



Women's History

Lesson Planning Guides

The History Explorer website offer hundreds of free, innovative online resources for teaching and learning American history. The site is designed for use by K-12 teachers and students, afterschool program providers, families, and individuals interested in lifelong learning. Resources focus on learning history by "reading" objects for the stories they hold about the nation and its many peoples.

Below is a listing of selected women's history related lesson planning guides available through History Explorer. To view and search the entirety of the teaching and learning resources available, visit the [History Explorer website](#).

Culture & Arts

—Martha Graham



An American Story in Dance and Music Homepage

Grade Range: K-4

Resource Type(s): Lessons & Activities, Reference Materials

In 1943, Martha Graham, Aaron Copland, and Isamu Noguchi created *Appalachian Spring*, a ballet that told the story of an American pioneer community.

<http://amhistory.si.edu/ourstory/activities/dance/>



Camera Creativity and Collaboration

Grade Range: 2-4

Resource Type(s): Lessons & Activities, Primary Source

Take a close look at a famous picture of Martha Graham, then grab your camera and make your own dance photo with a friend or family member.

http://amhistory.si.edu/ourstory/pdf/dance/dance_camera.pdf



Reading *Ballet for Martha*

Grade Range: K-4

Resource Type (s): Lessons & Activities, Reference Materials

Use this guide to actively read *Ballet for Martha* an award-winning work of children's literature about the collaboration of three artists to create an American masterpiece.

http://amhistory.si.edu/ourstory/pdf/dance/dance_reading.pdf



Women's History

Engineering, Building, and Architecture



Reading *Keep the Lights Burning, Abbie*

Grade Range: K-4

Resource Type (s): Lessons & Activities, Worksheets

Keep the Lights Burning, Abbie is a work of children's literature about a young heroine who runs her family's lighthouse during a fierce storm.

http://amhistory.si.edu/ourstory/pdf/water/water_reading.pdf



Statue of Liberty Print Artifact Exploration

Grade Range: 6-12

Resource Type (s): Lessons & Activities

Students can guide themselves to a deeper understanding of the Statue of Liberty with this 2-page activity sheet.

http://americanhistory.si.edu/citizenship/pdf/School_SOL.pdf

—Julia Morgan



Building Beautiful Buildings Homepage

Grade Range: K-4

Resource Type(s): Lessons & Activities

Architects design the buildings we use every day. Their designs solve problems, like how to make a sturdy building, and reflect their ideas about beauty and history.

<http://amhistory.si.edu/ourstory/activities/architect/>



Reading *Julia Morgan Built a Castle*

Grade Range: K-4

Resource Type (s): Lessons & Activities

Use this guide to actively read *Julia Morgan Built a Castle*, a picture book about one of America's first female architects.

http://amhistory.si.edu/ourstory/pdf/architect/architect_reading.pdf



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Family & Social Life



Reading *Dakota Dugout*

Grade Range: K-4

Resource Type (s): Lessons & Activities, Worksheets

In this activity, students will read *Dakota Dugout* by Ann Turner and answer questions about the book.

http://amhistory.si.edu/ourstory/pdf/sodhouse/sodhouse_readdakota.pdf

—Genealogy



Conduct a Genealogical Study

Grade Range: K-4

Resource Type(s): Lessons & Activities, Worksheets

Genealogy is the study of family ancestries and histories, and a great way to learn women's history. In this activity, students will learn about the methods and tools needed to conduct a genealogical interview.

http://amhistory.si.edu/ourstory/pdf/women/women_genealogy.pdf



Great Women of Our Pasts Homepage

Grade Range: K-4

Resource Type(s): Reference Materials, Lessons & Activities

This OurStory module, entitled Great Women of Our Pasts, includes links to hands-on activities and a list of recommended readings related to the topic of women's history.

<http://amhistory.si.edu/ourstory/activities/women/>



Reading *Seven Brave Women*

Grade Range: K-4

Resource Type (s): Lessons & Activities, Reference Materials

Author Betsy Hearne wanted to know more about the women in her family's past, so she researched her family for the book *Seven Brave Women*, which tells the story of her female ancestors dating back to the Revolutionary War.

http://amhistory.si.edu/ourstory/pdf/women/women_readseven.pdf



Women's History

Government, Politics, and Reform

—Grace Bedell and Abraham Lincoln



A Letter to Abraham Lincoln Homepage

Grade Range: K-4

Resource Type(s): Lessons & Activities, Reference Materials

In this OurStory module, children will read *Mr. Lincoln's Whiskers*, a children's book that tells the story of Grace Bedell and the famous letter that she sent to Abraham Lincoln in 1860.

