WONDER WOMEN!

THE UNTOLD STORY OF AMERICAN SUPERHEROINES

CURRICULUM GUIDE
UNIVERSITY

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Comic books have been a staple of American popular culture since the 1920s, but their popularity soared when the adventures of superheroes began filling their pages in the late 1930s.

For a population coming out of the Great Depression, comic book superheroes provided a much-needed boost to the spirits.

Overwhelmingly, these action heroes were men--until 1941, when a female superhero arrived on the scene and captured the imagination like no others before her. She was Wonder Woman, and *Wonder Women! The Untold Story of American Superheroines* tells the story of her creation and her enduring popularity as a role model and feminist icon.

Wonder Woman was created by William Moulton Marston, a Harvard-educated lawyer and psychologist. Marston was a strong supporter of the early twentieth century movements for women's rights. He felt that women were the key to world peace and that fostering feminine values of harmony and strength through love would set humanity on the right path. In addition to showing that there was an alternative to the physical violence of male superheroes, Marston's Wonder Woman served as propaganda for a system of female rule.

Wonder Woman was a patriotic symbol during World War II as women entered the workforce to take the place of men, but once the men returned after the war, she morphed into a more docile, traditional female. Over the next several decades, the comic book character of Wonder Woman mirrored the changes in women's roles and status in American society.

The feminist movement of the 1960s, looking for a figure that embodied strong womanhood, returned to the original depiction of Wonder Woman, who burst onto the cover of the first issue of Ms. Magazine. In the wake of the popularity of the 1970s Wonder Woman TV show, other superheroines appeared, both on television and in movies.

The portrayal of women in the media underwent numerous changes, from muscular, gun-toting, male-like characters to softer, self-sacrificing individuals, reflecting not just societal attitudes toward women but also the demographics of media production, where 97% of the decision-making positions are held by men.

An array of experts appears in the film, extolling the virtues of Wonder Woman and emphasizing the importance of female role models in the media. From feminist leader Gloria Steinem to fourth grader Katie Pineda, the message is that we need superheroes in our lives. The enduring appeal of Wonder Woman rests on what she symbolizes—strength, love, truth, a sense of fairness and justice, and an unending quest for harmony among human beings.

Contents

Introduction

Letter from the Director

Like most women and men of my generation, I grew up with Lynda Carter's "Wonder Woman" television show.

It was the late 70's, the show was already in the constant rotation of syndication, and there simply wasn't anything else out there that captured my imagination as a little girl. I had friends who were Wonder Woman for Halloween year after year because there were so few options for girls as fantasy heroes.

When I started telling people about this film, men and women had wildly different reactions. Most of the guys admitted that Wonder Woman was their first TV crush. Women reminisced about how they pretended to be her: twirling a rope to capture foes or spinning to transform themselves into superheroes.

Fast-forward some thirty years and I was reading a New York Times article that introduced Gail Simone as Wonder Woman's first female writer EVER. Here was this incredible feminist symbol who had always been stuck, like a lot of strong female characters, between being created by men and being primarily consumed by boys.

The story stayed with me, and I began looking into Wonder Woman's origins. Her creator, William Moulton Marston, was a fascinating character who set out to create an empowering role model amid a lot of super-violent male heroes. Of course, he also had some interesting ideas about what a strong female hero should look like. But his creation has endured while so many others have been forgotten.

I loved the idea of looking at something as populist as comics to reveal our cultural obsessions, and in particular, how women's roles have changed over time. The narratives of our most iconic superheroes, told and re-told over decades, boldly outline our shifting values. That's one story *Wonder Women!* tells, but to me, it's not the most interesting one. I hope the film also conveys the unpredictable ways those icons can shape and even transform us in return. For some it's Lara Croft, for others it's Buffy the Vampire Slayer, but we all need those iconic heroes that tell us we have the power to slay our dragons and don't have to wait around to be rescued.

–Kristy Guevara-Flanagan

User Guide

Whether you are an educator, administrator, parent, student or just someone who wants to learn more about the film, you can use this guide to discuss the themes in the film, *Wonder Women! The Untold Story of American Superheroines.* This guide is designed to be used in mass communication, history, media literacy, journalism, sociology and women and girls' studies classes. We have organized the guide into three modules that further develop issues raised in the film. We designed each module to be taught on its own or in conjunction with the other modules. Each module contains an introduction to the topic, discussion questions, in-class and take-home activities, and suggestions for further action.

Module 1: **Gender in the Media**
> Students critically analyze how gender is portrayed in media. Students strengthen media literacy skills, learning key vocabulary for discussing common media tropes and stereotypes.

Module 2: **Women in Power**
> Students reflect on the lack of women in leadership positions in the United States. They brainstorm ideas on why women occupy so few leadership positions. Students begin to think about powerful women in their lives and their role models.

