**The Seneca Falls Convention**

The **Seneca Falls Convention** was the first [women's rights](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Women%27s_rights) convention.[[1]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Seneca_Falls_Convention#cite_note-1) It advertised itself as "a convention to discuss the social, civil, and religious condition and rights of woman".[[2]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Seneca_Falls_Convention#cite_note-wellman-189-2)[[3]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Seneca_Falls_Convention#cite_note-3) Held in the [Wesleyan Chapel](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wesleyan_Methodist_Church_(Seneca_Falls,_New_York)) of the town of [Seneca Falls, New York](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Seneca_Falls,_New_York), it spanned two days over July 19–20, 1848. Attracting widespread attention, it was soon followed by other women's rights conventions, including the [Rochester Women's Rights Convention](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rochester_Women%27s_Rights_Convention_of_1848) in [Rochester, New York](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rochester,_New_York), two weeks later. In 1850 the first in a series of annual [National Women's Rights Conventions](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National_Women%27s_Rights_Convention) met in [Worcester, Massachusetts](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Worcester,_Massachusetts).

Female [Quakers](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Quakers) local to the area organized the meeting along with [Elizabeth Cady Stanton](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Elizabeth_Cady_Stanton), who was not a Quaker. They planned the event during a visit to the area by Philadelphia-based [Lucretia Mott](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lucretia_Mott" \o "Lucretia Mott). Mott, a Quaker, was famous for her oratorical ability, which was rare for non-Quaker women during an era in which women were often not allowed to speak in public.

The meeting comprised six sessions including a lecture on law, a humorous presentation, and multiple discussions about the role of women in society. Stanton and the Quaker women presented two prepared documents, the [Declaration of Sentiments](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Declaration_of_Sentiments) and an accompanying list of resolutions, to be debated and modified before being put forward for signatures. A heated debate sprang up regarding women's right to vote, with many – including Mott – urging the removal of this concept, but [Frederick Douglass](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Frederick_Douglass), who was the convention's sole African American attendee, argued eloquently for its inclusion, and the suffrage resolution was retained. Exactly 100 of approximately 300 attendees signed the document, mostly women.

The convention was seen by some of its contemporaries, including featured speaker Mott, as one important step among many others in the continuing effort by women to gain for themselves a greater proportion of social, civil and moral rights,[[4]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Seneca_Falls_Convention#cite_note-McMillen102-4) while it was viewed by others as a revolutionary beginning to the struggle by women for complete equality with men. Stanton considered the Seneca Falls Convention to be the beginning of the women's rights movement, an opinion that was echoed in the [*History of Woman Suffrage*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_Woman_Suffrage), which Stanton co-wrote.

The convention's [Declaration of Sentiments](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Declaration_of_Sentiments) became "the single most important factor in spreading news of the women's rights movement around the country in 1848 and into the future", according to Judith Wellman, a historian of the convention.[[5]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Seneca_Falls_Convention#cite_note-5) By the time of the National Women's Rights Convention of 1851, the issue of women's right to vote had become a central tenet of the [United States women's rights movement](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Feminism_in_the_United_States).[[6]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Seneca_Falls_Convention#cite_note-6) These conventions became annual events until the outbreak of the [American Civil War](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/American_Civil_War) in 1861.

**Reform movement**

In the decades leading up to 1848, a small number of women began to push against restrictions imposed upon them by society. A few men aided in this effort. In 1831, Reverend [Charles Grandison Finney](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Charles_Grandison_Finney) began allowing women to pray aloud in gatherings of men and women.[[7]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Seneca_Falls_Convention#cite_note-Isenberg5-7) The [Second Great Awakening](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Second_Great_Awakening) was challenging women's traditional roles in religion. Recalling the era in 1870, [Paulina Wright Davis](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paulina_Wright_Davis) set Finney's decision as the beginning of the American women's reform movement.[[7]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Seneca_Falls_Convention#cite_note-Isenberg5-7)

**Women in abolition**

Starting in 1832, [abolitionist](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Abolitionism_in_the_United_States) and journalist [William Lloyd Garrison](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/William_Lloyd_Garrison) organized anti-slavery associations which encouraged the full participation of women. Garrison's ideas were not welcomed by a majority of other abolitionists, and those unwilling to include women split from him to form other abolitionist societies.[[*citation needed*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Citation_needed)]

A few women began to gain fame as writers and speakers on the subject of abolition. In the 1830s, [Lydia Maria Child](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lydia_Maria_Child) wrote to encourage women to write a [will](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Will_(law)),[[8]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Seneca_Falls_Convention#cite_note-8) and [Frances Wright](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Frances_Wright) wrote books on women's rights and social reform. The [Grimké sisters](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grimk%C3%A9_sisters" \o "Grimké sisters) published their views against slavery in the late 1830s, and they began speaking to mixed gatherings of men and women for Garrison's [American Anti-Slavery Society](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/American_Anti-Slavery_Society), as did [Abby Kelley](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Abby_Kelley). Although these women lectured primarily on the evils of slavery, the fact that a woman was speaking in public was itself a noteworthy stand for the cause of women's rights. [Ernestine Rose](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ernestine_Rose) began lecturing in 1836 to groups of women on the subject of the "Science of Government" which included the enfranchisement of women.[[9]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Seneca_Falls_Convention#cite_note-Buhle68-9)

In 1840, at the urging of Garrison and [Wendell Phillips](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wendell_Phillips), [Lucretia Coffin Mott](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lucretia_Coffin_Mott" \o "Lucretia Coffin Mott) and [Elizabeth Cady Stanton](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Elizabeth_Cady_Stanton) traveled with their husbands and a dozen other American male and female abolitionists to [London](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/London) for the first [World's Anti-Slavery Convention](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/World%27s_Anti-Slavery_Convention), with the expectation that a motion put forward by Phillips to include women's participation in the convention would be controversial. In London, the proposal was rebuffed after a full day of debate; the women were allowed to listen from the gallery but not allowed to speak or vote. Mott and Stanton became friends in London and on the return voyage and together planned to organize their own convention to further the cause of women's rights, separate from abolition concerns. In 1842 [Thomas M'Clintock](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thomas_M%27Clintock) and his wife Mary Ann became founding members of the Western New York Anti-Slavery Society and helped write its constitution. When he moved to Rochester in 1847, [Frederick Douglass](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Frederick_Douglass) joined [Amy and Isaac Post](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amy_and_Isaac_Post) and the M'Clintocks in this Rochester-based chapter of the American Anti-Slavery Society.[[10]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Seneca_Falls_Convention#cite_note-Wellman188-10)

**Women's rights**

In 1839 in Boston, [Margaret Fuller](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Margaret_Fuller) began hosting conversations, akin to French [*salons*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salon_(gathering)), among women interested in discussing the "great questions" facing their sex.[[11]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Seneca_Falls_Convention#cite_note-11) [Sophia Ripley](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sophia_Ripley) was one of the participants. In 1845, Fuller published [*The Great Lawsuit*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Great_Lawsuit), asking women to claim themselves as self-dependent.[[*citation needed*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Citation_needed)]

In the 1840s, women in America were reaching out for greater control of their lives. Husbands and fathers directed the lives of women, and many doors were closed to female participation.[[12]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Seneca_Falls_Convention#cite_note-NPS_Quakers-12) State statutes and [common law](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Common_law) prohibited women from inheriting property, signing contracts, serving on juries and voting in elections. Women's prospects in employment were dim: they could expect only to gain a very few service-related jobs and were paid about half of what men were paid for the same work.[[12]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Seneca_Falls_Convention#cite_note-NPS_Quakers-12) In Massachusetts, [Brook Farm](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Brook_Farm) was founded by Sophia Ripley and her husband [George Ripley](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/George_Ripley_(transcendentalist)) in 1841 as an attempt to find a way in which men and women could work together, with women receiving the same compensation as men. The experiment failed.[[13]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Seneca_Falls_Convention#cite_note-13)

In the fall of 1841, Elizabeth Cady Stanton gave her first public speech, on the subject of the [Temperance movement](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Temperance_movement), in front of 100 women in Seneca Falls. She wrote to her friend Elizabeth J. Neal that she moved both the audience and herself to tears, saying "I infused into my speech a Homeopathic dose of woman's rights, as I take good care to do in many private conversations."[[14]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Seneca_Falls_Convention#cite_note-14)

Lucretia Mott met with Elizabeth Cady Stanton in Boston in 1842, and discussed again the possibility of a woman's rights convention.[[10]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Seneca_Falls_Convention#cite_note-Wellman188-10) They talked once more in 1847, prior to Stanton moving from Boston to Seneca Falls.[[15]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Seneca_Falls_Convention#cite_note-Isenberg3-15)

Women's groups led by Lucretia Mott and Paulina Wright Davis held public meetings in Philadelphia beginning in 1846.[[7]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Seneca_Falls_Convention#cite_note-Isenberg5-7) A wide circle of abolitionists friendly to women's rights began in 1847 to discuss the possibility of holding a convention wholly devoted to women's rights.[[7]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Seneca_Falls_Convention#cite_note-Isenberg5-7) In October 1847, [Lucy Stone](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lucy_Stone) gave her first public speech on the subject of women's rights, entitled *The Province of Women*, at her brother Bowman Stone's church in [Gardner, Massachusetts](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gardner,_Massachusetts).[[16]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Seneca_Falls_Convention#cite_note-16)