<http://amhistory.si.edu/ourstory/activities/lincoln/>



Dear Mr. President

Grade Range: 3-4

Resource Type(s): Lessons & Activities, Worksheets

In this activity, students will analyze the letter Grace Bedell wrote to President Abraham Lincoln, then write and send their own letters to the President of the United States.

http://amhistory.si.edu/ourstory/pdf/lincoln/dear_president.pdf



Find Grace's Family

Grade Range: K-4

Resource Type(s): Lessons & Activities, Worksheets

In this activity, children will analyze a primary source document – Grace Bedell's letter to Abraham Lincoln – and look for hints about Grace and her family.

http://amhistory.si.edu/ourstory/pdf/lincoln/find_family.pdf



Reading *Mr. Lincoln's Whiskers*

Grade Range: K-4

Resource Type (s): Lessons & Activities, Worksheets

This useful reading guide will help engage young readers as they read *Mr. Lincoln's Whiskers*, a children's book based on a true story about a girl who writes a letter to Abraham Lincoln.

http://amhistory.si.edu/ourstory/pdf/lincoln/reading_whiskers.pdf



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Send Lincoln a Letter

Grade Range: K-4

Resource Type (s): Lessons & Activities, Worksheets

Writing and receiving letters is fun! In 1860, Grace Bedell wrote a letter to Abraham Lincoln and took it to her local post office to mail it. A week later, a very special letter was waiting for her when she returned.

http://amhistory.si.edu/ourstory/pdf/lincoln/send_letter.pdf

—Mary Todd Lincoln



Material and Symbol: The Lincoln-Keckley Dress

Grade Range: 9-12

Resource Type (s): Interactives & Media, Lessons & Activities, Primary Source

This teacher's resource challenges students to think about the Lincoln-Keckley as an object that has multiple symbolic meanings.

<http://www.objectofhistory.org/teachers/intro/dress>



The Lincoln-Keckley Dress: Slavery, Women's History, and Race

Grade Range: 9-12

Resource Type (s): Lessons & Activities, Interactives & Media, Primary Source

This object-based learning activity revolves around a dress that connects the lives of Mary Todd Lincoln and Elizabeth Keckley, a popular African-American dressmaker who lived in Washington, D.C at the time of the Civil War.

<http://www.objectofhistory.org/objects/intro/dress/>

—Suffrage



Preparing for the Oath: Voting

Grade Range: 4-12

Resource Type (s): Interactives & Media, Lessons & Activities

Learn more about the American voting system using short videos, mini-activities, and practice questions in this segment of Preparing for the Oath: U.S. History and Civics for Citizenship.

<http://americanhistory.si.edu/citizenship/index.html?theme=14>



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Reading *Mama Went to Jail for the Vote*

Grade Range: K-4

Resource Type (s): Lessons & Activities

Mama Went to Jail for the Vote is a work of historical fiction about a girl whose mother joins the suffragists in working to win the vote for women during the early 1900s.

http://amhistory.si.edu/ourstory/pdf/suffrage/suffrage_reading.pdf



Role Model Medal

Grade Range: 1-4

Resource Type (s): Lessons & Activities, Worksheets

Encourage children to recognize a woman role model in their lives by creating a special symbolic pin.

http://amhistory.si.edu/ourstory/pdf/suffrage/suffrage_medal.pdf



Winning the Vote for Women

Grade Range: K-4

Resource Type (s): Lessons & Activities, Worksheets, Reference Materials

For more than a century, women in the United States struggled to obtain the right to vote. In 1920, the suffrage movement finally achieved victory with the ratification of the Nineteenth Amendment to the Constitution.

<http://amhistory.si.edu/ourstory/activities/suffrage/>

—Voting



America's Voting Patchwork

Grade Range: 9-12

Resource Type(s): Lessons & Activities, Primary Source

Because the Constitution gives the states the job of running elections, voting in the United States has developed into a patchwork of manual, mechanical, and electronic balloting.

