



UNIT 1

FEMALE EMANCIPATION



Goal 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls

1 Women in ancient history

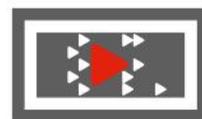


In the ancient and medieval world, women living in Europe, the Middle East and most of Africa, did not have the same legal and political rights as men and were under the control of fathers and husbands in almost all societies.

In **ancient Egypt**, women enjoyed the same rights as men: their rights depended on their social class, not on their sex. All landed property descended in the female line, from mother to daughter: a woman had the right to **manage** her property and use it as she wished. She could buy, sell property, be a partner in legal contracts, be an executor and **witness** to legal acts, bring an action in **court**, and adopt children in her name. In short, an ancient Egyptian woman enjoyed a higher social position than many women in other societies, both ancient and modern.

Women in the **ancient Greek world** didn't have many rights in comparison to male citizens. They were unable to vote, own land, or **inherit**. A woman's place was in the home and her purpose in life was the education of children.

In spite of this, Spartan women were treated differently: for example, they had to do physical training like men, they were allowed to **own** land, and could drink wine. In **Ancient Rome**, in the beginning, women had no rights. Over time, things changed. During the 500 years that Rome was a Republic, Roman women could go to the



Inquadrami per vedere le risorse digitali di questa lezione



GLOSSARY

Clergy: the collective body of men and women ordained as religious ministers, especially of the Christian Church

Court: a place where legal justice is administered

Inherit (to): take or receive (property, etc.) that is left to one after the death of someone or by someone's will, as an heir

Manage (to): to take charge of

Nun: a woman who is a member of a religious order, especially one who observes vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience

Own (to): possess

Peasant: a member of a class of small farmers of low social rank

Witness: a person who attests to the genuineness of a document

Forum to shop, chat with friends, and visit a temple, all without asking their husband for permission. During the 500 years of the Roman Empire, women gained even more freedom. Under the Empire, it was legal for women to own land, run businesses, free slaves, make wills, inherit wealth, and get a paid job. However, in ancient Rome, only free adult men were citizens. Even though women were not citizens of ancient Rome, they enjoyed a great deal more freedom than the women in ancient Greece.



• The Garden of Eden, Upper Rhenish Master (circa 1410-1420)



• Self-portrait as a lute player (1615-1617), Artemisia Gentileschi, Curtis Galleries, Minneapolis

The vast majority of people in the **Middle Ages** worked the land, and women were just as active as men in agricultural activities. Noblewomen and **nuns** had access to books and were often literate; women also learned to carry out domestic tasks. However, education for both women and men was limited to the upper classes and the **clergy**. Most people in medieval Europe lived in small rural communities, and made their living from the land. **Peasant** women had many domestic responsibilities, including caring for children, preparing food, and tending livestock. During the busiest times of the year, such as the harvest, women often joined their husbands in the field to

bring in the crops. Women often participated in fundamental cottage industries, such as brewing, baking and manufacturing textiles.

During the **Renaissance**, women played different roles in their families, depending on their age and marital status. First a woman was a daughter and then a wife, mother or widow. On the other hand, men's roles were generally defined by their social position or occupation. Female roles were more defined in upper-class society than in peasant society, because upper-class women had a share in the family estate.

On the contrary, peasant women generally had more freedom as they were actively involved in helping support the family by working with the men on the farm or in a shop.

Adapted from: www.worldhistory.org, www.archaeology.wik and griekse-les.nl

1 TRAINING FOR INVALSI Answers the questions with no more than FIVE words.

- Who used to control women in the ancient and medieval world?
- In ancient Egypt, what did women's rights depend on?
- In the ancient Greek world what was women's purpose in life?
- When Rome was a Republic, did women have more or less rights compared to when Rome was an Empire?
- In the Middle Ages, which women were often educated?
- In medieval Europe, where did most people live?
- In the Renaissance, what did women's roles in the family depend on?
- During the Renaissance, what were men's roles generally define by?

2 VOCABULARY IN CONTEXT Find in the text the words that match the following definitions.

a A great deal of money, property, or possessions	
b The horses, cattle, sheep, and other useful animals kept or raised on a farm or ranch	
c The act of gathering ripened crops	
d To make (beer, etc.) by boiling and fermenting the ingredients	
e Any fabric or cloth, especially woven	
f A woman whose husband has died and who has not remarried	

2 Women’s role in the Victorian era

The reign of Queen Victoria, from 1837 to 1901, marked the period known in history as the Victorian era. During these years, the rights which the women enjoyed were similar to those of young children: they were not allowed to vote, sue or even own property. They lived a life centered on the home, on their husband and on their children. Women who belonged to the noble class lived and enjoyed a life of luxuries: their main job was to instruct the servants on what was to be done and to **groom** younger girls of the same class to become women. Approximately half of all lower working-class women were in domestic service; others were barmaids and chambermaids. The middle-class women were expected to take education, help in the family business and try to get married into the nobility. Upper working-class women had a variety of jobs and earned a decent **livelihood** by becoming a governess, housekeeper or school teacher. <http://victorian-age-org>



GLOSSARY

Groom (to): to prepare for a position

Livelihood: occupation or employment

Portrait of Queen Victoria (1859), Franz Xaver Winterhalter

1 Decide if the statements are True or False. Correct the false statements.

- a** During the reign of Queen Victoria, women had few rights. T F
- b** Women could not vote, but they could bring legal action against somebody in court. T F
- c** Women’s life was mainly at home. T F
- d** Noble women’s task was to teach their daughters to grow into women. T F
- e** About 50% of lower-working class women were maids. T F
- f** Upper working-class women could not work. T F

2 TRAINING FOR INVALSI | **LISTENING**  **TRACK 01** | Listen to a teacher talking about the figure of the governess in the Victorian era. Choose the best answer.

