Day One: Where are Women Today? Looking Back....and Forth
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Acknowledgments: Parts of this lesson were adapted from the Vision 2020: Equality in Sight Educator’s Guide:
Unit Title: Women’s History
Subject/Grade Level: 6-8, 9-12 History
Lesson Title: Where are Women Today? Looking Back.....and Forth

Goal (that applies to this lesson): Understand the national context of women’s current levels of political representation and discover the beginnings of the initial fight for suffrage through reading the Declaration of Independence and the Declaration of Sentiments (a statement of women’s rights in 1848).

Objective: By comparing the Declaration of Sentiments to the Declaration of Independence, students will explain why the Declaration of Independence was inadequate to protect women’s rights.

ODE Curriculum Standards:
• Understand how citizens can make their voices heard in the political process.
• Understand the changes in society and culture in the early 20th century.

Time Needed: 50-60 minutes

Materials Needed:
• Print out Declaration of Sentiments (www.nps.gov/wori/historyculture/declaration-ofsentiments.htm)
• Declaration of Independence (http://www.archives.gov/exhibits/charters/declaration_transcript.html)
• Vocabulary List
• ELL version of Declaration of Independence
• ELL version of Declaration of Sentiments
• Student Handout and Answer Key

Introduction or Hook to Engage Students: (10 minutes)
Write or project questions about women’s representation (below in italics) on board. Call on students to guess answers to each questions.
How many women are serving in the US Congress (71 out of 435 seats)?
How many women does Oregon have in its congressional delegation (zero out of 5)?
What is the percentage of women in the US population (51%)? Do you think women are equally represented in the House of Representatives and the US Senate?
Procedures:
Give students some background information about the Declarations (who, what, when, where, why, etc.):
The United States Declaration of Independence is a statement adopted by the Continental Congress on July 4, 1776, which announced that the thirteen American colonies then at war with Great Britain were now independent states, and thus no longer a part of the British Empire. The document explains why the American colonies are fighting for independence from Great Britain.

The Declaration of Sentiments is a document signed in 1848 by 68 women and 32 men, 100 out of some 300 attendees at the first women's rights convention, in Seneca Falls, New York, now known as the Seneca Falls Convention. The principal author of the Declaration of Rights and Sentiments was Elizabeth Cady Stanton, who based it on the form of the United States Declaration of Independence. According to the North Star, published by Frederick Douglass, the document was the "grand basis for attaining the civil, social, political, and religious rights of women." At a time when traditional roles were still very much in place, the Declaration caused much controversy. An article published soon after the convention described the document as "the most shocking and unnatural event ever recorded in the history of womanity."

2. Divide class in half; assign one half to read the Declaration of Independence, and the other half the Declaration of Sentiments. Then divide students into 3 smaller groups. Students will complete an assigned section of the handout.

3. Ask students to work with their small group to read, discuss, and rewrite/paraphrase their document portion in their group's own words. Give them about 15 minutes to do this.

4. Then, have groups present their paraphrased version to the class, alternating back and forth through the two documents, as they align. (Discuss with the class along the way to help ensure comprehension.) Teacher records student ideas on the board or projected document and students complete the handout.

5. Have a class discussion about the similarities and differences between the Declarations. What was the Declaration of Sentiments declaring that was not included in the Declaration of Independence? Use a Venn diagram to illustrate on the chalkboard/projector:

6. Closure: Follow up this exercise with an individual writing/homework assignment; ask students in 2 or 3 paragraphs to reflect:
• Why do you think the Declaration of Sentiments was modeled after the Declaration of Independence?
• Do you think this was an effective strategy? Why or why not?
Adaptations

• **Simplified:** Use the ELL versions of Declaration of Sentiments and Declaration of Independence, along with the vocabulary list

• **Advanced:** Add another document—the Declaration of Rights of the Women of the United States (National Woman Suffrage Association, 1876): [http://ecssba.rutgers.edu/docs/decl.html](http://ecssba.rutgers.edu/docs/decl.html)

Documents for Day 1 Lesson:

**Declaration of Sentiments, Seneca Falls Conference, 1848**

Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Lucretia Mott, two activist in the movement to end slavery, organized the first conference to address women’s rights and issues in Seneca Falls, New York, in 1848. The reason for this conference came about, when Lucretia Mott was not allowed to speak at the world anti-slavery convention, even though she was an official delegate.

To write the Declaration of Sentiments, they used the Declaration as a model. The purpose was to create a document that demanded the rights of women as right bearing individuals, who were to be acknowledged and respected by society.

The opening paragraph of the Declaration of Sentiments describes their reason for writing the Declaration. The issue is that they don’t agree with the way the women are treated and not represented. Because they share a different point of view from others, and they feel that this is an important issue, they are entitled to find solutions and declare them.

