

PRIMARY SOURCE ANALYSIS

“Ain’t I a Woman?”

Read the text and answer the questions.

“Ain’t I a Woman?” speech by Sojourner Truth (excerpt)

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Well, children, where there is so much racket there must be something out of kilter. I think that ‘twixt the negroes of the South and the women at the North, all talking about rights, the white men will be in a fix pretty soon. But what’s all this here talking about?

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 they talk about this thing in the head; what’s this they call it? [member of audience whispers, “intellect”] That’s it, honey. What’s that got to do with women’s rights or negroes’ rights? If my cup won’t hold but a pint, and yours holds a quart, wouldn’t you be mean not to let me have my little half measure full?

1. Use the text to make 3-5 inferences about Sojourner Truth.
2. Describe the tone and style of this speech. Cite examples.
3. Why did Sojourner Truth give this speech?
4. Explain the difference between the speaker and the author of the text.
5. What point is Sojourner Truth making by repeating the phrase, “Ain’t I a woman?”
6. Sojourner Truth uses colloquial language in her speech. Analyze the text and explain what is meant by “racket,” “cup,” “my little half measure full,” and other expressive phrases. Discuss as a class.

MAIN IDEA ORGANIZER

Suffragist Tactics

Use an online resource to research women's suffragist tactics and complete the graphic organizer. Then answer the questions.

Lobbying

Imprisonment

Parades

Picketing

Pageants

SUFFRAGIST TACTICS

Purpose:

Example:

Purpose:

Example:

Purpose:

Example:

Purpose:

Example:

Purpose:

Example:

1. How are the purposes of the tactics similar? How are they different?
2. A. In small groups, use an online resource to research one specific tactic of the women's suffrage movement. Create a slideshow presentation explaining the who, what, when, where, and why of your specific tactic. Include pictures and examples of your tactic. What results did your tactic achieve?
B. Present your slideshow and discuss as a class.

Women's Roles During WWI

Read the text and answer the questions.

Many men joined the military when World War I began in 1914. As a result, it quickly became clear that women were needed in the workforce—not only in the home as before. Working women found new freedom in jobs usually held by men. Women primarily filled roles in government departments, public transportation, post offices, and secretarial positions. Women also contributed to the war effort by working in dangerous ammunition factories to produce shells and weapons for the British and U.S. militaries.

Women filled an important role in the military, too. Many women became medical nurses, and others were trained as clerks, phone operators, and stenographers. Besides paid jobs, women took on the responsibility of voluntary work as well. They rolled bandages, knitted clothing, and prepared supplies for men on the war front.

Approximately 1,600,000 women joined the workforce during WWI. Their activity proved that women could do men's work, women could hold responsibility, and women were necessary to victory in WWI. Women's involvement in WWI made it difficult for politicians to ignore the women's suffrage movement. As a result, women's roles in WWI helped the passage of the 19th Amendment.

1. What was the primary role of women before World War I?
2. During World War I, why did women take on jobs usually held by men?
3. Explain how WWI offered women new opportunities and freedoms.
4. Explain the relationship between women's roles in WWI and the passage of the 19th Amendment.

Writing Prompt:

Imagine you are a woman in America during WWI. What job would you choose to perform? Write a first-hand narrative describing your role in the war effort, at home or in the military, and describe how it is different than your life before. Proofread and edit your work.