<http://americanhistory.si.edu/vote/patchwork.html>



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History of Voting in the United States: Create a Virtual Exhibit

Grade Range: 9-12

Resource Type (s): Lessons & Activities, Interactives & Media, Primary Source

This activity challenges students to think about the 1898 Standard Voting Machine and the democratization of the voting process in the United States.

<http://www.objectofhistory.org/teachers/intro/votingmachine/>



The Gear & Lever Voting Machine

Grade Range: 9-12

Resource Type (s): Lessons & Activities, Primary Source

Gear and Lever voting, meant to ensure the confidentiality and efficiency of the election process, is the focus of this section of the Smithsonian's National Museum of American History's online exhibition entitled Vote: The Machinery of Democracy.

<http://americanhistory.si.edu/vote/votingmachine.html>



The Voting Machine and Election Reform

Grade Range: 9-12

Resource Type (s): Lessons & Activities, Interactives & Media, Primary Source

This object-based learning activity revolves around an 1898 Standard Voting Machine, the fight against voting fraud and the extension of voting rights in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

<http://www.objectofhistory.org/objects/intro/votingmachine/>



Who Represents You?

Grade Range: 1-4

Resource Type (s): Interactives & Media, Lessons & Activities, Worksheets

Use three Web sites to gather data about the people that live in your home state and those who represent you in Congress. Then use an online tool to make comparing this information easy!

http://amhistory.si.edu/ourstory/pdf/suffrage/suffrage_represents.pdf



Women's History

Military

—Revolutionary War



Banished: Louisa Susannah Wells, Loyalist Woman

Grade Range: 6-12

Resource Type(s): Interactives & Media, Lessons & Activities, Primary Source, Worksheets

Louisa Susannah Wells was a female colonist who was loyal to King George III, who was banished from America and returned to England after the War of Independence.

http://americanhistory.si.edu/onthewater/oral_histories/life_at_sea/wells.htm



War of Independence Activity: Who's in Camp?

Grade Range: 3-6

Resource Type (s): Primary Source, Lessons & Activities

This resource will help students understand how to analyze historical photos to better understand the intentions of those who took them. Every photograph is both truthful and deceptive.

<http://amhistory.si.edu/militaryhistory/resources/Lesson2.pdf>

—Civil War



Americans at War Learning Resources

Grade Range: 4-12

Resource Type(s): Lessons & Activities, Interactives & Media, Primary Source, Worksheets

This collection of learning resources was developed in conjunction with the exhibition The Price of Freedom: Americans at War Teacher's Manual.

<http://amhistory.si.edu/militaryhistory/resources/education.asp>



Women's Role in the Civil War

Grade Range: 3-6

Resource Type (s): Lessons & Activities, Primary Source

For more than a century, women in the United States struggled to obtain the right to vote. In 1920, the suffrage movement finally achieved victory with the ratification of the Nineteenth Amendment to the Constitution.

<http://amhistory.si.edu/militaryhistory/resources/Lesson7.pdf>



Women's History

—World War II



Changing Gender Roles on the World War II Home Front

Grade Range: 6-12

Resource Type(s): Lessons & Activities, Primary Source

Kick-off a research project on gender roles on the World War II home front with two brief video clips and selection of primary sources.

<http://amhistory.si.edu/militaryhistory/resources/Lesson10.pdf>



From Many, One: Maria Isabel Solis Thomas, Shipyard Worker

Grade Range: 6-12

Resource Type(s): Interactives & Media, Lessons & Activities, Primary Source, Worksheets

Maria Isabel Solis Thomas moved across the country to work in a shipyard on the World War II home front. Listen to her story, and then study the supporting primary sources to answer the discussion questions.

http://americanhistory.si.edu/onthewater/oral_histories/maritime_voices/thomas.htm

Music & Musical Instruments

—Celia Cruz



Autobiography Through Objects

Grade Range: K-4

Resource Type(s): Lessons & Activities

Analyze images and objects relating to Celia Cruz, create an exhibition using personal objects.

<http://amhistory.si.edu/celiacruz/printable/downloads/PDF/Autobiography%20through%20Objects.Kto4.pdf>



Exile: Cuba and the United States

Grade Range: 9-12

Resource Type(s): Lessons & Activities

Research the Cuban revolution, its effect on U.S.-Cuban relations and U.S. foreign policy by utilizing Celia Cruz's personal experience.