The truths they hold to be self-evident:

• That all men are created equal

• That all men have some rights given to them by god

• That among those rights are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness

So when a group of people feel that the government is getting in the way of their rights, the group has the right to change it or get rid of it and to make new government, in whatever way seems most likely to make them safe and happy.

People should not change their government without a good reason, so people usually suffer as long as they can under the government they have, rather than change it. But when there have been a lot of problems for a long time, it is their right and their duty to throw off that government and to set up a better government.

Here in America, women have suffered a long time and they have decided to change it. Here is a list of the rights that women have not been allowed.
• Can’t run for office
• Women can’t vote
• When she is married, she is the property of the man
• When she earns money, her wages are the husband’s property
• The husband has the right to physically abuse his wife without punishment
• The woman’s property is taxed
• Women cannot attend college
• Cannot participate in the affairs of the Church

The women feel that they should have immediate access to all the rights and privileges which belong to them as citizens of the United States.
Declaration of Sentiments, Seneca Falls Conference, 1848: ELL version

Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Lucretia Mott, two leaders in the movement to end slavery, organized the first conference to address women's rights and issues in Seneca Falls, New York, in 1848. The reason for this conference came about when Lucretia Mott was not allowed to speak at the world anti-slavery convention, even though she was an official delegate.

To write the Declaration of Sentiments, they used the Declaration of Independence as a model. The purpose was to create a document that demanded the equal rights of women, who were to be acknowledged and respected by society and explain why they were calling for a change in laws. This is what they had to say (except in easier words):

The opening paragraph of the Declaration of Sentiments describes their reason for writing the Declaration. The issue is that they don't agree with the way the women are treated and the laws that keep them from being represented.

We think these things are obviously true:

- That all men and women are created equal
- That all men and women have some rights given to them by God
- That among those rights are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness

So when a group of people feel that the government is getting in the way of their rights, the group has the right to change it or get rid of it and to make new government, in whatever way seems most likely to make them safe and happy.

People should not change their government without a good reason, so people usually suffer as long as they can under the government they have, rather than change it. But when there have been a lot of problems for a long time, it is their right and their duty to throw off that government and to set up a better government.

Here in America, women have suffered a long time under the current government laws which discriminate against women. Here is a list of the rights that women have not been allowed.

- Women can't be elected to office
- Women can't vote
- When she is married, she is the property of the man
- When she earns money, her wages are the husband property
- The husband has the right to physically abuse his wife without punishment
• The woman’s property is taxed

• Women cannot attend college

• Women cannot participate in the leadership of the Church

The women feel that they should have immediate access to all the rights and privileges, which belong to them as full citizens of the United States.

Adapted from:
http://www.historyforkids.org/learn/northamerica/after1500/government/declaration.htm by Dr. Karen Carr, Portland State University
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Declaration of Independence</strong></th>
<th><strong>Declaration of Sentiments</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Why is the Declaration necessary?</em></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><em>What are the Basic Truths about rights?</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>What are some of the violations of rights? Choose five you consider most important.</em></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Declaration of Independence- ELL Version

In 1776, in the middle of the American Revolutionary War, patriots who were leaders of the war got together to write a letter to the King of England. They wanted to explain why they were fighting to be their own country, independent of England. This is what they had to say (but in easier words):

Sometimes one group of people decide to split off from another group, and to become an independent country, as the laws of Nature and of God say that they can. But when this happens, if they want other people to respect them, they should explain why they are splitting off.

We think these things are obviously true:

• That all men are created equal
• That all men have some rights given to them by God
• That among these rights are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

So whenever any government is getting in the way of these rights, people have the right to change it or get rid of it, and to make a new government, in whatever way seems most likely to make them safe and happy.

People should not change their government without a good reason, so people usually suffer as long as they can under the government they have, rather than change it. But when there have been a lot of problems for a long time, it is their right and their duty to throw off that government, and to set up a better government.

We here in America have suffered for a very long time, and now we should change our government. The king of England has done many bad things to us - here is a list:

• He won’t let us pass laws we need for everybody’s good.
• Even when we do pass laws, he won’t sign them so they can go into effect.
• He tried to force men to give up their right to make laws.
• He calls men together to make laws in the most inconvenient times and places, so that they won’t be able to go discuss the new laws.
• He won’t let new settlers come to America, and he won’t let the settlers take over new land from the Native Americans.
• He won’t let us choose our own judges, and instead he chooses them all himself, so they’re all on his side.
• He sends lots of new government officials that we don’t want, and he makes us pay for
them.

• He sends lots of English soldiers here when there isn’t even a war, and makes us let them live in our own houses.
• He tells us these soldiers can do whatever they want and don’t have to obey the law.
• He won’t let us buy and sell things from wherever we want. We can only buy things from England.
• He makes us pay all kinds of taxes without asking us about it.
• He won’t let us have a jury for our trials, only a judge.
• He sends people accused of crimes far away to England for their trials.
• He tries to get people to revolt and tries to get the “Indian Savages” to attack us.

