

Re-Defining the Role of Women in Industrial America

This question is designed to test your ability to work with historical documents and is based on the accompanying documents 1 – 8. Some of the documents have been edited for the purposes of the question. As you analyze each document, take into account both the sources of the document and the point of view that may be presented in the document.

Directions: This document–based question consists of two parts. In Part A, you are to read each document and answer the question or questions that follow it. In part B, you are to write an essay based on the information in the document and your knowledge of United States history.

Historical Context:

Women played an important role in colonial America. With labor in short supply, women worked alongside men on farms and in craft shops to produce life's necessities. Economic and social factors in the early nineteenth century produced a new system of factories and commerce, a system that altered the role of women in American society. As industrial production flourished, the importance of women in home and craft businesses declined.

Economics redefined the role of women. Poor women were recruited to work as "mill girls" in the factories of New England. Affluent women were denied access to college and the professions. While their husbands were active in the world of business and politics, they were believed to be the moral guardians of family and home. Some women rebelled against what they felt to be the narrow confines of the home. Many of these women became active in the religious revivals and reform movements of the era, including temperance, educational reform, the abolition of slavery, and eventually, women's rights.

The formal movement for women's rights began at a convention held in Seneca Falls, New York, in July 1848. Many Americans - both men and women - rejected the ideas of these early feminists, sparking a long running debate over what roles women should play in American society.

Task:

Using information from the documents provided and your knowledge of United States history, write a well-organized essay in which you: Compare and contrast the different viewpoints in the debate over the proper role of women in American society 1848 - 1910.

Part A: Analyze the documents and answer the question or questions that follow each document in the space provided. Your answers will help you write the essay.

Document 1: An excerpt from *Declaration of Sentiment* of the Seneca Falls Convention 1848. (*Edited list of grievances from the original document*)

Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Lucretia Mott, two American activists in the movement to abolish slavery called together the first conference to address women's rights and issues in Seneca Falls, New York, in 1848. Part of the reason for doing so had been that Mott had been refused permission to speak at the world anti-slavery convention in London, even though she had been an official delegate. Applying the analysis of human freedom developed in the Abolitionist movement, Stanton and others began the public career of modern feminist analysis. Sixty-eight women and thirty-two men signed it.

The history of mankind is a history of repeated injuries and usurpations on the part of man toward woman, having in direct object the establishment of an absolute tyranny over her. To prove this, let facts be submitted to a candid world.

1. He has never permitted her to exercise her inalienable right to the elective franchise.
2. He has compelled her to submit to laws, in the formation of which she had no voice.
3. He has withheld from her rights, which are given to the most ignorant and degraded men both natives and foreigners.
4. He has made her, if married, in the eye of the law, civilly dead.
5. He has taken from her all right in property, even to the wages she earns.
6. He has made her, morally, an irresponsible being, as she can commit many crimes with impunity, provided they be done in the presence of her husband. In the covenant of marriage, she is compelled to promise obedience to her husband, he becoming, to all intents and purposes, her master--the law giving him power to deprive her of her liberty, and to administer chastisement. [punishment by beating]
7. He has so framed the laws of divorce ... in all cases, going upon a false supposition of the supremacy of man, and giving all power into his hands.
8. He has monopolized nearly all the profitable employments, and from those she is permitted to follow, she receives but a scanty remuneration.
9. He has denied her the facilities for obtaining a thorough education, all colleges being closed against her.
10. He has endeavored, in every way that he could, to destroy her confidence in her own powers, to lessen her self-respect, and to make her willing to lead a dependent and abject life.

Now, in view of this entire disfranchisement of one-half the people of this country, their social and religious degradation--in view of the unjust laws above mentioned, and because women do feel themselves aggrieved, oppressed, and fraudulently deprived of their most sacred rights, we insist that they have immediate admission to all the rights and privileges which belong to them as citizens of the United

1. Which of the grievances address issues of economic equality, political equality, or social equality?

Document 2: From Amendment 14 to the US Constitution, 1868

The 14th Amendment is one of the most important amendments since the Bill of Rights. Its key part is Section 1, which states: “nor shall any state deprive any person of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law; nor deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws.” Section 2 was designed to enforce voting rights in the Southern states. The 13th, 14th and 15th Amendments, also known as the “Civil War “ amendments, were enacted to protect the rights of the newly freed slaves.

