

Women of Power

Author:

National Constitution Center staff

About this Lesson

This lesson, which includes a pre-lesson and post-lesson, is intended to be used in conjunction with the National Constitution Center's Women of Power program. Together, they provide students with an overview of the contributions made by powerful women throughout United States history.

In this lesson, students begin by testing their knowledge of how famous men and women have impacted the country's cultural, social, political and economic development since the colonial period. .

After the NCC program, students learn about the mission of the National Women's Hall of Fame, located in Seneca Falls, NY. They research different members of the Hall and conclude the lesson by nominating women of their choosing for membership.

Designed for students in grade 6-8, this lesson takes approximately four to six class periods from beginning to end.

Background

Grade(s) Level

6-8

Classroom TimeOne 45-minute class
period (pre-lesson)Three or four 45-minute
periods (post-lesson)**Handouts***Who Am I? Part One*
student worksheet*Who Am I? Part Two*
student worksheet*Hall of Famer Snapshot*
student worksheet*Hall of Famer Hobnob*
student worksheet**Constitutional
Connections**

Nineteenth Amendment

Throughout United States history, women have made significant contributions to the country's cultural, social, political and economic development. From the colonial period to 2010, from Dolley Madison to Hillary Rodham Clinton, women have influenced everything from legislation to the arts.

The purpose of the National Constitution Center's *Women of Power* program, and of this accompanying lesson, is to offer students an opportunity to learn more about how women have shaped the U.S. throughout history. Even though women did not get the right to vote until the Nineteenth Amendment was ratified in 1920, their actions have affected life in the U.S. for more than 300 years.

In the *Women of Power* program, students will meet figures like Deborah Samson, who disguised herself as a man and fought in the Continental Army during the Revolutionary War. They will learn about Sojourner Truth, who was born into slavery but escaped at the age of 19 and became a leader of the abolitionist movement. And, they will understand how women began organizing themselves in the mid-1800s and early 1900s to fight for equal rights. Led by key figures like Alice Paul, who organized thousands of women to march in Washington, DC, their campaign for women's suffrage (the right to vote) was a long, but successful journey.

Objectives

Students will:

- Test their knowledge about the contributions of famous men and women in U.S. history;
- Learn key facts about how women have contributed to the cultural, social, political and economic development of the U.S. throughout the country's history, beginning with the colonial period;
- Familiarize themselves with the National Women's Hall of Fame's mission and members; and
- Nominate a woman to the National Women's Hall of Fame.

Standards

5.1.6.C: Explain how the principles and ideals shape local, state, and national government.

- Liberty / Freedom
- Democracy
- Justice
- Equality

5.1.6.D: Explain the basic principles and ideals within documents and the roles played by the framers as found in significant documents:

- Declaration of Independence
- United States Constitution
- Bill of Rights
- Pennsylvania Constitution

8.3.6.A: Explain the social, political, cultural, and economic contributions of individuals and groups to United States history.

Activity

Pre-Lesson

1. Divide students into mixed-ability groups of 3-4 and distribute a copy of the *Who Am I? Part One* worksheet to each student. Ask students to work in their groups to complete the worksheet as best as they can. Encourage them to discuss their answers within their groups, but do not allow them to use textbooks, the Internet, or any other materials.
2. After 5-10 minutes, review the correct answers. Ask students how many questions their groups were able to answer correctly, and record the numbers of correct answers for each group on the board. While students may not understand the importance of this information now, they will likely understand it later on during the pre-lesson.
3. Have students return to their groups and distribute a copy of the *Who Am I? Part Two* worksheet to each student. Ask students to work in their groups to complete this worksheet as best as they can. Once again, remind them that they may discuss their answers within their groups, but do not allow them to use textbooks, the Internet, or any other materials.
4. After 5-10 minutes, review the correct answers. Ask students how many questions their groups were able to answer correctly, and record the numbers of correct answers for each group on the board.