- a** The governess...
- was not an ordinary servant
 - was part of the family
 - was an ordinary servant
- b** In 1851,...
- most of the women were employed as governesses
 - 25,000 women earned their living teaching and looking after other women's children
 - 25,000 women were teachers
- c** Most governesses...
- were well paid
 - were fed and housed
 - had to pay for their meals
- d** For a middle-class woman who had no family to support her, being a governess was...
- the only respectable occupation
 - one of the many jobs she could do
 - considered a privilege
- e** From the beginning of the 19th century,...
- the upper classes started to hire governesses
 - the middle classes started to hire governesses
 - the lower classes could not afford a governess
- f** For a family, hiring a woman to raise their children...
- became a status symbol
 - was an opportunity
 - was an honour



 **Video**
Mary Poppins -
The Perfect Nanny

The most famous governess role which may be familiar is that of 'Mary Poppins'

2.1 The women's suffrage movement

3 TRAINING FOR INVALSI Parts of the text have been removed. Choose the correct part (A-F) for each gap (1-6). There are two extra parts that you should not use. The first one (0) has been done for you.

The feminist movement (also known as the Women's Movement, Women's Liberation or Women's Lib) refers to (0) E on issues such as reproductive rights, domestic violence, maternity leave, equal pay, voting rights, sexual harassment, and sexual violence.

The movement's history has gone through three waves, (1) ... In the mid-19th century, women in several countries—above all, the US and Britain—formed organizations to fight for suffrage. (2) ... was the struggle for the right of women to vote in elections. The word "suffragette" was first used (3) ... in an article in a British newspaper in 1906.

One major division, especially in Britain, was between suffragists, who wanted to create change constitutionally, (4) ... led by English political activist Emmeline Pankhurst, who in 1903 formed the more militant



GLOSSARY

Smash (to): break to pieces with violence and often with a crashing sound

Struggle: a war, fight, conflict, or contest of any kind

Suffrage: the right to vote

Vote (to): formal expression of opinion or choice, either positive or negative, made by an individual

Women’s Social and Political Union, (5) ... for its activities and whose members were the first to be called ‘suffragettes’. The group, identified as independent, often in opposition to political parties, became known for its physical confrontations: members **smashed** windows and assaulted police officers. Like many suffragettes, (6) ... This period of militancy was ended on the outbreak of the war in 1914, when Emmeline turned her energies to support the war effort. In 1918, the Representation of the People Act gave voting rights to women over 30. Ten years later, in 1928, the female voting age was lowered to 21. Emmeline died on 14 June 1928, shortly after women were granted equal voting rights with men.



Emmeline Pankhurst (1858-1928)

Adapted from: www.bbc.co.uk

- A** The women’s suffrage movement
- B** Emmeline was arrested on several occasions.
- C** to describe women campaigning for the right to vote
- D** The first one was tougher.
- E** a series of campaigns for reforms
- F** and suffragettes,
- G** an organisation that gained much notoriety
- H** beginning in the late 18th century up to the 20th century.
- I** by them

PROFESSIONALLY VALUED SKILLS
Build up your 21st century competencies: Creative and critical thinking / Social responsibility

4 WRITING “I’d rather be a rebel than a slave”. This is a famous quote by Emmeline Pankhurst. Do you share her views? Write a paragraph giving reasons to support your answer (not less than 100 words).

3 Women who fought for human rights

1 TRAINING FOR INVALSI | LISTENING TRACK 02 | Listen and complete the sentences with ONE of the phrases below.

- feminist pamphlet - amateur scientist - equality between women and men - the conditions of slaves - a mixed education system - wrote a blog under a pseudonym

Olympe de Gouges (1748-1793) was a French playwright and political activist. She struggled to improve **1** in the colonies of 1788 and to defend the rights of women. Today she is best known as an early feminist who demanded that French women be given the same rights as French men. She wrote the *Déclaration des droits de la Femme et de la Citoyenne* (Declaration of the Rights of Woman and the Female Citizen) in 1791, where she challenged the practice of male authority and the notion of male/female inequality.

GLOSSARY

Advocate: a person who speaks or writes in support of a cause

Argue (to): present or state reasons for or against a thing

Playwright: a writer of plays



Portrait of Mary Wollstonecraft (c. 1797), John Opie

Mary Wollstonecraft (1759-1797), English writer and philosopher, was one of the strongest activists of women’s rights. She is best known for her **2)** , *A vindication of Rights of woman*, where she denounces the patriarchal society of her time. She **argues** that women are not naturally inferior to men, but appear to be so only because they lack education. Published in 1792, the book is considered one of the founding books of the feminist movement.

