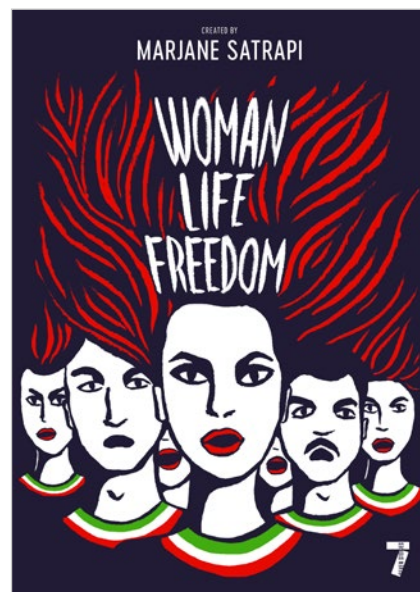
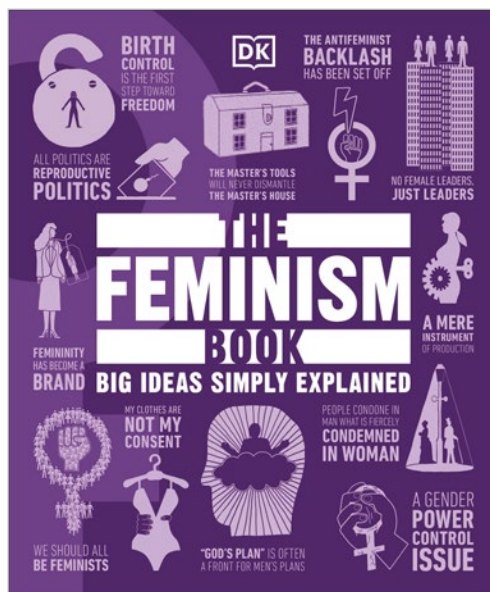
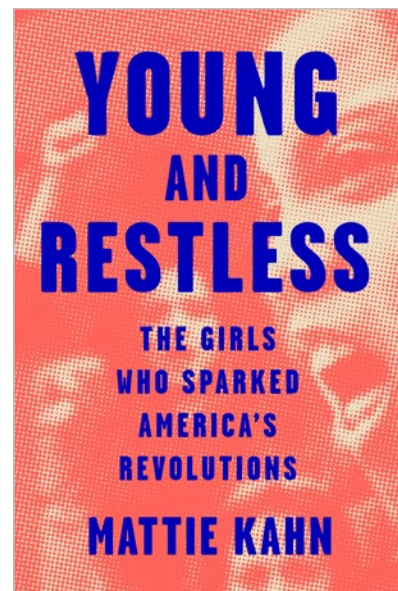
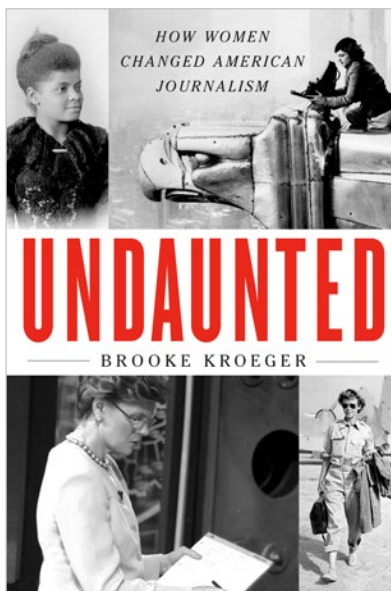
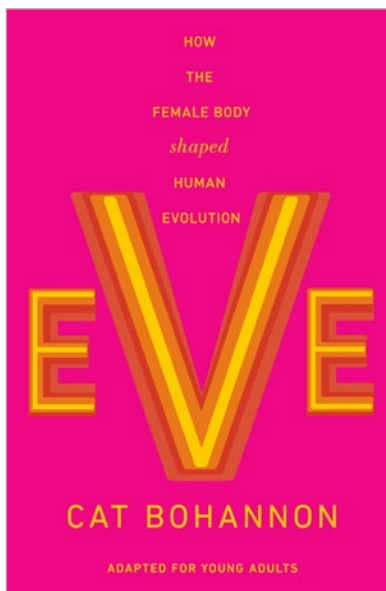




THEMATIC GUIDE

Teaching Women's History
HIGH SCHOOL



This guide analyzes the history and status of social justice for women and empowers high school students to reflect on their roles as changemakers in a landscape requiring their awareness, agency, and advocacy.

