A Teachers Guide

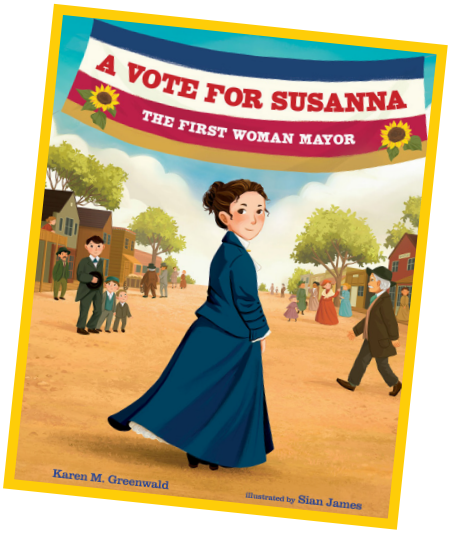
This guide is designed for K-8 students. Teachers may adapt lessons as they see fit.

A VOTE FOR SUSANNA

The First Woman Mayor

By Karen M. Greenwald Illustrated by Sian James

ABOUT THE BOOK



In 1887, the state of Kansas gave women the right to vote in municipal elections. But some men in the city of Argonia, Kansas, didn't think women should have a say in choosing their next mayor, so they put a woman on the ballot – as a joke. That woman was Susanna Salter– and soon the men would find the joke was on them! Narrated by a grandmother who remembered what happened on that election day, this is the true story of a woman who stood up for her right to vote and accomplished so much more.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Karen M. Greenwald published her first poem when she was five. Seeing her name in print hooked her on writing (even though the school paper credited her older sister). In addition to being a children's author, Karen is a nonpracticing attorney and an international-award-winning brand strategist. Karen is a Maryland native. Visit her online at **www.karengreenwald.com.**

ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR

Born and raised in Hong Kong, Sian has been drawing for as long as she can remember. Despite growing up as a city girl, she loves daydreaming about enchanted forests and magical adventures. After completing a PhD in archaeology, she decided to pursue her passion for illustration. When not drawing or painting, she loves to volunteer at museums or curl up with a good book.

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READING ACTIVITIES

BEFORE READING

✓	Identify the title, author, and illustrator of the book. What does the author do (writes the words)? What does the illustrator do (draws the pictures)?
✓	Read the title and look at the cover. What do you think this book will be about? Do you think the book will be nonfiction (true) or fiction (make believe)?
✓	Talk about who a mayor is and what their job entails. How does one become a mayor? Discuss the campaigning and election process.
✓	If your students are familiar with women's suffrage, talk about what it is. Can you identify what time period Susanna's election took place based on what you already know and/or the illustrations? Can you guess where?

WHILE READING

✓	Make a list of text-to-text, text-to-self, and text-to-world connections while reading the story.
✓	Make predictions about how Dora might be connected to Susanna's story.
✓	What is a "prank?" Discuss this with students. In the story, when twenty men meet in secret and decide to do a "prank," what might they be scheming? When it's revealed that they've made an "ENORMOUS change" to the ballot, make predictions for what the change might entail.
✓	Why do you think the men thought Susanna could never win the election? Discuss what they thought would happen when they added her to the ballot. Why was the outcome different from what the men expected?

AFTER READING

✓	Compare the election process in Susanna's time to the election process of a modern mayor. Show how they are both similar and different. You may want to include things like type of ballot, how candidates campaign, or voter demographics. Why do you think the women did not originally put a woman's name on the ballot?
✓	Read the back matter of the book. What additional information did you learn about Susanna? How is the writing style used in the back matter different from that in the story?

VOCABULARY

Decode and discuss the following words found in the book.

Ballot: a process of voting in writing, usually done in secret.
Candidate: a person who is nominated for an election.
Election: a formal, organized process of choosing someone for a political office.
Governing: having the authority to change policy, actions, or affairs of a place and its people.
Laws: rules of a society.
Nominate: to propose a candidate for election.
Office: a public position of authority.
Politics: the activities associated with government.
Vote: a formal indication of a choice between two or more candidates or positions.

FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE

The book tells us that Susanna "wanted women's voices to be heard." Discuss what this means. Literally it means hearing women speak or sing, but figuratively, Susanna meant she wanted women's opinions to matter in important decisions. "Having your voice heard" is an idiom. Research other idioms (a few are below) and have students describe what is literally and figuratively meant by each phrase. Have students illustrate the difference between the literal and figurative meanings.

- It's a piece of cake.
- It's raining cats and dogs.
- Bite the bullet.
- Break a leg.
- Hit the sack.
- Go back to the drawing board.
- You're on the ball.
- Lend me a hand.
- Feeling under the weather.
- Let me wrap my head around it.

WRITING

1 Ed thinks he can't bake a cake because he is a male and Susanna couldn't run for political office because she was a female.

- Create a superhero who defies gender stereotypes. What is your superhero named? What do they look like? Who is their arch nemesis? Write a story or comic about one of the superhero's adventures.

2 Imagine you were living in Argonia, Kansas, in 1887.

- Write a letter to Susanna after her election victory. What questions might you ask her? What might you want to tell her? Is there something you'd like her to do? Share your work on www.karengreenwald.com/teachers.

3

Ed tells Susanna she was brave to run for office.

- Write a persuasive essay explaining why you agree or disagree with that statement.
- Write a research report on another person you think is brave. Give three examples of how that person shows bravery.
- Write a personal narrative about a time you were brave.
- Write an acrostic poem about bravery. You can use the words brave or bravery as your acrostic, or you can use the name of a person for your poem.

Sample:

Bullied for helping people vote, but
Ready to do what's right.
Are you aware of Susanna Salter? She was the
Very first woman
Elected mayor in the United States.

4

Research countries that have had a female head of state.

- Have students work in pairs or groups to create reports on these famous female leaders.

5

There are many women serving in office at local, state, and national levels.

- Find out the names of a few of them (bonus points if they represent where you live). Write a letter to one of them. You may want to tell them about Susanna's story, inquire about their own experience running for office, or talk about issues affecting your community.

6

Campaign to see Susanna on a stamp.

- Write a letter to the US Postal Service Citizens' Stamp Advisory Committee. Persuade them to create a stamp that commemorates Susanna's achievements.
- Ask students to make sure these steps have been followed:

1. The proposal letters include pertinent historical information and important dates associated with Susanna Salter (the candidate).
2. The letters only discuss Susanna Salter.
3. The package of letters has adequate postage and will be mailed to:

Stamp Development
Attn: Citizens' Stamp Advisory Committee
475 L'Enfant Plaza SW, Room 3300
Washington, DC 20260-3501

- Be sure to share your letters at www.karengreenwald.com/stampcampaign.

SOCIAL STUDIES

DISCUSSION

- Women in Argonia earned the right to vote in local elections thirty-three years before American women could vote in national elections. Why do you think it took so long for this to happen? How do you think women (and men) in other communities felt when Argonia allowed women to vote?

- Imagine you lived during this time period. What are some reasons why you would or would not vote for Susanna? What made her a qualified candidate? What made her an unqualified candidate?

- Do you think prewritten ballots are a good idea? Why or why not? Which one would you prefer to use?

- Susanna and the other female voters in Argonia were originally meeting to discuss which candidates to vote for. Why do you think they didn't list any women candidates on their ballot?

- In the back matter, we learn that 98 men voted for Susanna in the election. Why do you think so many men voted for her?

- After Susanna's victory party many newspapers reported only on her appearance, and household duties—not her role as mayor. Over a century later, media coverage has not changed much. Twenty-first century female candidates have their gender, appearance, and family mentioned far more often than male candidates. Why do you think this happens? Why has so little changed over time? Should candidates, regardless of their gender, be treated the same? Why do you think the media and public care about a woman's appearance and family? What can be done to ensure all candidates are treated equally?

MAKE A TIME LINE

- Susanna was born in 1860 and died in 1961. Create a time line of her life. Research and discover ten important historical events that occurred in her lifetime. You may want to include things like presidential elections, wars, and women's suffrage.

