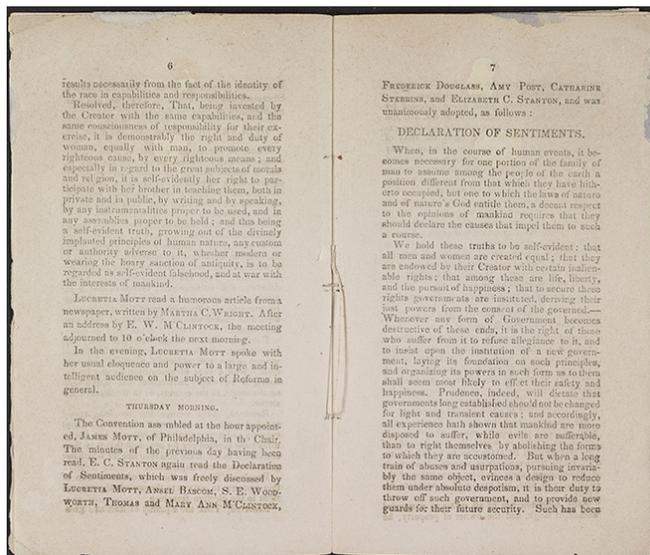


9-12 and Declaration of Sentiments Inquiry

Was the Declaration of Sentiments Intended for ALL US Women?



Elizabeth Cady Stanton (1815–1902). “Declaration of Sentiments,” *Report of the Woman’s Rights Convention, Held at Seneca Falls, New York, July 19 and 20, 1848*. Printed by John Dick. Rochester, NY: *The North Star* office of Frederick Douglass, 1848. Elizabeth Cady Stanton Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress (007.00.00)

Supporting Questions

1. How do laws and restrictions against women conflict with the ideals of the Declaration of Independence?
2. How were the rights of various groups of women similar or different from one another?
3. Are all women represented in the Declaration of Sentiments?

9-12 Declaration of Sentiments Inquiry

Was the Declaration of Sentiments intended for ALL women in the United States?	
Content Angle and Standards	<p>D2.His.16.9-12. Integrate evidence from multiple relevant historical sources and interpretations into a reasoned argument about the past.</p> <p>D3.1.9-12. Gather relevant information from multiple sources representing a wide range of views while using the origin, authority, structure, context, and corroborative value of the sources to guide the selection.</p> <p>D3.4.9-12. Refine claims and counterclaims attending to precision, significance, and knowledge conveyed through the claim while pointing out the strengths and limitations of both.</p>
Staging the Compelling Question	<p>In staging the compelling question, have students participate in a Think-Pair-Share. Ask students the following questions so they can begin to consider the evolution of women’s rights:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What rights do women today have? 2. How do individuals get more rights? 3. Are there any times in our history or present that we see individuals fighting for more rights? Were they successful? <p>After discussion, introduce students to the inquiry by sharing the compelling and supporting questions.</p>

Supporting Question 1
How do laws and restrictions against women conflict with the ideals of the Declaration of Independence?
Formative Performance Task
Write a paragraph addressing the supporting question, “how do the laws and restrictions against women conflict with the ideals of the Declaration of Independence?”
Featured Sources

Supporting Question 2
How were the rights of various groups of women similar or different from one another?
Formative Performance Task
Rank the groups of women in terms of having the most rights to the least rights. Explain your rankings with 2-3 sentences each.
Featured Sources

Supporting Question 3
Are all women represented in the Declaration of Sentiments?
Formative Performance Task
Explain if the Declaration of Sentiments represents the needs of ALL groups of women in the United States (2-3 sentences for each group)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New England Mill Workers • Enslaved African American Women • Cherokee Women • Middle and Upper Class White Reformers • Women in the Newly Conquered Territory of New Mexico
Featured Sources

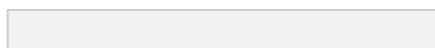
<p>Source A: Preamble to the Declaration of Independence</p> <p>Source B: The Rights of Women: Laws and Practice (Zinn)</p>	<p>Source A: Women Profiles</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● New England Mill Workers ● Enslaved African American Women ● Cherokee Women ● Middle and Upper Class White Reformers ● Women in the Newly Conquered Territory of New Mexico 	<p>Source A: The Declaration of Sentiments</p> <p>Source B: Reactions to Declaration</p> <p>Source C: The Declaration of Sentiments, Women's Rights National Park</p>
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<p>Summative Performance Task</p>	<p>ARGUMENT: <i>Was The Declaration of Sentiments intended for ALL US women?</i> Construct an argument (e.g., detailed outline, poster, essay) that evaluates the need to study, remember, and/or celebrate this expedition using specific claims and relevant evidence from sources while acknowledging competing views.</p>
	<p>EXTENSION. After the above lessons, consider one of the following extensions to the learning.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Discussion: Consider facilitating a discussion of the analysis questions. Ask students to share their response with someone, or if they already worked in a group, ask them to nominate someone to represent their group to the class as a whole. Capitalize on differences between group responses. Why did one group answer differently than another? What impacted them or stood out more? 2. Four Corner Debate: Consider a "four-corner debate." In the corners of the room tack up a piece of paper with four differing and possible answers to the inquiry question. After students complete the lesson packet, pose the question to the room at large and ask students to move to the corner of the room (or in between locations) that represent their answer. Then, ask students to explain their choice. As students discuss they are allowed to move closer or further from ideas. This is a great strategy for kinesthetic learning. 3. Socratic Seminar: Consider doing a "Socratic seminar" to extend the learning and get students to question what they still don't know or understand. Start with the inquiry's question. Students should be encouraged to answer one another's question directly, but also to answer the question with another question. This continues the conversation and gets at more rich ideas. The teacher should try to say as little as possible and let the students lead the dialog. One strategy for this is to seat students in a circle. Give each of them a cup and 2-3 tokens. When a student makes a substantive contribution to the discussion the teacher will walk over and place a token in the cup signaling that they have contributed. Students will become aware of who has spoken and who has not, and leave space for one another. 4. Structured Academic Controversy: Consider turning the lesson into a "structured academic controversy." Take the overarching question and turn it into a "debate." Students can choose or be assigned a side in the debate and use the documents provided to argue their "answer" to the overarching question. They can argue over interpretations and credibility of some documents. 5. Reacting to the Past: Consider doing some role play with your class. Reacting to the Past is an active learning pedagogy of role-playing games designed by Barnard University. In Reacting to the Past games, students are assigned character roles with specific goals and must communicate, collaborate, and compete effectively to advance their objectives. Reacting promotes engagement with big ideas, and improves intellectual and academic skills. Provide students with a set of rules about staying in character and what types of things they must know about their character. Students should be provided with a packet of role sheets with instructions on their individual goals and strategies for game play. Students can use sources and information from these activities, and can search for more details online about their individual character. Reacting roles and games do not have a fixed script or outcome. While students are obliged to adhere to the philosophical and intellectual beliefs of the historical figures they have been assigned to play, they must devise their own means of expressing those ideas persuasively in papers, speeches, or other public presentations.