Module 3: **Empower Yourself!**
> In this module, students bridge the critical media literacy skills learned in module 1 with the information about powerful women gained in module 2. Students learn about empowerment through activism and media.

The guide is intended to be used before, after, or in conjunction with viewing the film. You may find it useful to discuss some of the issues raised with your students before watching *Wonder Women!* or you might wait until after viewing to have a more detailed discussion incorporating students' reactions to the film. You may choose to reproduce some pages of the guide for your students; the overview, discussion questions and activities are addressed directly to the student for ease of use. Worksheets — found at the end of the guide — are in blue as are additional resources.

Viewing Suggestions

The educational version of *Wonder Women! The Untold Story of American Superheroines* has a running time of 55 minutes. You may decide to show the entire film in class or to show clips from the film. Along with each module we have suggested accompanying film clips that will help facilitate discussion. You will find a brief discussion of each chapter of the film on the next page.

Film Chapter Contents

Chapter 1 - Origin Story: Lack of female superheroes · Origin of the superhero · Creation of Wonder Woman during World War II · Wonder Woman storyline · Women in the U.S. in the 1940s

Chapter 2 - Breaking the Chains (optional): Bondage imagery in Wonder Woman comics · Wonder Woman tied up with her lasso · Wonder Woman rescues herself without relying on men

Chapter 3 - Wonder Woman Day: Wonder Woman inspiring others · Benefit event for domestic violence shelter · What Wonder Woman stands for

Chapter 4 - Post World War II: Post-World War II women in the U.S. · Wonder Woman in love · Comic books under fire · Women in comic books lose their powers

Chapter 5 - '70s Feminism: Women role models · 1970s feminist movement · Wonder Woman as 1960s clothing boutique owner · Ms. Magazine and the rebirth of Wonder Woman

Chapter 6 - A Young Fan: Wonder Woman empowers young girls · Superheroines as role models for youth

Chapter 7 - '70s TV: Women role models on TV · Wonder Woman TV show in the 1970s · Charlie's Angels· Bionic Woman

Chapter 8 - A Real Wonder Woman: Modern-day, real-life Wonder Woman · Wonder Woman empowers adult women to seek better lives

Chapter 9 - New Superheroines: Emergence of feminist comic superheroines in the 1980s · Decline of Wonder Woman character

Chapter 10 - '80s Action Films: 1980s action films · Women action heroes

Chapter 11 - Riot Grrrls: 1990s feminism · Riot Grrrl movement · DIY fanzines · Making your own media

Chapter 12 - Buffy & Friends: Rise and fall of TV superheroines in the 1990s · Buffy the Vampire Slayer as updated superheroine

Chapter 13 - Comic Tropes: Superheroine stereotypes · Hyper-sexualized superheroines · Superhero vs. superheroine · Girl power

Chapter 14 - Blockbuster Heroines: Action heroine study · Superheroines and gender norms · Lack of "true" action heroines

 Chapter 15 - Women in Film: The "gaze" · Representations of women in film · Women in media leadership positions

Chapter 16 - Reel Grrls: Reel Grrls, Seattle · Young girls create meaningful media

Chapter 17 - New Sheroes: Modern Wonder Woman comics · Wonder Woman's message today

Chapter 18 - Conclusion: Importance of superheroes as inspiration · Your inner-super hero · Real-life superheroes

Guide Overview:

The University section of the guide is designed to encourage students to think further about issues raised in the film. The guide is divided into three modules: **Media Literacy**, **Women in Power** and **Empower Yourself!** In each module, we ask students to consider what they have learned from the film, from university classes and personal research interests, and to think deeply about the questions asked. The questions are designed to serve as starting points for a broader discussion about issues raised. At the end of each module, we propose multiple activities, both in-class and take-home, to accompany class discussions.

Objectives:

- Encourage a critical approach to all forms of media

- Strengthen analysis of media and visual texts

- Explore gender and other stereotypes in the media

- Understand how social constructions are formed

- Analyze how stereotypes affect our daily interactions and opportunities.

- Develop an understanding of how women have been discriminated against in the U.S. and how this is reflected in the relative dearth of powerful women in the U.S.

- Reflect on how powerful women are portrayed in media and how this limits their opportunities

- Start to think about how to change media's portrayal of women

- Think about how to better represent diversity in the media

- Learn ways in which we can empower ourselves through activism and media.

Skills:

- Critical thinking

- Media and image analysis

- Textual analysis

- Citing texts and images to construct a thesis and sustained argument

- Creative writing

- Academic research and writing using print and images

Suggested Film Chapters:

- Module 1- Gender and the Media: Chapters 2; 4; 9; 10; 12-15

- Module 2- Women in Power: Chapters 1; 4; 5; 7; 9; 11; 17; 18

- Module 3- Empower Yourself!: Chapters 3; 5-8; 10-13; 16; 18

Module 1: Gender in the Media

Suggested Film Chapters:
Chapters 2 (optional chapter); 4; 9; 10; 12-15

What Is Media Literacy?

The Center for Media Literacy, defines media literacy
as the following:

> Media Literacy is a 21st century approach to education. It provides a framework to access, analyze,
> evaluate and create messages in a variety of forms — from print to video to the Internet. Media
> literacy builds on an understanding of the role of media in society as well as essential skills of
> inquiry and self-expression necessary for citizens of a democracy.

The rate of media consumption by society is constantly expanding in our increasingly "connected" world. Education
curriculum in schools now emphasizes multi-media technology along with traditional print materials. As media
increasingly saturates our society, it is critical that we develop tools to analyze media messages.

Media literacy includes learning more about the role of media in society. Media often play a key part in shaping
how youth and adults perceive themselves and the world they live in. Media help to create and maintain social
constructs about subjects like gender, race, class, and sexuality. For instance, a society's idea about gender roles
may be perpetuated by highly sexualized images of women in advertisements. The images of strong, dominant
men and scantily clothed, submissive women influence men and women's views of themselves and their place in
society. Powerful women, such as Hillary Clinton, Michelle Obama and Oprah Winfrey, are judged for their physical
appearance and clothing as much as for their policies and accomplishments.

By beginning to question how men and women, or people of color, gay people, working people, etc., are portrayed
in the media, we can begin to understand how the media form our understanding of the society in which we live.
One example of such a project is the Gendered Advertising Remixer, http://www.genderremixer.com/, which allows
users to recreate video and clips from gender-specific advertising directed at boys and girls. Once we become media
literate, we can act to change the way the media perpetuates inequality.

Car Ad

Wonder Woman Runway
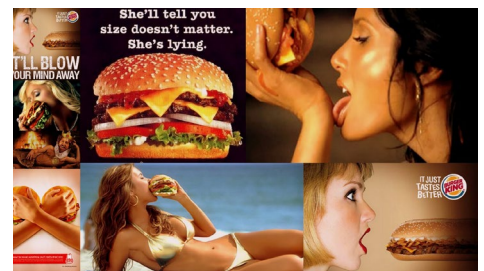
Fast Food Ad

Discussion Questions:

1) What do highly sexualized images of women in the media tell us about the place of women in society? Where are these gendered stereotypes felt the most? Workplace? Home? School? Relationships?

2) Do you see a change over time in how women have been portrayed in the media? How does the ever-changing image of Wonder Woman shed light on this?

Teen Waxing Ad

3) Are men also objectified by the media? If so, are they objectified in different ways? Is male objectification as harmful as female?

4) Does the media influence how we feel about ourselves? Does the media influence how we are viewed by others?

Social Construct:
An idea about a particular topic or group that is artificially created but often turned into a dominant belief; examples include the idea of gender, race and class.

5) How do you think gendered images affect young girls' and boys' self-images?

6) What are some other stereotypes or social constructs the media help perpetuate? How does the media influence ideas on race, ethnicity, nationality, sex, class, sexual orientation, disability, etc?

7) Is the media's portrayal of other stereotypes as obvious or apparent as many gender stereotypes? Compare and contrast.

Activity 1: Gender Box

> **Objective:** This exercise will help you begin thinking critically about **gender stereotypes**. You should also start to analyze where gender stereotypes come from and how they reflect reality.
> **Location:** Classroom
> **Classroom Time:** 40 minutes (20 before viewing film; 20 after viewing film)
> **Tools:** Gender Box Worksheet, pen and paper, black/white board.

Before Viewing

- Before watching the film, fill in the Gender Box Worksheet with adjectives that describe men, women and both.

- In small groups, or as a class, discuss your lists. Pay particular attention to how these adjectives may or may not be stereotypes.

- Reproduce a Venn diagram on the board and ask students to provide some examples from their own work.

After Viewing

- Repeat exercise.

- Compare the adjectives from before and after viewing the film. Discuss any differences.

- With a partner or in groups, discuss where ideas about what men and women are supposed to be come from. Do the adjectives listed describe you or people you know? Do they impact your daily lives? Do you think they will affect your life when you enter the job market?

Activity 2: Advertising Research Project

Objective: Collect and present data on gender stereotypes in the media. Practice research and writing skills.
Location: Home
Tools: Popular magazines, pen and paper or word processing computer program.

Instructions:

- At random, take a 50-page sample from a popular magazine.

- Categorize your sample: advertisements, articles, fashion spreads, etc.

- Analyze your sample paying particular attention gendered to stereotypes and others.

- Report findings, comparing the different categories in your sample, i.e. do you see more gendered images and language in advertisements, new stories, or advice columns?

- Analyze how these images influence the social construction of gender or other stereotypes and the effects of these stereotypes on society.

- Conclude with suggestions for action.

To make the project more complex:

- Take two 50-page samples from different types of popular magazines, i.e. Glamour and Rolling Stone or Elle and Sports Illustrated.

- In addition to analyzing the different categories in your samples, compare the two samples against each other.

- Determine if different types of magazine use gendered advertizing in different ways.

For some suggestions on how to get students talking about media messages, check out the National Association for Media Literacy Education's: "Key Questions to Ask When Analyzing Media Messages," found here: http://namle.net/wp-content/uploads/2009/09/NAMLEKeyQuestions0708.pdf

Module 2: Women in Power

Suggested Film Chapters:
Chapters 1; 4; 5; 7; 9; 11; 17; 18

Wonder Women in History

The changing image of Wonder Woman largely reflects ideas about the role of women in American society at a given time.

Using Wonder Woman as our guide, we will explore some key moments in U.S. Women's History.

The emergence of the powerful, female superhero Wonder Woman coincided with World War II in the 1940s. As American men left to fight in the war, women joined the workforce in large numbers. Women had long been a part of the American labor force. Some single women worked until married, and many immigrant workers and forced laborers, like slaves, were women. The recruitment of women into the workforce during WWII was significant because it called on white, middle-class married women who had previously been expected to remain in the home.

During World War II, as men fought in Europe and Japan, married middle-class women filled job openings, many of which were in the factories that supplied wartime machinery. **Propaganda** tools, like the image of Rosie the Riveter, were used to recruit housewives into factory jobs for the duration of the war. Women did not receive equal pay and were expected to return to the home after the men returned from war. Women also served in the military "auxiliary" units during the war. The Army created the Women's Army Corps (WAC), the Navy had WAVES and the Air Force called their all-female branch the Women Airforce Service Pilots. Most women in uniform remained in the U.S., although some units travelled to Europe.

After her rise as a superhero in the 1940s, Wonder Woman lost her powers, opened a clothing store and fell in love. With the end of the war, middle-class married women largely returned home to the domestic life of a housewife. The economic boom following World War II drove the suburbanization of American

middle-class society. These women were expected to stay at home and perform domestic chores like cooking and cleaning, while men supported the family. While some women chose to stay in the workforce, the era of the powerful working woman came to an abrupt end.

Wonder Woman came to life again in the 1970s with the emergence of the **Feminist Movement** in the United States. The Second Wave of the Feminist Movement in the 1960s and 1970s fought for **women's rights** and **equality**. Feminists waged major battles to end **discrimination** against women in the workplace and increase legal rights for women. Second-Wave Feminism achieved many of its goals including extending **Affirmative Action** rights to women, securing workplace rights for pregnant women, easing divorce laws and integrating traditionally male institutions like the military. The largest failure of Second-Wave Feminism was the Equal Rights Amendment (see text box). The Feminist Movement was part of a larger wave of social movements at the time, including the Civil Rights Movement and the anti-war protests directed at the Vietnam War.

Soon after the Wonder Woman television show went off the air, the Second Wave of the Feminist Movement gave way to **Third-Wave Feminism**. Feminists from the 1980s through today have continued to fight for women's equality in all facets of American life. However, the movement now recognizes the diversity of women's experiences and right to self-expression. Rather than calling for a single solution for all women, feminists today see each woman as an individual with individual needs.

One example of a major current within the modern Feminist Movement is the Riot Grrrl movement discussed in the film. In the 1990s, Riot Grrrls encouraged teens and young women to take charge of their own lives by making their own media outside of mainstream influence. Riot Grrrls embodied the essence of punk rock's "do it yourself" attitude, publishing **zines** and composing songs that focused on women's empowerment and highlighted issues typically left out of mass media, such as domestic abuse, rape, racism and sexuality.

The Equal Rights Amendment: Hope and Failure

The Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) was a proposed addition to the U.S. Constitution to guarantee equal rights for women. Section 1 of the ERA asserted, "equality of rights under law shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by a State on account of sex." The ERA initially passed through both the House of Representatives and the Senate in 1972, but was not ratified by enough states to become an amendment to the Constitution. The amendment was dropped from discussion in 1982. 35 states ratified the ERA, did yours? http://www.equalrightsamendment.org/states.htm

For an interactive women's history timeline visit: http://www.biography.com/tv/classroom/womens-history-timeline

Discussion Questions:

1. After more than a century of struggle for women's equality, why do you think there are so few females in leadership positions in the U.S.? Do you think the media plays a role in this?

2. Why does the "glass ceiling" or "wage gap" exist? What forces in society prevent women from earning the same wage as men? Compare this to other countries you may have learned about.

3. Are there modern-day women leaders who serve as role models? Did you have a female role model growing up? Do you think the relative lack of female role models has a negative effect on young women?

4. Do modern day leaders represent our diverse society? Why are there so few Latina or Asian-American leaders?

5. How does the media respond to powerful women? Think about popular quips about Hillary Clinton or Gloria Steinem. What does this tell us about larger societal views on women and gender?

6. What other factors could influence a person's leadership prospects? How do race, class, religion, age, marital status, sexual orientation, etc, limit a person's chances of rising to the top?

Get your facts straight:

- Women currently make between 77-82 cents to a man's dollar!

- Women occupy only 3% of the leadership positions in media industries

- Women hold only 3% of the top positions in Fortune 500 companies.

- Women represent half the population, yet the current House of Representatives has 361 men and 77 women.

- The U.S. Senate is comprised of 83 men and 17 women.

(source Geena Davis Institute on Gender in the Media and Pay-Equity)

For more information on women in the workplace:
http://www.catalyst.org/publication/219/statistical-overview-of-women-in-the-workplace
and www.dol.gov/wb/factsheets/Qf-laborforce-10.htm#.ULd68Y7FVdg

For more information on women in leadership:
http://www.newswise.com/articles/study-highlights-the-current-state-of-women-in-leadership-roles
and http://www.policymic.com/articles/18655/women-candidates-made-historic-gains-in-representation---2012-election-results

And for more information on the representation of women in the media:
http://www.womensmediacenter.com/pages/the-problem
and http://www.thegeenadavisinstitute.org/downloads/KeyFindings_GenderRoles.pdf

Research Activity: Women Leaders in Media

Objective: Discuss the portrayal of female and male politicians in the media. Learn how to record and analyze data.
Location: Classroom and Home
Classroom Time: 30 minutes
Tools: Women Leaders in the Media Handout; pen and paper; black/white board for notes on discussion; Internet access; computer with word processing software.

During the 2008 presidential election, there was much debate over differences in the coverage that men and women politicians received in the media. For example, Hillary Clinton's multi-colored array of pantsuits often made headlines next to Barack Obama's promise of change. And Vice Presidential candidate Sarah Palin's eyeglasses set off a new fashion trend among middle-aged women.

Instructions:

- Using the Women Leaders in the Media Handout as your guide, begin to discuss as a class the different ways powerful women and men are portrayed by the media.

Further Research:

- Read this 2008 report from the Pew Research Center on Leadership. http://pewresearch.org/pubs/932/men-or-women-whos-the-better-leader

- In a three to five page paper compare the findings of the report to:

  o media portrayals of politicians

  o your in-class discussions on leadership

  o other gender stereotypes in media

Feminism and Beyond

Recognizing the need for the equality of men and women is a major step toward empowering yourself.

The Feminist Movement is one the most popular social movements that fights for women's equality. Feminism often gets a bad name in the media. Stereotypes about those fighting for women's equality often overshadow the struggle itself. The media and popular culture often portray feminists as "man-hating" women, as opposing family values and as masculine. In fact, feminism and feminists represent a wide spectrum of men and women with different priorities, outlooks and backgrounds. Feminists are women and men who seek empowerment by bringing about equal rights for women.

Some attempts at bringing awareness to women's struggles have been widely critiqued. One of the best known examples is the pop culture "girl power" movement. While the phrase itself could be used as a tool of empowerment, "girl power" has come to be associated with a mass marketing campaign for young girls. Slogans like "girls rule, boys drool" and the ubiquitous "girl power" appear on clothes, posters, notebooks and magazine covers, often in pink and purple lettering surrounded by hearts and flowers. The color and design of the slogans reflect gendered stereotypes about girls, doing little to empower girls to think outside the gender box.

Outside of mainstream culture, women have been using ideas of girl power to create their own media. In the 1990s, the Riot Grrrls embraced grrrl power by publishing 'zines devoted to issues facing women in their local community. Today, technology has enabled us to easily create and share our own media. Within minutes, you can publish a blog, post a video on Youtube or create a website devoted to issues you care about. Rather than relying on media made by others, we can empower ourselves by creating media that matters. Are there alternative movements or particular women in the media who are successfully fighting for women's empowerment?

Discussion Questions:

1) What does it mean to be empowered? Do you think the meaning is different for women and men? Do men have to worry about becoming more empowered?

2) Is empowerment situational? Is there a difference between women's empowerment in the workplace and in the home?

3) What strategies do you implement to empower yourself? What suggestions would you give to girls who seek advice on becoming more empowered?

4) In the film, Kathleen Hanna characterizes the Girl Power craze as bringing about only a "veneer of change." Do you agree with that statement? In your opinion how does girl power fit into the evolution of the feminist movement, particularly third-wave feminism?

5) Have there been any feminist authors or activists that empower you? Why or why not? Who do you look to for advice on being a strong person? Why do you relate to that person?

6) Do you think superheroes play a role in empowering kids? Do they also empower adults?

7) If superheroes are empowering, why are there so few female superheroes? What does this tell us about the people in charge of mass media?

8) Women have long been creating their own media. What are some ways you can make media that matters?

9) Do you think that modern technology and social networking allow for more opportunities for the creation and distribution of media that matters? Think about projects you might like to create and how you would spread awareness about your media.

Activity: Making Media that Matters

Objective: After analyzing gender, and other stereotypes, perpetuated by media, students will create their own media. Students will conduct research, write, draw, and design their own media projects.

Location: Classroom and home

Classroom Time: 40 minutes; split into two 20-minute periods—one for brainstorming, another to discuss progress of project as a group.

Tools: Varies depending on project.

- Ask students to design and execute media projects, working individually or in small groups.

- Students should use information from the film, class discussions and independent research to conceptualize and create media that matters. Some suggestions:

    o Create your own zine, blog or webpage. Some elements to include:

        - News stories about women's empowerment in your community

        - Fun facts about women in history

        - Images of new superheroines

        - A comic

        - Ideas for empowerment at your school, home or community

    o Make a film. Write a script and shoot a short film to be shown in class. Some topics might include:

        - Defining feminism

        - Girl Power

        - Modern Women

        - Girls vs. Women; Boys vs. Men

    o Write a children's book addressing gender stereotypes and/or other social constructs such as race, ethnicity, class, sexual orientation.

        ▪ Educate preschoolers and elementary students about stereotypes.

        ▪ Include a moral at the end of the story.

        ▪ Inspire others to take action by providing suggestions on what they can do to bring about change.

- Students should present the media projects in class, followed by a 5-10 minute discussion of how the students made their project, why they decided to include particular topics and how they shared the work responsibility. Open up the discussion to questions from the class.

Take Action!

What can you do to bring about more equality for women? Here are a few ideas:

Create your own media. Using resources at school or at home, make your own short films, podcasts, vodcasts, blogs, zines, comics strips, or whatever else you can think of. Publish it!

Some examples:

- Feminist Frequency Youtube Channel (web series of video commentaries from a feminist/fangirl perspective): http://www.youtube.com/user/feministfrequency

- Reel Grrls, "The Meaning of Feminism" http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D1DVxvEiNdM&list=PLF145743AB0ECCE39&index=13&feature=plpp_video

- Rookie Mag (a website for teen girls made by teen girls): http://rookiemag.com/

Start a media campaign.

- Use your Facebook or Twitter account to create a campaign and attract followers.

- Set up a media literacy group at school. Contact your local media (college radio, television, newspaper, bloggers), and ask them to do a story on your club.

> **Speak Out!**
>
> - Share this information with younger siblings who may not know about gender stereotypes.
>
> - Raise issues with your university and professors about gender stereotypes in the classroom.

Participate in existing media campaign.

- Report Sexism in the Media: http://www.womensmediacenter.com/page/s/report-media-sexism

- Spark (a girl-fueled activist movement to demand an end to the sexualization of women and girls in media): http://www.sparksummit.com/

- Name It. Change It. http://www.nameitchangeit.org/

Change the language you use when talking about sex and gender.

- Use neutral pronouns

- Avoid speaking in stereotypes

Become a mentor! Volunteer with youth groups and talk to kids about gender stereotypes.

Educate yourself!

Brainstorm Time! What else can you do?

APPENDIX

Resources

Websites and Organizations:

Women's Media Center: The Women's Media Center works with the media to ensure that women's stories are told and women's voices are heard. Its methods are: media advocacy campaigns; media monitoring for sexism; creating original content; and training women and girls to participate in media.

http://www.womensmediacenter.com/

Geena Davis Institute on Gender in the Media: A researched-based organization working within the media and entertainment industry to reduce gender stereotyping for young children.

http://www.seejane.org/

The Feminist Majority Foundation: A cutting-edge organization dedicated to women's equality, reproductive health, and non-violence, utilizing research and action to empower women economically, socially, and politically. Its website includes a list and brief descriptions of feminist comics.

http://feminist.org/

Reel Grrls: Seattle-based non-profit that empowers young women to make their own media.

http://www.reelgrrls.org/

Girls Inc.: "Inspiring all girls to be strong, smart, and bold."

http://www.girlsinc.org/

Feminist Frequency: Blog and media resource with "a feminist analysis of race, gender, class, sexuality and privilege in the media."

http://www.feministfrequency.com/

About-Face: An organization designed to "equip women and girls with tools to understand and resist harmful media messages that affect self-esteem and body image."

http://www.about-face.org/

Girlshealth.gov: Website devoted to topics for girls such as body, fitness, drugs and alcohol, relationships, and bullying.

http://www.girlshealth.gov/

BAM! Body and Mind: Information for kids on making healthy lifestyle choices, from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

http://www.bam.gov

Girls Empowerment Network (GENAustin): Austin, Texas-based org supporting and guiding girls "to make wise choices as they navigate the unique pressures of girlhood."

http://genaustin.org

The Children's Media Project: helping children and youth "to interact with the media arts both as creators and critical viewers."

http://www.childrensmediaproject.org

Girlstart: "Empowering Girls in Science, Technology, Engineering and Math."

http://www.girlstart.org/

National Organization for Women (NOW): Women's Rights organization active since 1966.

http://www.now.org

Ms. Magazine: Leading US feminist publication.

http://www.msmagazine.com

U.S. National Archives: Source for primary documents on US women's history.

http://www.archives.gov/

SPARK: A girl-fueled activist movement to demand an end to the sexualization of women and girls in media.

http://www.sparksummit.com/

The Girl Scouts Healthy Media Commission: With the support of the National Association of Broadcasters, the National Cable & Telecommunications Association, and The Creative Coalition, the Girl Scouts' Healthy Media Commission convened the first National Dialogue on healthy images of women and girls in the media, and is spearheading an industry-wide commitment to promote positive media images.

http://www.girlscouts.org/who_we_are/advocacy/watchwhatyouwatch/healthymedia.asp

The Line Campaign: a non-profit organization that is committed to empowering young leaders to create a world without sexual violence, using critical dialogues and original media to inspire action and developing leadership among diverse groups within their communities.

www.whereisyourline.org

She Should Run: A nonprofit, nonpartisan organization dedicated to increasing the number of women in public leadership by eliminating and overcoming barriers to success.

http://www.sheshouldrun.org/

Public Leadership Education Network (PLEN): PLEN is the only national organization with the sole focus of preparing college women for leadership in the public policy arena. A nonpartisan, nonprofit organization based in Washington, D.C., PLEN introduces college women to role models, career paths, and skills trainings before they enter the workforce.

http://plen.org/

A Mighty Girl: An extensive resource list of books, toys, movies, and music for parents, teachers, and others dedicated to raising smart, confident, and courageous girls.

http://www.amightygirl.com/books/mighty-girls-women/role-models

Association for Media Literacy (Canada): The Association for Media Literacy is made up of teachers, librarians, consultants, parents, cultural workers, and media professionals concerned about the impact of the mass media on contemporary culture.

http://www.aml.ca/

Recommended Viewing:

Anything You Want To Be, by Liane Brandon

Barbie Nation: An Unauthorized Tour, by Susan Stern

Betty Tells Her Story, by Liane Brandon

Body Typed: 3 Films on Media and Physical Perfection, by Jesse Epstein

Dear Lisa: A Letter to My Sister, by J Clements

Girl Model, by Ashley Sabin and David Redmond

Going on 13, by Dawn Valadez and Kristy Guevara-Flanagan

Growing Up Female, by Jim Kelin and Julia Reichert

Miss Representation, by Jennifer Siebel Newsom

Wonder Women!, by Kristy Guevara-Flanagan

24 Girls, by Eva Ilona Brzeski

Recommended Reading:

Appetites: Why Women Want, by Caroline Knapp

The Beauty Myth: How Images of Beauty are Used Against Women, by Naomi Wolf

Girls in America, by Carol Cassidy

Cinderella Ate My Daughter, by Peggy Orenstein

Girls Make Media, by Mary Celeste Kearney

Hungry: A Young Model's Story of Appetite, Ambition, and the Ultimate Embrace of Curves, by Crystal Renn

In A Different Voice: Psychological Theory and Women's Development, by Carol Gilligan

Maiden USA, by Kathleen Sweeny

Perfect Girls, Starving Daughters: The Frightening New Normalcy of Hating Your Body, by Courtney Martin

Reviving Ophelia: Saving the Selves of Adolescent Girls, by Mary Pipher

Revolution from Within, by Gloria Steinem

**Schoolgirls: Young Women, Self Esteem, and the Confidence Gap,** by Peggy Orenstein

Wasted: A Memoir of Anorexia and Bulimia, by Marya Hornbacher

Worksheets
Begin On Next Page...

Worksheet 1: Gender Box

Instructions:

What words come to mind to describe women? What words come to mind to describe men? What adjectives describe both? Write the words you think of in the appropriate sections of the Venn diagram below.