- Create a time line of voting rights in US history. You can find a list of important dates here: **https://bit.ly/voting_timeline.**

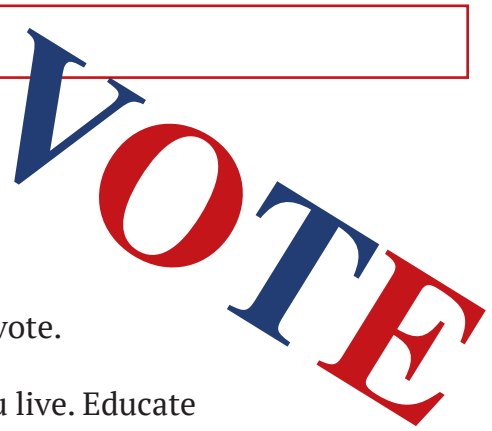
- Create a time line of women's suffrage in the United States. This document is a good resource for getting started: **https://bit.ly/sufferage_timeline.** Don't forget to include Susanna on your time line!

GEOGRAPHY

- Have students find out which countries have elected a female head of state. Color those countries. You can extend this by having students write reports on those countries.

- Today women can vote in 99% of all nations. Research when women won the right to vote around the world. This is a good resource for getting started: **https://bit.ly/womens_vote.** Choose a different color to represent each decade since 1890 and color in the map (as best as you can) to show when women won the vote worldwide.

PUBLIC SERVICE



During an election period (either school-level, local, or national), encourage and support voters and the election process.

- Inquire about ways you can volunteer at a polling site.
- Create posters, videos, or songs that encourage people to vote.
- Find out the requirements for voter registration where you live. Educate eligible voters about the requirements.

POLITICAL SCIENCE

1 Meet a Mayor

If possible, arrange to meet the mayor of your town. If you can't meet in person (or virtually), here are some other options:

- Using local newspapers and your town's website, find your mayor's name. When were they elected? What are some of their duties? What are some of their accomplishments? How long is their term?
- Write a letter to your mayor. You may want to tell them about Susanna's story or issues affecting your community. Post your letters on www.karengreenwald.com/teachers.
- If possible, attend a city council meeting to see how government works at the local level.

2 Understand Campaigns

- Hold a mock election. You can choose to elect a "student mayor" of your classroom or perhaps choose two different animals to run as candidates for "class mascot."
- Have each campaign team come up with a poster, slogan, and speech explaining why they should win.
- Discuss the responsibilities of the winner.
- Discuss ways to run a fair campaign process.
- Consider who will vote in the election and the length of the campaign period. If your whole class is involved in the campaign, you may want to have another class vote.

STEM

BAKING

Grandma and Ed spend the story baking a cake together. Baking is a great STEM activity that includes elements of math and scientific thinking. Use the following cake recipe and bake it together.

Recipe

GRANDMA DORA'S ANGEL FOOD CAKE

INGREDIENTS

9 LARGE EGG WHITES
1 1/2 C SUGAR
1 C CAKE FLOUR
1 1/4 TSP CREAM OF TARTAR
1 TSP VANILLA EXTRACT
1/4 TSP ALMOND EXTRACT
1/4 TSP SALT

DIRECTIONS

Seperate eggs. Place egg whites in large bowl and let stand at room temperature for 30 minutes.

Sift 1/2 cup sugar with flour, set aside.

Preheat oven to 350˚F.

Add cream of tartar, extracts, and salt to egg whites. Beat on medium until soft peaks form. Slowly add remiaing sugar and continue to beat until stiff peaks form. Fold in flour mixture.

Spoon into ungreased 10 inch tube pan. Tap gently to remove air pockets. Bake 35-40 minutes, until light brown and appears dry. Immediately invert, cool 1 hour.

Run knife around pan edges, remove cake and serve.

FRACTIONS AND PERCENTAGES

In the back matter of the book, we learn that 98 men and 20 women voted for Susanna.

- How many total people voted in the election? How many people voted for Susanna?
- If 2/3 of the town voted for her, how many people voted for someone else?
- Of the people that voted for Susanna, what percentage were men? What percentage were women?
- Hold a class election (perhaps for what game to play in gym or which book to read as a class). Calculate the results after everyone has voted and figure out what fraction of the class voted for each option.