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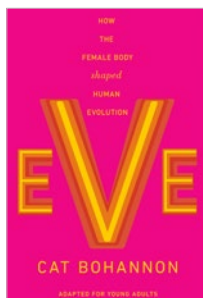
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■ INTRODUCTION

Today's high schoolers need only check their social media feeds to see the rise of antifeminism and the erosion of women's rights across the globe and, unfortunately, in their own backyard. According to The Southern Poverty Law Center's 2024 guide *Not Just a Joke: Understanding and Preventing Gender- and Sexuality-Based Bigotry*, "young people are particularly vulnerable to gender- and sexuality-based disinformation and extremist manipulation," and educators "play pivotal roles in helping them build resilience against such manipulation."

By analyzing the history and status of social justice for women, the texts in this set build awareness around feminism, and they empower readers to see themselves as conscious advocates for women's rights. The texts and tasks are appropriate for grades nine and up, in classes such as civics, history, women's studies, and English. The activities focus on the following line of inquiry: *How far has the women's movement advanced, and what work remains?* Teachers can choose one or a combination of titles and strategies as they ask students to reflect on their roles as changemakers in a social justice landscape requiring their awareness, agency, and advocacy.

■ ABOUT THE TITLES IN THIS COLLECTION



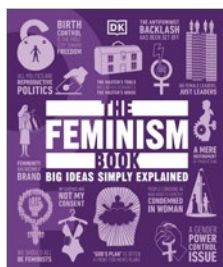
Eve (Adapted for Young Adults)
How the Female Body Shaped Human Evolution

CAT BOHANNON

9780593811887

Bright Matter Books | Hardcover
\$20.99 | 432 pages | Lexile: 1140L
Also available: **E-Book, Audio Download**

In *Eve (Adapted for Young Adults): How the Female Body Shaped Human Evolution*, Cat Bohannon explores the conceptions and misconceptions of the female body that link to many of today's significant social issues.



The Feminism Book

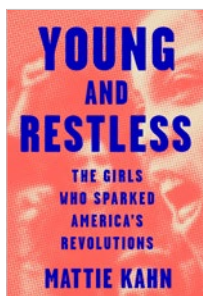
Big Ideas Simply Explained

DK

9780744051575

DK | Paperback
\$19.99 | 352 pages

The Feminism Book: Big Ideas Simply Explained employs an engaging graphic layout to provide an interesting and accessible overview of the feminist movement.



Young and Restless

The Girls Who Sparked America's Revolutions

MATTIE KAHN

9780593299067

Viking | Hardcover
\$29.00 | 368 pages
Also available: **E-Book, Audio Download**

Mattie Kahn's *Young and Restless: The Girls Who Sparked America's Revolutions* spotlights teenage girls and their unique ability to ignite and transform social movements.



Undaunted

How Women Changed American Journalism

BROOKE KROEGER

9780525659143

Knopf | Hardcover
\$35.00 | 592 pages | Lexile: 950L
Also available: **E-Book, Audio Download**

Brooke Kroeger's *Undaunted: How Women Changed American Journalism* is a comprehensive history of the impact women have had on journalism as well as journalism's impact on them.



Woman, Life, Freedom

MARJANE SATRAPI; Translated by **UNA DIMITRIJEVIC**

9781644214053

Seven Stories Press | Paperback
\$35.95 | 272 pages

In *Marjane Satrapi's Woman, Life, Freedom*, a collection of writers, activists, and artists utilize graphic storytelling to illuminate the Iranian uprising following the murder of Mahsa Amini.

■ **BUILDING INTEREST,
ACCESS, AND RELEVANCY
PRIOR TO READING**

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

High school-level informational texts address complex content. Support students' access to texts and topics with essential questions at the start and throughout reading. Questions model how to set a purpose for reading, how to engage in inquiry, and how to think critically about important topics. Ultimately, students should ask and answer their own questions as they read. The following questions frame essential ideas and can be used for reading, writing, and discussion.