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<p>Taking Informed Action</p>	<p>UNDERSTAND The way women were treated in the past often times persists into the present in how we teach about it or in societal norms that have not changed. Students can examine the way that this issue is addressed in textbooks and standards, as well as exploring the ways that the issues at play are still relevant.</p> <p>ASSESS Students should consider <i>what should be done</i> today to correct either the portrayal of women from this period in history or the issues at play?</p> <p>ACT Students could take informed action in one of the following ways:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Find an article or book about history that misrepresents women and gender in history and write to the author or editor.2. Write a letter to the Secretary of Education for your state about the teaching of women and gender history.3. Investigate women and gender rights issues that persist and engage with the movement by attending a protest, signing a petition, or donating to the cause.4. Make a PSA video, blog, or social media post with the intent to persuade the audience to better understand women from history or a persistent gender rights from this inquiry.
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**Featured sources are suggested and links are provided. It may be that these links are broken and we apologize in advance for the inconvenience.*



Overview

Inquiry Description

This inquiry leads students through an investigation of the Declaration of Sentiments. Students will be investigating the impact the Declaration of Sentiments had on various groups of women that existed at the time it was written. The Declaration of Sentiments was given at the Seneca Falls Convention in Seneca Falls, New York, where the Women’s Suffrage Movement would be kicked off.

This inquiry highlights the following additional thematic standards from NCSS:

- **POWER, AUTHORITY, AND GOVERNANCE:** Social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of how people create, interact with, and change structures of power, authority, and governance.
- **TIME, CONTINUITY, AND CHANGE:** Social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of the past and its legacy.
- **CULTURE:** Social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of culture and cultural diversity.

This inquiry also highlights the following additional thematic standards from the Common Core:

- Key Ideas and Details 1. Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources, connecting insights gained from specific details to an understanding of the text as a whole.
- Key Ideas and Details 3. Evaluate various explanations for actions or events and determine which explanation best accords with textual evidence, acknowledging where the text leaves matters uncertain.
- Key Ideas and Details 7. Integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in diverse formats and media (e.g., quantitative data, video, multimedia) in order to address a question or solve a problem.
- Key Ideas and Details 8. Evaluate the hypotheses, data, analysis, and conclusions in a science or technical text, verifying the data when possible and corroborating or challenging conclusions with other sources of information.
- Key Ideas and Details 9. Synthesize information from a range of sources (e.g., texts, experiments, simulations) into a coherent understanding of a process, phenomenon, or concept, resolving conflicting information when possible.
- Text Types and Purposes 8. Gather relevant information from multiple authoritative print and digital sources, using advanced searches effectively; assess the strengths and limitations of each source in terms of the specific task, purpose, and audience; integrate information into the text selectively to maintain the flow of ideas, avoiding plagiarism and overreliance on any one source and following a standard format for citation.

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It is important to note that this inquiry requires prerequisite knowledge of some key terms, which are defined and provided to students in the inquiries where relevant. It broadly requires prerequisite knowledge of women's place in society in the 1800s. This inquiry will give students specific details about how society viewed a woman's role, but students should enter this inquiry with an understanding of why women were seen as second class citizens.

Note: This inquiry is expected to take 3-4 class periods. The inquiry time frame could expand if teachers think their students need additional instructional experiences (e.g., supporting questions, formative performance tasks, featured sources, writing). Teachers are encouraged to adapt the inquiry to meet the needs and interests of their students. This inquiry lends itself to differentiation and modeling of historical thinking skills while assisting students in reading the variety of sources.



Staging the Compelling Question

In staging the compelling question, have students participate in a Think-Pair-Share. Ask students the following questions so they can begin to consider the evolution of women's rights:

4. What rights do women today have?
5. How do individuals get more rights?
6. Are there any times in our history or present that we see individuals fighting for more rights? Were they successful?

After discussion, introduce students to the inquiry by sharing the compelling and supporting questions.

Supporting Question 1

The first supporting question— How do laws and restrictions against women conflict with the ideals of the Declaration of Independence?

The formative task is: Write a paragraph addressing the supporting question, “how do the laws and restrictions against women conflict with the ideals of the Declaration of Independence?”

Teachers may implement this task with the following procedures:

1. Introduce students to the supporting question: How do laws and restrictions against women conflict with the ideals of the Declaration of Independence?
2. Distribute the sources for students to read and analyze independently or with a partner.
3. Assign students into groups of 3-4. Task each group to write their own Declaration of Sentiments based on the Declaration of Independence and the laws and practice that existed for women. Have groups share their Declarations.
4. Using what they have learned from the documents, have students complete the formative task.
5. Lead a closing discussion to address any additional questions, surprises, or misconceptions about the topic.

