

Where
the past
is present

DETROIT HISTORICAL SOCIETY

EDUCATOR LESSON PLAN

Learning Standards

ERA

USHG Era 7 - The Great Depression and World War II (1920-1945)

MI GLCES

HSCE 7.2.3 Impact of World War II on American Life – analyze the changes in American life brought about by U.S. participation in World War II, including: • the mobilization of economic, military, and social resources. • the role of women, African Americans, and ethnic minority groups in the war effort, including the work of A. Philip Randolph and the integration of U.S. military forces. • the role of the home front in supporting the war effort.

ELA COLLEGE AND CAREER READINESS STANDARDS

- **CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.9-10.1** Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources, attending to such features as the date and origin of the information.
- **CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.11-12.7** Integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in diverse formats and media (e.g., visually, quantitatively, as well as in words) in order to address a question or solve a problem.

WWII: WOMEN IN THE WORKPLACE

INTRODUCTION

World War II offered many American women the opportunity of a lifetime. Good paying jobs were suddenly available to females in industries who had previously denied them entry. Instead of being frowned upon, working outside of the home was seen as patriotic. But with opportunity also came discrimination. Bring your 9th - 12th grade students to the movie screen to judge for themselves if the United States government was looking out for the best interest of women or was guilty of perpetuating the second class status of females.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Students will:

- Gain perspective about industrial working women during WWII
 - Recognize difficulties male workers faced working with women for the first time
 - Formulate a position on work place discrimination during WWII
 - Evaluate and analyze a primary source

TIME REQUIRED

One class period, depending on the discussion and if the extension activity is completed.



Woman working at the Willow Run plant, c. 1943.
Courtesy of the Library of Congress



A black woman working at a bomber plant in Tennessee bears a resemblance to the iconic, white Rosie the Riveter, c. 1943. Courtesy of the Library of Congress

The Detroit Historical Society would like to thank Heather Rivard for her generous support of this program.

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MATERIALS USED

- Computer/Smartboard/projector to display a video linked to the internet
- Follow link to the “Problems in Supervision: Supervising Women Workers” video <https://vimeo.com/358620815>
- Primary Source Analysis Sheet or Student Comparison Organizer

LESSON PREPARATION

- Prior to the lesson, the teacher should decide which activity they will use to analyze the training video.
- The teacher should also become familiar with the need for female industrial workers during WWII, review <https://youtu.be/vs3pgaMcV3w>
- The following link to the Library of Congress as they highlight who is Rosie the Riveter at <https://youtu.be/04VNBM1PqR8>



Woman working at the Willow Run plant, c. 1943.
Courtesy of the Library of Congress

LESSON SEQUENCE

Activity One

1. Ask students, “What challenges do you think women faced working in war production plants during WWII?” Discuss with students their answers.
2. Pass out the Primary Source Analysis Tool from the Library of Congress.
3. Introduce the “*Problem in Supervision: Supervising Women Workers*” video.

Make sure the students understand that the video was created by the U.S. Government under the U.S. Office of Education as a training film for new male supervisors in war production plants.

4. Have students fill out Primary Source Analysis Tool while they watch the video.
5. Allow the students to discuss with a partner their answers from the *Primary Source Analysis Tool*.
6. As a class, ask students to share their reaction to the movie.
7. Discuss with the class why female workers were treated this way. What roles in society encouraged this kind of treatment?
8. Discuss with students their answers to the *Further Investigation* section. Allow students to expand on other student’s ideas.

LESSON SEQUENCE

Activity Two

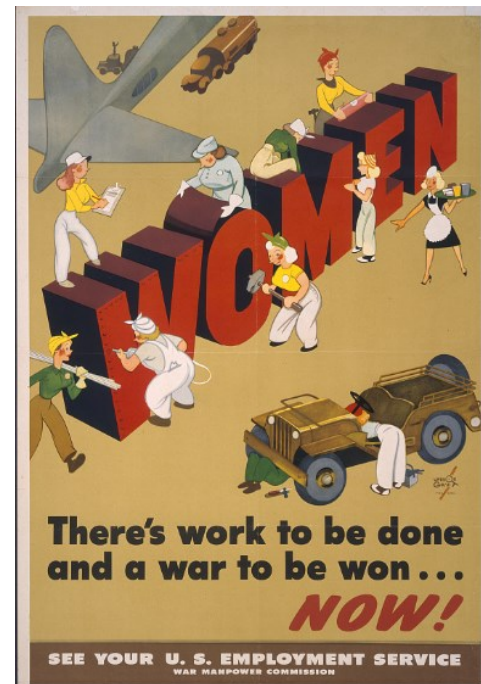
1. Ask students, “What challenges do you think women faced working in war production plants during WWII?”
2. Pass out the Comparison Organizer and allow students to brainstorm this question with a partner. Have them record their ideas on the Comparison Organizer.
3. Introduce the “Problem in Supervision: Supervising Women Workers” video. Make sure the students understand that the video was created by the U.S. Government under the U.S. Office of Education as a training film for new male supervisors in war production plants.
4. Have students fill out the What You Saw column of the Comparison Organizer while they watch the video.
5. Allow the students to discuss with their partner how their answers were the same or different from what they predicted women would be treated like during World War II.
6. As a class, ask students to share their reaction to the movie. Allow students to volunteer the answers they predicted during the brainstorming session.
7. Discuss with the class why female workers were treated this way. What roles in society encouraged this kind of treatment?
8. Discuss with students and allow them to record on their Comparison Organizer how the workplace has changed or stayed the same today. Reflect with students about their answers.

