



Women During World War II and the Scarcity of Labor

https://www.archives.gov/exhibits/powers_of_persuasion/its_a_womans_war_too/images/html/we_can_do_it.html

Overview/Prior Knowledge

Prior to this lesson, the students will have investigated the essential question: how does the scarcity of resources bring change? The students will have also learned about World War II and the key details from the war. It is important that the students have a background of the war so that they are able to evaluate the change that was brought for women.

Objectives

- The students will be able to identify the resource (labor) that was scarce during the war that brought change.
- The students will be able to identify the change that was brought for women during the war.
- The students will be able to explain if they believe that the change brought for World War II brought change for the way women are viewed today.

Time Required

Two, forty-five minute periods

Recommended Grade Range

9th-12th grade



Subject/Sub-Subject

US History/English Language Arts

Standards

Social Studies

US.7 WWII at home: Examine the nation's role in World War II and the impacts on domestic affairs. (Strands: Civics, Civil Rights, Geography, History, Economics)

9. Identify ways in which the roles of women and minorities changed during the war

English Language Arts

RL.10.1: Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text

Library of Congress - Teaching with Primary Sources Skills:

- Use previous knowledge to place primary sources into historical context
- Examine primary sources closely to form conjectures about their meaning and intent
- Investigate issues of cause and effect, causality, context, and continuity and change

Highlighted Strategies:

- See-Think-Wonder
- Circle of Viewpoints
- Headlines

Credits

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Materials

- Primary Sources – See Resource Guide at the end of this document.
- See-Think-Wonder Sheets
- See-Think-Wonder Differentiated Sheets
- Circle of Viewpoints Sheets
- Circle of Viewpoints Differentiated Sheets

Procedures

Introduction

- To begin the lesson, the teacher will ask the students what the essential question for the unit is, which is: The scarcity of resources brings change.

- The teacher will explain to the students that women saw change during World War II due to the scarcity of labor and that they will discover what the scarcity was and what change was brought during the lesson.
- Then, the teacher will ask the students, “how are women viewed in today’s society? Give examples.” The students will discuss by using think-pair-share. Once the class has shared and discussed, the teacher will transition into the teaching.

During

- The teacher will present the students with two sets of primary sources: the first set depicting how women were viewed before the war and the second depicting women during the war.
- The teacher will first give each table group the before the war sources with a See-Think-Wonder sheet for all six images.
- The teacher will explain to the students that they will have several minutes to make observations of one picture, complete the See-Think-Wonder and then switch the other pictures and do the same thing.
- The students will have five minutes to make observations for each picture.
- Once the students have completed their observations, the teacher will facilitate a discussion with the students. The teacher will ask questions such as, “what did you notice in the images? What stood out to you? How were women portrayed in these images? Do you think women are still viewed in this way? What do you think would happen if woman depicted this way today?”
 - The students should be finding:
 - The images take place in a house
 - The images feature women cooking/cleaning
 - The women are all dressed nicely/wearing a dress, apron, and heels
 - The women are being portrayed as housewives
 - If needed, the teacher will ask students, “what are the women wearing? Where are they? What are they doing” and “do women dress like this today? Do all women stay at home today?”
- The teacher will then hand out the three images of the women during WWII. The students will go through the same procedure.
- The teacher will ask the students, “What did you notice in the images? What stood out to you? How were women depicted in the images? How do these images compare to the ones from before the war? Why do you think the women were depicted differently?”
 - The students should be finding:
 - The images all show women working with tools or machines
 - The images all show women outside of the home
 - The women are not all wearing dresses
 - The women are being portrayed as workers
 - If needed, the teacher will ask students, “what are the women doing? How are they dressed? Where are the women?”
- Once the students have had a thorough discussion the teacher will ask the students which resource, they think was scarce during the war?
 - If needed, the teacher will ask students questions such as, “Who typically goes off to war? What happens when the leave?”
- The teacher will then ask the students what change was brought when the men were gone, which is that women had to fill the jobs that the men left behind.