The following sources were selected to increase student understanding of the rules set for American women in the 1800s. Because the Declaration of Sentiments was inspired by the Declaration of Independence, students will be analyzing the preamble of the Declaration of Independence to compare and contrast the rights that existed for women before the suffrage movement.

- **Featured Source A: The Preamble to the Declaration of Independence**

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness. That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed. That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness. Prudence, indeed, will dictate that Governments long established should not be changed for light and transient causes; and accordingly all experience hath shown that mankind are more disposed to suffer, while evils are sufferable, than to right themselves by abolishing the forms to which they are accustomed. But when a long train of abuses and usurpations, pursuing invariably the same Object evinces a design to reduce them under absolute Despotism, it is their right, it is their duty, to throw off such Government, and to provide new Guards for their future security.

Jefferson, Thomas, 1776. *The Declaration of Independence*. Retrieved from <https://www.gilderlehrman.org/sites/default/files/inline-pdfs/Preamble%20to%20The%20Declaration%20of%20Indepen>

dence.pdf

- **Featured Source B: The Rights of Women: Laws and Practice**

The Rights of Women: Laws and Practices

The following are some of the laws and conditions affecting many women in the United States in 1848:

- It is extremely difficult for a woman to divorce her husband in most states. In New York, adultery is the only grounds for divorce. Other states allow divorce for bigamy, desertion, or extreme cruelty. Most courts grant custody of the children to men. Alimony is sometimes awarded to women, but they are not allowed to sue in court to make him pay up.
- It is considered improper for women to speak in public.
- Until 1839, women were not allowed to own property in any state in the United States.
- An example from the personal experience of Elizabeth Cady: “Flora Campbell was a neighbor who owned a farm, which supplied the Cady family with fresh eggs, butter, milk, vegetables, and chickens. One day Flora Campbell came to the office [of Elizabeth’s father, Judge Cady] beside herself with fear and anxiety. Her husband had mortgaged her farm to pay his gambling debts. The bank was going to foreclose. Elizabeth Cady’s unbelieving ears heard her father say that Flora Campbell’s husband had acted on accepted legal principle. Women, like enslaved people, had no right to hold legal title to property, and all of a wife’s possessions belonged to her husband.”¹
- In almost every state, the father can legally make a will appointing a guardian for his children in the event of his death. Should the husband die, a mother could have her children taken away from her.
- In most states, it is legal for a man to beat his wife. New York courts ruled that, in order to keep his wife from nagging, a man could beat her with a horsewhip every few weeks.
- Until 1837, no college in the United States accepted women as regular students.
- Women may not vote in any state in the union.
- Based on British common law, a woman cannot sign a contract even if her husband lets her.
- Some women teach school, but they are paid only 30-50% of what men are paid for the same job.

Bigelow, Bill. 2015. *Seneca Falls, 1848: Women Organize for Equality*. Zinn Education Project.

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1xmRHqX40gAo-Axm2IEEU2EU2-7wkPpaL/view?usp=sharing>

Supporting Question 2

The lesson for this supporting question was influenced by:

Bigelow, Bill. 2015. *Seneca Falls, 1848: Women Organize for Equality*. Zinn Education Project.
<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1xmRHqX40gAo-Axm2IEEU2EU2-7wkPpaL/view?usp=sharing>

The second supporting question: How were the rights of various groups of women similar or different from one another?

The formative task is to: Rank the groups of women in terms of having the most rights to the least rights. Explain your rankings with 2-3 sentences each.

Teachers may implement this task with the following procedures:

1. Divide students into five groups. Each group will become experts in one of the identified groups of women that lived during the time of the Declaration of Sentiments.
2. These expert groups will read and discuss their assigned article to gain a better understanding of the experience and freedoms of women during the time the Declaration of Sentiments was presented.
3. Redistribute students into new groups. Each group should have one “expert” of each article. Each student will summarize their article and share the learning of their assigned group.
4. Have students, working in expert groups or mixed groups, rank each group of women in terms of having the most rights to the least rights. Each ranking should be accompanied by a short explanation (2-3 sentences) justifying the ranking.

The following sources were selected to provide students with various perspectives of women throughout the country. Each expert group will read their assigned article and share their learning to their peers.

- **Featured Source A:** Women Profiles

New England Mill Workers

You are young white women who were born on farms throughout New England and have come to Lowell, Massachusetts, to work in the textile mills. Most of you are single, but some of you left bad marriages. Married women often must change their names, because according to the law, whatever money a woman makes belongs to her husband. By the way, many people stereotype factory jobs as *male* jobs. But in 1848, almost a quarter of the people working in factories in the United States are women.

People say that at one time, conditions were pleasant in the mills, but no more. The verse of one of the songs that the girls sing goes like this:

*Amidst the clashing noise and din
Of the ever beating loom
Stood a fair young girl with throbbing brow
Working her way to the tomb.*

Is this an exaggeration? Hardly. Summer hours of work in the mills are from 5 a.m. to 7 p.m. Young women work an average of 75 hours a week with only four holidays a year. You get about 35 minutes for meals, but this includes travel time between the mill and your boarding house in the neighborhood. For this, you're paid anywhere from \$20-25 a *month*.

But it's not only the long hours and the short time for meals that are making you "work your way to the tomb." The conditions of the work itself are also terrible. The air in the factory is awful. It's polluted with flying lint and the fumes from the whale-oil lamps that hang on pegs from each loom. The owners demand that the overseers regularly spray the air with water to keep the humidity high so that

the cotton threads won't break. The windows are all nailed shut. The long hours in the bad air means that you and your friends often get sick. It's common for workers to get tuberculosis—"the white death," as you call it. The owners don't have any clinics for the workers, and there are no hospitals for the poor. Young women with breathing problems just go home to die. Add to this the terrible speed of the work. All workers must tend more than one loom, and male overseers, who are paid a premium based on how much cloth is produced, harass slower workers.