In March 1848, Garrison, the Motts, [Abby Kelley Foster](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Abby_Kelley_Foster), [Stephen Symonds Foster](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stephen_Symonds_Foster) and others hosted an Anti-Sabbath meeting in Boston, to work toward the elimination of laws that apply only to Sunday, and to gain for the laborer more time away from toil than just one day of rest per week. Lucretia Mott and two other women were active within the executive committee,[[17]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Seneca_Falls_Convention#cite_note-17) and Mott spoke to the assemblage. Lucretia Mott raised questions about the validity of blindly following religious and social tradition.[[18]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Seneca_Falls_Convention#cite_note-18)

**Political gains**

On April 7, 1848, in response to a citizen's petition, the [New York State Assembly](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/New_York_State_Assembly) passed the Married Woman's Property Act, giving women the right to retain the property they brought into a marriage, as well as property they acquired during the marriage. Creditors could not seize a wife's property to pay a husband's debts.[[19]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Seneca_Falls_Convention#cite_note-McMillen81-19) Leading up to the passage of this law, in 1846, supporters issued a pamphlet, probably authored by Judge John Fine,[[20]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Seneca_Falls_Convention#cite_note-historynow-20) which relied on its readers' familiarity with the [United States Declaration of Independence](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States_Declaration_of_Independence) to demand "That all are created free and equal ...",[[20]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Seneca_Falls_Convention#cite_note-historynow-20) and that this idea should apply equally to the sexes. "Women, as well as men, are entitled to the full enjoyment of its practical blessings".[[20]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Seneca_Falls_Convention#cite_note-historynow-20) A group of 44 married women of western New York wrote to the Assembly in March 1848, saying "your Declaration of Independence declares, that governments derive their just powers from the [consent of the governed](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Consent_of_the_governed). And as women have never consented to, been represented in, or recognized by this government, it is evident that in justice no allegiance can be claimed from them ... Our numerous and yearly petitions for this most desirable object having been disregarded, we now ask your august body, to abolish all laws which hold married women more accountable for their acts than infants, idiots, and lunatics."

The [General Assembly in Pennsylvania](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pennsylvania_General_Assembly) passed a similar married woman's property law a few weeks later, one which Lucretia Mott and others had championed. These progressive state laws were seen by American women as a sign of new hope for women's rights.[[19]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Seneca_Falls_Convention#cite_note-McMillen81-19)

On June 2, 1848 in [Rochester, New York](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rochester,_New_York), [Gerrit Smith](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gerrit_Smith" \o "Gerrit Smith) was nominated as the [Liberty Party](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Liberty_Party_(1840s))'s presidential candidate.[[21]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Seneca_Falls_Convention#cite_note-Wellman176-21) Smith was Elizabeth Cady Stanton's first cousin, and the two enjoyed debating and discussing political and social issues with each other whenever he came to visit.[[21]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Seneca_Falls_Convention#cite_note-Wellman176-21) At the [National Liberty Convention](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=National_Liberty_Convention&action=edit&redlink=1), held June 14–15 in [Buffalo, New York](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Buffalo,_New_York), Smith gave a major address,[[22]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Seneca_Falls_Convention#cite_note-22) including in his speech a demand for "universal suffrage in its broadest sense, females as well as males being entitled to vote."[[21]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Seneca_Falls_Convention#cite_note-Wellman176-21) The delegates approved a passage in their [party platform](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Party_platform) addressing votes for women: "Neither here, nor in any other part of the world, is the right of suffrage allowed to extend beyond one of the sexes. This universal exclusion of woman ... argues, conclusively, that, not as yet, is there one nation so far emerged from barbarism, and so far practically Christian, as to permit woman to rise up to the one level of the human family."[[21]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Seneca_Falls_Convention#cite_note-Wellman176-21) At this convention, five votes were placed calling for Lucretia Mott to be Smith's vice-president—the first time in the United States that a woman was suggested for federal executive office.[[21]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Seneca_Falls_Convention#cite_note-Wellman176-21)

**Planning**

Lucretia and James Mott visited central and western New York in the summer of 1848 for a number of reasons, including visiting the [Cattaraugus Reservation](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cattaraugus_Reservation) of the [Seneca Nation](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Seneca_Nation) and former slaves living in the province of Ontario, Canada. Mott was present at the meeting in which the Progressive Friends left the Hicksite Quakers. They also visited Lucretia's sister [Martha Coffin Wright](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Martha_Coffin_Wright) in Auburn, NY, where Mott also preached to prisoners at the Auburn State Penitentiary. Lucretia Mott's skill and fame as an orator drew crowds wherever she went.[[24]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Seneca_Falls_Convention#cite_note-24)

**Announcement**

After Quaker worship on Sunday July 9, 1848, Lucretia Coffin Mott joined [Mary Ann M'Clintock](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mary_Ann_M%27Clintock), [Martha Coffin Wright](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Martha_Coffin_Wright) (Mott's witty sister, several months pregnant),]Elizabeth Cady Stanton and [Jane Hunt](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jane_Hunt) for tea at the [Hunt home](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hunt_House_(Waterloo,_New_York)) in Waterloo. The two eldest M'Clintock daughters, Elizabeth and Mary Ann, Jr. may have accompanied their mother.[[26]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Seneca_Falls_Convention#cite_note-Wellman186-26) Jane Hunt had given birth two weeks earlier, and was tending the baby at home. Over tea, Stanton, the only non-Quaker present, vented a lifetime's worth of pent-up frustration, her "long-accumulating discontent"[[27]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Seneca_Falls_Convention#cite_note-Stanton,_1881-27) about women's subservient place in society. The five women decided to hold a women's rights convention in the immediate future, while the Motts were still in the area,[[2]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Seneca_Falls_Convention#cite_note-wellman-189-2) and drew up an announcement to run in the *Seneca County Courier*. The announcement began with these words: "WOMAN'S RIGHTS CONVENTION.—A Convention to discuss the social, civil, and religious condition and rights of woman".[[2]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Seneca_Falls_Convention#cite_note-wellman-189-2) The notice specified that only women were invited to the first day's meetings on July 19, but both women and men could attend on the second day to hear Lucretia Mott speak, among others.[[2]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Seneca_Falls_Convention#cite_note-wellman-189-2) On July 11, the announcement first appeared, giving readers just eight days' notice until the first day of convention.[[28]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Seneca_Falls_Convention#cite_note-28) Other papers such as Douglass's [*North Star*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/North_Star_(USA_newspaper)) picked up the notice, printing it on July 14.[[2]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Seneca_Falls_Convention#cite_note-wellman-189-2) The meeting place was to be the [Wesleyan Methodist Chapel](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wesleyan_Methodist_Church_(Seneca_Falls,_New_York))[[29]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Seneca_Falls_Convention#cite_note-29) in Seneca Falls. Built by a congregation of abolitionists and financed in part by Richard Hunt,[[23]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Seneca_Falls_Convention#cite_note-nps_quakers-23) the chapel had been the scene of many reform lectures, and was considered the only large building in the area that would open its doors to a women's rights convention.[[2]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Seneca_Falls_Convention#cite_note-wellman-189-2)

**Declaration, grievances, resolutions**[[edit](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Seneca_Falls_Convention&action=edit&section=9)]

At their home in Waterloo on Sunday, July 16, the M'Clintocks hosted a smaller planning session for the convention. Mary Ann M'Clintock and her eldest daughters, Elizabeth and Mary Ann, Jr., discussed with Stanton the makeup of the resolutions that would be presented to the convention for approval. Each woman made certain her concerns were appropriately represented among the ten resolutions that they composed.[[30]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Seneca_Falls_Convention#cite_note-30) Taken together, the resolutions demanded that women should have equality in the family, education, jobs, religion, and morals.[[20]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Seneca_Falls_Convention#cite_note-historynow-20) One of the M'Clintock women selected the [Declaration of Independence](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States_Declaration_of_Independence) from 1776 as a model for the declaration they wanted to make at their convention. The [Declaration of Sentiments](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Declaration_of_Sentiments) was then drafted in the parlor on a round, three-legged, mahogany tea table.[[31]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Seneca_Falls_Convention#cite_note-31) Stanton changed a few words of the Declaration of Independence to make it appropriate for a statement by women, replacing "The history of the present King of Great Britain" with "The history of mankind" as the basis for "usurpations on the part of man toward woman."[[32]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Seneca_Falls_Convention#cite_note-nps_declaration-32) The women added the phrase "and women" to make "... all men *and women* are created equal ..."[[32]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Seneca_Falls_Convention#cite_note-nps_declaration-32) A list of grievances was composed to form the second part of the Declaration.[[33]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Seneca_Falls_Convention#cite_note-Wellman192-33)

Between July 16 and July 19, at home on her own writing desk, Stanton edited the grievances and resolutions. [Henry Brewster Stanton](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Henry_Brewster_Stanton), a lawyer, politician and Stanton's husband, helped substantiate the document by locating "extracts from laws bearing unjustly against woman's property interests."[[33]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Seneca_Falls_Convention#cite_note-Wellman192-33) On her own, Stanton added a more radical point to the list of grievances and to the resolutions: the issue of women's voting rights.[[34]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Seneca_Falls_Convention#cite_note-Wellman193-34) To the grievances, she added "He has never permitted her to exercise her inalienable right to the elective franchise", and to the Sentiments, she added a line about man depriving woman of "the elective franchise, thereby leaving her without representation in the halls of legislation ..."[[34]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Seneca_Falls_Convention#cite_note-Wellman193-34) Stanton then copied the Declaration and resolutions into final draft form for presentation at the meeting. When he saw the addition of woman suffrage, Henry Stanton warned his wife "you will turn the proceedings into a farce."[[35]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Seneca_Falls_Convention#cite_note-McMillen93-35) He, like most men of his day, was not in favor of women gaining voting rights. Because he intended to run for elective office, he left Seneca Falls to avoid being connected with a convention promoting such an unpopular cause.[[36]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Seneca_Falls_Convention#cite_note-36) Elizabeth Cady Stanton asked her sister Harriet Cady Eaton to accompany her; Eaton brought her young son Daniel.[[37]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Seneca_Falls_Convention#cite_note-McMillen90-37)