Lydia Becker (1827-1890) was one of the great figures of the early British suffragettes movement. She was also an **3)** who was interested in Biology and Astronomy. She was contrary to the popular belief that there was a difference in biological intelligence between men and women. She campaigned for **4)**

She is best remembered for founding and publishing the *Women’s Suffrage Journal* between 1870 and 1890. The Argentinian **Eva Peron** (1919-1952), called «Evita», embodied the fight for women’s voting rights. In 1945, she married Juan Peron, who became President of Argentina the following year. A passionate **advocate** for **5)** , Evita used her position as First Lady to fight for women’s suffrage and improving the lives of the poor. She also ran the Ministries of Labor and Health and founded and ran the nation’s first large-scale female political party, the Female Peronist Party.

Malala Yousafzai (born 12 July 1997). This very young Pakistani woman has become the symbol of the struggle for the education of girls in her country, where her actions have earned her the target of the Taliban. When she was 12, Malala **6)** for the BBC Urdu detailing her life under Taliban occupation. She won the Nobel Peace Prize in 2014.



Evita Peron (1919-1952)



Malala Yousafzai

PROFESSIONALLY VALUED SKILLS

Build up your 21st century competencies: Communication and public speaking / Creative and critical thinking / Social responsibility

2 SPEAKING “Regardless of what barriers confront you, it is in your power to free yourselves; you have only to want to”. Comment on Olympe de Gouges’s statement. Who is she referring to? Do you agree with her? Give reasons to support your answer.

PROFESSIONALLY VALUED SKILLS

Build up your 21st century competencies: Communication and public speaking / Creative and critical thinking / Digital competencies / Social responsibility / Team working

3 INTERNET | WRITING | SPEAKING In groups, search the Internet and find information on Anna Maria Mozzoni, Italian writer and activist, commonly held as the founder of the woman’s movement in Italy. Write a brief report, then share with the class.



4 Gender inequality

Gender inequality refers to unfair rights and dignity between males and females based on different gender roles which leads to unequal treatment in life.

Women all over the world continue to be **discriminated** against. Women form the majority of the world's poorest people and violence against them throughout the world and in all cultures far exceeds what is most commonly believed. In some countries, women, unlike men, cannot dress as they like, drive, work or inherit property. Many women cannot have access to health care or proper nutrition, leading to a higher mortality rate. Even if there has been progress over the last decades, some girls still cannot go to school and are forced into early marriage. 1 in 5 women and girls between the ages of 15 and 49 have experienced physical or sexual violence by a partner within the last 12 months, but 49 countries currently have no laws protecting women from domestic violence.

Gender equality is not only a fundamental human right, but a necessary basis for a peaceful world. Although some

harmful practices such as child marriage and female genital mutilation have decreased by 30% in the past decade, there is still a lot of work to be done to completely eliminate them.

As a result of the COVID-19 lockdown, domestic violence has increased in many countries, showing the critical importance of social protection for women and girls.



Adapted from: www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment



GLOSSARY

Discriminate (to): make a distinction for or against a person on the basis of the group or class to which the person belongs, rather than according to merit

Harmful: causing or capable of causing harm

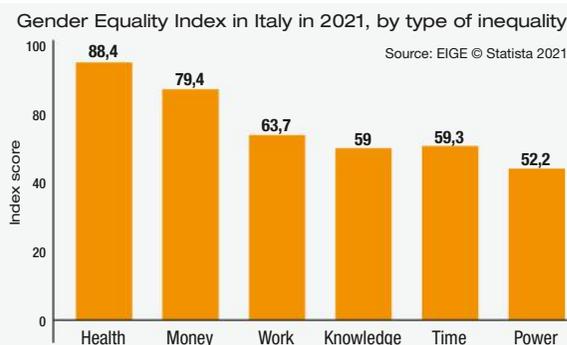
1 Choose the correct answer(s).

- a** Gender inequality...
- causes unequal treatment in men and women's lives
 - means violence against women
- b** Most of the world's poorest people are...
- men
 - women
- c** In some countries, women cannot...
- find a job
 - have medical care
- d** Over the last decades,...
- fewer girls have been obliged to get married at an early age
 - more girls have been forced to leave school
- e** Female genital mutilation...
- has decreased in the past decade
 - is still practised
- f** During the COVID-19 epidemic...
- violence against women has increased
 - women and girls have not been protected from men's violence

PROFESSIONALLY VALUED SKILLS

Build up your 21st century competencies: Communication and public speaking / Creative and critical thinking / Social responsibility

- 2 SPEAKING** The graph shows the gender equality index in Italy by type of inequality. What are your thoughts about it? Discuss in class.



PROFESSIONALLY VALUED SKILLS

Build up your 21st century competencies: Communication and public speaking / Creative and critical thinking / Digital competencies / Social responsibility / Team working

- 3 INTERNET | SPEAKING** The Spotlight Initiative is a European Union (EU) and United Nations (UN) global initiative focused on eliminating all forms of violence against women and girls. In groups, search the net and find further information about it. Report to the class.

