

History is Central Summer Institute (Social Movements)

Teacher: Sally Nyhan

Class: US History

Grade Level: 8

Topic: The Seneca Falls Convention and Portrayal of Women Activists: A Three-day Unit

Essential Questions: How did the woman's rights movement begin? How did 19th century American society react to women's rights advocates?

Learner Background: These lessons are designed as part of a larger study of the abolitionist movement. Students will have already discussed the place of women in society in general and studied some of the major ideas and people involved in the abolitionist movement. These lessons will introduce them to the woman involved in abolition and how they became the genesis of the woman's rights movement.

Student Objectives:

Day 1: Students will discover the connections between the abolition and women's rights movements. They will find the importance of major figures in the women's movement.

Day 2: Students will analyze the statements of the Seneca Falls Convention, comparing it to the Declaration of Independence, and discuss the goals of the women's movement.

Day 3: Students will use primary sources to discover the public response to the ideas of the women's rights movement and analyze the meanings of those sources.

Materials/Resources: Textbook (The American Nation) or a short history of the women's movement; copies of the Seneca Falls Declaration of Sentiments and the Declaration of Independence, attached worksheets, political cartoons on women's suffrage (as examples for assessment)

Day 1:

Initiation: Ask students what rights they have as students. Make a list on the board of correct and incorrect responses and discuss what limits students have on their rights (eg dress code, locker searches, etc.) and how they would go about getting more rights.

Learning Activities:

Ask students the following question. In the 1800s, these people could not vote, they could not own property, they could not find work in most jobs, if they did earn money, it was only a fraction of what others who did the same job earned, they could not get an education, and the law allowed them to be beaten by their masters. Who were they?

Most students will reply slaves, but these conditions also applied to women in the 19th century. Discuss the similarities between the treatment of women and slaves and women's involvement in the abolition movement. Then have students complete the background reading from the textbook (Worksheet 1). Students should finish this for homework.

Closure: Ask students to share new facts they discovered from the reading.

Day 2:

Initiation: Begin by showing a negative political cartoon on woman suffrage (numerous examples are available online. It may be hard to find a cartoon directly related to Seneca Falls—I used a cartoon from later periods just to give students the idea of public reaction). Discuss some of the issues the cartoon raises and whether it gives a positive or negative idea of woman suffrage.

Learning Activities:

Distribute copies of the Declaration of Sentiments and read the beginning together. Ask students if the language sounds familiar (reminders may be necessary to get someone to mention the Declaration of Independence). Distribute worksheet 2 and review vocabulary with the students. Then distribute copies of the Declaration of Independence and have students work together to complete the worksheet. Students should finish the worksheet or work on their project for homework.

Closure: Ask students to predict the public reaction to the Declaration of Sentiments.

Day 3:

Initiation: Review some of the resolutions of the Declaration of Sentiments. Do they seem outrageous or unreasonable? Write a list of some of the vocabulary from the newspaper articles on the board and ask if they are positive or negative words.(insurrection, aspire, novelty, vengeance, formidable, ridicule are some examples).

Learning Activities:

Distribute Newspaper Accounts sheet and worksheet 3. Students should work individually or in pairs to read and analyze the contemporary accounts of Seneca Falls.

Closure: Why would society react so strongly? What were the accepted places of men and women at that time? Review requirements of the assessment.

Assessment: Students will choose one of two assessment options, making a political cartoon about woman's rights or writing a letter to the editor of one of the newspaper accounts refuting their article. (see specifics below)

Differentiated Instruction:Pair stronger and weaker readers together in order to get through the worksheet, pre-supply special ed teacher with vocab to review before the lesson, circulate through the room to give extra help to those who struggle with the material, give only selected newspaper accounts to struggling readers.

Seneca Falls Convention/ Women Activists Assessment
Due Date:

Choose one of the two assessment options described below. Don't forget to use the rubric to help you plan your assignment.

Option 1:

Create a political cartoon displaying society's reaction to the Seneca Falls Convention and the issue of woman's rights. You must draw the cartoon yourself (no clip art) on an 8 ½ x 11 piece of paper and also complete a cartoon analysis sheet on your cartoon. Both pieces are due for this option. See the rubric below for details.