On July 16, Lucretia Mott sent a note to Stanton apologizing in advance for James Mott not being able to attend the first day, as he was feeling "quite unwell".[[38]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Seneca_Falls_Convention#cite_note-38) Lucretia Mott wrote to say she would bring her sister, Martha Wright, and that the two women would participate in both days of the convention.[[39]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Seneca_Falls_Convention#cite_note-39)

First day[[edit](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Seneca_Falls_Convention&action=edit&section=10)]

On July 19, 1848, the morning of the first day of convention, the organizing committee arrived at the Wesleyan Methodist Chapel shortly before ten o'clock on a hot, sunny day to find a crowd gathered outside and the church doors locked—an overlooked detail.[[37]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Seneca_Falls_Convention#cite_note-McMillen90-37) Stanton's young nephew Daniel was lifted through an open window so that he could unbar the doors from the inside. Even though the first session had been announced as being exclusively for women, some young children of both sexes had been brought by their mothers, and about 40 men were there expecting to attend. The men were not turned away, but were asked to remain silent. Mary Ann M'Clintock, Jr., 26 years old, was appointed secretary, to take notes.[[37]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Seneca_Falls_Convention#cite_note-McMillen90-37)

**Morning session**

Starting at 11 o'clock, [Elizabeth Cady Stanton](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Elizabeth_Cady_Stanton) spoke first, exhorting each woman in the audience to accept responsibility for her own life, and to "understand the height, the depth, the length, and the breadth of her own degradation."[[37]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Seneca_Falls_Convention#cite_note-McMillen90-37) [Lucretia Mott](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lucretia_Mott" \o "Lucretia Mott) then spoke, encouraging all to take up the cause. Stanton read the Declaration of Sentiments in its entirety, then re-read each paragraph so that it could be discussed at length, and changes incorporated. The question of whether men's signatures would be sought for the Declaration was discussed, with the vote looking favorable for including men, but the motion was tabled until the following day when men themselves could participate. The first session adjourned at 2:30 p.m.

**Afternoon session**

After a pause for refreshment in the 90° heat,[[40]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Seneca_Falls_Convention#cite_note-Wellman195-40) an afternoon session began with Stanton and then Mott addressing the audience. The Declaration of Sentiments was read again and more changes were made to it. The resolutions, now numbering eleven with Stanton's addition of women's suffrage, were read aloud and discussed. Lucretia Mott read a humorous newspaper piece written by her sister Martha Wright in which Wright questioned why, after an overworked mother completed the myriad daily tasks that were required of her but not of her husband, *she* was the one upon whom written advice was "so lavishly bestowed."[[42]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Seneca_Falls_Convention#cite_note-McMillen92-42) Twenty-seven-year-old Elizabeth W. M'Clintock then delivered a speech, and the first day's business was called to a close.

**Evening speech**

In the evening, the meeting was opened to all persons, and Lucretia Mott addressed a large audience.[[43]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Seneca_Falls_Convention#cite_note-NatReformer-43) She spoke of the progress of other reform movements and so framed for her listeners the social and moral context for the struggle for women's rights. She asked the men present to help women gain the equality they deserved.[[42]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Seneca_Falls_Convention#cite_note-McMillen92-42) The editor of the *National Reformer*, a paper in [Auburn, New York](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Auburn,_New_York), reported that Mott's extemporaneous evening speech was "one of the most eloquent, logical, and philosophical discourses which we ever listened to.

Second day

A larger crowd attended on the second day, including more men. [Amelia Bloomer](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amelia_Bloomer) arrived late and took a seat in the upstairs gallery, there being none left in the main seating area. Quaker James Mott was well enough to attend, and he chaired the morning meeting; it was still too radical a concept that a woman serve as chair in front of both men and women.[[42]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Seneca_Falls_Convention#cite_note-McMillen92-42)

**Morning session, day two**[[edit](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Seneca_Falls_Convention&action=edit&section=15)]

After Mott opened the meeting, the minutes of the previous day were read, and Stanton presented the Declaration of Sentiments. In regard to the grievance "He has taken from her all right in property, even to the wages she earns," Assemblyman Ansel Bascom stood to say that he had recently been at the New York State Assembly which passed the Married Woman's Property Act. Bascom spoke at length about the property rights it secured for married women, including property acquired after marriage.[[42]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Seneca_Falls_Convention#cite_note-McMillen92-42) Further discussion of the Declaration ensued, including comments by [Frederick Douglass](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Frederick_Douglass), Thomas and Mary Ann M'Clintock, and [Amy Post](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amy_and_Isaac_Post); the document was adopted unanimously.[[44]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Seneca_Falls_Convention#cite_note-nps_report-44) The question of men's signatures was solved by having two sections of signatures, one for women followed by one for men. One hundred of the 300[[45]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Seneca_Falls_Convention#cite_note-45) present signed the Declaration of Sentiments, including 68 women and 32 men.[[46]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Seneca_Falls_Convention#cite_note-46) Amelia Bloomer was one of the participants who did *not* endorse the Declaration; she was focused at that time on the [temperance movement](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Temperance_movement_in_the_United_States).[[47]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Seneca_Falls_Convention#cite_note-47) Ansel Bascom was the most conspicuous attendee who chose not to sign the Declaration.[[48]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Seneca_Falls_Convention#cite_note-48) The *National Reformer* reported that those in the audience who evidently regarded the Declaration as "too bold and ultra", including the lawyers known to be opposed to the equal rights of women, "failed to call out any opposition, except in a neighboring BAR-ROOM."[[43]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Seneca_Falls_Convention#cite_note-NatReformer-43)

**Afternoon session, day two**

[Frederick Douglass](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Frederick_Douglass) stood up to speak in favor of women's right to vote.

At the afternoon session, the eleven resolutions were read again, and each one was voted on individually. The only one that was materially questioned was the ninth, the one Stanton had added regarding women's right to vote. It read:

Resolved, that it is the duty of the women of this country to secure to themselves their sacred right to the elective franchise.[[49]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Seneca_Falls_Convention#cite_note-Text-49)

Those who opposed this resolution argued that its presence would cause the other, more rational resolutions to lose support.[[50]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Seneca_Falls_Convention#cite_note-50) Others argued that only the social, civil and religious rights of women should be addressed, not the political rights.[[35]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Seneca_Falls_Convention#cite_note-McMillen93-35) James and Lucretia Mott were against the resolution; Lucretia said to Stanton, "Why Lizzie, thee will make us ridiculous."[[35]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Seneca_Falls_Convention#cite_note-McMillen93-35) Stanton defended the concept of woman suffrage, saying women would then be able to affect future legislation and gain further rights.[[35]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Seneca_Falls_Convention#cite_note-McMillen93-35) Frederick Douglass, the only African American at the meeting,[[51]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Seneca_Falls_Convention#cite_note-51) stood and spoke eloquently in favor; he said that he could not accept the right to vote himself as a black man if woman could not also claim that right. Douglass projected that the world would be a better place if women were involved in the political sphere. "In this denial of the right to participate in government, not merely the degradation of woman and the perpetuation of a great injustice happens, but the maiming and repudiation of one-half of the moral and intellectual power of the government of the world."[[52]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Seneca_Falls_Convention#cite_note-52) Douglass's powerful words rang true with many in attendance, and the resolution passed by a large majority.[[44]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Seneca_Falls_Convention#cite_note-nps_report-44) Lucretia Mott spoke to end the session.[[44]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Seneca_Falls_Convention#cite_note-nps_report-44)

**Evening session, day two**[[edit](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Seneca_Falls_Convention&action=edit&section=17)]

Quaker Thomas M'Clintock served as chair for the evening session, opening it at half-past seven.The minutes were read, then Stanton spoke in defense of the many severe accusations brought against the much-abused "Lords of Creation.]Following Stanton, Thomas M'Clintock read several passages from Sir [William Blackstone](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/William_Blackstone)'s laws, to expose for the audience the basis of woman's current legal condition of servitude to man.[[53]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Seneca_Falls_Convention#cite_note-53) Lucretia Mott stood to offer another resolution: "Resolved, That the speedy success of our cause depends upon the zealous and untiring efforts of both men and women, for the overthrow of the monopoly of the pulpit, and for the securing to woman an equal participation with men in the various trades, professions and commerce."[[54]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Seneca_Falls_Convention#cite_note-Stanton83-54) This, the twelfth resolution, passed.Mary Ann M'Clintock, Jr. spoke briefly, calling upon woman to arouse from her lethargy and be true to herself and her God. Douglass again rose to speak in support of the cause of woman.] Lucretia Mott spoke for an hour with one of her "most beautiful and spiritual appeals" Although Lucretia Mott's reputation as a speaker drew the audience, Mott recognized Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Mary Ann M'Clintock as the "chief planners and architects" of the convention.[[23]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Seneca_Falls_Convention#cite_note-nps_quakers-23) To close the meeting, a committee was appointed to edit and publish the convention proceedings, with Amy Post, [Eunice Newton Foote](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eunice_Newton_Foote), Mary Ann M'Clintock, Jr., Elizabeth W. M'Clintock and Stanton serving.