Section 2. Representatives shall be apportioned among the several states according to their respective numbers, counting the whole number of persons in each state, excluding Indians not taxed. But when the right to vote at any election for the choice of electors for President and Vice President of the United States, Representatives in Congress, the executive and judicial officers of a state, or the members of the legislature thereof, is denied to any of the male inhabitants of such state, being twenty-one years of age, and citizens of the United States, or in any way abridged, except for participation in rebellion, or other crime, the basis of representation therein shall be reduced in the proportion which the number of such male citizens shall bear to the whole number of male citizens twenty-one years of age in such state.

2. Section 2 of the 14th Amendment is the first mention of gender in the US Constitution. Which gender received voting rights protection in this section?

Document 3: "How To Be the Perfect Housewife" appeared as an article in *Godey's Lady's Book and Magazine* in 1859

Founded in 1830, *Godey's Lady's Book* was the first American magazine for women. It offered advice to the wealthy on fashion, manners, and the efficient management of the household, and reflected mainstream nineteenth-century values on the proper place of women. At its peak in 1858, it had a monthly circulation of 150,000 and was the most widely read women's magazine of its time.

Having before suggested what is or should be the position of a wife, let us next consider her world as a housewife. ...What is her first duty? To live within her husband's income, its resources, its limits, the amount beyond which she cannot pass without bringing ruin upon him and misery on herself. ...

You will know how you can afford to live by the amount of income ... he has allowed you to keep his house with; but it must be your ambition to know how to make the best appearance; with small efforts to appear at least quite as rich as you are ... take care to devote the allowance only to the purpose for which it is given, let no inducement cause her to use it for a want of her own....

Your good looks, kind words, and tender smiles will make your husband feel that he cannot by friendship or purchase obtain the happiness anywhere else that he gets from you at home.

3. According to *Godey's Lady's Book*, what was the role of the "perfect housewife" in supporting her husband and family?

Document 4: Excerpt from a Senate Speech on Women's Suffrage, 1867

In a speech delivered in the United States Senate in 1867, Senator George Williams (Oregon) responded to feminist criticism directed against male legislatures.

Sir, it has been said that "the hand that rocked the cradle ruled the world," and there is truth as well as beauty, in that expression. Women in this country by their elevated social position, can exercise more influence upon public affairs, than they could coerce by the use of the ballot. ...

The whole theory of government and society proceeds upon the assumption that a married couple's interests are one, and that their relations are so intimate and tender that what ever is for the benefit of the one is for the benefit of the other....

The woman who undertakes to put her sex in the adversary position to man, who undertakes by the use of some independent political power to contend and fight against man, displays a spirit which would, if able, convert all the now harmonious elements of society into a state of war, and make every home a hell on earth.

4. According to Senator Williams, what might be the results of extending the vote to women?

Document 5: "The Chrisman Sisters on a claim in Goheen settlement Custer County, Nebraska 1886." Photograph by Solomon Butcher

Between 1886 and 1912, Solomon Butcher photographed the farmers of sparsely populated Custer County, Nebraska. He often journeyed for hours to reach the home of a family he wished to photograph, and accepted food, lodging, and the stabling of his horses in exchange for a print. As he traveled, he supported himself with subscriptions and donations that various citizens made to the project, as well as by the sale of photographs. Butcher added names and locations to many of his photographs and wrote a number of historical vignettes for his book his *Pioneer History of Custer County*. The Butcher collection is best known for more than 1,000 photographs of the distinctive sod house construction of the region.