5. More likely than not, the majority of the groups will have answered more questions correctly on the first worksheet, largely because most resources about U.S. history (textbooks, websites, videos, etc.) focus more on the contributions of famous men than on those of women. Using the questions below as a guide, lead a brief discussion about the quizzes and the upcoming NCC program. At the end of the discussion, make sure that students understand that the purpose of taking these two quizzes was not only to review (or learn) important information about figures in U.S. history but also to begin thinking about the contributions that women have made to the country.
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- Think about the quizzes that your group just took. Which quiz was easier for your group? Why do you think this is?
 - Which people were you able to correctly identify? How did you know who they were/Where did you learn about them?
 - Which people were you unable to correctly identify? Why do you think that you were less familiar with them?
 - Think about all of the different ways in which you learn about U.S. history (textbooks, websites, videos, field trips, etc.). Which types of people do these resources tend to focus on? Why do you think this is?
 - While many resources about U.S. history tend to focus on the contributions of famous men, many women have also made incredibly important contributions to the country over the past 300 years. Think about some of the women included in the second quiz that your group took. Why do you think it is important to learn about who these women were and what they did?
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Post-Lesson

1. At the end of the NCC *Women of Power* program, students are asked to think about women who have recently held or currently hold positions of power in the U.S., including Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton, former Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, and former Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O'Connor. Introduce students to the National Women's Hall of Fame, which was established in Seneca Falls, NY, in 1969 as a permanent home to honor the contributions of America's women. Share the following information with students about the Hall:
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- The National Women's Hall of Fame was founded by both men and women in Seneca Falls, NY, in 1969. In 1979, it moved to its permanent home in a former bank building in the town's historic district.
- In 1848, Seneca Falls was the site of the first women's rights convention. Organized by Lucretia Mott and Elizabeth Cady Stanton, the convention was attended by more than 300 women and men, all of whom gathered to

discuss the importance of granting women equal rights. They passed the Declaration of Sentiments, which was modeled after the Declaration of Independence and declared that women should have the right to vote.

- Today, the National Women's Hall of Fame continues to celebrate the many contributions that women have made to the arts and sciences, athletics, business, government, education and many other fields. The Hall currently honors 236 women, including Louisa May Alcott, Julia Child, Hillary Rodham Clinton, Harriet Tubman, and Oprah Winfrey.
 - The Hall welcomes nominations. Information about the nominating process can be found on its website (<https://www.greatwomen.org/home.php>).
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2. Assign each student one member of the Hall. Provide students with time to read their members' biographies on the Hall's website and to research additional information online (20-30 minutes). Have students complete the *Hall of Famers Snapshot* worksheet using the information they have collected about their members.
 3. Gather students together for a Hall of Famers Hobnob. Provide them with approximately 30 minutes to mingle with fellow members of the Hall and learn about each other. While remaining in character, students will socialize with each other, sharing what they have learned about their assigned members and learning more about other members of the Hall (If possible, have students dress in character with period clothing for this activity). As students mingle, they should complete the *Hall of Famers Hobnob* worksheet. Collect the worksheets at the end of the activity.
 4. To complete the post-lesson, divide students into mixed-ability groups of 3-4. Explain that the National Women's Hall of Fame invites the public to nominate "outstanding American women" whom they think deserve to be inducted. Nominees may be living or deceased, but they must be citizens of the U.S. and meet the following general criteria: "To honor in perpetuity those women, citizens of the United States of America, whose contributions to the arts, athletics, business, education, government, the humanities, philanthropy and science, have been the greatest value...."

The Hall of Fame's website includes complete information about how to nominate a woman and a link to the official nomination form, which asks students to include a nominee's biographical information and answer three questions about the nominee's contributions to society (http://www.greatwomen.org/nominate_2.php).

After reviewing the criteria and nomination form with students, lead a class brainstorm about women whom they believe should be nominated to the Hall. Have each group pick a different person from the list and research her life and accomplishments before completing the nomination form online. Once students

have completed their forms, allow them to submit their nominations officially to the Hall.

5. If time permits, have each group give a brief presentation to the class about their nominee.

Further Resources

- (<https://www.greatwomen.org/home.php>). (The National Women's Hall of Fame)
- <http://www.nwhp.org/resourcecenter/biographycenter.php> (The National Women's History Project's Biography Center)
- <http://womenshistorymonth.gov/> (The Library of Congress' Women's History Month website)
- <http://www.archives.gov/research/alic/reference/womens-history.html> (The National Archives)
- <http://www.nwhm.org/> (The National Women's History Museum)

Who Am I? Part One

Directions: Each of the following questions asks you to identify a famous man from U.S. history. Using what you know – but without the help of a textbook or the Internet – work with your group members to answer each of these questions. An answer bank is provided at the bottom of the worksheet. Use each answer only once.