**Religious reaction**

Some of the ministers heading congregations in the area attended the Seneca Falls Convention, but none spoke out during the sessions, not even when comments from the floor were invited. On Sunday, July 23, many who had attended, and more who had not, attacked the Convention, the Declaration of Sentiments, and the resolutions. Women in the congregations reported to Stanton, who saw the actions of the ministers as cowardly; in their congregations, no one would be allowed to reply.[[56]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Seneca_Falls_Convention#cite_note-56)

**Further conventions**

Signers of the Declaration of Sentiments hoped for "a series of Conventions, embracing every part of the country" to follow their own meeting. Because of the fame and drawing power of Lucretia Mott, who would not be staying in the [Upstate New York](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Upstate_New_York) area for much longer, some of the participants at Seneca Falls organized the [Rochester Women's Rights Convention](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rochester_Women%27s_Rights_Convention_of_1848) two weeks later in [Rochester, New York](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rochester,_New_York) with Lucretia Mott as its featured speaker. Unlike the Seneca Falls convention, the Rochester convention took the controversial step of electing a woman, [Abigail Bush](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Abigail_Bush), as its presiding officer. In the next two years, "the infancy ... of the movement",[[57]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Seneca_Falls_Convention#cite_note-57) other local and state women's rights conventions were called in Ohio, Indiana, and Pennsylvania.[[58]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Seneca_Falls_Convention#cite_note-nps_more-58)

Charlotte Woodward, alone among all 100 signers, was the only one still alive in 1920 when the [Nineteenth Amendment](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nineteenth_Amendment_to_the_United_States_Constitution) passed. Woodward was not well enough to vote herself.[[59]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Seneca_Falls_Convention#cite_note-59)

Historiography

In 1870, [Paulina Wright Davis](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paulina_Wright_Davis) authored a history of the antebellum women's rights movement, *The History of the National Woman's Rights Movement*, and received approval of her account from many of the involved suffragists including [Lucretia Mott](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lucretia_Mott" \o "Lucretia Mott) and [Elizabeth Cady Stanton](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Elizabeth_Cady_Stanton).[[7]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Seneca_Falls_Convention#cite_note-Isenberg5-7) Davis' version gave the Seneca Falls meeting in 1848 a minor role, equivalent to other local meetings that had been held by women's groups in the late 1840s. Davis set the beginning of the national and international women's rights movement at Worcester, Massachusetts in 1850, at the [National Women's Rights Convention](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National_Women%27s_Rights_Convention) when women from many states were invited, the influence of which was felt across the continent and in Great Britain.[[7]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Seneca_Falls_Convention#cite_note-Isenberg5-7) Stanton seemed to agree; in an address to the [National Woman Suffrage Association](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National_Woman_Suffrage_Association) (NWSA) convention in 1870, on the subject of the women's rights movement, she said "The movement in England, as in America, may be dated from the first National Convention, held at Worcester, Mass., October, 1850."[[61]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Seneca_Falls_Convention#cite_note-61)

In 1876, in the spirit of the nation's centennial celebrations, Stanton and [Susan B. Anthony](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Susan_B._Anthony) decided to write a more expansive history of the women's rights movement. They invited [Lucy Stone](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lucy_Stone) to help, but Stone declined to be part of the project; she was of the opinion that Stanton and Anthony would not fairly portray the divisive split between NWSA and [American Woman Suffrage Association (AWSA)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/American_Woman_Suffrage_Association_(AWSA)). Stanton and Anthony wrote without her and, in 1881, they published the first volume of the *History of Woman Suffrage*, and placed themselves at each of its most important events, marginalizing Stone's contribution.[[62]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Seneca_Falls_Convention#cite_note-62)

According to Lisa Tetrault, a professor of women's history, the Seneca Falls Convention was central to their rendition of the movement's history. Neither Stanton nor Anthony had been at the 1850 convention, which was associated with their rivals. Stanton, however, had played a key role at the Seneca Falls Convention in 1848, at which Stone had not been present. In the early 1870s, Stanton and Anthony began to present Seneca Falls as the beginning of the women's rights movement, an origin story that downplayed Stone's role. Pointing out that the women's rights movement could be said to have begun even earlier than Seneca Falls, Tetrault said the *History of Woman Suffrage* dealt with these earlier events relatively briefly in its first three chapters, the first of which is titled "Preceding Causes."[[63]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Seneca_Falls_Convention#cite_note-63) In the volume, Stanton did not mention the Liberty Party's plank on woman suffrage pre-dating the Seneca Falls Convention by a month, and she did not describe the Worcester National Women's Rights Convention, organized by Stone and Davis in 1850, as the beginning of the women's rights movement. Rather, Stanton named the 1840 Anti-Slavery Convention in London as the birth of the "movement for woman's suffrage, in both England and America".[[7]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Seneca_Falls_Convention#cite_note-Isenberg5-7) She positioned the Seneca Falls meeting as her own political debut, and characterized it as the beginning of the women's rights movement which she called "the greatest movement for human liberty recorded on the pages of history a demand for freedom to one-half the entire race."[[4]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Seneca_Falls_Convention#cite_note-McMillen102-4)

Stanton worked to enshrine the Declaration of Sentiments as a foundational treatise in a number of ways, not the least of which was by imbuing the small, three-legged tea table upon which the first draft of it was composed with an importance similar to that of [Thomas Jefferson](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thomas_Jefferson)'s desk upon which he wrote the [Declaration of Independence](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States_Declaration_of_Independence). The M'Clintocks gave Stanton the table, then Stanton gave it to [Susan B. Anthony](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Susan_B._Anthony) on the occasion of her 80th birthday, though Anthony had no part in the Seneca Falls meeting.[[27]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Seneca_Falls_Convention#cite_note-Stanton,_1881-27) In keeping with Stanton's promotion of the table as an iconic relic, women's rights activists put it in a place of honor at the head of the casket at the funeral of Susan B. Anthony on March 14, 1906. Subsequently, it was displayed prominently on the stage at each of the most important suffrage meetings until 1920, even though the grievance and resolution about woman suffrage was not written on it. The table is kept at the [Smithsonian Institution](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Smithsonian_Institution)'s [National Museum of American History](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National_Museum_of_American_History) in Washington, D.C.

Lucretia Mott reflected in August 1848 upon the two women's rights conventions in which she had participated that summer, and assessed them no greater than other projects and missions she was involved with. She wrote that the two gatherings were "greatly encouraging; and give hope that this long neglected subject will soon begin to receive the attention that its importance demands.]

Historian [Gerda Lerner](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gerda_Lerner) has pointed out that religious ideas provided a fundamental source for the *Declaration of Sentiments*. Most of the women attending the convention were active in [Quaker](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Quaker) or evangelical [Methodist](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Methodist) movements. The document itself drew from writings by the evangelical Quaker [Sarah Grimké](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sarah_Grimk%C3%A9) to make biblical claims that God had created woman equal to man and that man had usurped God's authority by establishing "absolute tyranny" over woman. According to author Jami Carlacio, Grimké's writings opened the public's eyes to ideas like women's rights, and for the first time they were willing to question conventional notions about the subordination of women.

2. The Significance of the Women’s Emancipation Movement:

The **feminist movement** (also known as the **women's movement**, or simply **feminism**) refers to a series of [political campaigns](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Political_campaign) for reforms on issues such as [reproductive rights](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Reproductive_rights), [domestic violence](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Domestic_violence), [maternity leave](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Parental_leave), [equal pay](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Equal_pay_for_women), [women's suffrage](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Women%27s_suffrage), [sexual harassment](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sexual_harassment), and [sexual violence](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sexual_violence), all of which fall under the label of [feminism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Feminism) and the feminist movement. The movement's priorities vary among nations and communities, and range from opposition to [female genital mutilation](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Female_genital_mutilation) in one country, to opposition to the [glass ceiling](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Glass_ceiling) in another.

Feminism in parts of the [Western world](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Western_world) has gone through three waves. [First-wave feminism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/First-wave_feminism) was oriented around the station of middle- or upper-class white women and involved suffrage and political equality. [Second-wave feminism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Second-wave_feminism) attempted to further combat social and cultural inequalities. Although the first wave of feminism involved mainly middle class white women, the second wave brought in women of color and women from other developing nations that were seeking solidarity.[[1]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Feminist_movement#cite_note-1) [Third-wave feminism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Third-wave_feminism) is continuing to address the financial, social and cultural inequalities and includes renewed campaigning for greater influence of women in politics and media. In reaction to political activism, feminists have also had to maintain focus on women's reproductive rights, such as the right to abortion. [Fourth-wave feminism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fourth-wave_feminism) examines the interlocking systems of power that contribute to the [stratification](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Social_stratification) of [traditionally marginalized groups](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marginalization).

[Feminism in China](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Feminism_in_China) started in the 20th century with the [Chinese Revolution](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Xinhai_Revolution) in 1911. In China, Feminism has a strong association with [socialism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Socialism) and class issues. Some commentators believe that this close association is damaging to Chinese feminism and argue that the interests of party are placed before those of women.