5 Violence against women: 5 ways women's human rights are violated around the world

The World Health Organisation describes violence against women and girls as a “*global health problem of epidemic proportions*”. November 25, International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women, marks the beginning of 16 Days of Action to end Gender-Based Violence, a campaign that has been running since 1981. The campaign ends on December 10th – Human Rights Day.

Some national studies show that up to 70 per cent of women have experienced **physical and/or sexual violence from an intimate partner** in their lifetime.

According to UNICEF, around the world, approximately 15 million adolescent girls (aged 15 to 19) have experienced forced sex at some point in their life.

Female genital mutilation (FGM) is considered a human rights violation and is condemned in several international conventions and treaties. Today, 200 million women worldwide are living with female genital cutting/mutilation, a

practice that includes many health risks, including haemorrhage, infertility, ongoing severe pelvic pain, complications in childbirth, HIV, psychological trauma and death. The Arab region is home to 50 million cases of FGM, accounting for a quarter of global cases. The urgency to end FGM is reflected in its inclusion as a target in the Sustainable Development Goals, as part of goal 5 to achieve gender equality and empower women and girls.

Child marriage is one of the most damaging forms of violence. Twenty-five million child marriages were prevented in the last decade, but still, over 150 million



girls are likely to marry by 2030. Every year, 12 million girls are married before they turn 18.

Humanitarian crises, including conflict and post-conflict situations, increase women’s vulnerability to violence. In some crisis-affected countries, 70 per cent of women experience gender-based violence. More than half of all maternal, new-born and child deaths occur in humanitarian settings. Living in fragile and humanitarian contexts and forced migration put women and girls at increased risk for **human trafficking**.



The 2020 Global Report on Trafficking in Persons showed that 71 per cent of all trafficking victims worldwide are women and girls. In 2018, for every 10 victims detected globally, about five were adult women and two were girls. 75 per cent of trafficked women and girls are trafficked for sexual slavery.

Adapted from: <https://canwach.ca> and <https://arabstates.unfpa.org>

1 Choose the correct answer.

- a November 25 is...
 - Human Rights Day
 - the first of 16 days of a campaign
- b Some national studies show that...
 - more than 50% of women have experienced physical and/or sexual violence from an intimate partner in their lifetime
 - up to 70 per cent of women have experienced forced sex at some point in their life
- c Female genital mutilation is...
 - finally banned worldwide
 - condemned in many treaties
- d Female genital mutilation...
 - may result in many risks for the woman
 - is a practice that includes several risks for young girls
- e A quarter of global cases of female genital mutilation are in...
 - Africa
 - Arabian countries
- f The determination to end female genital mutilation...
 - is included in goal 5 of the Sustainable Development Goals
 - is one of the Sustainable Development Goals

2 Decide if the following statements are True, False or Not Mentioned.

Correct the false statements.

- a Twenty-five million girls are likely to marry by 2030. T F NM
- b In underdeveloped countries, 5 million girls are married before they turn 18. T F NM
- c Wars increase women’s vulnerability to violence. T F NM
- d More than half of all maternal, new-born and child deaths occur in crisis-affected countries. T F NM
- e Living in fragile and humanitarian contexts puts women more at risk than men for human trafficking. T F NM
- f More than 70 per cent of trafficked women and girls are sex slaves. T F NM

3 TRAINING FOR INVALSI | VOCABULARY IN CONTEXT Match the words with the corresponding description.

a Violation	1 A large flow of blood from a damaged blood vessel
b Mutilation	2 An action that breaks or acts against something, especially a law, agreement, principle, or something that should be treated with respect
c Haemorrhage	3 The quality of being easily hurt, influenced, or attacked
d Infertility	4 The process of people travelling to a new place to live
e Vulnerability	5 The fact of being unable to have babies
f Migration	6 The act of damaging something severely, especially by violently removing a part

a ... b ... c ... d ... e ... f ...


PATHS TOWARDS RESPONSIBLE AND ACTIVE CITIZENSHIP
EDUCAZIONE CIVICA
Italian laws on the protection of women

Unlike the feminist movements in France and the United Kingdom which aimed at the total integration of women in society, the first defenders of the status of women in Italy have above all insisted on the importance of the right to education, seeking to improve the social conditions of women.

Italian feminism suffered a setback under the government of Benito Mussolini, whose ideology defined procreation as the main duty of women. During the after war period, feminist movements focused on issues such as divorce and abortion in the 1970s.

- ▶ In 1970, Law 898 introduced divorce into Italian law.

- ▶ In 1977, Law 903 established equal treatment of work between men and women.
- ▶ In 1978, Law 194 legalized abortion in Italy.
- ▶ In 1996, Law 66 declared rape a crime against the person and not against the public morality.
- ▶ In 2013, Law 119, concerning the fight against domestic violence, increased the penalties for abuses within the family, sexual violence and criminal harassment.
- ▶ In 2019, Law 69, called "codice rosso" or code red law, reinforced the protection of victims of domestic gender-based violence crimes, and increased repression through changes to the Criminal Code.