ENGINEERING

It's important that votes are both private and secure. Using the materials listed below, create a ballot box that allows voters to both:

VOTE FOR ONE OF TWO CANDIDATES AND KEEP THEIR VOTES SECRET

Materials:

- Cardboard boxes of various sizes
- Small containers of various sizes (lids, cups, bowls)
- Construction paper
- Straws
- Craft sticks and/or coffee stirrers
- Scissors
- Paper clips
- Glue
- Tape
- Modeling clay

When your ballot box is complete, create an election topic (Which is better: cake or ice cream? Dogs or cats? Reading the book or watching the movie?). Remember, no one should be able to know the outcome of the election until everyone has voted. Be sure to post photos of your completed projects on www.karengreenwald.com/teachers.

SOCIAL EMOTIONAL LEARNING

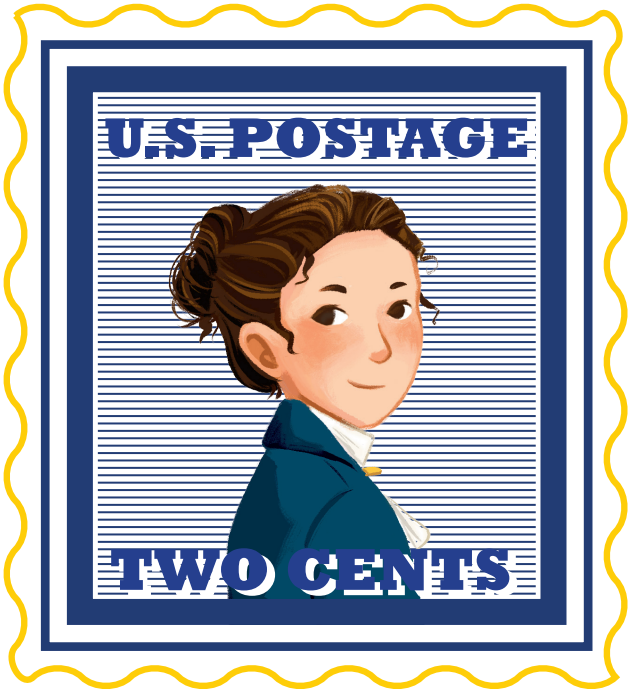
1 Discuss the ways Susanna is bullied in the story. We frequently think of bullying as being a physical action (pushing, shoving, hitting), but often it is nonphysical and less obvious. Can you think of examples of nonphysical bullying you've witnessed?

2 According to the book, what consequences did Susanna's bullies face? (Their prank backfired and Susanna actually won the election.) Do you think this was enough of a consequence? In the back matter, it is revealed that Susanna worked with three of the bullies on the city council. How would you react if you had to work with people who had bullied you? What strategies are helpful when you have to work with people you do not get along with?

3 Pretend you are an eyewitness to history and you are watching the bullies prank Susanna. What would you do? What would you say? Act out the scene or write a speech in support of Susanna and the other women voters.

FINE ARTS

1 Design a commemorative stamp that celebrates Susanna's life and accomplishments. You can view samples of the United States Post Office's current commemorative stamps here: **https://bit.ly/commemorative_stamp.**



2 Draw a portrait of Susanna. Two photographs of her are included in the back matter. Use them to create your own masterpiece.

3 Pretend you were living in Susanna's time and you are as assigned to create a campaign poster for her. Design a poster that highlights Susanna's strengths and encourages votes for her.

4 Re-enact Susanna's story through dramatic play. Assign students to perform as Susanna, Mr. Wilson (the other candidate), the other women in the meeting, the bullies who try to "prank" her, and voters in town. You may want to focus on these specific scenes:

- Susanna and the women meeting to discuss candidates. Two rude men interrupt them.
- The bullies trying to prank Susanna.
- The town election day. Susanna being declared the winner and the bullies' reaction.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

1 Set up stations with two (or more activities) at each one. Allow students to vote on which exercise to perform. For example, students could run one lap or jump rope 50 times for cardio.

2 Susanna loved baking an angel food cake each year on her birthday. To celebrate her, create a cake-baking relay.

- March or run in place 50 times to "beat the butter."
- Throw 3 bean bags in a hula hoop target to "add sugar."
- Make one basketball hoop to represent "adding flour."
- Use chopsticks or tongs to pick up a small item and carry it across the room. This represents adding a "pinch of salt."
- Walk across a balance beam without falling to symbolize carefully "separating your eggs."
- Use a water bottle or water gun to spray a target. This represents adding a "splash of vanilla." (Optional: if you have access to a pool, students could swim one lap as part of the relay.)

