

GENDER EQUALITY

Are gender stereotypes about culture or about power in the English-speaking world?



YOUR PROJECT

- 1 Interview several people about gender equality and the issues society still has to tackle nowadays.
- 2 Write three entries of a suffragette's diary for the book collection *Dear America Series*.

Au menu de cette unité :

DÉCOUVERTES CULTURELLES

- ♀♂ Les clichés hommes/femmes
- ♀♂ Les combats des suffragettes (Emmeline Pankhurst)
- ♀♂ L'émancipation des Américaines après la Seconde Guerre mondiale
- ♀♂ Des scientifiques américaines
- ♀♂ Lynsey Addario, photoreporter de guerre
- ♀♂ Des femmes artistes (*Guerilla Girls*)
- ♀♂ Les femmes dans la publicité des années 1940
- ♀♂ Jacky Fleming, une illustratrice engagée
- ♀♂ Le féminicide en Inde
- ♀♂ L'état matriarcal du Meghalaya en Inde

OUTILS LINGUISTIQUES

- ♀♂ Le prétérit simple et le prétérit *be + -ing*
- ♀♂ La voix passive
- ♀♂ *For, since et ago*

1 Demanding Gender Equality

Are gender equality and feminism different concepts?

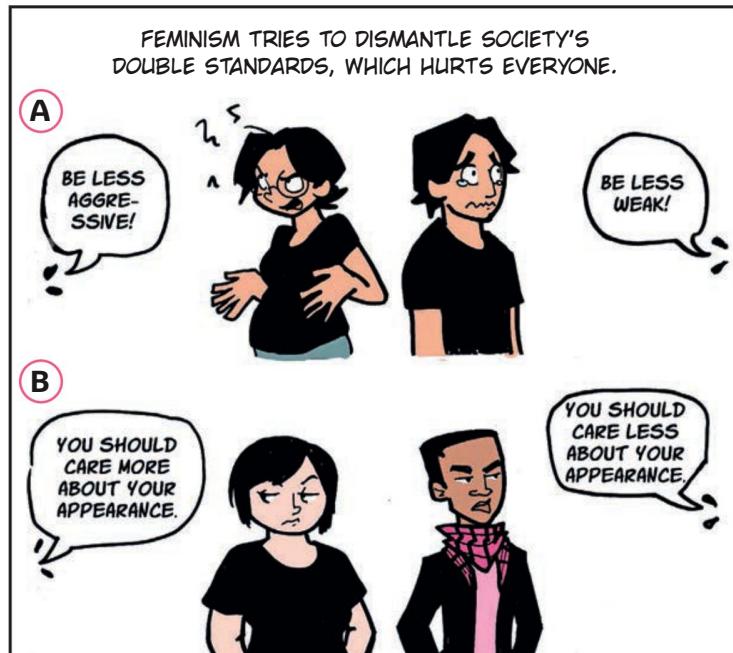
1 Fighting clichés

- A. Comment on this cartoon and say what the author denounces in each frame.
B. Can you think of other examples of double standards?

HELP!

Verbs & expressions

- campaign for / against
- dismantle = break
- double standards: *deux poids, deux mesures*
- gag = silence /*saltouf*/
- raise an issue: *soulever un problème*
- raise awareness: *sensibiliser*
- voice = express out loud = state sth



Talhi Brionnes (Canadian cartoonist), *Feminism*, 2018

2 Feminism in a nutshell

Read the quotes. According to you, which one best defines feminism? Justify your choice.

"Equality is not a concept. It's not something we should be striving for. It's a necessity. Equality is like gravity. We need it to stand on this earth as men and women, and the misogyny that is in every culture is not a true part of the human condition."

Joss Whedon,
American screenwriter, series director and comic book writer

"I myself have never been able to find out precisely what feminism is: I only know that people call me a feminist whenever I express sentiments that differentiate me from a doormat."

Rebecca West,
British author, journalist,
literary critic and travel writer

"Feminism is the radical notion that women are human beings."

Cheris Kramarae,
American scholar and author

3 Twitter contest

Tweet your own definition of feminism in 140 characters maximum. The class will vote for the best definition!

2 A Woman's Place

How did women fight for freedom?

1 "Freedom or Death"

- A. Read this speech with the help of [Worksheet n°17](#).
- B. At home. Listen to the speech on [MP3 n°34](#).
- C. Get ready to read your favourite passage out loud to your classmates!