**Feminist movement in Western society**

Feminism in the United States, Canada and a number of countries in western Europe has been divided into three waves by feminist scholars: [first](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/First-wave_feminism), [second](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Second-wave_feminism) and [third-wave feminism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Third-wave_feminism).[[4]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Feminist_movement#cite_note-4)[[5]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Feminist_movement#cite_note-Walker1992-5) Recent (early 2010s) research suggests there may be a [fourth wave](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_Feminism#Fourth_wave) characterized, in part, by [new media](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/New_media) platforms.[[6]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Feminist_movement#cite_note-6)[[7]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Feminist_movement#cite_note-7)

The women's movement became more popular in May 1968 when women began to read again, more widely, the book [*The Second Sex*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Second_Sex), written in 1949 by a defender of women's rights, [Simone de Beauvoir](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Simone_de_Beauvoir) (and translated into English for the first time in 1953; later translation 2009). De Beauvoir's writing explained why it was difficult for talented women to become successful. The obstacles de Beauvoir enumerates include women's inability to make as much money as men do in the same profession, women's domestic responsibilities, society's lack of support towards talented women, and women's fear that success will lead to an annoyed husband or prevent them from even finding a husband at all. De Beauvoir also argues that women lack ambition because of how they are raised, noting that girls are told to follow the duties of their mothers, whereas boys are told to exceed the accomplishments of their fathers. Along with other influences, Simone de Beauvoir's work helped the feminist movement to erupt, causing the formation of Le Mouvement de Libération des Femmes (The Women's Liberation Movement). Contributors to The Women's Liberation Movement include Simone de Beauvoir, [Christiane Rochefort](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christiane_Rochefort), [Christine Delphy](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christine_Delphy) and Anne Tristan. Through this movement, women gained equal rights such as a right to an education, a right to work, and a right to vote. One of the most important issues that The Women's Liberation movement faced was the banning of abortion and contraception, which the group saw as a violation of women's rights. Thus, they made a declaration known as Le Manifeste de 343 which held signatures from 343 women admitting to having had an illegal abortion. The declaration was published in two French newspapers, *Le Nouvel Observateur* and *Le Monde*, on 5 April 1971. The group gained support upon the publication. Women received the right to abort with the passing of the Veil Law in 1975.[[8]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Feminist_movement#cite_note-8)

The Women's movement effected change in Western society, including [women's suffrage](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Women%27s_suffrage), the right to initiate divorce proceedings and "no fault" divorce, the right of women to make individual decisions regarding pregnancy (including access to [contraceptives](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Contraceptive) and [abortion](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Abortion)), and the right to own property.[[9]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Feminist_movement#cite_note-Messer-Davidow-9) It has also led to broad employment for women at more equitable wages, and access to [university](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/University) education.

In 1918 [Crystal Eastman](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Crystal_Eastman) wrote an article published in the Birth Control Review, she contended that birth control is a fundamental right for women and must be available as an alternative if they are to participate fully in the modern world. “In short, if feminism, conscious and bold and intelligent, leads the demand, it will be supported by the secret eagerness of all women to control the size of their families, and a suffrage state should make short work of repealing these old laws that stand in the way of birth control.” She stated “I don’t believe there is one woman within the confines of this state who does not believe in birth control.

The *United Nations Human Development Report 2004* estimated that when both paid employment and unpaid household tasks are accounted for, on average women work more than men. In rural areas of selected developing countries women performed an average of 20% more work than men, or 120% of men's total work, an additional 102 minutes per day. In the [OECD](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/OECD) countries surveyed, on average women performed 5% more work than men, or 105% of men's total work—an additional 20 minutes per day. However, men did up to 19 minutes more work per day than women in five out of the eighteen OECD countries surveyed: Canada, Denmark, Hungary, Israel, and The Netherlands.[[11]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Feminist_movement#cite_note-11) According to [UN Women](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/UN_Women), "Women perform 66 percent of the world's work, produce 50 percent of the food, but earn 10 percent of the income and own 1 percent of the property.

The feminist movement's agenda includes acting as a counter to the putatively patriarchal strands in the dominant culture. While differing during the progression of waves, it is a movement that has sought to challenge the political structure, power holders, and cultural beliefs or practices.

Although antecedents to feminism may be found far back before the 18th century, the seeds of the modern feminist movement were planted during the late part of that century. [Christine de Pizan](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christine_de_Pizan), a late medieval writer, was possibly the earliest feminist in the western tradition. She is believed to be the first woman to make a living out of writing. Feminist thought began to take a more substantial shape during [the Enlightenment](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Age_of_Enlightenment) with such thinkers as [Lady Mary Wortley Montagu](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lady_Mary_Wortley_Montagu) and the [Marquis de Condorcet](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marquis_de_Condorcet) championing women's education.[[13]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Feminist_movement#cite_note-13) The first [scientific society](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Scientific_society) for women was founded in [Middelburg](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Middelburg), a city in the south of the [Dutch republic](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dutch_republic), in 1785. Journals for women that focused on issues like science became popular during this period as well.

The women who made the first efforts towards women's suffrage came from more stable and privileged backgrounds, and were able to dedicate time and energy into making change. Initial developments for women, therefore, mainly benefited white women in the middle and upper classes.

### Feminism in China

Prior to the 20th century, women in China were considered essentially different from men.

In the patriarchal society, the struggle for women's emancipation means to enact laws that guarantee women's full equality of race, sex, property and freedom of marriage. In order to further eliminate the legacy of the class society of patriarchal women (drowning of infants, [corset](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Corset), [footbinding](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Foot_binding" \o "Foot binding), etc.), discrimination, play, mutilate women's traditional prejudice and habitual forces on the basis of the development of productive forces, it is gradually needful on achieving gender in politics, economy, social and family aspects of equality.

Before the westernization movement and the reform movement, women had set off a wave of their own strength in the [Taiping Heavenly Kingdom](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Taiping_Heavenly_Kingdom) (1851–1864). However, there are too many women from the bottom identities in the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom. It is difficult to get rid of the fate of being used. Until the end of the Qing Dynasty, women with more knowledges took the initiative in the fight for women's rights and that is where feminism basically started.

The term 'feminism' was first transmitted to China in 1791 which was proposed by Olympe de Gouges and promoted the 'women's liberation'. The feminist movement in China was mainly kickstarted and driven by male feminists prior to female feminists.[[14]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Feminist_movement#cite_note-shen_pdf1-14)

Key male feminists in China in the 19th to 20th century included Liang Qichao, Ma Junwu and Jin Tianhe. In 1897, Liang Qichao proposed banning of foot-binding and encouraged women to engage in the workforce, political environment and education. The foot-binding costume had long been established in China which was an act to display the beauty and social status of women by binding their feet into an extremely small shoe with good decorations and ornaments.[[15]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Feminist_movement#cite_note-15) Liang Qichao proposed the abolishment of this act due to concern the health of female being a supportive wives and caring mothers. He also proposed to reduce the number of female dependents in family and encouraged women to receive the rights of education and enter the workforce to be economic independent from men and finally help the nation to reach higher wealth and prosperity. For feminist Ma Junwu and Jin Tianhe, they both supported the equality between husbands and wives, women enjoy legitimate and equal rights and also rights to enter the political sphere. A key assertion from Jin Tianhe was women as the mother of the nation. These views from male feminists in early feminism in China represented the image of ideal women in the imagination of men.[[14]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Feminist_movement#cite_note-shen_pdf1-14)

Key female feminists in China in the 19th to 20th century included Lin Zongsu, He Zhen, Chen Xiefen and Qiu Jin. The female feminists in early China focused more on the methods or ways that women should behave and liberate themselves to achieve equal and deserved rights and independence. He Zhen expressed her opinion that women's liberation was not correlated to the interest of the nation and she analysed three reasons behind the male feminists included: following the Western trend, to alleviate their financial burdens and high quality of reproduction. Besides, Li Zongsu proposed that women should strive for their legitimate rights which includes broader aspects than the male feminists: call for their own right over men, the Qing Court and in an international extent.[[14]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Feminist_movement#cite_note-shen_pdf1-14)

In the Qing Dynasty, the discussion on feminism had two dimensions including the sex differences between men and women such as maternal role and duties of women and social difference between genders; the other dimension was the aim of liberation of women. The view of the feminists were diverse: some believed feminism was benefiting the nation and some believed feminism was associated with the individual development of female in improving their rights and welfare.[[14]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Feminist_movement#cite_note-shen_pdf1-14)

In the 1970s, the Marxist philosophy about female and feminism was transmitted to China and became the guiding principle of feminism movement in China by introducing class struggle theories to address gender quality. In the 1990s, more female scholars were adapted to feminism in Western countries, and they promoted feminism and equal rights for women by publishing, translating and carrying out research on global feminism and made feminism in China as one part of their study to raise more concern and awareness for gender equality issues.

**Language**[[edit](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Feminist_movement&action=edit&section=4)]

Feminists are sometimes, though not exclusively, proponents of using [non-sexist language](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Non-sexist_language), such as using "[Ms.](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ms.)" to refer to both married and unmarried women. Feminists are also often proponents of using *gender-inclusive* language, such as "humanity" instead of "mankind", or "they" in place of "he" where the gender is unknown.[[16]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Feminist_movement#cite_note-16)

Gender-neutral language is [language usage](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Word_usage) which is aimed at minimizing assumptions regarding the [gender](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gender) of human referents. The advocacy of gender-neutral language reflects, at least, two different agendas: one aims to clarify the *inclusion* of both sexes or genders (gender-inclusive language); the other proposes that gender, as a category, is rarely worth marking in language (gender-neutral language). Gender-neutral language is sometimes described as *non-sexist language* by advocates and *politically correct language* by opponents.[[17]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Feminist_movement#cite_note-17)

Not only has the movement come to change the language into gender neutral but the feminist movement has brought up how people use language. Emily Martin describes the concept of how metaphors are gendered and ingrained into everyday life. Metaphors are used in everyday language and have become a way that people describe the world. Martin explains that these metaphors structure how people think and in regards to science can shape what questions are being asked. If the right questions are not being asked then the answers are not going to be the right either. For example, the aggressive sperm and passive egg is a metaphor that felt 'natural' to people in history but as scientists have reexamined this phenomenon they have come up with a new answer. "The sperm tries to pull its getaway act even on the egg itself, but is held down against its struggles by molecules on the surface of the egg that hook together with counterparts on the sperm's surface, fastening the sperm until the egg can absorb it." [[18]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Feminist_movement#cite_note-18) This is a goal in feminism to see these gendered metaphors and bring it to the public's attention. The outcome of looking at things in a new perspective can produce new information.