Living conditions are also very crowded. It's common for young women to live six to a room with three beds. There are very limited bathing facilities.

In response to these conditions, you've joined with other young women in the "10-hour movement" to reduce hours from the current 12 or 13 a day down to 10. Some people say that women are to do as they're told, but women in the mills have gone on strike a number of times to protest the long hours and bad conditions of work and housing. Thousands of women have signed petitions demanding shorter hours. During strikes, owners have fired strikers and hired "scabs," people who take the place of strikers. Some of the newer people hired by the mill owners are Irish immigrants—still, all women—who the owners say will work for less and not complain.

The owners are especially eager to learn the identities of the women who are the organizers of the 10-hour movement. When they find out who the leaders are they fire them and put their names on a "blacklist," so that no mill owner will hire them. So all meetings must be held in secret.

Enslaved African American Women

You are enslaved African American women living in the South. No one can imagine the horrible conditions of your lives, but here are some brief details. The most basic fact of slavery is that you have no control over any aspect of your life. As a woman, this lack of control is especially harsh and intimate. It is not uncommon for you to be sold away from members of your family, even your children. This may happen, for example, when a white owner dies and his property is sold to pay his debts, or simply because his heirs don't want his slaves as their property. A master can do just about anything to you that he wants. Sexual abuse is common. There are laws that make it look like slaves have protection, but no enslaved person can testify in court, so these laws are meaningless. If an owner wants to beat you, he beats you. If he wants to whip you, he whips you. If he wants to rape you, he rapes you. Your body is owned by another person. You have no legal rights whatsoever.

Most enslaved people do not live on huge plantations, but on smaller estates with just a few slaves. This means that contact with an owner is almost constant. Some owners even keep slaves as kind of "pets" and make them sleep on the floor by the bed to attend to their needs. Not only do women do the housework, but they often do most of the field work. Enslaved African American men often do blacksmithing, carpentry, or other skilled work, which means that women are sent to the

fields to pick cotton. Whether they work in the field or in the house of the white owner, women perform double duty. They still must cook for their family and take care of their own children. Life is no better for enslaved women who work in the owner's house than it is if they work in the fields. Owners would often send off the children of black women because they don't want the women spending any time with their children.

Women are whipped or tortured as punishment. One woman who ran off had one of her good front teeth pulled out of her mouth so that she would be easily recognizable if she tried it again.

Forty years ago, in 1808, sexual abuse of black women became even worse. The African slave trade was outlawed. This meant that all new slaves would have to be "bred" on the plantations. Many women were treated as breeders. One Texas woman was sold four times as a breeder, but did not get to keep any of her children. If a white man raped a black woman, the woman's child also is a slave. So white owners actually profit from the sexual abuse of black women.

As enslaved African American women, you have no right to vote, no right to own property, no right to an education, no right to travel, no right to marry, no right to keep or spend time with your children. Enslaved African American women have no rights—period.

Cherokee Women

Life for Cherokee women has changed dramatically in the last 100 years—for the worse. Today, in 1848, you live in the land called Oklahoma, where the United States army moved you by force. But there was a time when you had more power, respect, and happiness.

In Cherokee culture, women historically had great influence. It was the man who went to live in the house of the woman's family. Marriage gave him no right to control her or her property. As John Ross, Principal Chief of the Cherokee, explained to a white U.S. general: "By the laws of the Cherokee Nation, the property of husband and wife remain separate and apart and neither of these can sell or dispose of the property of the other." If they "divorced," the women kept the children and her property. The men were the main hunters, but women were the main farmers, and the women's families controlled the fields. However, the Cherokee did not believe in private property, like in the white society. Anyone could use unoccupied territories, but cultivated fields were controlled by large families. No individual or family could *own* land. Women signed the early land agreements between Cherokees and whites.

The more contact between the white Europeans and the Cherokees, the more power the women lost. The Europeans wanted to deal only with men, because men were the hunters and the warriors. And the Europeans wanted to make military alliances with the Cherokees, and to trade for deer skins. For these needs they had no use for the women. Meanwhile the white Protestant missionaries who came into your territory wanted Cherokee women to act like

white women. They wanted them to convert to Christianity, wear dresses, and allow the men to head the households.

Whites also pushed for Cherokees to give up the traditional method of land ownership. But in white society, the husband legally owned a married woman's property, even property she held before marriage—this is still true in 1848. However, you worried less about your own personal land than the land of your people. Thirty years ago, in 1818, a group of Cherokee women urged the Cherokee men not to give up any lands to the white landowners and the U. S. government. As they said, "The land was given to us by the Great Spirit above as our common right, to raise our children upon, and to make support for our rising generations. We, therefore, humbly petition our beloved children, the head men of warriors, to hold out to the last in support of our common rights, as the Cherokee nations have been the first settlers of this land; we, therefore claim the right of the soil."

However, slowly, whites in nearby Georgia claimed the land should belong to them and began to come onto Cherokee land and attacked your people. Georgia law prohibited Cherokees from testifying in court. Many Cherokees tried to appeal to the whites by adopting their ways. In fact, in 1826 the Cherokee government adopted a law that no woman could vote or hold office.

Finally, the United States government took all the Cherokees' land from them and forcibly moved them to Oklahoma. About 15,000 people were marched west; 4,000 died on the trip that was later named the Trail of Tears. An

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eyewitness reported that “even aged females, apparently nearly ready to drop in the grave, were traveling with heavy burdens attached to the back.” At least 69 Cherokee women gave birth along the Trail of Tears. One observer said that troops forced women in labor to continue marching until they collapsed and gave birth “in the midst of the company of soldiers.” One soldier even stabbed a pregnant Cherokee woman with a bayonet.