In 1913, British suffragette Emmeline Pankhurst gave a speech in Connecticut, USA, to address the American Suffragettes who were also fighting for their right to vote.

When they put us in prison at first, simply for taking petitions, we submitted; we allowed them to dress us in prison clothes; we allowed them to put us in solitary confinement; we allowed them to put us amongst the most degraded of criminals; we learned of some of the appalling evils of our so-called civilisation that we could not have learned in any other way. It was valuable experience, and we were glad to get it.

I have seen men smile when they heard the words "hunger strike", and yet I think there are very few men today who would be prepared to adopt a "hunger strike" for any cause. It is only people who feel an intolerable sense of oppression who would adopt a means of that kind. It means you refuse food until you are at death's door, and then the authorities have to choose between letting you die, and letting you go; and then they let the women go.

Now, that went on so long that the government felt that they were unable to cope. It was [then] that, to the shame of the British government, they set the example to authorities all over the world of feeding sane, resisting human beings by force. [...] Now, that was done in England, and the government thought they had crushed us. But they found that it did not quell the agitation, that more and more women came in and even passed that terrible ordeal, and they were obliged to let them go. [...]

Women are very slow to rouse, but once they are aroused, once they are determined, nothing on earth and nothing in heaven will make women give way; it is impossible. And so this "Cat and



"Mouse Act" which is being used against women today has failed. There are women lying at death's door, recovering enough strength to undergo operations who have not given in and won't give in, and who will be prepared, as soon as they get up from their sick beds, to go on as before. There are women who are being carried from their sick beds on stretchers into meetings. They are too weak to speak, but they go amongst their fellow workers just to show that their spirits are unquenched, and that their spirit is alive, and they mean to go on as long as life lasts. Now, I want to say to you who think women cannot succeed, we have brought the government of England to this position, that it has to face this alternative: either women are to be killed or women are to have the vote. [...] If we win it, this hardest of all fights, then, to be sure, in the future it is going to be made easier for women all over the world to win their fight when their time comes.

Freedom or Death,
Emmeline Pankhurst, 1913



2 Fighting for a new role

- A. Take a look at poster A and react. Focus on education and mimicry (imitation).
- B. Comment on poster B and imagine the context.
- C. What do these documents reveal about the evolution of women's role in society?



HELP!

Words

- doll
- mechanic
- wrench: clé à molette
- uneducated
- illiterate
- infantilise
- play house
- step up: prendre le relai

3 Towards emancipation

- A. Read the text and turn to [Worksheet n°18](#) for help.
- B. **Groupwork.** Pick out the key elements related to the role of women in society. Draw a mind map that shows the causes and consequences of this evolution.
- C. Share your findings with the other groups.

YOUR TURN! 4 Create a timeline

You work for the History Channel. Create a timeline about the evolution of women's role in society.

After the disruption, alienation, and insecurity of the Great Depression and the Second World War, the family, more so than ever before, became the center of American life. [...]

Postwar prosperity made the banalities of housework less taxing¹, but often came at a cost to women who gave up careers to maintain the domestic sphere. This lifestyle stressed the importance of a one-income household, with the husband working and the wife staying at home to raise the children. Historian Elaine Tyler May called it a kind of "domestic containment": In seeking to nurture² their families in the suburbs of the 1950s, housewives and mothers often gave up their aspirations for fulfillment outside the home. [...]

Shifting social norms quickly altered staid notions of domesticity. Amidst the routine of household duties, many postwar wives and mothers were frustrated by their lack of professional fulfillment. Betty Friedan memorably identified this malaise as "the problem with no name" in her landmark book *The Feminine Mystique* (1963). The book's popularity attested to Friedan's connection with a feeling of discontent³. Daughters who came of age in the 1960s were determined to make their lives less constrained than those of their mothers. Consequently, the women's rights movement and the sexual revolution of the 1960s challenged many of the traditional notions of motherhood and marital relationships. Many young women rejected the sexual conventions of their parents' generation. [...]

¹ pénible • ² prendre soin • ³ mécontentement

The Office of History Preservation, *Women in Congress 1917-2006*, 2007

● (In)equality at Work

Does recognition depend on gender?

