

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