After removal to Oklahoma your people had to totally rebuild. Now, in 1848, the divisions

among the Cherokee have been healed and new schools are under construction, including a college for Cherokee young women. Your major worry is that white settlers and the United States government will once again steal your land and kill your people. In places like Kansas Territory, just north of Oklahoma, white settlers are beginning to move in and take Indian land. You don’t want another Trail of Tears. You don’t want your children and families attacked once again.

Middle- and Upper- Class White Reformers

The first thing you discovered you had in common with each other is your opposition to slavery. Even though all of you are white, you believe that slavery is a terrible wrong. You are all “abolitionists”—people who want to abolish (end) slavery. So what does wanting to end slavery have to do with wanting rights for women? The more you spoke out against slavery and for the rights of black people, the more you came to see similarities in your own situations; the more you saw your *own* lack of rights. In many ways, women are the possessions of their husbands. As with slavery, you want this inequality with men to end.

Almost all of you are from upper-class or at least middle-class backgrounds. Elizabeth Cady Stanton’s father was a prominent lawyer, judge, and former congressman who served on the New York Supreme Court. Lucretia Mott’s father was the master of a whaling ship and her mother ran a store. Sarah and Angelina Grimké’s family was one of the wealthiest slaveowning families in South Carolina. Your privileged backgrounds help explain why you feel so limited. Even though some of you went to fine girls’ schools, there is only one college in the United States that will accept women! No women in the country are lawyers or doctors. Women are rarely allowed to speak in public, never allowed to vote or be elected to political office. In 1838, when Angelina Grimké delivered anti-slavery petitions and spoke before the Massachusetts state legislature, it was the first time a woman had *ever* spoken before a legislative body in the United States.

The idea for the upcoming Women’s Rights Convention in Seneca Falls, New York, was born eight years ago in London, England. Lucretia Mott and Elizabeth Cady Stanton were attending the World Anti-Slavery Convention. Even though they were active abolitionists in the United States, and Mott was an elected delegate of the American Anti-Slavery Society, they were not allowed to participate. They were forced to watch, as spectators. When the male leaders of the anti-slavery movement refused to let you speak out it made you feel like slaves. As Angelina Grimké once wrote: “The denial of our duty to act, is a denial of our right to act; and if we have no right to act, then we may well be termed ‘the white slaves of the North,’ for like our brethren in bonds, we must seal our lips in silence and despair.”

Now, eight years later, the time has come for women to unseal our lips and speak about our needs, speak about our rights. Women’s lives are just too hard. It wouldn’t be right for us to speak up for freedom for slaves, but to remain silent about the need for freedom for women. The prominent abolitionist and women’s rights advocate Lucy Stone once spoke about her family. Stone, who unlike most of you came from a poor background, said that when her mother learned that she had given birth to a daughter instead of a son, she sighed, “Oh dear! I am sorry it’s a girl. A woman’s life is so hard.”

We are the educated women. If we won’t stand up for women’s rights, who will?

Women in the Newly Conquered Territory of New Mexico

Two years ago, in 1846, the United States went to war with Mexico. That summer, Colonel Stephen W. Kearny of the United States army marched into Santa Fé to take control. Up until that moment, you had been Mexican women. Since that moment, you have been *conquered* Mexican women. There are about 25,000 to 30,000 of you in New Mexico. Your lives have been changed for the worse by the U.S. conquest. You worry that things will continue to go downhill.

The white male conquerors who came from the East treated you very badly. They had contempt for all Mexicans, especially women. One U.S. lieutenant wrote a letter to his parents about the conduct of U.S. troops during the war: “every species of outrage was committed. Old women and girls were stripped of their clothing—and many suffered still greater outrages. Men were shot by dozens ... their property, churches, stores and dwelling houses ransacked ...” Even the commander of U.S. troops in Mexico, General Winfield Scott, admitted that his troops “committed atrocities to make Heaven weep and every American of Christian morals blush for his country. Murder, robbery, and rape of mothers and daughters in the presence of tied-up males of families have been common.” One of the politicians in the North offered his opinions about New Mexico: “The mass of the people are Mexicans, a hybrid race of Spanish and Indian origin, ignorant, degraded, demoralized and priest-ridden.” If this is what the educated U.S. leaders have to say in public, think about how this encourages the soldiers to treat people in private.

But now the war is officially over. These are hard economic times for all Mexicans. For women it’s even worse. Half the women of Santa Fé live in poverty. The only people with cash are the (white) Anglo soldiers, and the Anglo merchants and businessmen who have begun arriving. If you are lucky, you make some money washing, sewing, or being a domestic for Anglos. A woman domestic might make 50 cents a day, a seamstress as little as five cents a day. Mexican men who work as laborers make twice as much as Mexican female domestics, but Anglo men make three times as much as Mexican domestics—*30 times* as much as Mexican seamstresses. Is this fair? Women have to work two jobs just to feed their families.

Also, the Anglo Easterners arrive with so many dollars that it drives up the prices. Food costs more these days. But that’s not the worst of it. The Anglos are looking to make money, and you will be the victims. They are buying up land as they look to mine for copper and silver. And slowly they are beginning to take over Mexicans’ land, including land owned by you women. The Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, that ended the U.S. war with Mexico, guaranteed that all Mexicans in the conquered territories could keep their property, and would have all the rights of U.S. citizens if they wanted. But a treaty is just a piece of paper unless it is enforced.

Traditional Mexican communities like yours were not perfect, but everyone had rights to land and water. As a woman, you could own property in your maiden name, and sell or give it away without your husband’s signature. You could even farm your own land apart from your

C3 TEACHERS

husband's land or land you owned together. You've heard that Anglo women in the East don't have these rights. If becoming a U.S. citizen means that your husband will control your property, no thank you.

