“On Women’s Right to the Suffrage,” excerpt from a speech by Susan B. Anthony given in 1873

“Friends and fellow citizens: I stand before you tonight under indictment for the alleged crime of having voted at the last presidential election, without having a lawful right to vote. It shall be my work this evening to prove to you that in thus voting, I not only committed no crime, but, instead, simply exercised my citizen’s rights, guaranteed to me and all United States citizens by the National Constitution, beyond the power of any state to deny.

The preamble of the Federal Constitution says:

‘We, the people of the United States, in order to form a more perfect union, establish justice, insure domestic tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general welfare, and secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America.’

It was we, the people; not we, the white male citizens; nor yet we, the male citizens; but we, the whole people, who formed the Union. And we formed it, not to give the blessings of liberty, but to secure them; not to the half of ourselves and the half of our posterity, but to the whole people—women as well as men. And it is a downright mockery to talk to women of their enjoyment of the blessings of liberty while they are denied the use of the only means of securing them provided by this democratic-republican government—the ballot.”

1200L/FK 10.7 Source: <http://www.historyplace.com/speeches/anthony.htm>

Directions:

1. Follow along as the first paragraph of the speech is reread to you. Circle the words listed in the glossary and any other words you do not know the meanings of.
2. Reread the speech with your partner using the glossary and context clues to write synonyms or explanations above difficult words.
3. Reread the text and answer the questions in the right hand column.

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| **“On Women’s Right to the Suffrage,” a Speech by Susan B. Anthony, 1873** | **Use the text to answer the following questions:** |
| Friends and fellow citizens: I stand before you tonight under indictment for the alleged crime of having voted at the last presidential election, without having a lawful right to vote. It shall be my work this evening to prove to you that in thus voting, I not only committed no crime, but, instead, simply exercised my citizen’s rights, guaranteed to me and all United States citizens by the National Constitution, beyond the power of any state to deny. 1200L/FK 10.7 Source: <http://www.historyplace.com/speeches/anthony.htm>  | 1) What does Susan B. Anthony mean by “alleged crime”?2) What does the word “right” mean as it is used in this text? 3) In 1873 it was against the law for women to vote in the state of New York as well as in other states. This speech says that voting is a right that is “beyond the power of the state to deny.” What do you think this means? |
| **Gist Statement: What is this paragraph mostly about?** |