

Context Card

Case study 2: Women

In 1867, the *British North America Act* was passed. The Act said that only men could vote. In the 1870s, women formed groups to fight for equality and the right to vote.

Different provinces had different rules about women and voting. In 1916, some women in Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta won the right to vote in provincial elections. During the First World War, some women were allowed to vote at the federal level. In 1918, many women got the right to participate fully in federal elections.

However, some women were still not allowed to vote for reasons other than their gender. It was not until 1960 that First Nations women got the right to vote.



Source: Reg Innell, Toronto Star Photo Archive

1867

Women



Source: Library and Archives Canada, PA-091061

At Confederation, you can vote only if you:

- are male
- are age 21 or older, and
- own property.

Women couldn't vote in federal or provincial elections.

1876

Women



Source: Library and Archives Canada, PA-028033

A group of women create the National Council of Women to fight for women's right to vote. Women create similar organizations across Canada.

1916

Women



Source: Foote and James, Archives of Manitoba, PR1967-43, N9905

Manitoba becomes the first province in Canada to allow some women to vote.

1917

Women



Source: William Rider-Rider, Canada. Dept. of National Defence/Library and Archives Canada, PA-002279 (modified from the original). Colourized image courtesy of the Vimy Foundation.

During the First World War, these women are allowed to vote in federal elections:

- Canadian women in the military
- Women related to men in the military

In this photo, Canadian military nurses in France cast their ballots.

1918

Women



Source: The Grey Roots Archival Collection

Many Canadian women win the right to vote in federal elections. In the next federal election (1921), Agnes Macphail is the first woman elected to the Canadian Parliament.

1940

Women



Source: André Larose, Library and Archives Canada, PA-178194

Quebec is the last province to give women the vote. It took the work of activists like Thérèse Casgrain to make this change.

1960

Women



Source: University of Saskatchewan, University Archives & Special Collections, John G. Diefenbaker fonds MG 411, JGD 3636

All First Nations women and men are given the right to vote in federal elections without any conditions. Before 1960, they could vote only if they gave up their treaty rights and First Nations status. Here, Prime Minister John Diefenbaker greets a First Nations woman.

1993

Women



Source: The Canadian Press/Phil Snel

Kim Campbell becomes the first female prime minister of Canada.