Option 2:

Write a 4-5 paragraph letter to the editor of one of the newspapers that criticized the Seneca Falls Convention. Write from the point of view of someone who supports the ideas of the Convention and refer to BOTH the newspaper and the Declaration of Sentiments in your letter. This may be typed or hand-written. See the rubric below for details.

Letter to the Editor Rubric

NAME: _____

Requirement	Exceeds Expectations	Meets Expectations	Approaches Expectations	Below Expectations
Historical Accuracy	Letter is completely historically accurate.	Letter is mostly historically accurate.	Letter is somewhat historically accurate.	Letter is not historically accurate.
Document Use	Letter responds to several specific issues from newspaper.	Letter responds to one specific issue from newspaper.	Letter responds to general issue from newspaper.	Letter does not respond to newspaper.
Primary Source Use	Letter specifically refers to Dec. of Sentiments several times.	Letter specifically refers to Dec. of Sentiments one time.	Letter refers generally to Dec. of Sentiments.	Letter does not refer to Declaration of Sentiments.
Mechanics	Letter is grammatically correct, well-organized and flows.	Letter is mostly grammatically correct, organized and flows.	Letter is somewhat grammatically correct, organized and flows.	Letter is not grammatically correct, not organized and does not flow.

GRADE: _____

Political Cartoon Rubric

NAME: _____

Requirement	Exceeds Expectations	Meets Expectations	Approaches Expectations	Below Expectations
Subject Matter	Student clearly shows understanding of political concept.	Student mostly shows understanding of political concept.	Student shows some understanding of political concept.	Student shows no understanding of political concept.
Historical Accuracy	Cartoon is completely historically accurate.	Cartoon is mostly historically accurate.	Cartoon is somewhat historically accurate.	Cartoon is not historically accurate.
Point of View	Student's point of view is clearly conveyed.	Student's point of view is mostly well-conveyed.	Student's point of view is poorly conveyed.	Student's point of view is not conveyed.
Creativity/ Visual Appeal	Original idea displayed; cartoon is neat and clearly legible.	Original idea displayed; cartoon is mostly neat and legible.	No original idea displayed; cartoon is neat and legible.	No original idea displayed; cartoon is not neat or legible.
Cartoon Analysis Worksheet	Worksheet is complete, with several details/specifics.	Worksheet is complete, with some details/specifics.	Worksheet is incomplete, with some specifics/details.	Worksheet is incomplete with no details/specifics.

GRADE: _____

Cartoon Analysis Worksheet:

WHO is represented in your cartoon?

WHAT are the people in your cartoon doing?

WHEN would this cartoon have been created? What were the main ideas/events of that time?

WHERE does your cartoon take place? How does the reader know (what are the clues)?

MESSAGE: What message does the cartoon give? How can the reader see the message?

Worksheet 2

The Declaration of Sentiments and the Declaration of Independence

VOCABULARY:

Inalienable right: a right that is natural, it cannot be taken away

Elective franchise: the right to vote

Degraded: immoral

Civilly dead: having no rights under the law

Impunity: without punishment

Chastisement: punishment

Remuneration: pay, wages

Apostolic authority: religious authority

QUESTIONS:

Compare the two Declarations and answer the questions below.

What phrases are used in both documents?

Declaration of Independence:

Declaration of Sentiments:

Is this a deliberate use of language?

Why would authors use this particular language?

What complaints do women have? In your own words list at least 8 of them.

Newspaper Accounts of The Seneca Falls Convention

The Boston ladies contend for the rights of women. The New York girls aspire to mount the rostrum, to do all the voting, and, we suppose, all the fighting too. . . . Women have enough influence over human affairs without being politicians. Is not everything managed by female influence? Mothers, grandmothers, aunts, and sweethearts manage everything. Men have nothing to do but to listen and obey to the "of course, my dear, you will, and of course, my dear, you won't." Their rule is absolute; their power unbounded. Under such a system men have no claim to rights, especially "equal rights." . . . A woman is nobody. A wife is everything. A pretty girl is equal to ten thousand men, and a mother is, next to God, all powerful. . . . --*Philadelphia Ledger and Daily Transcript*.

To us they appear extremely dull and uninteresting, and, aside from their novelty, hardly worth notice.—*Rochester Advertiser*.

