

Looking for Women in Your Community

Goal or objective of the lesson plan:

Students will investigate how and whether women are represented in their communities.

If it is part of a larger unit, please describe briefly:

This lesson can be part of a larger unit women's history or introduction to historical investigation. It also supports teaching students to think about styles and genre in the arts and architecture as well as the historical and cultural contexts of such representations. Please note that it is an appropriate follow-up lesson to the Comparison Columns lesson on this Web site.

Projected length of time needed to complete it:

Projected length of time is two class periods with homework assigned in between the two sessions.

Materials needed:

Optional: chart paper and markers

If your school or district requires the listing of standards in your lesson plans, please include:

Pennsylvania Department of Education standards include:

Arts and Humanities—

Standard 9.2 – Historical and Cultural Contexts

Standard 9.3 – Critical Response

Standard 9.4 – Aesthetic Response

History—

Standard 8.1 – Historical Analysis and Skills Development

Standard 8.2 – United States History

Standard 8.4 – World History

Please outline the lesson:

- a. First class period: Either teach the Comparison Columns lesson or have students brainstorm where they might find evidence of women's lives and accomplishments in their neighborhoods or communities. Have them list from memory buildings, artwork, community centers, street names, public murals and other art works, etc., that represent women or were produced by women. Chart paper may or may not be used to capture their lists.
- b. Assign for homework or complete as a class: a walk around the neighborhood or community. Ask students to take notes on evidence of women's lives and accomplishments that they see as they walk through their neighborhoods or communities. They should note buildings, artwork, community centers, street names, public murals and other art works, etc., that represent women or were produced by women.
- c. Second class period: Have students share what they've found. Group their findings

according to categories they create (e.g., murals, buildings, etc.). Discuss whether this was difficult. Are women more readily represented in public spaces than men? Why or why not? What surprised them?

Assessment:

Have the students write a report on what they found. Did they find women represented equally along with men? What were women shown doing or what quality were the women representing? What sense do they make of the way women are represented in public places?

Student papers should be evaluated on their understanding of the way women are represented.

An alternate assessment might be as follows:

Ask students to survey the public art in their own school buildings and prepare a report for the principal.

Suggestions for follow-up lessons:

Have students choose one of their findings to research and report on.

For more ideas on locating women in the community, see Paula Sincero and Christine Woyshner. 2003. Writing Women Into the Curriculum. *Social Education* 67(4): 218-225.