

**Grade 5 HASS**  
**Australian History**

# **Suffragettes**

## **Catherine**

## **Helen Spence**

**4 fun activities!**

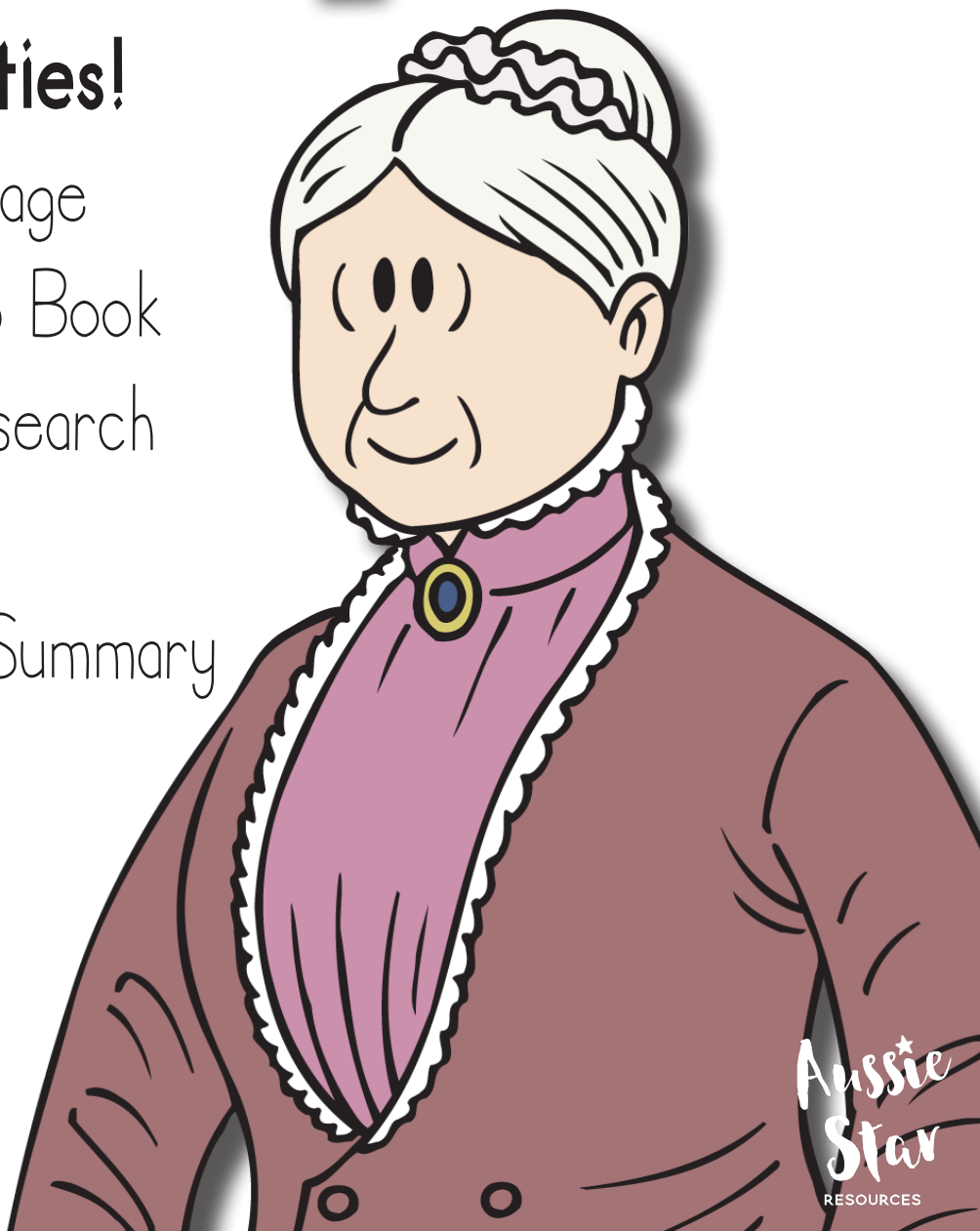
Reading Passage

Suffragette Flip Book

Suffragette Research

Profile

Reading Passage Summary





The class were excited and a buzz of conversation hummed through the classroom. It was History class and Miss Townsend had arranged a special treat. She fiddled with the knobs and dials of the big expensive machine and turned to the class.

"Class, today we will be talking with Catherine Helen Spence who is coming to us from the late 1870s. Please keep your questions related to her life, do not mention her death, and class - no mobile phones!"

Miss Townsend turned the dial and the time machine whirred into life. A dazzling beam of white light appeared and a short, stout woman stepped from the light. She looked at the class with clear eyes and said, "Good morning children. How may I help you?"

Milly raised her hand. "Ms Spence, you once said that if you were born male you would have commanded the most important position among Australian statesmen. Why would you have to a man to achieve such a position?"

Catherine gazed over the class and said, "I see both boys and girls sitting shoulder to shoulder, learning and speaking with equal rights. Did you know though, this was not always so? When I left Scotland in 1839 I was a lass of only fourteen years. My parents migrated to the Colony and here I found womenfolk were to be seen and not heard. Women were to cook and clean but rarely allowed to be educated and, even more rarely, allowed to take on positions of power. And children were taught to be seen nor heard. In fact, poor children and orphans were confined to orphanages and often lived - and died - behind closed doors."

"You helped to change all that," Emily said matter-of-factly.

Catherine's lips lifted up in a small smile and she said, "I like to think I helped women and children achieve greater presence in society. My dear friend, Caroline Emily Clark, and I worked tirelessly to have the State of South Australia reform its laws and introduce home boarding for orphan and destitute children. I worked also to have all-female kindergartens and schools opened."

Kyran groaned at the mention of schools for girls.