**Heterosexual relationships**

The increased entry of women into the workplace beginning in the 20th century has affected gender roles and the [division of labor](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Division_of_labor) within households. Sociologist [Arlie Russell Hochschild](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arlie_Russell_Hochschild) in *The Second Shift* and *The Time Bind* presents evidence that in two-career couples, men and women, on average, spend about equal amounts of time working, but women still spend more time on housework.[[19]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Feminist_movement#cite_note-Hochschild1-19)[[20]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Feminist_movement#cite_note-Hochschild2-20) Feminist writer [Cathy Young](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cathy_Young) responds to Hochschild's assertions by arguing that, in some cases, women may prevent the equal participation of men in housework and parenting.[[21]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Feminist_movement#cite_note-21) Economists Mark Aguiar and Erik Hurst calculate that the amount of time spent on housework by women since the 1960s has dropped considerably.[[22]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Feminist_movement#cite_note-22) Leisure for both men and women has risen significantly and by about the same amount for both sexes. Jeremy Greenwood, Ananth Seshadri and Mehmet Yorukoglu argue that the introduction of modern appliances into the home has allowed women to enter the work force.[[23]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Feminist_movement#cite_note-23)[[24]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Feminist_movement#cite_note-24)

Feminist criticisms of men's contributions to child care and domestic labor in the Western middle class are typically centered around the idea that it is unfair for women to be expected to perform more than half of a household's domestic work and child care when both members of the relationship perform an equal share of work outside the home. Several studies provide statistical evidence that the financial income of married men does not affect their rate of attending to household duties.[[25]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Feminist_movement#cite_note-25)[[26]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Feminist_movement#cite_note-26)

In *Dubious Conceptions*, [Kristin Luker](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kristin_Luker) discusses the effect of feminism on teenage women's choices to bear children, both in and out of wedlock. She says that as childbearing [out of wedlock](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Legitimacy_(family_law)) has become more socially acceptable, young women, especially poor young women, while not bearing children at a higher rate than in the 1950s, now see less of a reason to get married before having a child. Her explanation for this is that the economic prospects for poor men are slim, hence poor women have a low chance of finding a husband who will be able to provide reliable financial support due to the rise of unemployment from more workers on the market, from just men to women and men.[[27]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Feminist_movement#cite_note-27)

Some studies have suggested that both men and women perceive feminism as being incompatible with romance. However, a recent survey of U.S. undergraduates and older adults found that feminism actually has a positive impact on relationship health for women and sexual satisfaction for men, and found no support for negative stereotypes of feminists.[[28]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Feminist_movement#cite_note-28)

[Virginia Satir](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Virginia_Satir) said the need for relationship education emerged from shifting gender roles as women gained greater rights and freedoms during the 20th century:

"As we moved into the 20th century, we arrived with a very clearly prescribed way that males and females in marriage were to behave with one another ... The pattern of the relationship between husband and wife was that of the dominant male and submissive female ... A new era has since dawned ... the climate of relationships had changed, and women were no longer willing to be submissive ... The end of the dominant/submissive model in relationships was in sight. However, there was very little that had developed to replace the old pattern; couples floundered ... Retrospectively, one could have expected that there would be a lot of chaos and a lot of fall-out. The change from the dominant/submissive model to one of equality is a monumental shift. We are learning how a relationship based on genuine feelings of equality can operate practically."

**Religion**

[Feminist theology](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Feminist_theology) is a movement that reconsiders the traditions, practices, scriptures, and theologies of religions from a feminist perspective. Some of the goals of feminist theology include increasing the role of women among the clergy and religious authorities, reinterpreting male-dominated imagery and language about God, determining the place of women in relation to career and motherhood, and studying images of women in the religion's sacred texts.[[30]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Feminist_movement#cite_note-Bundesen-30)

The feminist movement has affected [religion](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Religion) and [theology](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Theology) in profound ways. In liberal branches of [Protestant Christianity](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Protestant_Christianity), women are now allowed to be ordained as [clergy](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Clergy), and in [Reform](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Reform_Judaism), [Conservative](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Conservative_Judaism) and [Reconstructionist](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Reconstructionist_Judaism) [Judaism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Judaism), women are now allowed to be ordained as [rabbis](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rabbi) and [cantors](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hazzan). In some of these groups, some women are gradually obtaining positions of power that were formerly only held by men, and their perspectives are now sought out in developing new statements of belief. These trends, however, have been resisted within most sects of [Islam](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Islam), [Roman Catholicism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Roman_Catholicism), and [Orthodox Christianity](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Orthodox_Christianity). Within Roman Catholicism, most women understand that, through the dogma of the faith, they are to hold, within the family, a place of love and focus on the family. They also understand the need to rise above that doesn't necessarily constitute a woman to be considered less than, but in fact equal to, that of her husband who is called to be the patriarch of the family and provide love and guidance to his family as well.

[Christian feminism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christian_feminism) is a branch of feminist theology which seeks to reinterpret and understand [Christianity](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christianity) in light of the equality of women and men (Feminine Genius, St. Pope John Paul II, Vatican.va) While there is no standard set of beliefs among Christian feminists, most agree that God does not discriminate on the basis of biologically determined characteristics such as sex.

Early feminists such as [Elizabeth Cady Stanton](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Elizabeth_Cady_Stanton) concentrated almost solely on "making women equal to men." However, the Christian feminist movement chose to concentrate on the language of religion because they viewed the historic gendering of God as male as a result of the pervasive influence of patriarchy. [Rosemary Radford Ruether](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rosemary_Radford_Ruether) provided a systematic critique of Christian theology from a feminist and theist point of view.[[32]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Feminist_movement#cite_note-Ochs-32) Stanton was an agnostic and Reuther is an agnostic who was born to Catholic parents but no longer practices the faith.

[Islamic feminism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Islamic_feminism) is concerned with the role of [women in Islam](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Women_and_Islam) and aims for the full equality of all [Muslims](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Muslims), regardless of gender, in public and private life. Although rooted in Islam, the movement's pioneers have also utilized secular and Western feminist discourses.[[33]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Feminist_movement#cite_note-33) Advocates of the movement seek to highlight the deeply rooted teachings of equality in the [Quran](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Quran) and encourage a questioning of the patriarchal interpretation of Islamic teaching through the Quran, [*hadith*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hadith) (sayings of [Muhammad](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Muhammad)), and [*sharia*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sharia) (law) towards the creation of a more equal and just society.[[34]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Feminist_movement#cite_note-34)

[Jewish feminism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jewish_feminism) seeks to improve the religious, legal, and social status of women within [Judaism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Judaism) and to open up new opportunities for religious experience and leadership for Jewish women. In its modern form, the movement can be traced to the early 1970s in the United States. According to [Judith Plaskow](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Judith_Plaskow), who has focused on feminism in [Reform Judaism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Reform_Judaism), the main issues for early Jewish feminists in these movements were the exclusion from the all-male prayer group or *[minyan](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Minyan" \o "Minyan)*, the exemption from positive time-bound *[mitzvot](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mitzvah" \o "Mitzvah)*, and women's inability to function as witnesses and to initiate [divorce](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jewish_view_of_marriage#Divorce).[[35]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Feminist_movement#cite_note-Plaskow1997-35)

**Women's health**[[edit](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Feminist_movement&action=edit&section=7)]

*Main article:*[*Women's health*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Women%27s_health)

Historically there has been a need to study and contribute to the health and well-being of a woman that previously has been lacking. [Londa Schiebinger](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Londa_Schiebinger" \o "Londa Schiebinger) suggests that the common biomedical model is no longer adequate and there is a need for a broader model to ensure that all aspects of a woman are being cared for. Schiebinger describes six contributions that must occur in order to have success: political movement, academic women studies, affirmative action, health equality act, geo-political forces, and professional women not being afraid to talk openly about women issues. Political movements come from the streets and are what the people as a whole want to see changed. An academic women study is the support from universities in order to teach a subject that most people have never encountered. [Affirmative action](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Affirmative_action) enacted is a legal change to acknowledge and do something for the times of neglect people were subjected to. Women's Health Equity Act legally enforces the idea that medicine needs to be tested in suitable standards such as including women in research studies and is also allocates a set amount of money to research diseases that are specific towards women. Research has shown that there is a lack of research in autoimmune disease, which mainly affects women. "Despite their prevalence and morbidity, little progress has been made toward a better understanding of those conditions, identifying risk factors, or developing a cure" this article reinforces the progress that still needs to be made. Geo-political forces can improve health, when the country is not at a sense of threat in war there is more funding and resources to focus on other needs, such as women's health. Lastly, professional women not being afraid to talk about women's issues moves women from entering into these jobs and preventing them for just acting as men and instead embracing their concerns for the health of women. These six factors need to be included in order for there to be change in women's health.[[36]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Feminist_movement#cite_note-36)

**Businesses**

Feminist activists have established a range of [feminist businesses](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Feminist_businesses), including women's bookstores, feminist credit unions, feminist presses, feminist mail-order catalogs, and feminist restaurants. These businesses flourished as part of the [second](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Second-wave_feminism) and [third-waves](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Third-wave_feminism) of feminism in the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s.