1. How have gender stereotypes and expectations presented barriers to women, historically and currently? How have groundbreaking women challenged these and to what outcome?
2. How have women shaped and been shaped by journalism and other media?
3. What is the role of a free press in historical and contemporary women's movements?
4. Why is social media such a powerful tool for young women's rights advocates?
5. Why is freedom for all women essential to success in most social justice movements?
6. How is sexism systemic in our society? How do individuals and groups support these systems? How do we confront systems in a way that facilitates change?
7. How does the concept of intersectionality apply to women's history and social justice?
8. Why is education a significant component of women's equity? Who must be educated?
9. In what ways has the female body been misunderstood and misrepresented?
10. In what ways does art provide access and amplification to women's social movements?
11. How do authors and artists address the intersection among gender, power, and identity?

THE BARBIE CONNECTION: TEXT-TO-TEXT COMPARISON

In *The Feminism Book*, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie is identified as a key figure in the movement for universal feminism. Her famous "We Should All Be Feminists" TED Talk is explored on pages 305–306. Provide relevance and build interest around the topic of feminism by showing students Adichie's TED Talk (prhlink.com/ytngozaifeminist). In the video (12:15–12:45), Adichie says, "We teach girls to shrink themselves, to make themselves smaller. We say to girls, 'You can have ambition, but not too much. You should aim to be successful, but not too successful, otherwise you will threaten the man.'" After the TED Talk, show the clip from 2023's popular *Barbie* movie, where America Ferrara delivers a remarkably

■ BUILDING INTEREST, ACCESS, AND RELEVANCY PRIOR TO READING

similar and now famous monologue (prhlink.com/nytbarbie).

After students have watched the TED Talk and the movie clip, discuss: *In what ways does the Barbie monologue echo Adichie's TED Talk? How do the movie and the TED Talk support The Feminism Book's assertion that "we need to reclaim the word 'feminism'" (p. 304)?*

CLASS CONTRACT

The books in this set address important yet challenging topics such as sexual assault, gender roles, politics, and religion. Teachers may want to prepare students for reading and discussing these sensitive issues. Creating a set of norms will ensure equity and promote diverse perspectives. Discuss why the books may cause concern and why it is important to read them, especially in our current culture. Together with students, create a set of classroom procedures for how the class will handle sensitive language and topics. Provide sentence starters for use during small- and large-group discussions and read-alouds. Model what academic discourse looks like. Facing History, a website dedicated to helping students and teachers confront bigotry and hate, models possible norms for a "classroom contract" that facilitates a reflective and supportive classroom community (prhlink.com/fhreflectiveclassroom).

INTENTIONAL VOCABULARY INSTRUCTION

The texts in this set integrate content-specific vocabulary. It may be helpful to provide intentional vocabulary instruction essential for comprehension. Rather than assigning the entire list at one time, pre-teach only the words that will be important in a particular day's lesson. Ask students to note when words are used in the text(s). After reading, students should use the words in speech and writing. Words might be added to a classroom word wall, and students can engage in activities to solidify learning. Significant vocabulary appearing throughout this set includes *apartheid*, *biologism*, *coalition*, *collective action*, *demoralization*, *disarmament*, *disenfranchise*, *misogyny*, *sexism*, and *social cohesion*. For more on intentional vocabulary instruction, see prhlink.com/dfisher.

■ ENGAGEMENT STRATEGIES DURING READING

BOOK CIRCLES

Whether students are all reading the same book from this set or each reading a different title, book circles provide a low-stakes but high-impact opportunity for students to engage in academic discussion, share different points of view, and build knowledge with their peers.

- If students in the circle are reading the same book from this set, circles can meet to discuss a specific topic, structural element, or passage that supports an intended focus. Students can rotate through self-selected roles each time the group meets, such as text expert, questioner, summarizer, and vocabulary expert.

■ ENGAGEMENT STRATEGIES DURING READING

- If students in the circle are reading different titles, they can meet to share core concepts, cite specific passages, and discuss connections to course content and current events.

A multimodal alternative to traditional book circles is to meet or record the group's activity using a digital collaboration tool such as Zoom, Flip, or Padlet. With these tools, students use emojis, likes, and posts as they collaborate, plus they can edit, rerecord, or rewrite their responses before sharing with their peer audience.

