

How did the women's rights movement shape modern Britain?

What does the women's rights movement look like today?

Guidance Notes and Lesson Plan

By the end of the lesson students will:

- Be able to connect historical feminist initiatives to the contemporary feminist movement
- Understand the current state of gender inequity in Britain
- Illustrate their understanding of the feminist movement's goals and tactics
- Create their own piece of art highlighting a social issue of their choosing

Introduction

This lesson shifts focus from the historical context of the women's rights movement in Britain to its contemporary landscape. Students will be asked to identify modern-day trailblazers for women in politics, sport, science, and entertainment. They will then be tasked with analysing statistics about ongoing inequity in modern Britain and discussing potential solutions.

The lesson will conclude with a summative project where students will create their own poster advocating for change related to a social issue of their choosing, inspired by the posters previously studied in the unit. Students should be able to place themselves within a broader context of social activists, using art as a tool for political change.

Key Information

This lesson is designed for students aged 12 and above. It is devised for History classes.

Timings are suggested based on a one-hour lesson and may need adapting based on circumstances.

Prior knowledge is not needed. However, the notion that students may arrive with knowledge, ideas and preconceptions is embraced and should be utilised to explore and resolve misconceptions.

Resources:

- Lesson plan
- Lesson PowerPoint
- Gender Inequity in Modern Britain handout (Slide 4) – one per student
- Examples of art as political tools (Slides 7-12) – each slide printed out and displayed prominently on a classroom wall/whiteboard
- Changemaking through Art handout - additional resource

Lesson Plan

Starter: Comparative exercise (8 minutes)

Display the starter activity (Slide 1). These images are from Lesson 1 and illustrate the different spheres men and women inhabited in 1950s Britain. Ask students: How are gender roles in contemporary Britain different from in the 1950s? Are there any ways that they are still similar? Facilitate a class discussion based on this prompt. Students should back up their claims using evidence. Students may have differing perspectives on the answer: respectful and thoughtful disagreement should be encouraged.

Introduction (2 minutes)

Remind students of the enquiry question for the unit: How did the women's rights movement shape modern Britain?

Introduce students to the question for this unit: What does the women's rights movement look like today?

Activity: Women Trailblazers in Modern Britain (6 minutes)

Explain to students that the role of women in British life continues to change and develop over time. Slide 3 displays several trailblazers in different elements of modern British life.

- Politics/Law: Margaret Thatcher (1st woman prime minister), Amal Clooney (prolific human rights lawyer), Diane Abbott (first black woman elected to parliament)

- Science: Jane Goodall (zoologist and conservation activist), Jocelyn Bell Burnell (astrophysicist)
- Sport: Tanni Grey-Thompson (16x paralympic medallist in wheelchair racing), Leah Williamson (member of 2022 Euros-winning England women's football team)
- Entertainment: Zadie Smith (author), Emma Watson (actress and women's rights activist), Naomi Campbell (model)

Ask students: What other British women trailblazers do you know? Encourage students to identify examples from politics, popular culture, or even their personal lives. Students should understand the myriads of ways in which women have broken barriers in British life since the 1950s.

Activity: Gender Inequity in Modern Britain (10 minutes)

Ensure every student has a copy of the Gender Inequity in Modern Britain handout (Slide 4) Ask the students to use the information and statistics on Slide 5 to fill out their handout chart independently.

Ask students to consider: when will men and women become fully equal in Britain? What should be done to create this equity? Facilitate a group discussion on this topic. Students may identify different root causes or provide different solutions from their peers.

Activity: Changemaking through Art (30 minutes)

(Before the lesson, educators should print out one copy of slides 7-12 and display these prominently on a wall or whiteboard in the classroom. Each slide depicts a different piece of political art which has been previously discussed in the scheme of work.)

Remind students of the posters and art they have examined throughout the unit. Explain that art has always been a means of demanding change for women's rights activists.

Ask students to examine the artwork displayed on the wall/whiteboard and facilitate a group discussion (Slide 6):

- What issues does this art address?
- Why are the images memorable?
- Why are they effective in making their point?

Review the criteria for success with students (Slide 13).

Students will spend the remainder of the lesson working independently on their own piece of activist art: a poster raising awareness about a social cause in modern Britain that they care about. Although issues of gender equity will likely be front of mind, the posters can focus on other parts of identity or society which students care about, recognizing the intersectionality of their own experiences.

Students should demonstrate through their posters that they understand the goals of the women's rights movement – to fight for equity and safety for all – as well as its strategies – including art as protest. Students can opt to make their posters by hand or with digital tools such as Photoshop or Canva. Give students roughly 20 minutes to create their posters, circulating throughout the room as they do so.

Students should spend the last 10 minutes of the exercise completing the associated written activity (Changemaking through Art Handout). In an essay of one or two paragraphs, students should explain which social issue they chose to highlight in their poster, why they selected this issue, how their social activism is inspired by the activism studied in this scheme of work, and what creative decisions they made whilst making their poster to get their point across.

If there is any additional time, or educators wish to make this activity longer, students could rotate around and view all the posters in their classroom in an 'art gallery' activity.

Students should submit their poster alongside their written explanation at the end of the lesson. This can serve as an assessment opportunity for educators.

Summary (5 minutes)

If time allows, conclude the lesson with a quote from the feminist activist Malala Yousafzai: "I raise up my voice – not so that I can shout, but so that those without a voice can be heard." Ask students to share how they might use their voice to advocate for equality, as the women's rights activists studied in this unit did.