**3. The Working conditions for Women**

Women in the workforce earning wages or salary are part of a modern phenomenon, one that developed at the same time as the growth of paid employment for men, but women have been challenged by [inequality](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gender_inequality) in the workforce. Until modern times, legal and cultural practices, combined with the inertia of longstanding religious and educational conventions, restricted women's entry and participation in the [workforce](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Workforce). Economic dependency upon men, and consequently the poor [socio-economic status](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Socio-economic_status) of women, have had the same impact, particularly as occupations have become [professionalized](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Professionalization) over the 19th and 20th centuries.

Women's lack of access to [higher education](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Higher_education) had effectively excluded them from the practice of well-paid and high status occupations. Entry of women into the higher professions like [law](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Law) and [medicine](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Medicine) was delayed in most countries due to women being denied entry to universities and qualification for degrees; for example, [Cambridge University](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cambridge_University) only fully validated degrees for women late in 1947, and even then only after much opposition and acrimonious debate.[[2]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Women_in_the_workforce#cite_note-2) Women were largely limited to low-paid and poor status occupations for most of the 19th and 20th centuries, or earned less pay than men for doing the same work. However, through the 20th century, the [labor market](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Labor_market) shifted. [Office work](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Office_work) that does not require heavy labor expanded, and women increasingly acquired the higher education that led to better-compensated, longer-term [careers](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Career) rather than lower-skilled, shorter-term jobs.

The increasing rates of women contributing in the work force has led to a more equal disbursement of [hours worked](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Working_hours) across the regions of the world.[[3]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Women_in_the_workforce#cite_note-3) However, in western European countries the nature of women's employment participation remains markedly different from that of men.

Although access to paying occupations (the "workforce") has been and remains unequal in many occupations and places around the world, scholars sometimes distinguish between "work" and "paying work", including in their analysis a broader spectrum of labor such as uncompensated [household work](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Household_work), childcare, [eldercare](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eldercare), and family [subsistence farming](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Subsistence_farming).

In 2019 around 74.6 million of around 123 million women age 16+ in America are working or looking for work.

Paid employment globally

Women still contribute to their communities in many regions mainly through agricultural work. In Southern Asia, Western Asia, and Africa, only 20% of women work at paid non-agricultural jobs. Worldwide, women's rate of paid employment outside of agriculture grew to 41% by 2008.[[11]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Women_in_the_workforce#cite_note-11)

One of the main forms of paid employment for women worldwide is actually a traditional one, that of the market "hawker". Women have worked outside the home as vendors at markets since ancient times in many parts of the world, such as Central America, South Asia, and Africa.

During the 20th century, the most significant global shift in women's paid employment came from the spread of global travel and the development of a large migrant workforce of women [domestic workers](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Domestic_workers) seeking jobs outside of their native country. The [Philippines](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Philippines) is a major source of female domestic workers. Before the 1990s, the majority of Filipinos working outside the Philippines were male, but by 2012, an estimated 63% of Filipinos working overseas were female.[[12]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Women_in_the_workforce#cite_note-Tubeza-12)

Estimates of Filipino women working overseas are in the millions. Over 138,000 new domestic workers gained permission to work overseas in 2012, a number that grew 12% from the previous year.[[12]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Women_in_the_workforce#cite_note-Tubeza-12) Overseas employment often results in the women leaving their own children behind in the Philippines to be cared for by relatives. Domestic employees from the Philippines and other countries have also been subject to exploitation and sex and money extreme abuse, for example in several countries in the Middle East, where they are often employed. It is estimated that [remittances](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Remittances) from overseas workers (both male and female) bring $1 billion (USD) per month to the Philippines.

**Workforce participation by sector**

Women and men often participate in economic sectors in sharply different proportions, a result of gender clustering in occupations. Reasons for this may include a traditional association of certain types of work with a particular gender. There is a wide range of other possible economic, social and cultural variables that impact the gender distribution in different occupations, including within a region or country. An averaging of statistics gathered by the United Nations for 2004 through 2007 reflects these differences (totals may not add up to 100% due to rounding):

**Sectoral distribution of employed persons, by sector and sex (2004 through 2007)**

More detailed statistics show large differences even within these regions. For example, 11% of employed women in East Asia are employed in agriculture, a number that rises to 55% in South Asia; 70% of women in Southern Africa are employed in the service sector, while in Eastern, Middle, and Western Africa this number is 26%.[[14]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Women_in_the_workforce#cite_note-The_World's_Women_2010-14)

**Occupational dissimilarity index**

Choice of occupation is considered to be one of the key factors contributing to the male-female wage differential. In other words, careers with a majority of female employees tend to pay less than careers that employ a majority of males. This is different from direct wage discrimination within occupations, as males in the female dominated professions will also make lower than average wages and the women in the ]r for the wage differential to disappear. In 1960, the dimilarity index for the United Statnal Women's Trade Union League (WTUL) is established to advocate for improved wages and working conditions for women. In 1920 The Women's Bureau of the Department of Labor was formed to create equal rights and a safe workplace for women.[[15]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Women_in_the_workforce#cite_note-15) In 1956 a group called Financial Women's Association (FWA), was formed. It is an orgadustry with special emphasis on the role and development of women, to attain greater recognition for women's achievements in business, and to encourage women to seek career opportunities in finance and business.[[16]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Women_in_the_workforce#cite_note-DiversityBestPractices-16) In 1966 the National Organization for Women (NOW) was founded by a group of feminists including Betty Friedan. The largest women's rights group in the U.S., NOW seeks to end sexual discrimination, especially in the workplace, by means of legislative lobbying, litigation, and public demonstrations. NOW has 500,000 contributing members and 550 chapters in all 50 states and the District of Columbia.[[17]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Women_in_the_workforce#cite_note-17) Founded in 1972, the National Association of Female Executives (NAFE) provides education, networking and public advocacy to empower its members to achieve career success and financial security. Members are women executives, business owners, entrepreneurs and others who are committed to NAFE's mission: the advancement of women in the workplace.[[16]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Women_in_the_workforce#cite_note-DiversityBestPractices-16) Many of these organizations led to legal action and protecting women's rights as workers and empowered women in the workplace.

**Laws protecting women's rights as workers**

International laws protecting women's rights as workers exist through the efforts of various international bodies. On June 16, 2011, the [International Labour Organization](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/International_Labour_Organization) (ILO) passed C189 [Domestic Workers Convention, 2011](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Convention_on_Domestic_Workers), binding signatories to regulations intended to end abuses of migrant domestic workers. It was anticipated that the Convention would put pressure on non-ratifying countries to support changes to their own laws to meet the change in international standards protecting domestic workers.[[18]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Women_in_the_workforce#cite_note-18) Also in 2011, Hong Kong's High Court struck down a law preventing domestic workers from having residency rights granted to other foreign workers, a move that affected an estimated 100,000 domestic workers in Hong Kong.[[19]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Women_in_the_workforce#cite_note-19)

The ILO has previously ratified the [Equal Remuneration Convention](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Equal_Remuneration_Convention) in 1951, which came into force in 1953, the [Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Discrimination_(Employment_and_Occupation)_Convention), which went into force in 1960 and the [Maternity Protection Convention, 2000](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maternity_Protection_Convention,_2000), which went into force in 2002. In 1966, the [United Nations General Assembly](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_Nations_General_Assembly) adopted the [International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/International_Covenant_on_Economic,_Social_and_Cultural_Rights), which went into force in 1976. [UNESCO](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/UNESCO) also adopted the [Convention against Discrimination in Education](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Convention_against_Discrimination_in_Education) in 1960, which came into force in 1962.[[20]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Women_in_the_workforce#cite_note-20) The [International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/International_Convention_on_the_Protection_of_the_Rights_of_All_Migrant_Workers_and_Members_of_Their_Families), adopted by the United Nations General Assembly, went into force in 2003. The [Home Work Convention](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Home_Work_Convention), adopted by the ILO, went into force in 2000;the Convention protects the rights of persons doing paid work out of their home, which is frequently women workers. It offers equal protection regarding working conditions, safety, remuneration, social security protection, access to training, minimum age of employment, and maternity protection.[[21]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Women_in_the_workforce#cite_note-21)

[Human trafficking](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Human_trafficking) often targets young women who are abducted and sent outside their own country to work as domestic workers, often in conditions of extreme exploitation. A number of international laws have been ratified to address human trafficking of women and children.

Maternity protection measures are put in place to insure that women will not be discriminated against in the workplace once they return from having a child. They should also not be exposed to any health hazards while they are pregnant and at work. They are allowed time off for maternity leave as well, which allows them to bond with their child; this aspect of development is crucial for infants to gain proper attachment skills. Employers are expected to hold to these policies. Yet many women on maternity leave receive very small amounts of time off to allow for their health along with their babies' health. The amount of time allowed for maternity leave as well as the pay for maternity leave varies by country, with Sweden having the longest amount off with 68 weeks and the United States being one of the worst, with the typical period being 12 weeks without pay.

