

SOURCE 1

An article called 'An Appeal Against Female Suffrage' published in *The Nineteenth Century Magazine* in June 1889
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HOW TO USE THIS SOURCE TO HELP YOU ANSWER THE BIG QUESTION :

Study this source carefully and consider what it tells you about why people thought women should get the vote. You should consider:

ASK YOURSELF:

- Does this article suggest women are inferior to men?
- According to this article, in what ways are the roles of men and women different?
- What do you think the following phrases mean: 'disabilities of sex'; 'strong formations of custom and habit'?
- The writers of this article were wealthy women, the wives of leading political figures in England. Does this affect your view of what is said in the article?

SOURCE 1

AN APPEAL AGAINST FEMALE SUFFRAGE.

WE, the undersigned, wish to appeal to the common sense and the educated thought of the men and women of England against the proposed extension of the Parliamentary suffrage to women.

1. While desiring the fullest possible development of the powers, energies, and education of women, we believe that their work for the State, and their responsibilities towards it, must always differ essentially from those of men, and that therefore their share in the working of the State machinery should be different from that assigned to men.

To men belong the struggle of debate and legislation in Parliament; the hard and exhausting labour implied in the administration of the national resources and powers; the conduct of England's relations towards the external world; the working of the army and navy;

In all these spheres women's direct participation is made impossible either by the disabilities of sex, or by strong formations of custom and habit resting ultimately upon physical difference, against which it is useless to contend.

In conclusion: nothing can be further from our minds than to seek to depreciate the position or the importance of women. It is because we are keenly alive to the enormous value of their special contribution to the community, that we oppose what seems to us likely to endanger that contribution. We are convinced that the pursuit of a mere outward equality with men is for women not only vain but leads to a total misconception of woman's true dignity and special mission.