- Next, the teacher will explain to the students that during WWII when the men left for war that jobs had to be filled to help with the war effort and that women were the ones to step up to the plate. The teacher will also explain that during this time, especially prior to the war, women were considered less than men and that their place was in the home. However, during the war women began to fill the left behind jobs and entered the workforce.
- The teacher will explain to the students that women were a crucial part of the war effort because the women helped build planes, worked in factories, became electricians, and welders and all of these jobs were only for men before the war.
- The students will read the document, "Womanpower."
- The students will use Circle of Viewpoints to think about the document they have just read and take on the role of a woman or a man during the war. The teacher will ask the students to think about what their answers would be to the questions stated in the survey from the document.
- The students will share their viewpoints about women entering the workforce.
- The teacher will show the students the image of Rosie the Riveter and ask the students to quickly do See-Think-Wonder in their head.
- The students will explain what they see, think, and wonder about the image.
- The student will come up with conjectures as to why Rosie the Riveter the meaning of the poster and its significance to the war.
- The teacher will explain to the students that Rosie the Riveter was not a specific person, but rather an idea of the working women on the American Homefront.
- The teacher will also explain to the students that Rosie was apart of the Propaganda from the US government that was to promote the war effort.
- The teacher will show the students a video on Rosie the Riveter from the History Channel.
- The teacher will ask the students what they think happened when the war ended.
- The students will discuss with their tables and then they will share.
- The teacher will explain to the students that after the war 75% of women wanted to keep their jobs and that working brought the women satisfaction and it brought more money in for their family.
- The teacher will then ask the students to think about a world where most of the women worked in the house, except for jobs like teachers and nurses. What would society be like?
- As an assessment, the students will write headlines to recruit women to the workforce, then they will create a propaganda poster to go along with the headline, recruiting women to the workforce.
- The students will share their headlines/posters and the teacher will display in the classroom.

After

- Once students have shared their headlines, the teacher will hand the students an exit ticket to complete as a formative assessment.
- After the exit ticket the teacher will review the key points of the lesson asking:
 - How were women viewed before WWII?
 - Why did the role of women change during WWII?
 - How do you think the women felt after the men came back from war?
 - How did the scarcity of resources change the role of women in America?

- The teacher will explain to the students that WWII was a pivotal time in history for women in America and that other Americans also saw change due to the scarcity of resources during WWII, such as African Americans, which will be taught in the next lesson.
- To conclude the lesson, the students will write in their journals answering the following prompt:
 - Pretend that you are a woman during World War II. How would you feel having to go to work every day? Is life harder or easier? What are some resources that you lack? What are some ways that you can make up for your lack of resources? What happens to you when the men come back from the war?

Assessment

Formative:

- Headlines: Students will write headlines to recruit women to the workforce, then they will create a propaganda poster to go along with the headline, recruiting women to the workforce.
- Exit Ticket
 - The students will identify: what resource was scarce during World War II that caused change for women?
 - The students will identify: what change was brought for women?
 - The students will apply: Do you think that the change that occurred during WWII for women has affected how women are viewed today? Explain your answer.

Differentiation

- Students that need more support will receive a See-Think-Wonder and Circle of Viewpoints sheet with guiding questions.
- ELL students will receive a See-Think-Wonder and Circle of Viewpoints sheets with sentence stems and guiding questions.
- Extended time will be provided as needed.
- Accelerated learners will work on a choice board in regards to women in World War II (creating CSI for women and the change brought by the war, applying Rosie to today, creating a propaganda poster)

Supplementary Materials

- See-Think-Wonder sheets
- Differentiated See-Think-Wonder sheets
- Primary sources of women before the war
- Primary sources of women after the war
- “Womanpower” Document:
<https://www.archives.gov/files/education/lessons//images/wwii-womanpower.pdf>
- Circle of Viewpoints sheets
- Differentiated Circle of Viewpoints sheets

- Image of Rosie the Riveter: https://www.archives.gov/exhibits/powers_of_persuasion/its_a_womans_war_too/images_html/we_can_do_it.html
- History Channel Video of Rosie the Riveter: <https://www.history.com/topics/world-war-ii/rosie-the-riveter>
- Paper for Headlines and propaganda posters

Teaching with Primary Sources Resource Guide

Title: Change on the American Homefront

Historical Background:

Prior to World War II, women were mostly confined to the household to take care of their families, with exceptions such as teachers and nurses. However, when the United States entered the war sacrifices had to be made from the rationing of metal and food to women entering the workforce to fill the jobs that had been left behind by the men. As women began to enter in the workforce, they found value in the jobs they were holding, and they were able to provide more for their families. When the war was over, and the men returned home, it was expected that the men would return to their positions, yet women did not want to quit their jobs.