PRIMARY SOURCE ANALYSIS

In chapter one of *Young and Restless*, the Lowell, Massachusetts labor uprising by young “material girls” provides an excellent opportunity for students to conduct primary source analysis. Ask students to reflect on the impact of young women on social justice issues both historically and today. Using the Library of Congress’s “Analyzing Primary Sources” tool (prhlink.com/photosandprints), students can analyze primary sources from the Tsongas Industrial History Center at University of Massachusetts Lowell through observation, reflection, and questioning (prhlink.com/umledu). Sources include hospital forms, work schedules, wage records, and images from mill life in Lowell. Students can analyze independently, with partners, or in small groups. Afterwards, ask students to read the introduction to *Young and Restless* and discuss: *What factors empowered young Lowell girls to protest in the early 1800s? What unique skills and powers did these young women possess? What similar skills and new tools do today’s young women embody in their activism against climate change, sexual harassment, education barriers, and more?*

“DIDLS” SONG ANALYSIS

In *Woman, Life, Freedom*, the chapter entitled “The Anthem of the Uprising” focuses on the protest song “Baraye.” “Baraye” is a Persian word meaning “for,” or in English, “because.” The song won the very first “Best Song for Social Change” award at the 2023 Grammy awards. Ask students to read about Shervin Hajipour, the singer-songwriter inspired to write the song after Mahsa Amini’s murder by the Iranian morality police (p. 30). Encourage them to reflect on the complexity of “Baraye” with the “DIDLS” analysis method. With “DIDLS,” students use a chart to perform a rhetorical analysis of a song or poem. They examine diction, imagery, details, language, and syntax in order to determine the speaker’s attitude towards the subject. Provide time for students to apply the “DIDLS” framework independently or with a partner. Afterwards, discuss: *How does the constant repetition of “baraye” (because) support the songwriter’s and protestors’ point of view? How does imagery in the lyrics and the accompanying illustrations support the song’s tone and purpose?* Finally, show students a video performance of “Baraye,” and discuss how the video extends their understanding. One video includes a blend of Iranian and English (prhlink.com/ytbaraye); another showcases the band Coldplay (prhlink.com/ytcoldplaybaraye). Discuss: *How do the lyrics, illustrations, and performances underscore the point that the Mahsa Amini uprisings are about so much more than hijabs?*

■ ENGAGEMENT STRATEGIES DURING READING

“3 WHYS” PROTOCOL

In *Eve (Adapted for Young Adults)*, Cat Bohannon discusses the disconnect between biology and society's views of female beauty. She cites the popularity of cosmetic surgery (p. 10) and the prevalence of celebrity “baby bod” images (p. 403) as examples of how sexism shapes the way women see themselves and are seen by others, even other women. The author discusses the roles social media and advertising play in contributing to this focus on unattainable ideals of the female form. Send students to NOW's “Love your Body” website (prhlink.com/nowfoundation) and provide time for students to peruse the “Posters” link, the “Ads” link, and the “What's It All About” link. Here, students will find art designed to promote body positivity, facts about body image and eating disorders, and examples of pro- and anti-feminist advertisements.

Next, ask students to click the “About” link, which discusses media's role in female body image (prhlink.com/nowfoundation). As students read this text, ask them to apply the “3 Whys” protocol to reflect on the text and topic (prhlink.com/threewhys). In this routine, students consider: *Why might this topic matter to me? Why might it matter to people around me? Why might it matter to the world?* Afterward, discuss as a class: *Where do we see these issues play out in ads and social media?*

“GEM” AD ANALYSIS

Undaunted chronicles the ages-long struggle with gender barriers and bias in the media, both with the treatment of female journalists as well as the depiction of female subjects. Today, that bias and sexism has expanded beyond the walls of the newsroom into television, print, and social media ads. Facilitate an analysis of gender depiction in advertisement by applying the gender equality measure (GEM) framework. Explain to students that “GEM” was created by SeeHer, a group of media, marketing, and entertainment professionals to address and eliminate gender bias in their industry. Their aim is to project realistic, positive portrayals of females in commercials, gaming, and more. To measure consumer perception of how females are portrayed in specific media, the “GEM” asks the following questions:

1. What is the overall opinion of the female presented?
2. Is she portrayed respectfully?
3. Is she depicted inappropriately?
4. Is she seen as a positive role model for women and girls?