1. I worked as a printer, conducted many famous experiments with electricity and wrote *Poor Richard's Almanac*. Who Am I? _____
2. I invented the light bulb, the phonograph and the motion picture projector. Who Am I? _____
3. I was the first president of the United States and served as the commander-in-chief of the colonial armies during the Revolutionary War. Who Am I? _____
4. I was a poet and one of the most important figures in the Harlem Renaissance. Who Am I? _____
5. I delivered the "I Have a Dream" speech about civil rights in Washington, DC, and was the youngest person to receive the Nobel Peace Prize. Who Am I? _____
6. I was the fourth president of the United States and wrote the Bill of Rights. Who Am I? _____
7. As president, I led the United States through the Civil War, but I was assassinated during my second term in office. Who Am I? _____
8. I was the first African American justice on the U.S. Supreme Court. Who Am I? _____
9. I wrote some of the greatest American novels, including *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* and *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*. Who Am I? _____
10. I invented the telephone. Who Am I? _____

Alexander Graham Bell	Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.	Abraham Lincoln
James Madison	Ben Franklin	George Washington
Mark Twain	Thurgood Marshall	Langston Hughes
Thomas Edison		

Who Am I?
Part One
Answer Sheet

1. Ben Franklin
2. Thomas Edison
3. George Washington
4. Langston Hughes
5. Martin Luther King Jr.
6. James Madison
7. Abraham Lincoln
8. Thurgood Marshall
9. Mark Twain
10. Alexander Graham Bell

Who Am I? Part Two

Directions: Each of the following questions asks you to identify a famous woman from U.S. history. Using what you know – but without the help of a textbook or the Internet – work with your group members to answer each of these questions. An answer bank is provided at the bottom of the worksheet. Use each answer only once.

1. I disguised myself as a boy and fought in the Revolutionary War, but my secret was discovered when a doctor examined me after I became ill. Who Am I?

2. I organized thousands of women to march for equal rights in Washington, DC. Who Am I?

3. I was a novelist and an influential figure in the Harlem Renaissance. Who Am I?

4. Along with others, I organized a famous women's rights convention in Seneca Falls, NY, in 1848. Who Am I? _____
5. I was a sculptor and the first African American female artist to receive a federal commission for my work. Who Am I? _____
6. I was a teacher and nurse and founded the American Red Cross. Who Am I?

7. I was born a slave but escaped and became a leader of the abolitionist (anti-slavery) movement. Who Am I? _____
8. I was a first lady and worked as my husband's unofficial speech writer. Who Am I?

9. I worked as a seamstress and owned my own shop on Arch St. in Philadelphia. Who Am I? _____
10. I was married to one of the country's first presidents and saved a portrait of George Washington from being destroyed in a White House fire. Who Am I?

Elizabeth Cady Stanton	Zora Neale Hurston	Clara Barton
Deborah Samson	Betsy Ross	Alice Paul
Sojourner Truth	Sarah Polk	Meta Vaux Warrick Fuller

Who Am I?
Part Two
Answer Sheet

1. Deborah Samson
2. Alice Paul
3. Zora Neale Hurston
4. Elizabeth Cady Stanton
5. Meta Vaux Warrick Fuller
6. Clara Barton
7. Sojourner Truth
8. Sarah Polk
9. Betsy Ross
10. Dolley Madison

Hall of Famer Snapshot

As you research your Hall of Famer, record information about her life and contributions to society below.

Name:

Year of Birth:

Year of Death:

Birthplace:

Education:

Profession:

Contributions to Society:

Honors/Awards:

Fun Fact:

Hall of Famer Hobnob

As you socialize with fellow Hall of Famers today, jot down information about the different people you meet. Try to meet 10 different people during the Hobnob.

Member #1

Name:

Profession:

Interesting Contribution to Society:

Fun Fact:

Member #2

Name:

Profession:

Interesting Contribution to Society:

Fun Fact:

Member #3

Name:

Profession:

Interesting Contribution to Society:

Fun Fact:

Member #4

Name:

Profession:

Interesting Contribution to Society:

Fun Fact:

Member #5

Name:

Profession:

Interesting Contribution to Society:

Fun Fact:

Member #6

Name:

Profession:

Interesting Contribution to Society:

Fun Fact:

Member #7

Name:

Profession:

Interesting Contribution to Society:

Fun Fact:

Member #8

Name:

Profession:

Interesting Contribution to Society:

Fun Fact:

Member #9

Name:

Profession:

Interesting Contribution to Society:

Fun Fact:

Member #10

Name:

Profession:

Interesting Contribution to Society:

Fun Fact: