

DOCUMENTS

Interpreting Alternative Viewpoints
in Primary Source Documents

Women in the Modern World

The emancipation of women was a major theme of the past century in many parts of the world.



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Debating the DOCUMENTS

Interpreting Alternative Viewpoints
in Primary Source Documents

Women in the Modern World

The 2017 World History Course and Exam Description of the College Board Advanced Placement Program* lists five themes that it urges teachers to use in organizing their teaching. Each World History *Debating the Documents* booklet focuses on one or two of these five themes.

The Five Themes

- 1. Interaction between humans and the environment.** (demography and disease; migration; patterns of settlement; technology)
- 2. Development and interaction of cultures.** (religions; belief systems, philosophies, and ideologies; science and technology; the arts and architecture)
- 3. State-building, expansion, and conflict.** (political structures and forms of governance; empires; nations and nationalism; revolts and revolutions; regional, transregional, and global structures and organizations)
- 4. Creation, expansion, and interaction of economic systems.** (agricultural and pastoral production; trade and commerce; labor systems; industrialization; capitalism and socialism)
- 5. Development and transformation of social structures.** (gender roles and relations; family and kinship; racial and ethnic constructions; social and economic classes)

This Booklet's Main Theme:

- 2** Development and interaction of cultures.

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Teacher Introduction

★ Using Primary Sources

Primary sources are called “primary” because they are first-hand records of a past era or historical event. They are the raw materials, or the evidence, on which historians base their “secondary” accounts of the past.

A rapidly growing number of history teachers today are using primary sources. Why? Perhaps it's because primary sources give students a better sense of what history is and what historians do. Such sources also help students see the past from a variety of viewpoints. Moreover, primary sources make history vivid and bring it to life.

However, primary sources are not easy to use. They can be confusing. They can be biased. They rarely all agree. Primary sources must be interpreted and set in context. To do this, students need historical background knowledge. *Debating the Documents* helps students handle such challenges by giving them a useful framework for analyzing sources that conflict with one another.



*“Multiple,
conflicting
perspectives are
among the truths
of history.
No single
objective or
universal account
could ever put an
end to this endless
creative dialogue
within and
between the past
and the present.”*

From the 2011 Statement on Standards of Professional Conduct of the Council of the American Historical Association.

INTRODUCTION

★ *The Debating the Documents Series*

Each *Debating the Documents* booklet includes the same sequence of reproducible worksheets. If students use several booklets over time, they will get regular practice at interpreting and comparing conflicting sources. In this way, they can learn the skills and habits needed to get the most out of primary sources.

Each *Debating the Documents* Booklet Includes

- **Suggestions for the Student and an Introductory Essay.** The student gets instructions and a one-page essay providing background on the booklet's topic. A time line on the topic is also included.
- **Two Groups of Contrasting Primary Source Documents.** In most of the booklets, students get one pair of visual sources and one pair of written sources. In some cases, more than two are provided for each. Background is provided on each source. *Within each group, the sources clash in a very clear way.* (The sources are not always exact opposites, but they do always differ in some obvious way.)
- **Three Worksheets for Each Document Group.** Students use the first two worksheets to take notes on the sources. The third worksheet asks which source the student thinks would be most useful to a historian.
- **One DBQ.** On page 20, a document-based question (DBQ) asks students to write an effective essay using all of the booklet's primary sources.

★ *How to Use This Booklet*

1. Have students read “Suggestions for the Student” and the Introductory Essay.

Give them copies of pages 5–7. Ask them to read the instructions and then read the introductory essay on the topic. The time line gives them additional information on that topic. This reading could be done in class or as a homework assignment.

2. Have students do the worksheets.

Make copies of the worksheets and the pages with the sources. Ask students to study the background information on each source and the source itself. Then have them take notes on the sources using the worksheets. If students have access to a computer, have them review the primary sources digitally.

NOTE: If you are using these materials with an AP world history class, an honors class, or some other group of advanced and/or more knowledgeable students, you may want to make more written sources available to them on this topic. Do a basic Internet search for sources that provide additional perspectives and then add to the sources provided here.

3. “Debate the documents” as a class.

Have students use their worksheet notes to debate the primary source documents as a class. Urge students to follow these ground rules:

- Use your worksheets as a guide for the discussion or debate.
- Try to reach agreement about the main ideas and the significance of each primary source document.
- Look for points of agreement as well as disagreement between the primary sources.
- Listen closely to all points of view about each primary source.
- Focus on the usefulness of each source to the historian, not merely on whether you agree or disagree with that source’s point of view.

4. Have students do the final DBQ.

A DBQ is an essay question about a set of primary source documents. To answer the DBQ, students write essays using evidence from the sources and their own background knowledge of the historical era. (See the next page for a DBQ scoring guide to use in evaluating these essays.)

The DBQ assignment on page 20 includes guidelines for writing a DBQ essay. Here are some additional points to make with students about preparing to write this kind of essay.

The DBQ for this Booklet (see page 20):

Using these sources, explain how the lives of women changed in the twentieth century, and explain what problems women face today because of—or in spite of—these changes.