5. How does this photograph explain why the Western states led the nation in extending voting rights to women?

Document 6: Excerpt from: "The Status Of Woman, Past, Present, And Future"
Arena, May 1897 by Susan B. Anthony

By 1897, Susan B. Anthony had labored for over forty years, along with her dear friend, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, for the right of women to vote. She was a legend in her own time and was admired for her devotion to and perseverance in the cause of woman suffrage. Girls, who were tomboys, were often called "Susan B's." The Nineteenth Amendment which granted women' suffrage, was not ratified until 1920, fourteen years after her death.

Fifty years ago woman in the United States was without a recognized individuality in any department of life. Such was the helpless, dependent, fettered condition of woman when the first Woman's Rights Convention was called just forty-nine years ago...

The close of this 19th century finds every trade, vocation, and profession open to women, and every opportunity at their command for preparing themselves to follow these occupations. ... A vast amount of the household drudgery that once monopolized the whole time and strength of the mother and daughters has been taken outside and turned over to machinery in vast establishments. A money value is placed upon the labor of women. The ban of social ostracism has been largely removed from the woman wage earner. ... Woman is no longer compelled to marry for support, but may herself make her own home and earn her own financial independence. ... In nearly every state they may retain and control property owned at marriage and all they may receive from their earnings outside the home. They may sue and be sued, testify in the courts, and carry on business in their own name, but in no state have wives any ownership in the joint earnings. In six or seven states, mothers have equal guardianship of the children.... While in most states the divorce laws are the same for men and women...

The department of politics has been slowest to give admission to women. Suffrage is the pivotal right ... If women could make the laws or elect those who make them, they would be in the position of sovereigns instead of subjects. Were they the political peers of man, they could command instead of having to beg, petition, and pray. Can it be possible it is for this reason that men have been so determined in their opposition to grant to women political power?

Until woman has obtained "that right protective of all other rights -the ballot," this agitation must still go on, absorbing the time and the energy of our best and strongest women. Who can measure the advantages that would result if the magnificent abilities of these women could be devoted to the needs of government, society, home, instead of being consumed in the struggle to obtain their birthright of individual freedom? Until this be gained we can never know, we cannot even prophesy, the capacity and power of woman for the uplifting of humanity.

6. Summarize Anthony's assessment of the progress in women's rights since 1848.

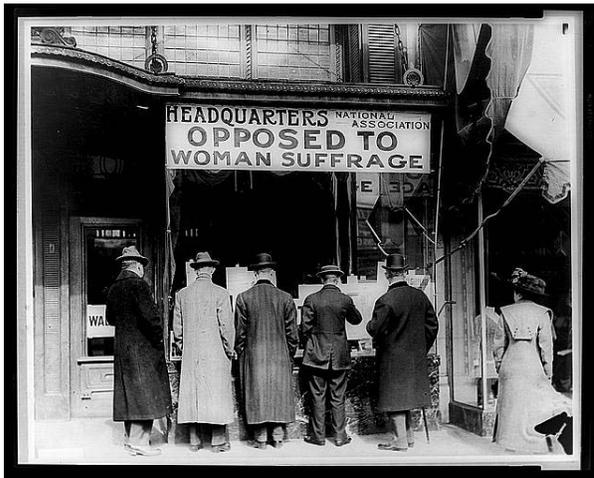
Document 7: From "The New York State Association Opposed to the Extension of the Suffrage to Women. Eleventh Annual Report" New York, December 1906

The association was opposed to the passage of women's suffrage legislation by the New York State legislature. At the time of this report many states west of the Mississippi had extended suffrage to women. The all-female executive committee of the organization signed this report.

Our Association was organized eleven years ago, and ever since it has earnestly sought to fulfill the aim and hope upon which it was founded. That aim of the Association was to educate and stimulate public opinion in an opposition based upon intelligent conviction. The hope of the Association was to prove conclusively that the majority of women neither sought nor desired the suffrage....

Women can accomplish more permanent good without the exercise of the ballot than with it; and that the weight of woman's influence, both personal and political, is far too valuable to divert to a channel where, to be practically effective, the woman must become a leader in political lines.