Source 1:



Title: Yonkers, New York. Mrs. Garrity, suburban housewife, in the kitchen preparing dinner

Link: <https://www.loc.gov/item/2017833896/>

Purpose: The students will analyze this image using See-Think-Wonder to help establish the role of women prior to World War II.

Source 2:



Title: Turlock, California. Housewife in front room of her home

Link: <https://www.loc.gov/item/2017818356/>

Purpose: The students will analyze this image using See-Think-Wonder to help establish the role of women prior to World War II.

Source 3:



Title: Substitute materials. Glass utensils. Glass mixing bowls are doing double duty today as busy war-working housewives mix, bake, and serve cake in one and the same bowl, with no dishwashing between stages

Link: <https://www.loc.gov/item/2017696121/>

Purpose: The students will analyze this image using See-Think-Wonder to help establish the role of women prior to World War II.

Source 2:



Title: War production drive poster. Poster distributed by the War Production Board (WPB) to U.S. employment service offices, beauty parlors, women's colleges, manufacturers, etc. The original is 28 1/2 inches by 40 inches and is printed in red, blue, and black on white. The poster was reproduced from a photograph by Office of War Information photographer, Howard Hollem. Copies may be obtained from Central Distribution Plant, Office for Emergency Management (OEM), 1509 14th Street, N.W., Washington, D.C.

Link: <https://www.loc.gov/item/2017693660/>

Purpose: The students will analyze this image using See-Think-Wonder to help distinguish the change that occurred for women during World War II. The students will use the images to infer what resource was scarce and what change was brought for women during the war.

Source 3:



Title: "The girl he left behind" is still behind him--She's a WOW / Adolph Treidler.

Link: <https://www.loc.gov/item/95501843/>

Purpose: The students will analyze this image using See-Think-Wonder to help distinguish the change that occurred for women during World War II. The students will use the images to infer what resource was scarce and what change was brought for women during the war.

Source 4:



Title: The more women at work the sooner we win! Women are needed also as [...] See your local U.S. Employment Service.

Link: <https://www.loc.gov/item/95504675/>

Purpose: The students will analyze this image using See-Think-Wonder to help distinguish the change that occurred for women during World War II. The students will use the images to infer what resource was scarce and what change was brought for women during the war.

Source 5:



Title: Operating a hand drill at Vultee-Nashville, woman is working on a "Vengeance" dive bomber, Tennessee

Link: <https://www.loc.gov/item/2017878540/>

Purpose: The students will analyze this image using See-Think-Wonder to help distinguish the change that occurred for women during World War II. The students will use the images to infer what resource was scarce and what change was brought for women during the war.

Source 6:

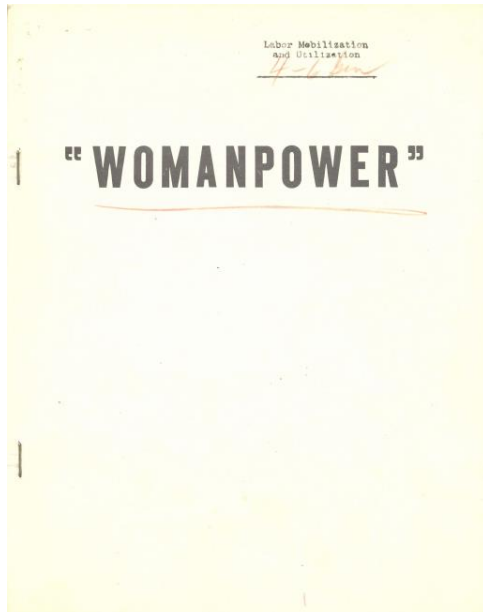


Title: Grading oranges at a co-op orange packing plant, Redlands, Calif. Santa Fe trip

Link: <https://www.loc.gov/item/2017878149/>

Purpose: The students will analyze this image using See-Think-Wonder to help distinguish the change that occurred for women during World War II. The students will use the images to infer what resource was scarce and what change was brought for women during the war.

Source 7:



Title: "Womanpower"

Link: <https://www.archives.gov/files/education/lessons//images/wwii-womanpower.pdf>

Purpose: The students will read through this document to gain a perspective on men and women's view of women entering the workforce. The students will then use this document and take a viewpoint presented and work through the Circle of Viewpoints thinking routine.

