The 19th Amendment

Read the passage. Then answer the questions in full sentences.

Name _____ Date _____

The 19th Amendment to the Constitution guarantees American women the right to vote, which is also called suffrage. Winning it took decades of difficult struggle, and few of its early supporters lived to see the final victory in 1920. Beginning in the mid-1800s, several generations of supporters lectured, wrote, marched and organized. Some worked state by state, and nine western states had passed laws giving women the vote by 1912. Others challenged male-only voting laws in the courts, and some used picketing, silent vigils and hunger strikes. Opponents heckled them, jailed them and sometimes hurt them.

The amendment was first introduced in Congress in 1878. Then New York gave women the vote in 1917, and in 1918 President Wilson changed his position and supported the amendment. The political balance began to shift. In 1919, the House of Representatives and then the Senate passed the amendment. Next it had to be ratified, or approved, by three-fourths of the states. On August 18, 1920, Tennessee became the 36th state to ratify it.

The amendment says that the right to vote "shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of sex." Still, the victory was not complete. African American and other minority women faced decades more of struggle, and many women could not vote until long into the 20th century because of discriminatory state voting laws, laws that treated some groups unfairly.

1. **What is the passage mostly about?**

2. **What does "ratified" mean in the second paragraph? What in the sentence shows it?**

3. **How did events in 1917 and 1918 help the amendment pass?**

4. **The author says "the victory was not complete." Do you agree? Support your answer with details from the passage.**

Answer key

The 19th Amendment

1. What is the passage mostly about?
   How American women won the right to vote through the 19th Amendment after decades of struggle, and how the victory was not complete for every woman.

2. What does “ratified” mean in the second paragraph? What in the sentence shows it?
   It means approved. The words “or approved” right after it explain it.

3. How did events in 1917 and 1918 help the amendment pass?
   New York gave women the vote and President Wilson began to support the amendment, so the political balance began to shift. Congress passed the amendment in 1919.

4. The author says “the victory was not complete.” Do you agree? Support your answer with details from the passage.
   Sample answer: Yes. The amendment said the vote could not be denied on account of sex, but many women still could not vote until long into the 20th century because of discriminatory state voting laws, and African American and other minority women faced decades more of struggle.