



***American Studies Unit Six:
Women Struggle to Define an American Dream of Their Own***

Background: Writing a letter to her husband John Adams in 1776, Abigail Adams urged him to “remember the ladies” as he and the other founding fathers endeavored to write the “Declaration of Independence.” Although these words were of a personal nature, they, like so much of the relationship between the sexes, have become political over the course of several centuries. As we have learned throughout this semester, the promise of “liberty and justice for all” has eluded many groups in American history, but none as large as women in this country. American women have struggled since the formative years of our nation to achieve political, social, and economic equality with men. The struggle to define a role for themselves has resulted in many tangible achievements; however, many argue that there is work left to be done and that women continue to find their “American Dreams” unattainable.

Focus Questions: In terms of women’s lives, has our country moved closer to the promise of “liberty and justice for all”? How and why have women struggled to achieve the American Dream?

Content Objectives: At the end of this unit you should be able to...

- A. Identify significant people associated with the woman suffrage and women’s rights movements of the 19th and early 20th centuries and discuss the goals and outcomes of their efforts.
The Americans, pg. 257-258; 5210-522; 540-541
Film clips: *Iron Jawed Angels*
Literary selections
- B. Analyze the factors contributing to modern (post-1950’s) feminism and compare the ideas, agendas, and strategies of feminist and counter-feminist organizations.
The Americans, pg. 850; 982-986
Film clips: *Mona Lisa Smile*, “Leave it to Beaver”
Literary selections
- C. Discuss the achievements and outcomes of the modern women’s movement of the 1960s and 1970s.
The Americans, pg. 984-986; pg. 1048
Film clips: “The Mary Tyler Moore Show”
Literary selections
- D. Identify the efforts of contemporary women’s rights activists and evaluate the success of these individuals in realizing the goal of “liberty and justice for all” in the United States.
The Americans, pg. 1048-1049; 1116-1117
Literary selections

Assessments for and of learning: At the end of this unit you should be able to...

- E. **Chronology:** Create a time line of several key events related to the unit and be able to explain the significance of the events on the time line (use the key terms below as a guide)
- F. **Recognizing Bias:** Explain what is meant by the concept of “bias” and discuss examples of bias in selected writings.

- G. Chart/Graph Interpretation: Use charts and graphs to answer the focus questions for this unit.
- H. Writing: Prepare a well-organized essay answer to one of the topics listed below or one provided by the teacher:

“In 1972, members of Congress passed what would become a controversial amendment proposal called the Equal Rights Amendment. Despite the efforts of many activist groups, the proposed amendment failed to get the required 75% of the states needed to ratify the proposal and the effort failed. Based on the evidence gained in this unit, defend a position on the importance of an amendment to guarantee equal rights for all citizens.”

Important Names and Terms: You should be able to identify the following names and terms and explain how each is important to the unit. Look for possible relationships between the names and terms.

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| Seneca Falls | Elizabeth Cady Stanton | Susan B. Anthony | Alice Paul |
| Carrie C. Catt | 19 th Amendment | NOW | Betty Friedan |
| Gloria Steinem | Phyllis Schlafly | E.R.A. | <i>Roe v. Wade</i> |
| affirmative action | feminism | suffrage | Abigail Adams |