Miss Townsend frowned and Catherine glared at Kyran and snapped, "That's enough from you, young man! It's precisely boorish actions like yours that drove me to advocate for women to be seen and heard. God forbid what this country would have come to if women hadn't been enfranchised!"

Kyran blushed bright red and Kalish sniggered then asked, "What does enfranchised mean?"

Catherine tilted her head back and said, "To be acknowledged as a member of society, dear. To be allowed to contribute to your society. To be allowed to vote. To be allowed to speak up. To have rights as a citizen of society. Why, I took my own State Government of South Australia until 1894 to allow women the right to vote. By that time I was campaigning day and night to see this outcome, and had even taken a place in political office to urge society to awaken to the need to embrace change."

"Were you were the first female politician?" David asked politely.

Catherine thought for a moment and said, "I suppose so. I always seemed to be the first woman to do something that was so commonplace for men; first published Australian female author. First published Australian female journalist. First female elected to reform boards. I say female in all of these firsts, because men had always had the right to do these things truly first."

"But because of your actions, now we females actually are allowed to do things first," Emily said quietly.

Catherine smiled, a satisfied, happy smile. "Then my life's work has counted for something. Society has been woken and recognised that women, and children, have voices of importance."

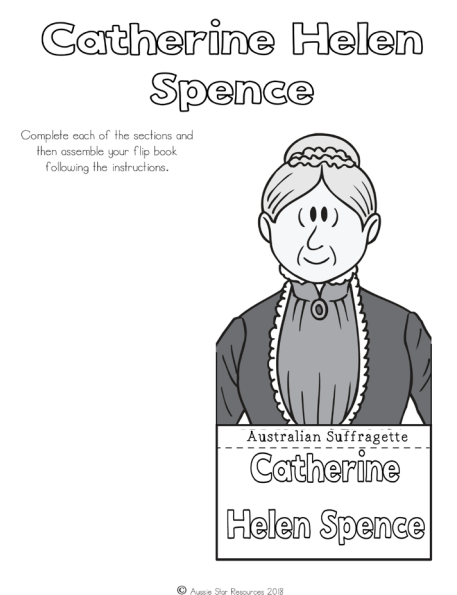
Miss Townsend nodded and said, "We have run out of time unfortunately, Catherine Spence, thank you for coming to talk with the class. We wish you the best in your future endeavours."

Catherine nodded at Miss Townsend and the class. She disappeared back into the time machine and vanished in a beam of bright white light.

Miss Townsend turned to the class and said, "Bonus points for anyone who can tell me the end of Catherine Spence's story."

Kalish raised her hand and said, "I know she was called 'The Grand Old Woman of Australia' when she died."

Miss Townsend nodded. "Correct. Catherine campaigned and advocated for women's rights up to her death in 1910 at the amazing age of 85. She was many things in life, a novelist, journalist, politician and advocate - and that's why she will always be remembered as a true Australian pioneer."



GLUE HERE	GLUE HERE
How does Catherine describe life for women and children in the colonies?	
GLUE HERE	Catherine achieved a number of 'firsts' for women. What were they?
How did Mary and her friend Caroline work to improve life for children?	GLUE HERE
	According to Catherine, what does it mean to be enfranchised?

# Australian Suffragette Profile Catherine Helen Spence

Full Name: .....

Date of Birth: .....

Place of Birth: .....

Date of Death: .....

How would you describe the character of Catherine Helen Spence based on the story and your research?

How did Catherine Helen Spence bring about political and social reform?

Two questions I have about Catherine Helen Spence.

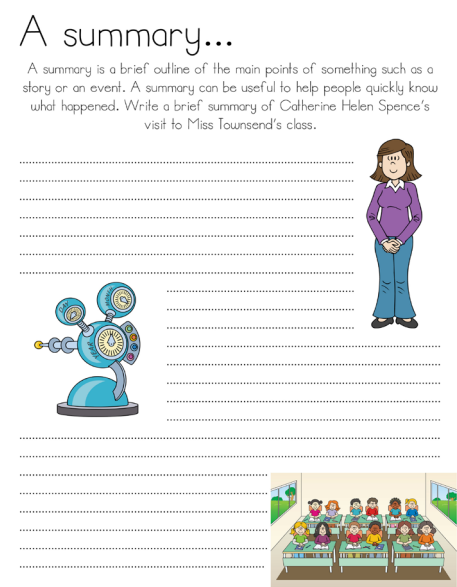
1. ....

2. ....

Two facts I've learned about Catherine Helen Spence.

1. ....

2. ....



# Australian Suffragette Profile Catherine Helen Spence ANSWERS

Full Name: Catherine Helen Spence

Date of Birth: 3rd October 1825

Place of Birth: Melbourne, UK

Date of Death: 3rd April, 1910

How would you describe the character of Catherine Helen Spence based on the story and your research?

Answers will vary.

How did Catherine Helen Spence bring about political and social reform?

Answers will vary.

Two questions I have about Catherine Helen Spence.

1. Answers will vary.

2. ....

Two facts I've learned about Catherine Helen Spence.

1. Answers will vary.

2. ....

# Catherine Helen Spence Answers

GLUE HERE

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How does Catherine describe life for women and children in the colonies?

GLUE HERE

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Catherine achieved a number of 'firsts' for women. What were they?

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"I like to think I helped women and children achieve greater presence in society. My dear friend, Caroline Emily Clark, and I worked tirelessly to have the State of South Australia reform its laws and introduce home boarding for orphan and destitute children. I worked also to have all-female kindergartens and schools opened."

How did Mary and her friend Caroline work to improve life for children?

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According to Catherine, what does it mean to be enfranchised?

# ANSWERS AND ASSEMBLY INSTRUCTIONS ARE INCLUDED