PROFESSIONALLY VALUED SKILLS

Build up your 21st century competencies: Communication and public speaking / Creative and critical thinking / Digital competencies / Social responsibility / Team working

4 INTERNET | WRITING | SPEAKING The numbers vary across countries and demographics, but overall, the COVID-19 pandemic has increased women's experiences of violence and eroded their feelings of safety. In pairs, search the Internet for the latest British and American laws for the protection of women and compare them with the Italian ones. Write a report, then share with the class.

From the press

flipped

classroom

- 1 **LISTENING**  **TRACK 03** | Listen to the article as you read it, then choose the correct answer(s) for each question.

US Supreme Court overturns abortion rights, upending Roe v. Wade

The Supreme Court has ruled that there is no constitutional right to abortion in the United States, upending the landmark Roe v. Wade case from nearly 50 years ago. Joe Biden called the ruling a “tragic error” and the Republicans celebrating it “wrong, extreme and out of touch”. The court, the President said, had pointed America down “an extreme and dangerous path”.

Biden said key rights including same-sex marriage and access to contraception could now be targeted by the rightwing court. “This is an extreme and dangerous path the court has now taken us on”.

The end of the right to abortion in the United States will have devastating consequences around the world. The court’s reversal will empower anti-abortion voices everywhere, threatening reproductive freedom and the right to control one’s destiny.

At least 26 states are expected to ban abortion immediately or as soon as practicable. The Republican attorney general of Texas, Ken Paxton, celebrated the ruling and said: “Abortion is illegal here.”

This decision is one of the most consequential in generations. It will have profound, immediate and enduring consequences for tens of millions of women who can become pregnant and other people. Ripple effects could play out over decades.

Swaths of the South and Midwest are expected to ban abortion or impose severe restrictions, possibly forcing patients to travel hundreds of miles or self-manage abortions.

Massive protests erupted outside the courthouse and in major cities and smaller towns across the US after the decision was announced. (...)

Adapted from: www.theguardian.com



- a** The US Supreme Court...
- has decreed abortion illegal in the United States
 - has overturned Roe v. Wade decision that had provided a constitutional right to abortion
- b** Joe Biden...
- agrees with the ruling
 - doesn't agree with the ruling
- c** According to the US President,...
- the USA has taken a hazardous route
 - the ruling can be a disastrous precedent

- d Biden said that...
 - other rights such as same-sex marriage could be at risk
 - the right to access to contraception could be put in danger by the right wing court
- e The end of the right to abortion in the United States will...
 - strengthen the power of anti-abortion people
 - have devastating consequences above all in Texas
- f At least 26 states...
 - have just banned abortion
 - will ban abortion as soon as the rule is put into force
- g Ken Paxton...
 - is happy about the anti-abortion ruling
 - said abortion was already illegal in Texas
- h The South and Midwest of the USA...
 - will definitely ban abortion
 - are likely to ban abortion
- i Following the Supreme Court decision,...
 - large protests broke out all around the States
 - massive protests erupted inside the Court

2 LISTENING  **TRACK 04** | Listen and decide if the statements are True, False or Not Mentioned.

- a Democratic-run states are pro-abortion. T F NM
- b Democratic-run states are against abortion. T F NM
- c Democratic-led states have passed laws to help patients who travel for abortions. T F NM
- d Republican-led states are happy about the Supreme Court decision. T F NM
- e Republican-led states have already prosecuted women who sought abortions. T F NM
- f About 80% of Americans support legal abortion in case of miscarriage. T F NM
- g Biden declared he would do everything in his power to protect a woman’s right in those states where abortion will be illegal. T F NM
- h Biden is likely to win the next election. T F NM
- i According to the Center for Reproductive Rights, Poland, Nicaragua and El Salvador are among the countries that have restricted abortion. T F NM

PROFESSIONALLY VALUED SKILLS

Build up your 21st century competencies: Communication and public speaking / Creative and critical thinking / Social responsibility