Both

Women   **Men**
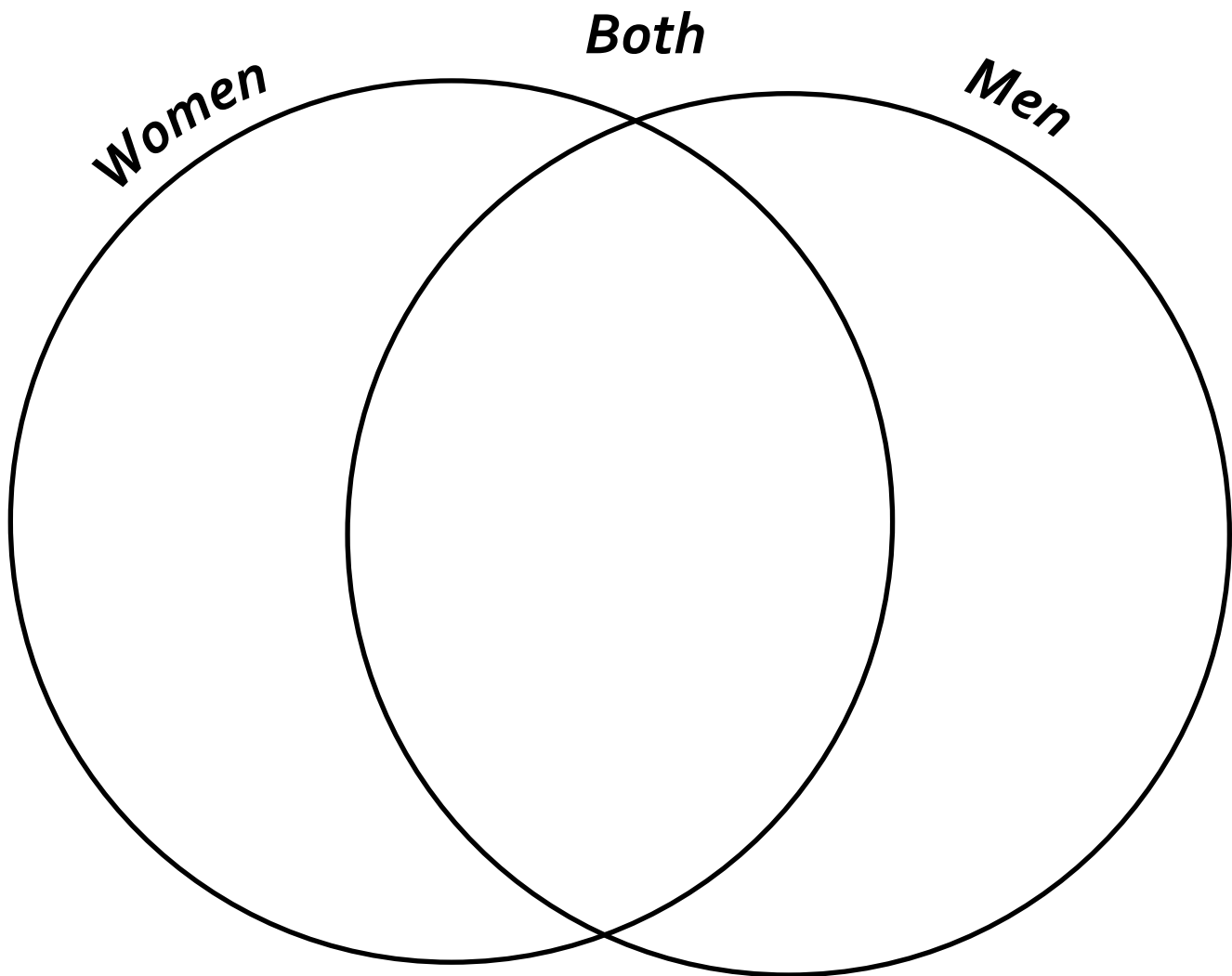
Discussion Handout: Women Leaders in the Media

Instructions:

Using the images below as your guide, discuss the different ways powerful women and men are portrayed in the media. Write your own answers below.

- **Question 1**: What are the common trends in how powerful women are portrayed?

  _____

- **Question 2**: How does this differ from the way powerful men are portrayed?

  _____

International Women of Courage Awards Ceremony
Article Headline: Michelle Obama vs. Hillary Clinton: Style Showdown!

Michelle Obama featured with supermodels.

Fake Vogue cover with Sarah Palin

First Lady Bill Clinton

President Barack Obama

Credits

About the Author:

Jamie Holeman is a freelance researcher and grant writer with a Master's Degree in History from the University of Pittsburgh. She specializes in Latin American history and the history of slavery and abolition in the Americas. She is currently interested in Native American history in the West. Holeman graduated with a Bachelor's degree in History and Political Science from California State University, Northridge. She is the recipient of numerous academic awards and research grants and has conducted archival research in the United States, Europe and Latin America. When not walking dogs at her local animal shelter, she helps documentary filmmakers increase the presence of their films in universities and creates educational materials for the classroom. She is a published author.

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Special thanks for your feedback:

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