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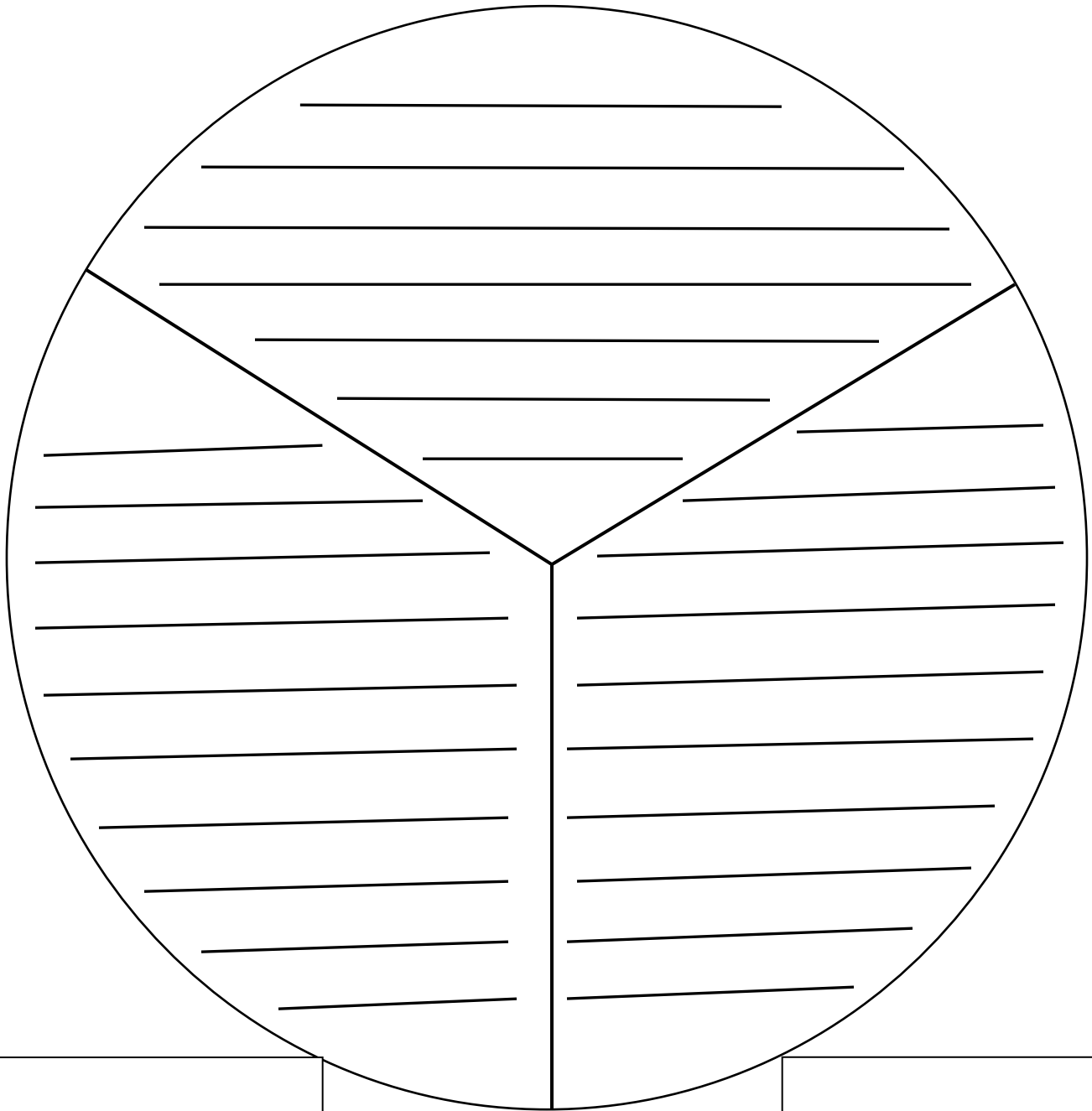
Source 8:



Title: We Can Do It!



Link: https://www.archives.gov/exhibits/powers_of_persuasion/its_a_womans_war_too/images_html/we_can_do_it.html

Purpose: The teacher will present this propaganda poster to students and they will do an informal See-Think-Wonder. The student will create conjectures about what this poster might have meant and its importance to the war.



Circle of Viewpoints

Topic:

 I Think...	 I Wonder...
I See... 