1 Women in science

- A. **Pairwork.** In five minutes, list all the scientists you can think of.
B. How many men are there on your list? How many women? What does that tell you?
C. Read the cartoon. How does it illustrate the struggle women still have when presenting new scientific theories?
D. What does it tell you about recognition?
E. **Have your say.** Is this cartoon helpful to fight sexism? Justify your answer.

HELP!

- ill-treated
- lack of recognition
- struggle = fight
- be on an equal footing

The Oceanographic Dress Code: No Bare Mid Rifts



The illustrated Women in Science, by Dale Debacksy, 2015

2 Hidden in plain sight

- A. Read the text and pick out the different jobs mentioned. Say who did them, where and when.
B. Were those people recognised for their work?

Find at least two reasons to justify your answer.

C. Take a look at the date of publication.

What does it reveal about the evolution of society?

“How many women are we talking about? Five or six?” I had known more than that number just growing up in Hampton, but even I was surprised at how the numbers kept adding up. [...] I discovered one 1945 personnel document describing a beehive¹ of mathematical activity in an office in a new building on Langley’s west side, staffed by 25 black women coaxing² numbers out of calculators on a 24-hour schedule, overseen by three black shift supervisors who reported to two white head computers. I can put names to almost 50 black women who worked as computers, mathematicians, engineers or scientists at the Langley Memorial Aeronautical Laboratory from 1943 through 1980, and my intuition is that 20 more names can be shaken loose from the archives with more research.

While the black women are the most hidden of the mathematicians who worked at the NACA, the National Advisory Committee for Aeronautics, and later at NASA, they

were not sitting alone in the shadows: the white women who made up the majority of Langley’s computing workforce over the years have hardly been recognised for their contributions to the agency’s long-term success. Virginia Biggins worked the Langley beat for the *Daily Press* newspaper, covering the space programme starting in 1958. “Everyone said, ‘This is a scientist, this is an engineer’ and it was always a man,” she said in a 1990 panel on Langley’s human computers. She never got to meet any of the women. “I just assumed they were all secretaries,” she said.

¹ ruche • ² (ici) obtenir

Hidden Figures:
The American Dream and the Untold Story of the Black Women Who Helped Win the Space Race, Margot Lee Shetterly, 2016



3 Lynsey Addario



- A. Listen to [MP3 n°35](#) and take notes.
- B. How does Lynsey Addario see her work as a photojournalist?
- C. Say what issues she was faced with as a female war photographer.
- D. **Have your say.** Do you think the journalist would have asked the same questions if Lynsey were a man?



American photojournalist Lynsey Addario covering war

HELP!

Noun

- role model

Adjectives

- bold = daring = fearless
- biased: partial(e)

Expressions

- break the glass ceiling
- be judged by the same standards



Lynsey Addario interviewed by CBS, 2015

4 Go further: Women artists

C. At home. Search for information about "the Guerrilla Girls" and present them to the class.

A. Read the text. List all the ways in which Harriet Burden feels her work is discredited and depreciated.

B. What elements show that this is linked to her gender rather than to her talent?

I suspected that if I had come in another package my work might have been embraced or, at least, approached with greater seriousness. I didn't believe that there had been a plot against me. Much of prejudice is unconscious. What appears on the surface is an unidentified aversion, which is then justified in some rational way. Perhaps being ignored is worse – the look of boredom in the eyes of the other person, that assurance that nothing from me could be of any possible interest. Nevertheless, I had hoarded my direct hits and humiliations, and they had made me gun-shy¹.

Not to my face: That's Felix Lord's wife. She makes dollhouses. Titters².

To my face: I heard that Jonathan took your work because he's a friend of Felix. Plus they needed a woman in the stable. In a rag: *The show at Jonathan Palmer* by Harriet Burden,

¹⁵ wife of legendary art dealer Felix Lord, consists of small architectural works cluttered with various figures and texts. The work has no discipline or focus and seems to be an odd blend of pretentiousness and naïveté³. One can only wonder why these pieces were deemed worthy of exhibition [...].

²⁰ Time had made the feelings worse, not better. Despite Rachel's prompting that I return to the fray, I knew that youth was the desired commodity and that, despite the Guerrilla Girls, it was still better to have a penis. I was over the hill and had never had a penis. It was too late for me to go as myself.

¹ nervous • ² ricanements • ³ en français dans le texte

The Blazing World,
Siri Hustvedt, 2014