When we ask him to stop, he just keeps on doing more bad things. We have tried to talk to the other people who live in England. We asked them to stop these crimes against us, but they have acted as though they were deaf. So we have to separate from England, and they will be our enemies during the war, though we hope they’ll be our friends when there is peace.

So we think that God will see that we are doing the right thing when we declare that the United States are now completely independent of the King of England. We have no more political connection to England at all. And as independent states, we say that each state has the right to make war, to make peace, to make alliances with other countries, trade with other countries, and do everything else that countries do. And we promise that we will fight for our independence with the help of God - we promise by our lives, our property, and our sacred honor.

Developed by:
Dr. Karen Carr, Associate Professor of History, Portland State University
http://www.historyforkids.org/learn/northamerica/after1500/government/declaration.htm
## Declaration of Sentiments vs. Declaration of Independence

### ANSWER KEY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Why is the Declaration necessary?</th>
<th>The Declaration of Sentiments is necessary because it calls attention to the lack of equal rights given women, even after they had fought to create their own country. It explains why they were fighting for equal rights.</th>
<th>The Declaration of Independence is necessary because it calls attention to the unhappiness that the citizens were experiencing and expresses why they were fighting for their own country.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| What are the Basic Truths about rights? | • All men and women are created equal  
• All men and women have some rights given to them by God  
• Among these rights are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness | • All men are created equal  
• All men have some rights given to them by God  
• Among these rights are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness |
| What are the Violations of rights? Choose five you consider most important. | • Women can’t vote or hold elective office  
• Though she cannot play a part in choosing laws, or those who govern, she must submit to the laws made by others  
• When she is married, she is the property of the man  
• When she earns money, her wages are the husband’s property  
• The husband has the right to physically abuse his wife without punishment  
• If she is single and owns property her property is taxed, without asking her about it  
• Women are expected to live by a different set of morals  
• If a woman becomes divorced, the laws have been crafted by men to give them all the power  
• Women have been kept out of profitable employment, and in the instances she is involved, she receives less pay  
• Women cannot attend college  
• Women are not allowed to have rights that even the most ignorant and degraded men are allowed | • He won’t let us pass laws we need for everybody’s good  
• Even when we do pass laws, he won’t sign them so they can go into effect  
• He calls men together to make laws in the most inconvenient times and places, so that they won’t be able to go discuss the new laws  
• He tried to force men to give up their right to make laws  
• He won’t let new settlers come to America, and he won’t let the settlers take over new land from the Native Americans  
• He makes us pay for taxes without asking us about it  
• He won’t let us have a jury for our trials, only a judge  
• He tells us these soldiers can do whatever they want and don’t have to obey the law  
• He won’t let us buy and sell things from wherever we want. We can only buy things from England  
• He sends people accused of crimes far away to England for their trials  
• He won’t let us have a jury for our trials, only a judge |
Vocabulary List: 15 total words

1. **unalienable**
   - We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain **unalienable** Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.
   - **Def:** incapable of being taken away or transferred to another

2. **redirect**
   - **Def:** channel into a new direction

3. **consequential**
   - **Def:** having important issues or results

4. **signatory**
   - **Def:** someone who signs and is bound by a document

5. **initially**
   - **Def:** at the beginning

6. **archives**
   - **Def:** collection of records especially about an institution

7. **self-evident**
   - We hold these truths to be **self-evident**, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.
   - **Def:** evident without proof or argument

8. **invoke**
   - The famous wording of the Declaration has often been **invoked** to protect the rights of individuals and marginalized groups, and has come to represent for many people a moral standard for which the United States should strive.
   - **Def:** summon into action or bring into existence

9. **broadside**
   - **Def:** an advertisement (usually printed on a page or in a leaflet) intended for wide distribution

10. **ratified**
    - **Def:** formally approved and invested with legal authority

11. **grievance**
    - The Declaration justified the independence of the United States by listing colonial **grievances** against King George III, and by asserting certain natural rights, including a right of revolution.
    - **Def:** a resentment strong enough to justify retaliation

12. **navigation**
    - **Def:** the guidance of ships or airplanes from place to place

13. **endowed**
    - **Def:** provided or supplied or equipped with (especially as by inheritance or nature)

14. **delegate**
    - Signatories 56 **delegates** to the Continental Congress
    - **Def:** a person appointed or elected to represent others

15. **pursuit**
    - **Def:** the act of pursuing in an effort to overtake or capture

Adapted from: [http://www.vocabulary.com/lists/36193](http://www.vocabulary.com/lists/36193)