3 In the book, you see men playing the game of pool or billiards. This game is still popular today. Learn the rules and find a pool table (many community and rec centers have one) where you can play the game yourself.

GIRL SCOUT GUIDE

Earning Girl Scout Badges with **A Vote for Susanna: The First Woman Mayor**

You can empower your troop with Susanna's story as you earn badges at every level. The following are ideas for incorporating the book into your meetings.

DAISY

Honest and Fair Petal (light blue): Read the book and discuss voting rights during Susanna's life. Is it fair that only white males could vote until Kansas passed their law? To demonstrate, randomly choose one girl and allow her to pick all the activities and snacks for your meeting or a short portion of it. Everyone else has to do what she chooses even if they don't want to. Discuss how it feels not having a say in what you do.

Courageous and Strong Petal (red): After reading the book, discuss the different ways Susanna was courageous and strong (ignoring the bullies, running for election, leading her town). Have girls list the ways they demonstrate being courageous and strong in their own lives. As an activity, have girls create posters or bookmarks to empower others to be strong, lead others, and stand up to bullies.

Respect Authority Petal (magenta): After reading the book, take a field trip and meet your own mayor. If it's not possible to meet in person, the troop may be able to have a virtual visit or tour city hall. Before the meeting, they can research a little bit about the mayor or write letters about issues that are important to them.

BROWNIE

Celebrate Community
Susanna became more than just a mayor. People around the world saw her as a symbol of hope. As your girls earn the Celebrate Community badge, encourage them to use Susanna as a role model.

- Find female leaders in the local, state or national community. Make posters to celebrate their accomplishments.
- Susanna was from the state of Kansas. Have the girls learn the state song of Kansas and sing it (as well as the state song of their home state).
- Create a parade of female leaders. Each girl can dress up as a famous leader and march in the parade. Or see if your troop can be part of a community parade on Independence Day, Veteran's Day, or another important day in your town.

JUNIOR

Inside Government
Susanna was an active citizen because she cared about which candidates were on the ballot and she encouraged others to vote. Your girls can also become active citizens by earning this badge.

- Read the book and list all the ways Susanna was an active citizen.
- Have your girls be active citizens by reading the book to a younger troop and giving a presentation on women's suffrage.
- Research laws that limited voting rights for different groups of people (women, minorities, the uneducated, and poor). Create a time line of voting rights in America.
- Write an essay or poem about the importance of voting rights. Share it with your classmates, publish it in a newspaper, or post it on author Karen M. Greenwald's site at www.karengreenwald.com/girlscouts.
- Discuss ways girls can be involved in politics now. Do their schools have a student council? Talk about what it means to be an elected leader and encourage them to learn more about the process.

CADETTE

Public Speaker
Susanna was passionate about helping others find their voices. As you earn this badge, reflect on Susanna's story and share your own voice with the world. Perhaps you can try one of these ideas:

- Publish a poem, story, or essay about something that is important to you.
- Join a club or group that shares the same beliefs and goals as you do.
- Write a play or create a video about an issue that is important to you. Share it with others. Where appropriate, post on www.karengreenwald.com/girlscouts.

Democracy for Cadettes
To earn this badge, you must learn about different levels of government leaders. Find out who represents you at the local, state, and national level. Include leaders in the executive, judicial, and legislative branches.

- Do any of the people that represent you have special distinctions?
- Learn about other leaders in your country who are the first to earn leadership positions.
- Who are the women who have served as US Supreme Court justices? Learn about their lives and share your learning through reports, skits, or an online presentation.

SENIORS

Democracy for Seniors
After reading the book, discuss different ways Susanna impacted her community. Learn more about how your community is governed.

- Sit in on a city council meeting.
- Arrange a meeting with your mayor or city council to discuss issues that are important to you.
- Find out if your community has citizen improvement groups. See if you are eligible to join one or find another way to help improve your community (libraries and parks often allow teens to volunteer on committees, too).
- How did Susanna's election impact other communities in Kansas? How did it impact communities outside of Kansas?