## Women in workforce leadership

Female decision-makers from around Europe are organized in several national and European wide networks. The networks aim to promote women in decision-making positions in politics and the economy across Europe. These networks were founded in the 1980s and are often very different from the "service clubs" founded in the early days of the century, like Soroptimist and Zontas.

"Women in Management" is about women in business in usually male-dominated areas. Their motivation, their ideas and leadership styles and their ability to enter into leadership positions is the subject of most of the different networks.

As of 2009, women represented 20.9% of parliament in Europe (both houses) and 18.4% world average.[[23]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Women_in_the_workforce#cite_note-23)

As of 2009, 90 women serve in the U.S. Congress: 18 women serve in the Senate, and 73 women serve in the House Women hold about three percent of executive positions.[[24]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Women_in_the_workforce#cite_note-24)

In the private sector, men still represent 9 out of 10 board members in European blue-chip companies, The discrepancy is widest at the very top: only 3% of these companies have a woman presiding over the highest decision-making body.

List of members of the [European Network of Women in Decision-making in Politics and the Economy](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=European_Network_of_Women_in_Decision-making_in_Politics_and_the_Economy&action=edit&redlink=1):

* Committee of Women Elected Representatives of Local and Regional Authorities (Council of European Municipalities and Regions)
* BPW Europe, Business and Professional Women – Europe
* [Association of Organisations of Mediterranean Businesswomen](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Association_of_Organisations_of_Mediterranean_Businesswomen&action=edit&redlink=1)
* [Eurochambres](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eurochambres) Women's Network
* [European Platform of Women Scientists](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/European_Platform_of_Women_Scientists)
* Network of Parliamentary Committees for Equal Opportunities for Women and Men in the European Union
* [European Network to Promote Women's Entrepreneurship](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=European_Network_to_Promote_Women%27s_Entrepreneurship&action=edit&redlink=1)
* [European Women's Lobby](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/European_Women%27s_Lobby)
* [European Women's Lawyers Association](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=European_Women%27s_Lawyers_Association&action=edit&redlink=1)
* CEE Network for Gender Issues
* [European Women Inventors and Innovators Network](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=European_Women_Inventors_and_Innovators_Network&action=edit&redlink=1)
* [European Women's Management Development International Network](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=European_Women%27s_Management_Development_International_Network&action=edit&redlink=1), EWMD
* [Femanet – Eurocadres](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Femanet_%E2%80%93_Eurocadres&action=edit&redlink=1)
* [European Professional Women's Network](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=European_Professional_Women%27s_Network&action=edit&redlink=1), EPWN
* [Women's Forum for the Economy and the Society](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Women%27s_Forum_for_the_Economy_and_the_Society&action=edit&redlink=1)

The European Union Commission has created a platform for all these networks. It also funded the [Women to the Top](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Women_to_the_Top) program in 2003–2005 to bring more women into top management.[[25]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Women_in_the_workforce#cite_note-25)

Some organizations have been created to promote the presence of women in top responsibilities, in politics and business. One example is EWMD European Women's Management Development (cited above), a European and international network of individual and corporate members, drawn from professional organisations. Members are from all areas of business, education, politics and culture.

Women who are born into the upper class rather than the middle or lower class have a much better chance at holding higher positions of [power](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Power_(social_and_political)) in the work force if they choose to enter it.[[*citation needed*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Citation_needed)] According to a study published 2015, of the women who held C-suite jobs in the U.S., 94% played [competitive sports](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Competitive_sports), 52% at a university level.[[26]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Women_in_the_workforce#cite_note-26)

## Barriers to equal participation

As [gender roles](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gender_role) have followed the formation of agricultural and then industrial societies, newly developed [professions](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Profession) and fields of occupation have been frequently inflected by gender. Some of the ways in which gender affects a field include:

* Prohibitions or restrictions on members of a particular gender entering a field or studying a field
* [Discrimination](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Discrimination) within a field, including wage, management, and prestige hierarchies
* Expectation that mothers, rather than fathers, should be the primary childcare providers

Note that these gender restrictions may not be universal in time and place, and that they operate to restrict both men and women. However, in practice, norms and laws have historically restricted women's access to particular occupations;civil rights laws and cases have thus primarily focused on equal access to and participation by *women* in the workforce. These barriers may also be manifested in hidden bias and by means of many [microinequities](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Microinequities" \o "Microinequities).

Many women face issues with sexual abuse while working in agriculture fields as well. Many of the women who work in these fields are undocumented and so supervisors or other male workers may take advantage of that. These women may suffer sexual abuse in order to keep their jobs and they cannot report the incident to the police because the fact that they are documented will be brought up and may be deported.

### Access to education and training

A number of occupations became "[professionalized](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Professionalization)" through the 19th and 20th centuries, gaining regulatory bodies, and passing laws or regulations requiring particular [higher educational](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Higher_education) requirements. As women's access to higher education was often limited, this effectively restricted women's participation in these professionalizing occupations. For instance, women were completely forbidden access to [Cambridge University](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cambridge_University) until 1868, and were encumbered with a variety of restrictions until 1987 when the university adopted an equal opportunity policy.[[27]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Women_in_the_workforce#cite_note-27) Numerous other institutions in the United States and Western Europe began opening their doors to women over the same period of time, but access to higher education remains a significant barrier to women's full participation in the workforce in developing countries. Even where access to higher education is formally available, women's access to the full range of occupational choices is significantly limited where access to primary education is limited through social custom.[[28]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Women_in_the_workforce#cite_note-UNICEF-2007-28)

### Access to capital

Women's access to occupations requiring capital outlays is also hindered by their unequal access (statistically) to capital;this affects occupations such as entrepreneur and small business owner, farm ownership, and investor.[[29]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Women_in_the_workforce#cite_note-29) Numerous [microloan](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Microloan) programs attempt to redress this imbalance, targeting women for loans or grants to establish start-up businesses or farms, having determined that aid targeted to women can disproportionately benefit a nation's economy.[[30]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Women_in_the_workforce#cite_note-Northoff-2004-30) While research has shown that women cultivate more than half the world's food in sub-Saharan Africa and the Caribbean, women are responsible for up to 80% of food production most such work is family subsistence labor, and often the family property is legally owned by the men in the family.

### Discrimination within occupations

[Statistical discrimination](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Statistical_discrimination_(economics)) in the workplace is unintentional discrimination based on the presumed probability that a worker will or will not remain with the company for a long period of time. Specific to women, since employers believe that women are more likely to drop out of the labor force to have kids, or work part-time while they are raising kids, this tends to hurt their chances for job advancement. They are passed up for promotions because of the possibility that they may leave, and are in some cases placed in positions with little opportunity for upward mobility to begin with based on these same stereotypes.[[32]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Women_in_the_workforce#cite_note-32)

Women continue to earn less money than men, despite establishing equal pay laws.

According to the textbook *Race, Class, and Gender: An Anthology*, women are at a higher risk of financial disadvantage in modern-day society than men. Statistical findings suggest that women are under paid for similar jobs men complete despite having the same qualifications. The statistical data collected by the U.S. Department of Labor suggests that women are discriminated against in the workforce based on gender. The textbook reads, “Women’s wages are also more volatile than men’s wages, and women face a much higher risk of seeing large drops in income than do men” (Kennedy 2008). Anderson clearly demonstrates a significant difference between men and women in the workforce in regards to pay. Women are left more exposed to financial devastation and unemployment. The textbook also mentions that women are often give public positions versus private or leadership positions despite having appropriate work experience, higher education, or necessary skills to qualify. According to the Joint Economic Committee, “Among women heading families, the unemployment rate has grown and is higher than the national unemployment rate and twice as high as that for either married men or married women” (Joint Economic Committee, 2009). In other words, unmarried women who are the head of household are more vulnerable to financial disadvantage than married men or women. The unemployment rate of women compared to men suggests that single women are discriminated against based on gender. Anderson writes, “All women are disproportionately at risk in the current foreclosure crisis, since women are 32% more likely than men to have subprime mortgages (One-third of women, compared to one-fourth of men, have subprime mortgages; and, the disparity between women and men increases in higher income brackets)”.The statistical information illustrates the dramatic difference between men and women in regards to finances. It can be inferred that men are favored in the workforce over women. Women are discriminated against based on their gender and thus are more likely to struggle financially because of discriminatory employers.

Sex differentiation focuses on separating men and women in the workplace from different settings and duties, and it leads to the idea of [sex segregation](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sex_segregation).[[34]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Women_in_the_workforce#cite_note-:1-34) Explanations for sex segregation fall under two main categories of cultural beliefs and men's efforts to preserve their advantages in the workplace. Cultural beliefs about gender and work emphasize sex stereotypes. Certain cultures value these sex stereotypes, assumptions about individuals based on sex, which leads to stereotype thinking about the genders. Jobs become labeled male or female when these sex stereotypes relate to the sexes. Cultural beliefs for sexes lays out the inequality at work women face. In Western and Eastern cultures, men are believed to be superior to women, leading to sex inequality in job duties, authority, and pay. Women are seen as requiring protection and care, and it takes away their opportunities at many jobs.[[34]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Women_in_the_workforce#cite_note-:1-34)

Another explanation of sex inequality is that the dominant group will preserve their position, such as men's efforts to preserve their advantages in the workplace. If women are capable of taking on the duties of male dominated jobs, especially “macho” jobs, then men's masculinity will no longer be a requirement. Women gaining equality in the workforce threatens undermining men's privileges in any other realm they wish, such as authority, family, or political life.[[35]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Women_in_the_workforce#cite_note-35) Sometimes the solution men choose is to try to drive the women out of the job.