

## Context card

# Case study: Women

In 1867, only men could vote in elections.

In the decades that followed, women formed groups to fight for equality and the right to vote. Women's groups focused on getting the right to vote at the provincial level. The first successes came in 1916 when Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta gave women the vote.

Two years later, in 1918, the federal election law changed to give women the same voting rights as men. This did not mean that all women could vote in federal elections. Some women were still barred from voting for other reasons such as their racial background. It was not until many years later that all Canadian citizens got the right to vote in federal elections.



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 at least 21 years old
- own property

Women cannot vote in federal or provincial elections.

# 1876

Women



Source: Library and Archives Canada, PA-028033

The National Council of Women is created to fight for women's right to vote. Women create similar groups across Canada.

# 1916

Women



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

Manitoba is the first province in Canada to allow women to vote. Some women are still not allowed to vote for reasons other than their gender.

Women in Manitoba took civic action to achieve this success. Over 40,000 people signed the final petition for women's voting rights.

# 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 vote while serving in France.

# 1918

Women



Source: The Grey Roots Archival Collection

Canadian women win the right to vote in federal elections. Some women are still not allowed to vote for other reasons such as their racial background.

One year later, they win the right to be a candidate for the House of Commons.

Agnes Macphail is the first woman elected to Parliament, in 1921.

# 1940

Women



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

Quebec gives women the right to vote in provincial elections. It is the last province to do so after opposing the idea for decades.

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 people, women and men, are given the right to vote in federal elections.

Before this, they could vote only if they gave up their Treaty rights and status.

Here, Prime Minister John Diefenbaker greets a First Nations woman and child in Yellowknife.

# 1993

Women



Source: The Canadian Press/Phil Snel

Kim Campbell becomes the first female prime minister of Canada. She takes over the position when the previous Prime Minister resigns.