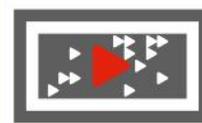
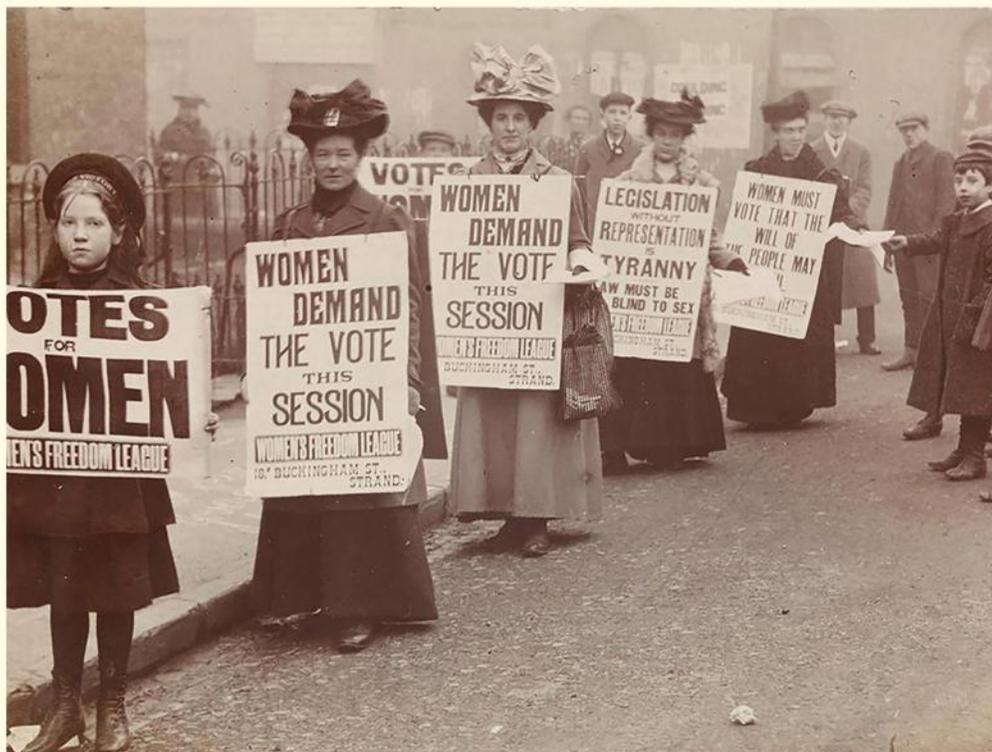
3 SPEAKING In your opinion, what consequences will the end of the right to abortion in the United States have around the world? Share with the class.

Video corner

flipped

classroom

The history of women's rights



Video
The history of women's rights

1 LISTENING  **TRACK 05** | Watch the video or listen to it, then choose the correct answer(s).

- a** Nowadays, women and girls...
- still have to fight for their rights
 - have reinforced their role in society
- b** The Seneca Falls convention was held in...
- the USA
 - New Zealand
- c** In New Zealand, the right to vote was granted in...
- 1848
 - 1893
- d** Following the formation of the United Nations, Eleanor Roosevelt...
- supervised the drafting of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights
 - became the symbol of feminist resistance and social change
- e** Feminist resistance...
- reached a climax in 1985
 - peaked in 1995
- f** Social media...
- is a very useful means to incite people to fight against injustice
 - is a crucial tool to overcome obstacles

2 LISTENING  **TRACK 05** | Watch the video again or listen to it one more time, then complete the sentences.

- a Women and girls are , change makers, and peacekeepers.
- b Women have been fighting for for centuries.
- c 1848 marked a watershed moment for
- d With the Seneca Falls convention activists publicly petitioned for their civil social political and religious rights.
- e In the early twentieth century, women around the world mobilized in increasing numbers to campaign for
- f With the rise of the , social media emerged as a crucial tool for galvanizing populations in the struggle against injustice.
- g A quarter of a century after the Beijing Declaration, women and men are mobilizing together to overcome to gender equality.

3 VOCABULARY IN CONTEXT Match each word with its synonym.

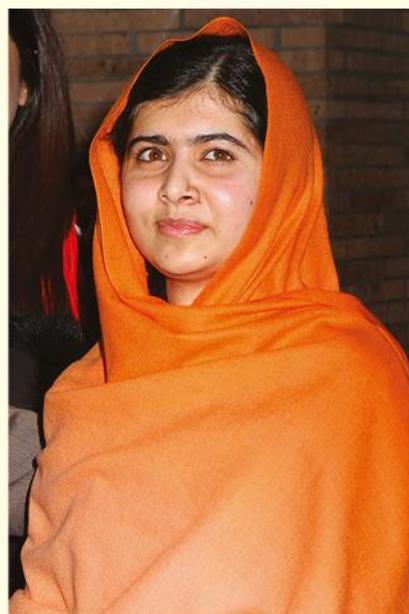
a Equality	1 Advocate
b Activist	2 Imaginary
c Resistance	3 Important
d Visionary	4 Parity
e Crucial	5 Opposition

a ... b ... c ... d ... e ...

PROFESSIONALLY VALUED SKILLS

Build up your 21st century competencies: Communication and public speaking / Creative and critical thinking / Social responsibility

4 SPEAKING Today, several women are still fighting for gender equality all over the world. Malala Yousafzai, a young Pakistani girl who struggles to protect women’s rights, is one of them. On the occasion of her speech to the United Nations on July 12, 2013, the young woman, Nobel Peace Prize laureate in 2014, said: “I am not telling men to step away from speaking for women’s rights, but I am focusing on women to be independent and fight for themselves.” In your opinion, is Malala’s struggle only a women’s affair or should it also concern men? Think about it, then discuss in class.



Literature connections

1 Sojourner Truth *Ain't I a Woman?*

Sojourner Truth (1797-1883), born Isabella Baumfree, was an African-American abolitionist and women's rights activist. She was sold when she was eleven and then forced to marry an older slave. To escape her third master who refused to release her after the abolition of slavery, she ran away with her youngest daughter, Sophie, and joined a religious group which advocated the abolition of slavery and supported the movement of women's rights. In 1851, before the Ohio Women's Rights Convention, she pronounced her famous speech "*Ain't I a Woman?*", that made her famous. Sojourner Truth, talks about the double burden of being both black and a woman, and about the power of women to change the world.



