

WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP IN AMERICAN HISTORY

CURRICULUM GUIDE FOR GRADES 7 & 8

**A DOCUMENT-BASED CURRICULUM USING PRIMARY SOURCES AND TODAY'S NEW YORK TIMES
DESIGNED TO PREPARE STUDENTS FOR THE NEW YORK STATE GRADE EIGHT INTERMEDIATE
LEVEL SOCIAL STUDIES EXAM**

The dominant historical narrative either turns women's accomplishments and contributions into footnotes and sidebars or ignores them altogether. In reality, women have been key players in U.S. history since colonial times. During the Revolutionary War, many women were firing cannons alongside male soldiers and discussing patriotic duties with their husbands and family members. The image of the woman as ruler of the domestic sphere, while not entirely false, is proven wrong by the words and deeds of women like Abigail Adams, Charity Clarke Moore and Deborah Sampson Gannett.

Moving forward in history, we see women agitating for a variety of social reforms: suffragists marching for the vote, Christians crusading against the evils of alcohol, and progressives like Ida B. Wells-Barnett educating the Western world on the horrors of lynching and racially motivated violence. As women gained a variety of rights and freedoms, the roles they were allowed and expected to play in society changed as well.

By the 1940's, when the U.S. involvement in World War II created a manpower shortage on the home front, women were ready to step into the work force in a variety of ways. On farms, in factories, and on the ball field, many women stepped into positions that their fathers, husbands and brothers had held for years. However, racial inequality was still an issue in the United States, with women of color excluded from higher paying factory jobs and the women's baseball league, and segregated in the military. After World War II, women in the United States came together in numbers unseen since organizing for the vote, now agitating for equality and freedom in public and private spheres.

From the Revolutionary War era to more contemporary history, this curriculum integrates women into the central narratives of U.S. history instead of treating them as a separate from it.

To download this curriculum, go to: www.cuny.edu/womenscurriculum.

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