

Women's History Activities

1. After students read short biographies of women in U.S. history, have them each create a diorama, design a poster, or make a mask, puppet or costume representing one woman who especially captures her/his interest. Have each student do an explanatory presentation to the class about that person. Gather all the dioramas or posters together to form the beginnings of a school "women's history museum" in your classroom or in the library. Invite other classes to visit the exhibit, and have your class lead the tour.
2. Discuss with your class the daily needs of a family for food, soap, indoor lighting, clean clothing, and heat. How were these things obtained by families in America 100 or 150 years ago? Whose job was it to see that the family was kept fed, clothed, healthy and warm? Try your hand at weaving cloth, sewing a simple garment by hand, baking bread, churning butter, etc. Calculate how often these domestic chores would have to be undertaken to supply the daily, weekly, and annual needs of a family with eight children. Calculate how many hours a day women worked on such household tasks.
3. Observe the birthdays of our nation's foremothers throughout the year as you do for our forefathers — with special bulletin boards, classroom lessons, art projects, films, stories, skits, etc. Birthday cakes decorated by the students to represent the life work of the birthday woman add to the impact and sense of her importance, of course!
4. Invite a woman working in a nontraditional job to share her experiences with your class. In advance, have the students prepare interview questions to ask her about the training her job required, what got her interested in this kind of work initially, what she especially likes about the work she does now, what its drawbacks are for her, and what her future plans are for her working life. You might set the actual visit up like a game of "Twenty Questions," having the students ask indirect questions to figure out what kind of work the woman does.
5. Read a story to the class about a significant woman in history. Have each student design a quilt square on construction paper, representing some important event or accomplishment in her life. Piece together the squares, with a solid color background, to make a class quilt telling the story of the woman's life. Invite other classes to do similar projects, and hang them all in the cafeteria or library as part of your National Women's History Month celebration or parents' night event.
6. By learning about the lives of women, we can gain a better understanding of our society. Brainstorm with your class to develop a list of questions they would like to ask an aunt, their mother, or the woman who raised them about her life. Organize the questions into topics or clusters, developing an appropriate questionnaire, being careful to avoid questions that can be answered simply "yes" or "no." Practice conducting an oral history interview and recording the answers. Have each student write a short biography of the woman she/he interviewed, to be read to the class. Use the stories to discuss the similarities and differences between women's life experiences.
7. Create a Women's Hall of Fame, focusing on your own community or including the entire country. Have students look through the newspapers and magazines their parents or neighbors receive to find captioned photos about the accomplishments and activities of women today. Collect the photos for several weeks or months so you will have lots to choose from in creating your Women's Hall of Fame. Use a collage or a more structured approach to mounting the pictures for a special bulletin board display. Have students vote on their favorites, and induct them into your Hall of Fame.

jCourtesy of the [National Women's History Project](#).

For more information about this organization, please contact the National Women's History Project, 7738 Bell Road, Windsor, CA 95492. (707) 838-6000.