(...) That man over there says that women need to be helped into carriages, and lifted over ditches, and to have the best place everywhere. Nobody ever helps me into carriages, or over mud puddles, or gives me any best place! And ain't I a woman? Look at me! Look at my arm! I have ploughed and planted, and gathered into barns, and no man could head me! And ain't I a woman? I could work as much and eat as much as a man - when I could get it - and bear the lash as well! And ain't I a woman? I have borne thirteen children, and seen most all sold off to slavery, and when I cried out with my mother's grief, none but Jesus heard me! And ain't I a woman? (...) Then that little man in black there, he says women can't have as much rights as men, 'cause Christ wasn't a woman! Where did your Christ come from? Where did your Christ come from? From God and a woman! Man had nothing to do with Him.

 Track 06



• Enslaved people cutting sugarcane on the Caribbean island of Antigua, (1832), William Clark.

If the first woman God ever made was strong enough to turn the world upside down all alone, these women together ought to be able to turn it back, and get it right side up again! And now they are asking to do it, the men better let them. Obligated to you for hearing me, and now old Sojourner ain't got nothing more to say.

Adapted from: www.feminist.com

ANALYZE THE TEXT

READING COMPREHENSION

1 According to the text, tick the correct statements. Sojourner Truth...

- a was helped getting into carriages.
- b was always given the best place everywhere.
- c used to cultivate the soil.
- d could eat as much as a man.
- e could not eat every time she felt like it.
- f was beaten as punishment.
- g had 10 children.
- h many of her children were sold as slaves.
- i said that women had no rights because God was a man.
- j stated that Christ was born from God and a woman.
- k declared that men should let women change the world.

SPEAKING PRACTICE

2 Comment on Sojourner Truth's statement: "If women want any rights more than they've got, why don't they just take them, and not be talking about it?". Do you agree with her? Give reasons in support of your answer.

WEB SEARCHING/SPEAKING PRACTICE

3 Search the Internet and find further information on Sojourner Truth. Find out the reason why she gave herself that name, then report to the class.

• Nine African American women gather for the Banner State Woman's National Baptist Convention in 1915.



2 Jane Austen*

Pride and Prejudice (Elisabeth's self-realization)

Elisabeth receives a letter from Darcy where he admits separating Bingley and Jane because he had not understood how much Jane loved his friend. This passage describes Elisabeth's reaction to the letter.

She grew absolutely ashamed of herself. Of neither Darcy nor Wickham could she think without feeling she had been blind, partial, prejudiced, absurd.

"How despicably I have acted!" she cried; "I, who have prided myself on my discernment! I, who have valued myself on my abilities! who have often disdained the generous candour of my sister, and gratified my vanity in useless or blameable mistrust! How humiliating is this discovery! Yet, how just a humiliation! Had I been in love, I could not have been more wretchedly blind! But vanity, not love, has been my folly. Pleased with the preference of one, and offended by the neglect of the other, on the very beginning of our acquaintance, I have courted prepossession and ignorance, and driven reason away, where either were concerned. Till this moment I never knew myself."

Pride and Prejudice, Chapter XXXV

*See English literature at a glance, page 384



ANALYZE THE TEXT

READING COMPREHENSION

1 Answer the questions.

- What does Elisabeth realise in the first two lines?
- What do these words reveal?
- By seeing her wrongs, what does the reader realise about Elisabeth?
- What does Elisabeth blame for her behaviour?
- How does Elisabeth feel on the whole?

SPEAKING PRACTICE

- 2 The words self-realisation are often used in literature to refer to the liberation of an individual from the sense of limitation brought about by identification with conditions, beliefs, opinions and habits. As a daughter, a woman is traditionally responsible for taking care of her parents. As a wife, she is expected to serve her husband, preparing food, clothing and other personal needs. As a mother, she has to take care of the children and their needs, including education. Do you agree with this statement? Do you believe that a woman is still expected to perform all these tasks? Discuss in class.

3 Virginia Woolf* *To the Lighthouse (Mrs. Ramsay, a perfect hostess)*

The extract presents Mrs. Ramsay in her efforts to be a perfect hostess at dinner, giving the reader access to her inner thoughts and feelings in one of her rare moments of existential crisis. The author focuses on the interiority of Mrs. Ramsay, showing a special interest in women's subjectivity opposed to that of men, represented by Mrs. Ramsay's husband.