<http://amhistory.si.edu/celiacruz/printable/downloads/PDF/Exile.Cuba%20and%20the%20United%20States.gto12.pdf>



Women's History

—Jazz



Jazz Oral Histories as Primary Sources

Grade Range: 6-12

Resource Type (s): Interactives & Media, Worksheets, Primary Source, Lessons & Activities

Introduce students to using oral histories as primary sources with these interviews with jazz musicians recorded by the Smithsonian Jazz Oral History Program in partnership with the National Endowment for the Humanities.

<http://americanhistory.si.edu/smithsonian-jazz/education/john-levy-oral-history-activity>

Natural Resources

—Lady Bird Johnson



Beauty All Around You

Grade Range: K-4

Resource Type(s): Lessons & Activities, Reference Materials

Discover the beauty in nature in your neighborhood or a local botanical garden in this activity related to First Lady Claudia "Lady Bird" Johnson and her work to protect the environment and bring beauty to every community.

http://amhistory.si.edu/ourstory/pdf/firstlady/firstlady_beauty.pdf



First Lady for the Environment Homepage

Grade Range: K-4

Resource Type(s): Lessons & Activities, Worksheets, Interactives & Media, Reference Materials

Learn more about First Lady Claudia "Lady Bird" Johnson, wife of President Lyndon Baines Johnson and her work to protect the environment and bring beauty to every community.

<http://amhistory.si.edu/ourstory/activities/firstlady/>



Reading *Miss Lady Bird's Wildflowers*

Grade Range: K-4

Resource Type (s): Lessons & Activities, Reference Materials

Explore environmentalism, the role of the first lady, and biography by reading *Miss Lady Bird's Wildflowers* together!

http://amhistory.si.edu/ourstory/pdf/firstlady/firstlady_reading.pdf



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What was on Lady Bird's plate?

Grade Range: 2-4

Resource Type (s): Lessons & Activities, Reference Materials, Primary Source

Take a close look at some special dishes that Lady Bird Johnson had created for the White House.

http://amhistory.si.edu/ourstory/pdf/firstlady/firstlady_plate.pdf

—Rachel Carson



Convince Me!

Grade Range: 4-6

Resource Type(s): Lessons & Activities, Worksheets

Examine examples of persuasive writing from Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring*, then compose persuasive statements about an environmental cause.

http://amhistory.si.edu/ourstory/pdf/environment/environment_convince.pdf



Discover and Protect Nature

Grade Range: K-4

Resource Type(s): Lessons & Activities

In 1962, Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring* changed the way people thought about their relationship to nature, warning readers of the impact of man-made pesticides on birds, insects, and other wildlife.

<http://amhistory.si.edu/ourstory/activities/environment/>



Reading *Rachel Carson and Her Book That Changed the World*

Grade Range: K-4

Resource Type (s): Lessons & Activities

Actively read *Rachel Carson and Her Book That Changed the World* using the suggested reading strategies.

http://amhistory.si.edu/ourstory/pdf/environment/environment_read.pdf



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Science & Mathematics

—Maria Mitchell



Constellation Maker

Grade Range: K-4

Resource Type(s): Worksheets, Lessons & Activities

Make your own constellation commemorating an American woman, like Maria Mitchell. Many cultures have used constellations to remember the stories of heroes, like the Greeks and some American Indians.

http://amhistory.si.edu/ourstory/pdf/telescope/telescope_maker.pdf



Exploring the Sky

Grade Range: K-4

Resource Type(s): Lessons & Activities, Reference Materials

People around the world have studied the stars and shared stories through constellations and astrology.

<http://amhistory.si.edu/ourstory/activities/telescope/>



Reading *Maria's Comet*

Grade Range: K-4

Resource Type (s): Lessons & Activities

Maria's Comet is a work of children's literature about a young girl who longs to study the stars.

http://amhistory.si.edu/ourstory/pdf/telescope/telescope_comet.pdf

Textiles



Make A Quilt Square

Grade Range: K-4

Resource Type (s): Lessons & Activities, Worksheets

Quilts do more than just keep us warm; they preserve history by telling us stories about the people who made them. In this hands-on activity, students will learn about women's history by studying quilts.

http://amhistory.si.edu/ourstory/pdf/women/women_quiltsquare.pdf