategies in the struggle for the constitutional amendment for suffrage including winning suffrage in several states, speaking and writing in favor of equality, demonstrating and picketing, going to jail and engaging in hunger strikes, and pressuring members of Congress and the President.

Handout B: Women in the Gilded Age Graphic Organizer

Organization	Date/Founder	Reforms Supported
Women's Christian Temperance Union	Frances Willard (1879)	Promoting an improved moral climate in society and politics; closing saloons and ending the consumption of alcohol because of the ill effects of drunkenness on families; women's suffrage as a means of achieving prohibition.
Hull House	Jane Addams (1889)	Providing immigrants with vital services in poor, ethnic neighborhoods; helped immigrants to adapt to American society by teaching English and civics.
National Consumers' League	Florence Kelley (1898)	Pressured stores to pay female clerks better; protective legislation regulating the hours and conditions for women and children.

Organization	Date/Founder	Reforms Supported
Women's Trade Union League	Lilian Wald (1903)	Helped women organize their own labor unions to bargain for better working conditions and increased wages.
International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union	Rose Schneiderman (1909)	Desired to protest against poor wages, grueling hours, and dangerous conditions in the garment industry.
National Woman Suffrage Association	Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton (1869)	Achieving voting rights for women through an amendment to the United States Constitution.
American Woman Suffrage Association	Lucy Stone and Henry Blackwell (1869)	Achieving women's suffrage on a state-by-state basis through state amendments rather than one to the United States Constitution.

Handout C: Timeline of Women's Suffrage

Students may list a variety of different significant events and landmarks for their timeline. Some prominent examples are listed below, but accept well-reasoned and applicable responses:

- **1848:** First women's rights convention in Seneca Falls, New York
- **1850:** First National Women's Rights Convention in Worcester, Massachusetts
- **1869:** Formation of National Woman Suffrage Association (May)
- **1869:** Formation of American Woman Suffrage Association (November)
- **1869:** Wyoming passes first women's suffrage law
- **1878:** Susan B. Anthony writes a federal woman suffrage amendment and it is introduced to Congress
- **1890:** National Woman Suffrage Association and American Women Suffrage Association merge in order to form the National American Woman Suffrage Association

- **1893:** Colorado adopts an amendment granting women the right to vote
- **1896:** Idaho adopts an amendment granting women the right to vote
- **1903:** Formation of the National Women's Trade Union League to help advocate for higher wages and better working conditions for working women
- **1910:** Washington state adopts an amendment granting women the right to vote
- **1911:** California adopts an amendment granting women the right to vote
- **1912:** Oregon, Kansas, and Arizona adopt an amendment granting women the right to vote
- **1913:** Alaska and Illinois adopt an amendment granting women the right to vote
- **1913:** Formation of the Congressional Union which sought an amendment to the U.S. Constitution that would grant women the right to vote at the federal level; this group would later change its name to the National Women's Party
- **1914:** Montana and Nevada adopt an amendment granting women the right to vote
- **1917:** New York adopts an amendment granting women the right to vote
- **1918:** Michigan, South Dakota, and Oklahoma adopt an amendment granting women the right to vote
- **1919:** Federal woman suffrage amendment is passed by the House and Senate and sent to the states for ratification
- **1920:** The Nineteenth Amendment to the Constitution is signed into law by Secretary of State Bainbridge Colby.

Handout D: Images of Women's Suffrage

1. The Awakening represents how during the Gilded Age, the push for women's suffrage truly began in the West, with almost all of the states passing women's suffrage amendments prior to the Nineteenth amendment being states in the West. The Awakening symbolizes how this movement which began in the west is moving eastward in its goal of providing women across the nation with the right to vote.
2. While President Wilson's signature would not be necessary for securing the constitutional amendment, many desired his support to add legitimacy to the cause of women's suffrage. The persistence of those in support of women's suffrage would help to persuade Wilson to support women's suffrage.