Finally, you don't speak English; you speak Spanish. But English is the language used by the lawyers, judges and tax assessors. The U.S. authorities demanded that all Mexicans come in to register their land. But some of you didn't meet the deadline, and so the courts took your land away from you. They also taxed the land very heavily. This was

not a Mexican custom. People who couldn't afford to pay the cash, lost the land. And guess who was there at the auction to buy up the land? That's right: the Anglo men from the East. And after they bought the land, the Anglo tax assessors lowered the taxes.

With the conquest, you are hurt because you are women, you are hurt because you are poor, and you are hurt because you are Mexican.

Bigelow, Bill. 2015. *Seneca Falls, 1848: Women Organize for Equality*. Zinn Education Project.
<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1xmRHqX40gAo-Axm2IEEU2EU2-7wkPpaL/view?usp=sharing>

Supporting Question 3

This lesson for this supporting question is influenced by the following lesson:

Stanford History Education Group, n.d. *The Declaration of Sentiments, Seneca Falls Convention, 1848 (Modified)*. Reading Like A Historian. <https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/18oHRWbhywzfcf8L2k-fIEKV3MMxTJzd>

The third supporting question: Are all women represented in the Declaration of Sentiments?

The formative task is: Explain if the Declaration of Sentiments represents the needs of ALL groups of women in the United States (2-3 sentences for each group)

- New England Mill Workers
- Enslaved African American Women
- Cherokee Women
- Middle and Upper Class White Reformers
- Women in the Newly Conquered Territory of New Mexico

Teachers may implement this task with the following procedures:

1. Review the groups of women from the previous lesson.
2. Have students read and analyze sources for this lesson independently or with a partner.
3. Assign students into groups of 3-4. Students should discuss the pros and cons of the Declaration of Sentiments on the Women's Suffrage Movement.
4. Have groups complete the formative task by explaining if the Declaration of Sentiments represents the needs of ALL groups of women in the United States. Students should have 2-3 sentences per group.
5. Have groups share their work and compare lists to other groups.
6. Lead a closing discussion to address additional questions, surprises, or misconceptions.

The following sources were selected to engage students in the reading of the Declaration of Sentiments. Based on their knowledge from the previous two lessons, they will have the opportunity to reflect upon the Declaration as it pertains to various groups of women. Students will also have the opportunity to review reactions to the declaration and how it impacted views on women's rights.

- **Featured Source A:** The Declaration of Sentiments

When, in the course of human events, it becomes necessary for one portion of the family of man to assume among the people of the earth a position different from that which they have hitherto occupied, but one to which the laws of nature and of nature's God entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes that impel them to such a course.

C3 TEACHERS

We hold these truths to be self-evident: that all men and women are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness; that to secure these rights governments are instituted, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed. Whenever any form of government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the right of those who suffer from it to refuse allegiance to it, and to insist upon the institution of a new government, laying its foundation on such principles, and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their safety and happiness. Prudence, indeed, will dictate that governments long established should not be changed for light and transient causes; and accordingly all experience hath shown that mankind are more disposed to suffer, while evils are sufferable, than to right themselves by abolishing the forms to which they are accustomed. But when a long train of abuses and usurpations, pursuing invariably the same object, evinces a design to reduce them under absolute despotism, it is their duty to throw off such government, and to provide new guards for their future security. Such has been the patient sufferance of the women under this government, and such is now the necessity which constrains them to demand the equal station to which they are entitled. The history of mankind is a history of repeated injuries and usurpations on the part of man toward woman, having in direct object the establishment of an absolute tyranny over her. To prove this, let facts be submitted to a candid world.

The history of mankind is a history of repeated injuries and usurpations on the part of man toward woman, having in direct object the establishment of an absolute tyranny over her. To prove this, let facts be submitted to a candid world.

He has never permitted her to exercise her inalienable right to the elective franchise.

He has compelled her to submit to laws, in the formation of which she had no voice.

He has withheld from her rights which are given to the most ignorant and degraded men--both natives and foreigners.

Having deprived her of this first right of a citizen, the elective franchise, thereby leaving her without representation in the halls of legislation, he has oppressed her on all sides.

He has made her, if married, in the eye of the law, civilly dead.

He has taken from her all right in property, even to the wages she earns.

He has made her, morally, an irresponsible being, as she can commit many crimes with impunity, provided they be done in the presence of her husband. In the covenant of marriage, she is compelled to promise obedience to her husband, he becoming, to all intents and purposes, her master--the law giving him power to deprive her of her liberty, and to administer

C3 TEACHERS

chastisement.

He has so framed the laws of divorce, as to what shall be the proper causes, and in case of separation, to whom the guardianship of the children shall be given, as to be wholly regardless of the happiness of women--the law, in all cases, going upon a false supposition of the supremacy of man, and giving all power into his hands.

After depriving her of all rights as a married woman, if single, and the owner of property, he has taxed her to support a government which recognizes her only when her property can be made profitable to it.

He has monopolized nearly all the profitable employments, and from those she is permitted to follow, she receives but a scanty remuneration. He closes against her all the avenues to wealth and distinction which he considers most honorable to himself. As a teacher of theology, medicine, or law, she is not known.

He has denied her the facilities for obtaining a thorough education, all colleges being closed against her.

He allows her in church, as well as state, but a subordinate position, claiming apostolic authority for her exclusion from the ministry, and, with some exceptions, from any public participation in the affairs of the church.

He has created a false public sentiment by giving to the world a different code of morals for men and women, by which moral delinquencies which exclude women from society, are not only tolerated, but deemed of little account in man.

He has usurped the prerogative of Jehovah himself, claiming it as his right to assign for her a sphere of action, when that belongs to her conscience and to her God.

He has endeavored, in every way that he could, to destroy her confidence in her own powers, to lessen her self-respect, and to make her willing to lead a dependent and abject life.

Now, in view of this entire disfranchisement of one-half the people of this country, their social and religious degradation--in view of the unjust laws above mentioned, and because women do feel themselves aggrieved, oppressed, and fraudulently deprived of their most sacred rights, we insist that they have immediate admission to all the rights and privileges which belong to them as citizens of the United States.