In Colorado, woman's suffrage is a complete failure. Some women have gloried in having sat in the legislative halls of Colorado, and of having been political "bosses," but this glory has lately been overshadowed by a feeling that no woman would again be nominated for a legislative office ... The fact seems to be, that after the novelty of woman suffrage wore off, a large proportion of the women ceased to avail themselves of it. The wives and mothers were not willing to disregard duties which they considered more important, for the sake of mixing in the tangled game of politics."



Men looking in the window of the National Anti-Suffrage Association headquarters 1911

7. According to the Association how do most women feel about the issue of women's suffrage?

Document 8: **Election Day!** By CW Guslin, 1909



8. According to the cartoon, how has women's suffrage impacted this family?

Part B Directions: Using information from the documents provided and your knowledge of United States history, write a well-organized essay that includes an introduction, several paragraphs and a conclusion.

Historical Context:

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Economics redefined the role of women. Poor women were recruited to work as "mill girls" in the factories of New England. Affluent women were denied access to college and the professions. While their husbands were active in the world of business and politics, they were believed to be the moral guardians of family and home. Some women rebelled against what they felt to be the narrow confines of the home. Many of these women became active in the religious revivals and reform movements of the era, including temperance, educational reform, the abolition of slavery, and eventually, women's rights.

The formal movement for women's rights began at a convention held in Seneca Falls, New York, in July 1848. Many Americans - both men and women - rejected the ideas of these early feminists, sparking a long running debate over what roles women should play in American society.

Task:

Using information from the documents provided and your knowledge of United States history, write a well-organized essay in which you: Compare and contrast the different viewpoints in the debate over the proper role of women in American society 1848 - 1910.

Be sure to:

1. Address all parts of the task by analyzing and interpreting at least 4 documents.
2. Incorporate information from the documents in the body of the essay.
3. Incorporate relevant information throughout the essay.
4. Support the theme with relevant facts and examples.
5. Write a well-developed essay that consistently demonstrates a logical and clear plan of organization.
6. Introduce the theme by establishing a framework beyond a simple restatement of the task or historical context, and conclude the essay with a summation of the theme

Document-Based Question - Essay Scoring Rubric

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- Thoroughly addresses all aspects of the *Task* by accurately analyzing and interpreting at least four documents Incorporates information from the documents in the body of the essay
- Incorporates relevant outside information
- Richly supports the theme or problem with relevant facts, examples, and details
- Is a well-developed essay, consistently demonstrating a logical and clear plan of organization
- Introduces the theme or problem by establishing a framework that is beyond a simple restatement of the *Task* or *Historical Context* and concludes with a summation of the theme or problem

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- Addresses all aspects of the *Task* by accurately analyzing and interpreting at least four documents
- Incorporates information from the documents in the body of the essay
- Incorporates relevant outside information
- Includes relevant facts, examples, and details, but discussion may be more descriptive than analytical
- Is a well-developed essay, demonstrating a logical and clear plan of organization
- Introduces the theme or problem by establishing a framework that is beyond a simple restatement of the *Task* or *Historical Context* and concludes with a summation of the theme or problem

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- Addresses most aspects of the *Task* or *Historical Context* and concludes by simply repeating the theme or problem or addresses all aspects of the *Task* in a limited way, using some of the documents
- Incorporates some information from the documents in the body of the essay
- Incorporates limited or no relevant outside information
- Includes some facts, examples, and details, but discussion is more descriptive than analytical
- Is a satisfactorily developed essay, demonstrating a general plan of organization
- Introduces the theme or problem by repeating

2

- Attempts to address some aspects of the *Task*, making limited use of the documents
- Presents no relevant outside information
- Includes few facts, examples, and details; discussion restates contents of the documents
- Is a poorly organized essay, lacking focus
- Fails to introduce or summarize the theme or problem

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- Shows limited understanding of the *Task* with vague, unclear references to the documents
- Presents no relevant outside information
- Includes little or no accurate or relevant facts, details, or examples
- Attempts to complete the *Task*, but demonstrates a major weakness in organization Fails to introduce or summarize the theme or problem

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- Fails to address the *Task*, is illegible, or is a blank paper