- Analyze the question carefully.
- Use your background knowledge to set sources in their historical context.
- Question and interpret sources actively. Do not accept them at face value.
- Use sources meaningfully to support your essay’s thesis.
- Pay attention to the overall organization of your essay.

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★ *Complete DBQ Scoring Guide*

Use this guide in evaluating the DBQ for this booklet. Use this scoring guide with students who are already familiar with using primary sources and writing DBQ essays.

Excellent Essay

- Offers a clear answer or thesis explicitly addressing all aspects of the essay question.
- Does a careful job of interpreting many or most of the documents and relating them clearly to the thesis and the DBQ. Deals with conflicting documents effectively.
- Uses details and examples effectively to support the thesis and other main ideas. Explains the significance of those details and examples well.
- Uses background knowledge and the documents in a balanced way.
- Is well written; clear transitions make the essay easy to follow from point to point. Only a few minor writing errors or errors of fact.

Good Essay

- Offers a reasonable thesis addressing the essential points of the essay question.
- Adequately interprets at least some of the documents and relates them to the thesis and the DBQ.
- Usually relates details and examples meaningfully to the thesis or other main ideas.
- Includes some relevant background knowledge.
- May have some writing errors or errors of fact, as long as these do not invalidate the essay's overall argument or point of view.

Fair Essay

- Offers at least a partly developed thesis addressing the essay question.
- Adequately interprets at least a few of the documents.
- Relates only a few of the details and examples to the thesis or other main ideas.
- Includes some background knowledge.
- Has several writing errors or errors of fact that make it harder to understand the essay's overall argument or point of view.

Poor Essay

- Offers no clear thesis or answer addressing the DBQ.
- Uses few documents effectively other than referring to them in “laundry list” style, with no meaningful relationship to a thesis or any main point.
- Uses details and examples unrelated to the thesis or other main ideas. Does not explain the significance of these details and examples.
- Is not clearly written, with some major writing errors or errors of fact.

Suggestions to the Student

★ *Using Primary Sources*

A primary source is any record of evidence from the past. Many things are primary sources: letters, diary entries, official documents, photos, cartoons, wills, maps, charts, etc. They are called “primary” because they are first-hand records of a past event or time period. This *Debating the Documents* lesson is based on two groups of primary source documents. Within each group, the sources conflict with one another. That is, they express different or even opposed points of view. You need to decide which source is more reliable, more useful, or more typical of the time period. This is what historians do all the time. Usually, you will be able to learn something about the past from each source, even when the sources clash with one another in dramatic ways.

★ *How to Use This Booklet*

1. **Read the one-page introductory essay.**

This gives you background information that will help you analyze the primary source documents and do the exercises for this *Debating the Documents* lesson. The time line gives you additional information you will find helpful.



2. **Study the primary source documents for this lesson.**

For this lesson, you get two groups of sources. The sources within each group conflict with one another. Some of these sources are visuals, others are written sources. With visual sources, pay attention not only to the image’s “content” (its subject matter) but also to its artistic style, shading, composition, camera angle, symbols, and other features that add to the image’s meaning. With written sources, notice the writing style, bias, even what the source leaves out or does not talk about. Think about each source’s author, that author’s reasons for writing, and the likely audience for the source. These considerations give you clues as to the source’s historical value.

3. **Use the worksheets to analyze each group of primary source documents.**

For each group of sources, you get three worksheets. Use the “Study the Document” worksheets to take notes on each source. Use the “Comparing the Documents” worksheet to decide which of the sources would be most useful to a historian.

4. **As a class, debate the documents.**

Use your worksheet notes to help you take part in this debate.

5. **Do the final DBQ.**

“DBQ” means “document-based question.” A DBQ is a question along with several primary source documents. To answer the DBQ, write an essay using evidence from the documents and your own background history knowledge.

Women in the Modern World

Throughout history, women have faced challenges, made choices, and lived their lives in ways vastly different from the men around them. While remarkable women as individuals might occasionally have a noticeable impact on public life, most women through the ages and in nearly all societies were confined to domestic duties. They often had little recourse against abusive husbands. Activities, dress, even gestures and interactions outside the home were often closely guarded and restricted. Women had only limited property rights. They had less access to education. They were kept out of high-status occupations, even when they had the skills required. They usually lacked the civil or political rights available to the men with whom they lived.

Historians still debate the causes of this subordinate position for women. Some stress the role of patriarchal attitudes and institutions, which treated women as inferior, weak, dependent on male protection, overly emotional, or sexually impulsive in ways that could threaten family cohesion and honor. Other historians stress natural and biological factors: before the modern era, they say, men in general were more fit to be warriors or to perform hard physical labor, whereas women had to remain close to home to bear and raise the many children families usually needed.

In any case, this subordinate status for women might not have seemed particularly harsh or unfair. Kings or tiny groups of authoritarian ruling elites usually controlled social life. Female subjection may have seemed normal, given that everyone was in subjection in one way or another.