Elizabeth Cady Stanton. 1848. Declaration of Sentiments.

C3 TEACHERS

Stanford History Education Group, n.d. *The Declaration of Sentiments, Seneca Falls Convention, 1848 (Modified)*. Reading Like A Historian. <https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/18oHRWbhywzfcf8L2k-fIEKV3MMxTJzd>

1. Why did the women at Seneca Falls choose to copy the Declaration of Independence?
2. What were 3 things they complained about?
3. Are you surprised by any of the grievances?
4. Do any of the grievances seem like they're still true today?
5. Does it surprise you that most of the women who signed this redacted their signature after social pressure? Why or why not?

● **Featured Source B: Reactions to the Declaration of Sentiments**

women and the AMERICAN STORY

Resource 17:
Reactions to Seneca Falls

The first Women's Rights Convention was held on July 19–20, 1848 in Seneca Falls, New York. The Declaration of Sentiments (see **Appendix B**) was a list of grievances modeled on the Declaration of Independence. It was signed by sixty-eight women and, in a separate list, thirty-two men. The resolutions, including the call for suffrage, were endorsed by those present, but not signed.

In her autobiography, *Eighty Years And More*, Stanton wrote: "No words could express our astonishment on finding, a few days afterward, that what seemed to us so timely, so rational, and so sacred, should be a subject for sarcasm and ridicule. . . ." Perhaps she wasn't quite so astonished as she remembered. Before the convention, Lucretia Mott and Elizabeth's husband, Henry Stanton, had both warned that the suffrage resolution would be seen as ridiculous. At the convention, it passed only after persuasive arguments by Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Frederick Douglass.

As follow-up conventions were held elsewhere, newspapers covered the growing story. Stanton continued in her autobiography:

From the Newspapers

This is all wrong. . . . Society would have to be radically remodeled in order to accommodate itself to so great a change.
—*Mechanics' Advocate*, Albany, New York

The women folks have just held a Convention up in New York State, and passed a sort of "bill of rights" They should have resolved at the same time, that it was obligatory . . . upon the "lords" . . . to wash dishes, scour up, be put to the tub, handle the broom, darn stockings, patch breeches, scold the servants, dress in the latest fashion, wear trinkets, look beautiful, and be as fascinating as those blessed morsels of humanity whom God gave to preserve that rough animal man, in something like a reasonable civilization.
—*Lowell (Massachusetts) Courier*

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. The ladies of Philadelphia, therefore, under the influence of the most serious "sober second thoughts," are resolved to maintain their rights as Wives, Belles, Virgins, and Mothers, and not as Women.
—*Philadelphia Public Ledger and Daily Transcript*



Elizabeth Cady Stanton and her daughter Fanny, 1836. Digitized by Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division, Washington D.C., 7790110.

Discussion Questions

- The *Mechanics' Advocate* and the *Lowell Courier* both objected to the convention on similar grounds. What was their main objection? Do you think their objection was reasonable? Why?
- Why did "the ladies of Philadelphia" object to the convention? Was their objection reasonable? Why?
- How did the women who participated in the Seneca Falls Convention feel about the backlash? How would you feel in their position?

Stanton, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, *Eighty Years And More: Reminiscences 1815–1887* (New York: T. Fisher Unwin, 1898); Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Susan B. Anthony, and Matilda Joselyn Gage, eds., *History of Women Suffrage*, Vol. 1, 1848–1861, rev. ed. (Rochester, NY: 1895).

Seeing Washington: The New Republic and Early Reformers, 1790–1840

New York Historical Society Library & Museum. 2019. *Reactions to Seneca Falls*. Women and the American Story. <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1tB2rXlJe-NqTP3i3cdclj1k0lwaSukU/view>

● **Featured Source C: The Declaration of Sentiments, Women's Rights National Park**

The Declaration of Sentiments

During the summer of 1848 abolitionist Lucretia Mott left her home in Philadelphia and headed for upstate New York to attend a Quaker meeting and visit her pregnant sister, Martha Coffin Wright. While in the area, both Mott and Wright attended a tea party in Seneca Falls. Their friend Jane Hunt hosted the party. Invitations were also extended to Hunt's neighbors, Mary Ann M'Clintock and Elizabeth Cady Stanton. By the end of the tea, the group was planning a meeting for women's rights. They published a notice in local papers reporting: "a Convention to discuss



C3 TEACHERS

the social, civil, and religious condition of women.”[1] Elizabeth Cady Stanton volunteered to write an outline for their protest statement, calling it a **Declaration of Sentiments**. Stanton and M’Clintock, then, drafted the document, from M’Clintock’s mahogany tea table. The Declaration of Sentiments set the stage for their convening.

Elizabeth Cady Stanton voiced the claims of the antebellum-era conventioners at Seneca Falls by adopting the same language of colonial revolutionaries, decades prior. Thomas Jefferson’s Declaration of Independence was her template. Historian Linda Kerber perhaps best explains the significance of Stanton’s rhetorical decision, writing: “By tying the complaints of women to the most distinguished political statement the nation had made [Stanton] implied that women’s demands were no more or less radical than the American Revolution had been; that they were in fact an implicit fulfillment of the commitments already made.”[2]

The Declaration of Sentiments was a clarion call in celebration of women’s worthiness—naming their right not be subjugated. Most prominent among the critiques Stanton advanced were: women’s inferior legal status, including lack of suffrage rights (which was true except both for some local elections and in New Jersey between 1790 and 1807); economic as well as physical subordination; and limited opportunities for divorce (including lack of child custody protections). These offences were particularly ironic considering the expansive civic wartime roles women performed, including their contributions to the nation’s independence—by working as nurses and cooks, spies, and, even, fundraisers.[3]

