

# HAS FEMINISM HELPED WOMEN GAIN EQUAL RIGHTS?

**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.

### I'M NOT A FEMINIST

What I Hear When You Say | March 13, 2017 | Video  
5:56 minutes

This video from What I Hear When You Say asks what it means to be a feminist and explores how the word is heard many ways.

**[Content Warning: This video uses some language that might not be suitable for all students.]**

- Comedian Phoebe Robinson concludes that when someone says “I’m not a feminist,” they have certain preconceptions about feminists and feminism, like they hate men, are bullies, are unhappy, or don’t shave their legs.
- Filmmaker Jasmine Rivera says that many people reject the label because they have an incorrect understanding of feminism based on negative stereotypes of what the term actually means.
- Robinson and Rivera discuss the Bechdel Test, which asks if two female characters in a book, movie, or TV show have a conversation about a topic other than a man. Very few recent major motion pictures pass the Bechdel Test.
- Kristen (Sollee) Korvette, founder of *Slutist*, is working to reclaim words that demean women and acknowledges that feminism is not a monolith and means different things to different people.
- Multiple speakers argue that if one believes in equal rights regardless of gender, then they are a feminist.

### ‘HOOD FEMINISM’: A CASE FOR WOMEN IGNORED BY THE MOVEMENT

PBS NewsHour | July 18, 2020 | Video  
4:35 minutes

NewsHour’s Christopher Booker talks to writer Mikki Kendall, author of *Hood Feminism*, about feminism’s past, present, and future.

- Kendall says she only considers herself an ‘occasional feminist,’ and says that ‘hood feminism’ looks to uplift urban, rural, and working-class communities who “make a way out of no way” and are required to put survival before identity.
- She argues that people who have never had to worry about safe housing or food insecurity define feminism as success that isn’t about survival. Kendall says that focusing feminism away from people with the greatest need alienates people from the movement.
- Kendall says that people are left out of the modern feminist movement because of race, class, and social constructs that lead to people with the most need being left out of conversations.
- However, social media has led to conversations being more accessible, meaning that people can talk about feminism and feminist movements from around the world.
- Kendall believes that feminism can be a way to address more issues, like income inequality. She says there are maybe 300 women CEOs in the U.S., and notes that women are slightly more than half of the population and says that the advancements that the Lean In movement made are not enough.

*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.*

## FEMINISTS WEIGH THEIR WINS AND LOSSES AFTER NEARLY FOUR YEARS OF TRUMP

NPR | October 16, 2020 | Audio

5:07 minutes

During the Trump presidency from 2017-2021, feminism saw some significant wins and losses.

- Examples of feminist progress included the #MeToo movement, a record number of women running for office, and Kamala Harris becoming the first woman of color on a major party's presidential ticket and the first female Vice President.
- Glynda Carr, President and CEO of Higher Heights for America, an organization that promotes progressive Black women in politics, cites the record number of women of color who ran for office in 2020 as indication of increased visibility of women of color within the feminist movement.
- In contrast, the fight for equal rights for women struggled in certain areas like the passage of anti-abortion laws, women leaving the workforce during the Coronavirus pandemic, and female elected officials enduring sexist attacks in the media and by opponents.

### 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.

- Intersectionality
- Suffrage
- Systemic

### 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.

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