BOLTING AMONG THE LADIES

A Woman's Rights Convention was held at Seneca Falls on the 19th and 20th inst., at which the opposers of *female* slavery adopted a declaration of sentiments, declaring that these truths are self-evident—that all men and women are created equal. . . . Was there ever such a dreadful revolt?—They set aside the statute "wives submit yourselves unto your husbands;" . . . This bolt is the most shocking and unnatural incident ever recorded in the history of womanity. If our ladies will insist on voting and legislating, where, gentlemen, will be our diners and our elbows? Where our domestic firesides. . . .?—*Oneida (NY) Whig*

INSURRECTION AMONG THE WOMEN.

A female Convention has just been held at Seneca Falls, N.Y., at which was adopted a "declaration of rights," setting forth, among other things, that "all men and women are created equal, and endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights." The list of grievances which the *Amazons* exhibit, concludes by expressing a determination to insist that women shall have "immediate admission to all the rights and privileges which belong to them as citizens of the United States." It is stated that they design, in spite of all misrepresentations and ridicule, to employ agents, circulate tracts, petition the State and National Legislatures, and endeavor to enlist the pulpit and press in their behalf. This is *bolting* with a vengeance.—*Worcester (Mass.) Telegraph*.

WOMEN OUT OF THEIR LATITUDE.

We are sorry to see that the women in several parts of this State are holding what they call "Woman's Rights Conventions," and setting forth a formidable list of those rights in a parody upon the Declaration of American Independence.

The papers of the day contain extended notices of these Conventions. Some of them fall in with their objects and praise the meetings highly; but the majority either deprecate or ridicule both.

The women who attend these meetings, no doubt at the expense of their more appropriate duties, act as committees, write resolutions and addresses, hold much correspondence, make speeches, &c., &c. They affirm, as among their rights, that of unrestricted franchise, and assert that it is wrong to deprive them of the privilege to become legislators, lawyers, doctors, divines, &c., &c.; and they are holding Conventions and making an agitational movement, with the object in view of revolutionizing public opinion and the laws of the land, and changing their relative position in society in such a way as to divide with the male sex the labors and irresponsibilities of active life in every branch of art, science, trades, and professions.

Now, it requires no argument to prove that this is all wrong. Every true hearted female will instantly feel that this is unwomanly, and that to be practically carried out, the males must change their position in society to the same extent in an opposite direction, in order to enable them to discharge an equal share of the domestic duties which now appertain to females, and which must be neglected, to a great extent, if women are allowed to exercise all the "rights" that are claimed by these Convention-holders. Society would have to be radically remodelled in order to accommodate itself to so great a change in the most vital part of the compact of the social relations of life; and the order of things established at the creation of mankind, and continued *six thousand years*, would be completely broken up.... But this change is impractical, uncalled for, and unnecessary. *If effected*, it would set the world by the ears, make "confusion worse confounded," demoralize and degrade from their high sphere and noble destiny, women of all respectable and useful classes, and prove a monstrous injury to all mankind. It would be productive of no positive good, that would not be outweighed tenfold by positive evil. It would alter the relations of females without bettering their condition. Besides all, and above all, it presents no remedy for the *real* evils, that the millions of industrious, hard-working, and much suffering women of our country groan under and seek to redress.— *Mechanic's* (Albany, N.Y.) *Advocate*.

Worksheet 3

Newspaper Accounts of the Seneca Falls Convention

Look at the headlines of the stories. What impression do they give?

Philadelphia Ledger:

What are Boston and New York women doing?

What does the author say about the power of women?

Does this author think women need equal rights?

Rochester Advertiser:

What adjectives are used to describe the convention?

Oneida Whig:

How does the author describe the Convention?

What is the author's complaint?

Worcester Telegraph:

What does the headline of this story suggest?

Who are the *Amazons* and is the use of that word positive or negative?

What do the women intend to do to help their cause?

Mechanic's Advocate:

What does the author say about newspaper coverage of the Convention?

What does "The women who attend these meetings, no doubt at the expense of their more appropriate duties," mean?

What is an "agitatory movement"?

According to the author, what should "true" women feel?

What would happen to society if the Convention succeeds?

How would changes called for at the Convention affect women, according to the author?

GENERAL QUESTION:

What is the general tone of the articles? (give at least three adjectives)