Elizabeth Cady Stanton wrote the Declaration of Sentiments to dramatize the denied citizenship claims of elite women during a period when the early republic’s founding documents privileged white propertied males. The document has long been recognized for the sharp critique she made of gender inequality in the U.S. Yet, her words also obscured significant differences in the lived experiences of women across racial, class, and regional lines. For example, at the very moment Stanton wrote the Declaration of Sentiments, Native Americans were being displaced to create space for westward expansion. This does not mean they had no relationship to the women’s rights movement. Rather, matrilineal Native societies inspired women’s rights advocates who referenced them in order to claim that women in the U.S. deserved greater autonomy.[4] Additionally, African Americans in New York were but a mere generation removed from slavery. There were black women advocates of the women’s rights movement, but there is no evidence that they were invited to Seneca Falls.[5] Frederick Douglass played a prominent role in the proceedings. Making clear these distinctions creates a space to better understand both the inequalities that existed

C3 TEACHERS

between women at the time of Stanton's call for women's rights and the intellectual tensions that existed in the movement during some of its earliest days. Yet, the Declaration of Sentiments as an idea created an important space for articulating the rights owed to women, one embraced by many now in a larger project of gender equality.

Women's Rights National Park. 2019. *The Declaration of Sentiments*. National Parks Service.
<https://www.nps.gov/articles/declaration-of-sentiments.htm>



Summative Performance Task

At this point in the inquiry, students have examined the beginnings of the women's rights movement. They have had the opportunity to identify various groups of women and how the lack of rights for women in the United States impacted them. Because of this, the need for a movement arose. Students were able to read the Declaration of Sentiments and apply the message in the Declaration to the needs of the various groups of women.

Students should be expected to demonstrate the breadth of their understanding and their abilities to use evidence from multiple sources to support their claims. In this task, students will be participating in a debate to address the compelling question: Was the Declaration of Sentiments intended to fight for the Rights of ALL women?

Students' arguments will likely vary, but could include any of the following:

- *Yes the Declaration of sentiments was written to fight for the rights of ALL women because...*
- *No, the Declaration of Sentiments was only intended to fight for the rights of white women...*

To support students in their writing they can use this provided organizer for a body paragraph:

First Argument	
Write a topic sentence that summarizes the paragraph and tells how this proves the thesis	<i>(Repeat the first part of your thesis)</i>
Provide background information here. Cite anyone you paraphrase or quote!	<i>When...</i>
What textual evidence proves this? Describe 1 or 2 HAPP elements about the source of your evidence.	
What textual evidence proves this? Insert a short quote here.	

C3 TEACHERS

What makes this quote credible, valid, or helpful in providing insights to this issue?	<i>The quote revealed...</i>
Who disagrees or disputes a piece of your argument? Describe 1 or 2 HAPP elements about the source of your evidence.	<i>Others claimed that...</i>
What textual evidence do you have? Insert a short quote here.	
What makes this quote seem untrue, inaccurate, or only partly true?	<i>While it may be true that _____, it was clear that...</i>

To extend their arguments, once students have written or formed an argument, consider doing one of the following extension activities:

1. **Discussion:** Consider facilitating a discussion of the analysis questions. Ask students to share their response with someone, or if they already worked in a group, ask them to nominate someone to represent their group to the class as a whole. Capitalize on differences between group responses. Why did one group answer differently than another? What impacted them or stood out more?
2. **Four Corner Debate:** Consider a "four-corner debate." In the corners of the room tack up a piece of paper with four differing and possible answers to the inquiry question. After students complete the lesson packet, pose the question to the room at large and ask students to move to the corner of the room (or in between locations) that represent their answer. Then, ask students to explain their choice. As students discuss they are allowed to move closer or further from ideas. This is a great strategy for kinesthetic learning.
3. **Socratic Seminar:** Consider doing a "Socratic seminar" to extend the learning and get students to question what they still don't know or understand. Start with the inquiry's question. Students should be encouraged to answer one another's question directly, but also to answer the question with another question. This continues the conversation and gets at more rich ideas. The teacher should try to say as little as possible and let the students lead the dialog. One strategy for this is to seat students in a circle. Give each of them a cup and 2-3 tokens. When a student makes a substantive contribution to the discussion the teacher will walk over and place a token in the cup signaling that they have contributed. Students will become aware of who has spoken and who has not, and leave space for one another.
4. **Structured Academic Controversy:** Consider turning the lesson into a "structured academic controversy." Take the overarching question and turn it into a "debate." Students can choose or be assigned a side in the debate and use the documents provided to argue their "answer" to the overarching question. They can argue over interpretations and credibility of some documents.

C3 TEACHERS

5. **Reacting to the Past:** Consider doing some role play with your class. Reacting to the Past is an active learning pedagogy of role-playing games designed by Barnard University. In Reacting to the Past games, students are assigned character roles with specific goals and must communicate, collaborate, and compete effectively to advance their objectives. Reacting promotes engagement with big ideas, and improves intellectual and academic skills. Provide students with a set of rules about staying in character and what types of things they must know about their character. Students should be provided with a packet of role sheets with instructions on their individual goals and strategies for game play. Students can use sources and information from these activities, and can search for more details online about their individual character. Reacting roles and games do not have a fixed script or outcome. While students are obliged to adhere to the philosophical and intellectual beliefs of the historical figures they have been assigned to play, they must devise their own means of expressing those ideas persuasively in papers, speeches, or other public presentations.

Students have the opportunity to Take Informed Action by doing one of the following suggested action activities:

1. Find an article or book about history that misrepresents women and gender in history and write to the author or editor.
2. Write a letter to the Secretary of Education for your state about the teaching of women and gender history.
3. Investigate women and gender rights issues that persist and engage with the movement by attending a protest, signing a petition, or donating to the cause.
4. Make a PSA video, blog, or social media post with the intent to persuade the audience to better understand women from history or a persistent gender rights from this inquiry.