Among the many ways in which the twentieth century was unique was in how it disrupted this pattern. Its upheavals in fact completely transformed the lives of millions of women, and began to change the lives of nearly all. In the industrialized nations of Europe and North America, this metamorphosis began in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Individuals such as Mary Wollstonecraft, Hannah More, Susan B. Anthony, Elizabeth Cady Stanton,

Frances Willard, and Emmeline Pankhurst kicked off a long struggle for greater female opportunity, respect, basic property rights, and the most fundamental civil right of all in a democracy: the right to vote.

The struggle was especially bitter in the United States and Great Britain. Suffragists there fought fiercely for the right to vote, winning it only in the early 1900s. In the meantime, vast cultural and economic changes helped give women increasing freedom in their personal lives and choices. From the 1920s on, women have increasingly challenged every aspect of the traditional norms that had limited them.

As a result, women in modern industrial nations today sit in parliaments, rule as heads of state, and participate in society as corporate leaders, professionals, scholars, celebrities, athletes, and in many other ways. Moreover, since the 1960s, a “second wave” of feminism has challenged discrimination in every aspect of life, including the intimate realms of family and sexuality.

In the poorer nations of Africa, the Middle East, parts of Asia, and South and Central America, the story is more mixed. Among elites especially, women do often assume leadership roles. Yet for many ordinary women, access to education and political rights is still limited. In many areas, extreme practices persist, such as female genital mutilation, female infanticide, “honor killings” by relatives offended by female assertiveness, harsh sweatshop labor, and trafficking in girls exploited by the commercial sex trade.

Within more tradition-bound societies, is modern-day feminism the solution to such challenges? What form will the transformation of women’s lives take? As the sources for this lesson show, the answers are not at all clear. These sources will, however, give you a chance to debate these issues and think more about the impact of the changing status of women in the modern world.

Women in the Modern World Time Line

1903

- • • Emmeline Pankhurst, her daughters, and others form the militant Women's Social and Political Union (WSPU) in Britain.

1913

- • • In Washington, several thousand march for women's right to vote.

1918

- • • Women over 30 are granted the right to vote in Britain. The Indian National Congress endorses giving women the right to vote.

1920

- • • The Nineteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution grants women the right to vote.

1923

- • • Ataturk helps found the Turkish Republic, which in time grants women many civil rights, including the right to vote.

1947

- • • The new Japanese constitution guarantees women's equality.

1949

- • • In France, Simone de Beauvoir publishes *The Second Sex*, a feminist classic.

1963

- • • American feminist Betty Friedan publishes *The Feminine Mystique*, another important classic setting the agenda for "second-wave" feminism.

1964

- • • The U.S. Civil Rights Act of 1964 prohibits discrimination in employment on the basis of race, creed, national origin, or sex.

1966

- • • Indira Gandhi becomes the first female prime minister of India.

1969

- • • Golda Meir becomes the first female prime minister of Israel.

1970

- • • The Boston Women's Health Book Collective publishes *Our Bodies, Ourselves*, a classic feminist work on women's health and sexuality that reflects the focus of second-wave feminism.

1973

- • • Jordanian women are granted the right to vote. The U.S. Supreme Court rules in *Roe v. Wade* that women have a constitutional right to abortion.

1977

- • • Nigerian women are granted the right to vote. In that same year, in Saudi Arabia, Princess Misha'al is accused of adultery and executed.

1979

- • • Margaret Thatcher becomes the first female prime minister of Great Britain.

1983

- • • Iran orders women to wear the *chador*, a long, black cloak that covers the head.

1988

- • • Benazir Bhutto becomes prime minister of Pakistan.

1990

- • • A group of Saudi Arabian women drive cars in Riyadh to protest laws forbidding them to drive. They are briefly imprisoned.

1996

- • • In Afghanistan, the Taliban government proclaims that women may not receive an education or work outside the home.

2003

- • • In the adultery case of Amina Lawal, a Nigerian appeals court overturns a lower court's sentence of death by stoning.

2005

- • • Kuwaiti women win the right to vote.

DOCUMENTS 1–3

Visual Primary Source Documents 1–3

Document 1



Olga Kolos, Shutterstock Inc.

Document 3

Luisa Fernanda Gonzalez,
Shutterstock Inc.

Document 2



Anyka, Shutterstock Inc.

Information on Documents 1–3

Document 1 shows a group of Muslim women on the streets of Damascus, Syria. Many of them are covered almost completely. This dress style is often criticized by women in other nations as a sign of how subordinated and devalued women are in Islamic cultures. Some modern Muslim women also criticize the practice. However, many Muslim women defend it as dignified and as expressive of a respectful view of women.

Document 2. As this photo suggests, Muslim headscarves and other coverings

are not a barrier to working efficiently in a modern office, and Muslim women work outside the home in many places.

Document 3. Some women's groups regard working outside the home as the key to greater freedom for women. It's probably true that this Chinese factory worker is better off, but how much better off may depend on the nature of the work, her level of pay, and the quality of life of the family she helps to support.