

SHOULD WOMEN BE REQUIRED TO REGISTER FOR THE DRAFT?

THIS ACTIVITY SHOULD TAKE ABOUT 90 MINUTES. IF LEARNERS ARE ABLE TO REVIEW MEDIA PRIOR TO THE LESSON, ACTIVITY TIME SHOULD BE 45 TO 60 MINUTES.

INVESTIGATE

Read, watch, and listen to the three media resources on the Thinkalong module. Learners can use the Investigate graphic organizer to summarize each piece of media and record new information. Below are summaries of the three pieces of media curated in the Thinkalong module.

HOW DOES THE DRAFT WORK?

WFYI Simple Civics | June 2, 2020 | Video
4:00 minutes

The draft in the United States has only been used with men in the context of war, and recently its relevance and constitutionality have both been called into question.

- The first draft was during the U.S. Civil War, but wealthy men could pay their way out of it.
- The two World Wars led to temporary drafts, and World War II also gave rise to the concept of conscientious objectors.
- With the Vietnam War, resistance to the draft reached its peak, with many eligible men refusing to serve.
- The draft hasn't been necessary since 1973, and while some think it may be extended to women, others believe the draft should be retired now that the U.S. military has relied on an all-volunteer force.

WOMEN AND THE DRAFT

NPR | April 27, 2019 | Audio
3:54 minutes

Now that no jobs in the military are off-limits for women, a federal judge has ruled that mandatory male-only draft registration is unconstitutional.

- Once the Pentagon announced it was now acceptable to require women to register for the draft, the U.S. Congress established a blue-ribbon commission to consider modifying the requirement.
- Some opponents argue that drafting women is “contrary to nature.” Others cite evidence that women in the military are wounded at 10 times the rate of men, which would lead to more turnover and less overall effectiveness.
- Proponents, including Katey Van Dam, a former Marine, argue that women outnumber men in higher education, and that many have skills the military needs. Some say that exempting women from selective service is discrimination based on sex.
- Other ideas to changing the selective service is to end the requirement altogether, continuing to rely on a volunteer military force.

COMMISSION ISSUES VERDICT: WOMEN, LIKE MEN, SHOULD HAVE TO SIGN UP FOR DRAFT

NPR | March 25, 2020 | Article

924 words

Traditionally, only male citizens aged 18-25 have been required to register for selective service, but when the Obama administration rescinded a policy excluding women from combat roles, the registration policy has also been re-examined.

- The National Commission on Military, National and Public Service has recommended that Congress modify the Military Selective Service Act to eliminate male-only registration.
- The commission asserted that expanding the draft to all citizens ages 18-25 would allow the military to leverage the skills, abilities, and talents of all Americans. Currently, women make up 19% of active-duty military members.
- The commission noted that 70% of Americans of draft age are unfit for military service.
- Anti-war activists argue that the expansion would instead lead to more men and women resisting service if the government did indeed institute a draft.

KEY WORDS

Look out for these important keywords in the news stories. Discuss the definitions with your learners and see how they affect the understanding of the story.

- Eligibility
- Conscientious objector
- Casualty

CONTEMPLATE

Learners will use media literacy questions to critically engage with news by thinking about its purpose, searching for bias and discussing missing perspectives. They will answer the 5 Key Questions of Media Literacy created by the Center for Media Literacy, which are:

1. Who created this message?
2. What creative techniques are used to attract my attention?
3. How might different people understand this message differently than me?
4. What values, lifestyles and points of view are represented in, or omitted from, this message?
5. Why is this message being sent?

A graphic organizer is included in this guide and the Thinkalong website to help learners answer these five questions about each piece of media.

DEBATE

Use the debate tool on the module webpage to help form evidence-based responses to the debate question.

Thinkalong is designed to help learners engage with real issues that are relevant to their lives. [Structured discussions](#) allow learners to practice their critical thinking skills through evidence-based debate with their peers. Discussions are designed to take about 30 minutes. Educators are encouraged to modify aspects that work best for their learners.

To encourage civil discourse, please review the [Code of Conduct](#) with your learners.

Using public media — video, audio and digital reports — about newsworthy topics, these classroom-based exercises help learners to think critically about media messages, develop informed opinions, and practice how to take a stand.