Ask students to apply the “GEM” analysis to two recent commercials. First, show the 2025 Superbowl ad and accompanying *NY Post* article featuring influencer Alix Earle for Carl's Jr. (prhlink.com/nypsb). Ask students to turn and talk with a partner, addressing each of the four “GEM” questions. Next, show students the Gatorade ad from the SeeHer ad gallery, featuring basketball player A'ja Wilson (prhlink.com/seeher). Again, invite partners to apply and discuss the “GEM”

■ ENGAGEMENT STRATEGIES DURING READING

questions. Afterward, discuss: *Which ad would receive a higher “GEM” score, and why? According to the NY Post article, what about our current culture is reigniting this biased depiction of females in media? Why is the “GEM” tool important? How does it address the gender disparity issues identified in Undaunted?*

EXPLAINER VIDEO

In *Young and Restless*, Mattie Kahn shares the story of nineteenth-century journalist Anna Elizabeth Dickinson, who wrote, “It is an established truth, that when the press is free, the people are free. And that, where freedom of the press is not known, the people are the slaves of despotism” (p. 31). Challenge students to evaluate the impact of current politics on the First Amendment with a short, engaging “explainer” video similar to those popular on TikTok and YouTube. Assign students a news clip or article about the press and current politics, such as:

- prhlink.com/msmagazine
- prhlink.com/nprvoa
- prhlink.com/ytpbscensorship

After students have watched or read the news item, ask them to summarize the story’s big idea(s) for an audience of their peers in an explainer video. For videos with all the bells and whistles, Canva provides a free online tool (canva.com/create/explainer-videos/). When students post their videos on Instagram, Padlet, or another online location, they can invite classmates to ask questions and post responses. Once students have been able to watch several classmate’s videos, post a discussion prompt on the whiteboard: “How free is our press today?” Ask students to support their answers with evidence from the news clips, the explainers, and from their own knowledge and experience.

CARTOON ANALYSIS

Explore politics and author’s point of view by analyzing a political cartoon connected to an important concept in the text(s). For example, in *Eve*, Cat Bohannon says that the “core” of sexism is “a massive set of rules that work to control reproduction” (p. 381). Similarly, *The Feminism Book* asserts that “All politics are reproductive politics” (p. 268). Project a relevant political cartoon on the board, such as the American flag composed of white cross stars and red handmaiden stripes (prhlink.com/cartoonstock). Ask students to analyze and connect to the cartoon using the “See/Think/Me/We” routine (prhlink.com/seethinkmewe). In this protocol, students observe the image, consider preliminary thoughts, and make connections to their own lives before reflecting on the image’s application to the “bigger picture.” After students have analyzed the cartoon individually or in partners, discuss with the class: *How does this recent political cartoon speak to contemporary politics and social justice around women’s reproductive rights? How does it support or extend author’s purpose in Eve and The Feminist Book?* Discussion might include current legislation impeding women’s voting, health, or other issues.

■ ENGAGEMENT STRATEGIES DURING READING

I USED TO THINK...NOW I THINK

Both *Undaunted* (pp. 377–383) and *The Feminism Book* (pp. 324–327) identify the #MeToo movement as a significant turning point for women's social justice. Ask students to read and annotate one or both of these excerpts before discussing as a class how celebrity activists amplified the movement and empowered other women to come forward with their stories. Next, ask students to read the *Time* article by Gretchen Carlson entitled “What the Epstein Scandal Tells us About the #MeToo Movement” (prhlink.com/timemetoo). After reading, ask students to discuss with a partner: *What positive societal shift has the writer identified? Whom does she claim is the new focal point of sexual misconduct cases, and how does she say the #MeToo movement instigated the shift?* Ask students to reflect on their own thinking around #MeToo by considering how their knowledge of the movement has deepened beyond what they've seen on social media. Applying the “I Used to Think...Now I Think” visible thinking routine, have students explain how reading about #MeToo in *Undaunted*, *The Feminism Book*, and *Time* has impacted their thinking (prhlink.com/usedtothinknf).