Track 08

But what have I done with my life? thought Mrs. Ramsay, taking her place at the head of the table, and looking at all the plates making white circles on it. "William¹, sit by me," she said. "Lily," she said, wearily, "over there." They had that—Paul Rayley and Minta Doyle—she, only this²—an infinitely long table and plates and knives. At the far end was her husband, sitting down, all in a heap, frowning. What at? She did not know. She did not mind. She could not understand how she had ever felt any emotion or affection for him. She had a sense of being past everything, through everything, out of everything, as she helped the soup, as if there was an eddy³—there—and one could be in it, or one could be out of it, and she was out of it. It's all come to an end, she thought, while they came in one after another, Charles Tansley—"Sit there, please," she said—Augustus Carmichael—and sat down. And meanwhile she waited, passively, for someone to answer her, for something to happen. But this is not a thing, she thought, ladling out soup, that one says. Raising her eyebrows at the discrepancy—that was what she was thinking, this was what she was doing—ladling out soup—she felt, more and more strongly, outside that eddy; or as if a shade had fallen, and, robbed of colour, she saw things truly. The room (she looked round it) was very shabby. There was no beauty anywhere. She forbore to look at Mr. Tansley. Nothing seemed to have merged. They all sat separate. And the whole of the effort of merging and flowing and creating rested on her⁴.

To the Lighthouse ("The Window", Part 1, Chapter 17)

* See English literature at a glance, page 406

- 1 *William*: è uno degli ospiti dei Ramsays
- 2 *They had that...she, only this*: Mrs. Ramsay si sta riferendo alla storia d'amore di Paul e Minta e alla sua storia con suo marito
- 3 *Eddy*: turbine
- 4 *Rested on her*: era compito suo

ANALYZE THE TEXT

READING COMPREHENSION

1 Answer the questions.

- a Where does the event take place?
- b What is Mrs. Ramsay saying to her guests?
- c Where is her husband?
- d What is her husband's attitude?
- e How does Mrs. Ramsay feel about her husband?
- f What are Mrs. Ramsay's feelings during the dinner?

WRITING PRACTICE

- 2 Describe a moment when your mind has taken you to past events. (Not less than 100 words).

SPEAKING PRACTICE

- 3 Have you ever felt trapped in a situation you were not happy about? Have you ever felt like you were drawing in mud, worthless and confused, and you had lost your sense of direction? Share in class.

4 Kate Chopin *The Awakening (Mr. Pontellier's disapproval)*

Kate Chopin, born Katherine O'Flaherty (1851-1904) was an American author of short stories and novels based in Louisiana. She is considered to have been a forerunner of American 20th-century feminism. In 1899 she published the short story *The Awakening*, set in the 1890s Louisiana, within the upper-class Creole society. The plot centers on Edna Pontellier and her struggle between her increasingly unorthodox views on femininity and motherhood with the prevailing social attitudes of the turn-of-the-century American South. The story, which shocked the public with the portrayal of one woman's "awakening", is widely seen as a landmark work of early feminism.



He (Mr. Pontellier) reproached his wife with her inattention, her habitual neglect of the children. If it was not a mother's place to look after children, whose on earth was it? He himself had his hands full with his brokerage business. He could not be in two places at once; making a living for his family on the street, and staying at home to see that no harm befell them. He talked in a monotonous, insistent way. Mrs. Pontellier sprang out of bed and went into the next room. She soon came back and sat on the edge of the bed, leaning her head down on the pillow. She said nothing, and refused to answer her husband when he questioned her. When his cigar was smoked out, he went to bed, and in half a minute he was fast asleep. Mrs. Pontellier was by that time thoroughly awake. She began to cry a little, and wiped her eyes on the sleeve of her peignoir¹. (...)



1 *Peignoir*: vestaglia



She could not have told why she was crying. Such experiences as the foregoing² were not uncommon in her married life. They seemed never before to have weighed much against the abundance of her husband's kindness and a uniform devotion which had come to be tacit and self-understood.

An indescribable oppression, which seemed to generate in some unfamiliar part of her consciousness, filled her whole being with a vague anguish. It was like a shadow, like a mist passing across her soul's summer day. It was strange and unfamiliar; it was a mood.

2 *The foregoing*: quella appena accaduta

The Awakening, Chapter III.

ANALYZE THE TEXT

READING COMPREHENSION

1 Answer the questions.

- a What does Mr. Pontellier reproach his wife with?
- b What's Mrs. Pontellier's reaction to her husband's reproaches?
- c We could say that this episode can be seen as the beginning of Edna's rebellion. What kind of rebellion is it?
- d According to Mr. Pontellier, the roles in the family are clear. What are they?

WRITING PRACTICE

- 2** Women play a variety of significant roles in our society, from their birth till the end of life. However, after all women have done in the past and continue to do so today, they are still seen as weak because men are still considered the 'stronger' gender of the society. Comment on this statement (about 200 words).

SPEAKING PRACTICE

- 3** Do you believe a woman should stay at home and raise the children, while the man works? Why or why not? Discuss in class.

REVISION

TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE

- 1 What rights did a woman have in Ancient Egypt?
- 2 What was being a woman like in Ancient Rome?
- 3 What was the role of women in the Victoria Era?
- 4 Who was Emmeline Pankhurst?
- 5 Talk about the women who fought for human rights.
- 6 What does gender inequality refer to?
- 7 In what ways are women's human rights violated around the world?

SPEAKING/WRITING

Women are increasingly present in political institutions and in leadership positions. Can we finally say that today women have equal opportunities to men?

REVIEW AND REMEMBER

