

WayfinderWoman: Teaching notes

Women of Eastbourne: Questions for Elsie Bowerman

We have individual videos for Elsie Bowerman, Marie Corbett, Mary Anne Gilbert, Emily Shackleton, Jessy Blackburn, Emily Phipps and a compilation of all six which can be paused between each woman. They provide an amusing introduction to the women and ask the question for each: if Elsie was alive today what would she be doing now? Designed for careers advice, they can be used for a variety of topics. Below are a few suggestions as to how they might be utilised in the classroom but first let's consider questions specific to Elsie Bowerman.

- Elsie Bowerman was prohibited from gaining a degree. Why and when did that change?
- Elsie Bowerman was prohibited from entering the legal profession. Why and when did that change?
- What opportunities are there now for women entering the legal profession? (see video with Mrs Justice McGowan) (<https://youtu.be/VfEI7-1hnI8>)
- Elsie went to America ostensibly to visit family, but was there an ulterior motive? (Note: it was more likely that she thought there were more opportunities for women in the USA than in the UK)
- How much would a passenger of Elsie's class pay to go on the ill-fated Titanic? Why was she saved when so many others were not?
- During the war Elsie went to the Russian Front and received a medal. What does that say about her character? (You may wish to explore further the role of women in war/war torn zones.)

General Questions

These influential women had been hidden in history. Their achievements unrecognised today. Had these women been alive now what would their career paths have been like? What would be their likely occupations now?

How many different roles/occupations did they have? What does this say about the nature of work? Women were banned from entering some professions until there were changes in the law. Why was that do you think? Why the change and what difference did it make to women and society?

History does not show the diversity of role models for young people seeking a career. Why is this and what diverse role models are there now?

What does this video show about the position of women in the past and what lessons can we draw from that?

We talk about a 'glass ceiling' for women. What is it? Did the suffragettes put the first crack into that glass ceiling?

Were these women trend setters, women 'on the up'? What barriers did they have to overcome to achieve what they did? What skills did they have to develop to achieve what they did? What characteristics did they demonstrate? Would the same questions have been asked of men at that time? Would the same questions be asked of women today? How would the answers have been different?

On International Women's Day what would you find inspiring about these women? Why are they all white and middle-class? Can you name other inspirational women from the past? Can you name

current British inspirational black women/Asian women/women with disabilities/women from the LGBT+ community?

What does this video show about the stereotypes and prejudices relating to gender at the time? How does the current debate about sexism fit with what you have seen in the video?

Questions about the project.

Why do you think WayfinderWoman thought it a good idea to make this video [to undertake the project/produce the website]? Why would women volunteer to do this? What do you think they gained from it?

This project was funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund. Do you think that the Lottery Fund has changed the way that charities work?

Do you think the digital platforms for the project [website, Facebook, twitter] are appropriate for this type of project? What are your reasons for your answer? What digital platforms would you do if you had to run a project like this?

Potential workshops

Evaluation of the video – whole class/group activity

3 x flip charts entitled “What we enjoyed/What we learnt/What we found useful”

Each pupil has 2 or 3 post-it notes on which they write a comment and place on the appropriate flip-chart as they leave the room. [Or then use the post-it notes as discussion points in groups. Why the different responses? What does that say about our different ways of looking at things?]

Practical discussion - ATTITUDE CONTINUUM regarding CONTROVERSIAL STATEMENTS.

Participants – 50-60% participate with rest observing, depending on numbers, then rotate participation depending on time allowed for the session.

Poster on wall at one end of room STRONGLY AGREE, and STRONGLY DISAGREE on the other. Pupils must be able to walk/move about in the space between these 2 posters .

Can be very helpful to focus the pupils by drawing a chalk line on the floor between the walls. They place themselves on the continuum according to their view of the statement that is read out by the teacher.

The teacher then asks a selection of pupils why they have placed themselves in that spot. After some discussion, pupils can rearrange themselves if they wish – to show whether any of the expressed views have led to them changing their minds.

Observers then make comment on what they have seen, any stereotypes or prejudices expressed, why there might have been a change of mind for some, what this might say about the nature of debate and the ability to reason.

STATEMENT EXAMPLES LINKED TO THE VIDEO

Any of the above questions can be rephrased to construct a controversial statement eg question 3

Women were banned from entering some professions until there were changes in the law. Why was that do you think? Why the change and what difference did it make to women and society?

Can be changed to:

Women were deemed to have been the property of men and so it was right that women were banned from entering professions such as Law and Medicine.

and question 8 could become

Women have it all so there is no need to have an International Women's Day.

GENERAL STATEMENT EXAMPLES:

A woman's place is in the home!

There are women's jobs and there are men's jobs.

Women don't want the responsibility of a high powered/high level job

Feminists just hate men/Men cannot be feminists

Women do not have the temperament for leadership

Women have always been discriminated against and it will never change

Web site research

Using the Women of Eastbourne website pupils can compare and contrast for themselves one or more of the women of influence with an inspirational woman of today eg

- Jessie Blackburn, aviator and entrepreneur can be compared with Baroness Brady
- Elsie Bowerman with Helena Kennedy QC
- Marie Corbett with Diane Abbott, MP
- Then after undertaking their own personality profile (eg using the WISE characteristics questionnaire) map the two against themselves and what this might say about their future career options.

More information about these women can be found on the website

www.womenofeastbourne.co.uk

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www.wayfinderwoman.com