MISOGYNY AND THE MANOSPHERE

In *Woman, Life, Freedom*, Marjane Satrapi explains that “the murder of Mahsa Amini gave birth to the first feminist revolution in history supported by men” (p. 15). Despite this remarkable shift, however, the country where the revolution occurred remains a violent patriarchy. Unfortunately, Iran is not alone. According to multiple data points, the “manosphere” is on the rise in the United States and around the world. Social media has amplified the spread of misogynistic messaging. Ask students to read the article “Why is the Manosphere on the Rise? UN Women Sounds the Alarm Over Online Misogyny” (prhlink.com/unmisogyny). After reading, ask students to turn and talk about the article with a partner, focusing on three questions:

1. Why does the “manosphere” reject feminism?
2. How do misogynistic individuals and organizations depict women?
3. How does anti-feminism and the “manosphere” threaten not only girls and women, but also boys and men?

Next, ask students to examine the controversial cover of pop singer Sabrina Carpenter's newest album, *Man's Best Friend*. In the image, Carpenter appears on hands and knees, directly in front of a man who is holding her by her hair. According to the accompanying article, critics see the cover as regressive and evoking “tired tropes that reduce women to pets, props, and possessions and promote an element of violence and control.” Others see it as satire that is “a knowing wink at how femininity is constructed, consumed, and commodified” (prhlink.com/forbessc). Discuss with the class: *Is the cover regressive and misogynistic, or is it satirical and intentional? Who is actually in control? How does the album cover connect to the article on the manosphere? How does the controversy extend Marjane Satrapi's point about men playing a role in the feminist movement?*

■ ENGAGEMENT STRATEGIES DURING READING

CLAIM, EVIDENCE, REASONING

“At this point, sexism is killing us” writes Cat Bohannon in *Eve* (p. 385). At the end of *Eve*, in a section entitled “Healthy, Wealthy, and Wise,” Bohannon asserts that systemic sexism is dangerous, even deadly, for women, and ultimately, for everyone (pp. 385–408). As one piece of evidence, the author points to the rise in U.S. maternal death rates (p. 394). Bohannon divides her argument into three subsections: “Less Healthy,” “Less Wealthy,” and “Less Wise.” Ask students to read and analyze one of these three subsections with the “Claim, Evidence, Reasoning” (CER) method, where students identify the argument’s claims, cite evidence, and outline reasoning in order to understand complex ideas or viewpoints. Once students have read and annotated their section, form triads where each student has read a different piece of the argument, and ask students to share their annotations. Afterward, discuss as a class: *How does Bohannon illustrate her point that “sexism is killing us”?* As an extension, direct students to read and apply the “CER” analysis method to the *Harvard Gazette* article “U.S. Pregnancy-Related Deaths Continuing to Rise” (prhlink.com/thgstudy). As a group, discuss how the article supports or extends Bohannon’s argument in *Eve*.

INDEPENDENT RESEARCH

The texts in this set provide multiple references and opportunities for further exploration based on students’ personal interests. After reading, invite students to embark on further research and synthesize their learning in a multimedia publication format of their choice (website, podcast, cartoon, flipbook, TED Talk-inspired video, TikTok explainer, meme, etc.). Topics might include:

- In *Eve*, Cat Bohannon incorporates illustrations, poetry, and fictional excerpts to support her big ideas. Identify and discuss one or more organization, movement, or publication that incorporates female-centric art in the support of feminist goals.
- *The Feminism Book* details how “‘hashtag activism’ has been strongly incorporated into fourth-wave feminism” (p. 296). Highlight one hashtag campaign that focuses on girls or women. Some examples are listed in the book: #Neda, #BringBackOurGirls, #BlackTransLivesMatter. Incorporate information, images, and links.
- In *Undaunted*, Brooke Kroeger references many historic and contemporary female journalists including Martha Gellhorn, Rachel Carson, Janet Malcolm, Joan Didion, Cokie Roberts, and Charlayne Hunter-Gault. Select one of these female journalists, or another of your choice, and illuminate their career.
- In *Woman, Life, Freedom*, Marjane Satrapi and her collection of authors and artists magnify the complexity of issues surrounding the Mahsa Amini protests. Highlight one of these issues. For example, you might focus on the morality police (Guidance Patrol), Evin Prison, gas poisoning in schools, sham trials, or Bloody Friday.

