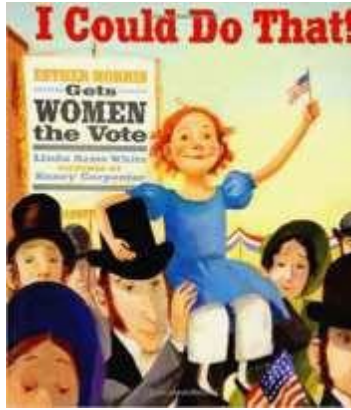


I Could Do That: Esther Morris Gets Women the Vote



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Topics: Constitution, legislation, rules, building community, what it means to be an American, rights and responsibility

Genres: Picture book, American history non-fiction

Many groups of people had to fight very hard to secure the right to vote. Every United States citizen should register to vote at eighteen and should always go to the polls on election day. Voting is the single most important way each of us uses our voice.

Esther Morris was born in 1812, a time in our history when women did not have the right to vote. It took over 100 years for women to get that right. The 19th Amendment that gave all women the right to vote was passed eighteen years after Esther Morris died.

However, her commitment to the suffragette movement and the Social and Political Union helped the suffragettes move ever closer to their goal of universal suffrage.

Reading or *listening to (*Check YouTube for a read-aloud of *I Could Do That*) Esther Morris' story, the reader learns how she became a leader in the movement that won voting rights for women in Wyoming Territory as early as 1869. Wyoming Territory was the first territory to give women the right to vote, and Esther was the first woman to hold a public office there.

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Before the Read Aloud:

What is a suffragist? If you were alive during any of the events discussed in the book, do you think you would have been a suffragist? Why or why not? Does your gender determine whether you would or not support the suffragists?

During the Read Aloud:

1. From the beginning of the story, Esther wants to learn how to do things that the older girls do. Do you think that was a sign that Esther Morris was going to become a leader? What kinds of things do you want to learn to do that will help you to become a leader in your home, school, and/or community? Be prepared to share.
2. Esther Morris opened a hat shop when she was only 19 years old. Even though she could run her own business, Esther was not able to vote. Today all citizens can register to vote when they become 18 years of age. However, until March of 1971, an individual had to be 21 to be able to register to vote. It was not that long ago that an individual could own a business at 19, but could not vote until they were 21. Do you think 18 is the right age for an individual to be able to register to vote? Why or why not? Would you think the age to vote should be higher or lower than 18? Be prepared to support your opinion.
3. Despite all of her “firsts,” Esther Morris never got to vote for president. As we learned from reading/listening to *I Could Do That*, trying to make change takes a lot of time, energy, and patience. In Esther Morris’ case, she did not get what she had fought so hard for. Do you think the time and energy Esther Morris spent working for women’s right to vote was worth her effort? Why or why not?

Take Action Project:

This story helps the reader understand how important our ancestors felt about voting. In addition, we learn that we can accomplish anything we put our minds to. After listening to the story, think about the things you can do as a young citizen to make the world a better place.