EXTENSION ACTIVITY

Allow students to watch the video again. This time, have students document every attribute female workers brought to the workplace. Have students create a skit of a new training video from the WWII era which highlights the attributes female workers brought to the workplace.

EVALUATION

- Primary Source Analysis Tool or the Comparison Organizer
- Feedback shared by students to the class during the activity.
- Extension Activity skit



US Employment Services WWII Poster c. 1943.
Courtesy of the Library of Congress

LESSON SEQUENCE

Activity Two

1. Ask students, “What challenges do you think women faced working in war production plants during WWII?”
2. Pass out the Comparison Organizer and allow students to brainstorm this question with a partner. Have them record their ideas on the Comparison Organizer.
3. Introduce the “Problem in Supervision: Supervising Women Workers” video. Make sure the students understand that the video was created by the U.S. Government under the U.S. Office of Education as a training film for new male supervisors in war production plants.
4. Have students fill out the What You Saw column of the Comparison Organizer while they watch the video.

Looking to delve into WWII history the whole semester?

Detroit is full of businesses that contributed to the war effort. For high school classes looking to study this topic we'd love to support you and your students work!

Your students can submit their findings and research to be reviewed and their findings showcased on an interactive map on the Society's website. Through this inquiry-based, authentic learning process, students will develop valuable college and career readiness skills, including research, interpretation, communication, problem-solving, time management, goal setting, self-awareness, persistence, collaborative learning and technology proficiency.

**Check out the project at wwii.detroithistorical.org or
contact our team at 313.833.1419**

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- Babson, Steve. *Working Detroit*. Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1986.
- Bauer, Lt. Col. Eddy. *History of World War II*. New York: Galahad Press, 1966.
- Brown, Arthur Joseph. *The Arsenal of Democracy*. Oxford University Press, 1941.
- Davis, Michael W.R. *Detroit's Wartime Industry: Arsenal of Democracy*. Chicago: Arcadia Publishing, 2007.
- Gervasi, Tom. *Arsenal of Democracy: American Weapons Available for Export*. New York: Grove Press, 1978.
- Herman, Arthur. *Freedom's Forge: How American Business Produced Victory in World War II*. 2012.
- Honey, Maureen. *Creating Rosie the Riveter: Class, Gender and Propaganda during World War II*. 1984.
- Kallen, Stuart A. *The War at Home*. San Diego: Lucent Books, 2000.
- Litoff, Julie Barrett and David C. Smith. *American Women in a World at War: Contemporary Accounts of World War II*. 1996.
- Nelson, Donald M. *Arsenal of Democracy: The Story of American War Production*. New York: Harcourt, 1946.
- Peterson, Sarah Jo. *Planning the Home Front: Building Bombers and a Communities at Willow Run*. University of Chicago Press, First Edition: 2013.
- Weatherford, Doris. *American Women in World War II*. 2009.
- Wise, Nancy Baker and Christy Wise. *A Mouthful of Rivets: Women at Work in World War II*. 1994.
- Yellin, Emily. *Our Mother's War: American Women at Home and at the Front During World War II*. Free Press, 2004.

Comparison Organizer

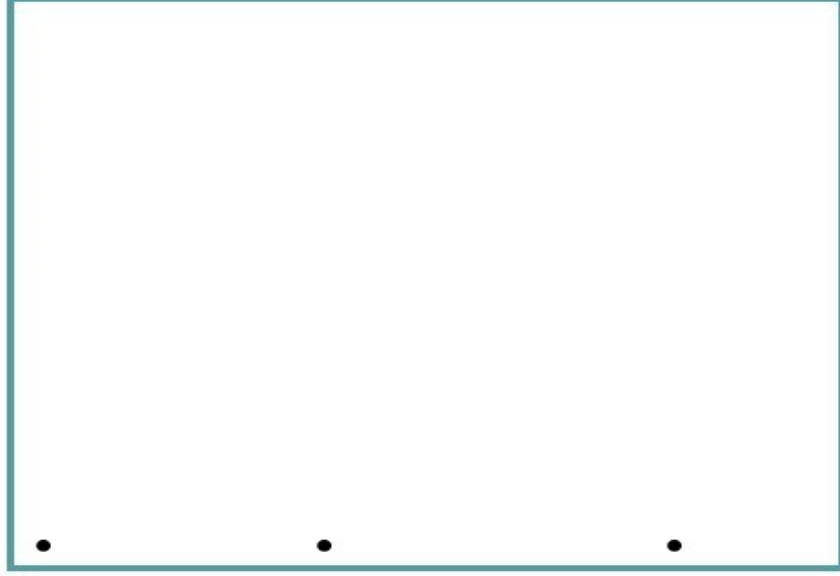
Name: _____ Date: _____ Hour: _____

Directions: Before watching the video, “*Problems in Supervision: Supervising Women Workers*”, write down three predictions of how you believe new male supervisors will be trained to deal with female workers during World War II. As you watch the training video, write down at least five forms of biased treatment toward female workers. After watching the video, reflect with your classmates and provide examples of how female workers are treated today.

Your Prediction



What you saw



Today's Workplace