■ CULMINATING ACTIVITIES AFTER READING

■ CULMINATING ACTIVITIES AFTER READING

- In *Young and Restless*, Mattie Kahn says “There’s a certain exhilaration in finding a community. That’s the work of adolescence. It’s also essential to building a coalition” (p. 222). Amplify a youth coalition that has at least one female founder. Consider coalitions Kahn mentions in her book, including Zero Hour, GenZ for Change, Fridays for Future, and March for Our Lives, as well as other female-led coalitions of interest.

CULMINATING WRITING ASSESSMENT

Culminating assessment prompts provide students with a frame to read and analyze the texts in a collection and prepare students for a formal writing opportunity after reading. Students should be introduced to these prompts prior to reading so that they read with intent and with an eye for evidence. Prompts should be complex enough to encourage critical thinking and to promote a variety of responses. Students can apply thinking from notes, activities, and class materials as they respond to the prompt. The prompt might align with an essential question such as the ones at the beginning of this guide. For example, students might respond to the following prompt:

In multiple examples of women’s social justice texts, authors and artists reflect on the impact of social media on the proliferation of anti-feminism as well as the increase of feminist advocacy. Using one or more of the texts we’ve read in this unit, compose a well-written essay that analyzes how the internet is inspiring change, be it for good or for bad. Use explicit text evidence and compelling argumentation to support your thesis.

SOCRATIC SEMINAR

To promote civic discourse with diverse views, conduct a Socratic seminar based on a text or text excerpt from this set. Prior to the activity, discuss with students what an ideal seminar looks and sounds like, including participation, active listening, and respect of multiple viewpoints. Ask students to set a class goal, such as “I will contribute to the discussion at least once,” as well as a personal goal, such as “I will mention a classmate’s name and extend or disagree with his thinking.” Students should record their goals on paper or sticky notes visible during the seminar.

During the discussion, take a facilitator’s role. Ask a low-risk opening question to encourage total class participation in a round-robin response. This question can be provided the night before. Its purpose is to identify the text’s main ideas. Second, move to a core question for the purpose of analyzing text details. Finally, end with a closing question that promotes connection and relevance. Example prompts based on the intersectionality chapter of *The Feminism Book* (pp. 242–245) include:

■ CULMINATING ACTIVITIES AFTER READING

1. What phrase or quotation from the chapter stuck with you?
2. On page 243, the author explains the concept of “multiple jeopardy” as “sexism is multiplied when combined with racism, and then further multiplied by class and other oppressions.” How does she support and elaborate this concept?
3. Where do we see the idea of intersectionality play out in our school, our community, or our world?

After the seminar, ask students to evaluate their own and classmates' speaking, thinking, and listening. Did they meet their goals? What should the class do differently next time? How did the seminar deepen their understanding of the text?

■ ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

The following resources provide additional information and ideas for engaging students in women's history.

- “Getting to Know Graphic Novels”
prhlink.com/oppositeland
- “The History of Iran’s So-Called Morality Police”
prhlink.com/nprmorality
- National Women’s History Museum: Digital Classroom Resources
prhlink.com/womenshistoryorg
- “Not Just a Joke: Understanding and Preventing Gender– and Sexuality–Based Bigotry”
prhlink.com/splcbigotry
- Restless Development
restlessdevelopment.org
- “Seven female activists under 23 who are changing the world”
prhlink.com/cnbcseven
- Teaching Resources for Women’s History and Women’s Rights
prhlink.com/educationblogs
- Women’s History Month for the Classroom
prhlink.com/neaorg
- Women’s History Toolkit
prhlink.com/natwmnhstalliance

■ ABOUT THE AUTHOR OF THIS GUIDE

Laura Reis Mayer is a professional learning consultant from Asheville, NC. She develops content and facilitates learning for national education organizations. A twice-renewed National Board Certified Teacher (NBCT), she taught middle school, high school, and college English, speech, drama, and literacy. She has written more than forty teacher guides for multiple publishers.

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