

IDEAS 61

**International Online Teachers Society
Debate
Educational Materials For
Advance and Upper Intermediate
Students**



**International Online Teachers Society
Publishing Committee**



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THE 61st INTERNATIONAL ONLINE TEACHERS SOCIETY ESSAY CONTEST

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HEY SISTAH, THIS IS FOR YOU!

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Feminism has indeed gone a long way. Women nowadays have been able to gain equal footing with their male counterparts, with many of them holding highly-responsible and important positions in government, entertainment, employment, and many other significant aspects of living. We have had female presidents, female prime ministers, female heads of state, female corporate leaders. Indeed, women have ceased to be just objects of fantasy. Women have been able to claim their place in a world originally dominated by we-men.

We have sisters who enjoy power dressing and power tripping just as immensely as their male counterparts. We are no longer just bringers of light and gatekeepers of hearth and home. We have come unto our own.

The road that feminism took has been long and winding.

Our sisters back then could not enjoy the same privileges that we have now. Yet, many of them struggled and dared to raise their voices against prevailing inequality, choosing to bring forth their rightful indignation against patent gender issues directly affecting women. Thanks to the support of their male counterparts, women now hold equal importance in holding up half of the sky and even half of the universe.

In my country, the right to suffrage was voted upon in a men-only plebiscite in 1937. Thankfully, our brothers voted to adopt the law, not against it. (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Philippine_women_suffrage_plebiscite_1937). In the US, women's suffrage was achieved sometime between the late 19th and the early 20th centuries (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Women's_suffrage_in_the_United_States). Women's suffrage was adopted as a right under the Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women by the UN (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Women's_suffrage).

Back in college, I remember one female professor who absolutely refused to be called "Doctora", her rationale being that no such word exists in the English language. She had a right to be called "Doctor" just as equally as her male counterparts. I have always believed she was right. "Doktora" exists in my language but spelled with a "K", not a "C".

What serves as a dampener to it all has been the fact that preconceived notions about the female of the species still abound. Women are more reckless drivers. Women indulge in raunchier talk when they are together. Women commit more terrible crimes. This is the age of enlightened, thinking people. Women can't and don't appreciate such concepts.

Consider the concepts of the words "Imeldific" and "bobbitize" as acceptable entries in dictionaries. Although they refer to less palatable meanings, they certainly do not accurately portray what women generally are. And why do majority of tropical storms carry women's names? I'm sure some wisecracks out there will argue that it is because of the natural tendency of women to have ever-changing moods.

Well, I guess such instances are fine, considering that we already have widely-used words like "beautiful boy" and "metrosexual" as perfectly acceptable.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION:

1. What are your thoughts on gender equality?
2. To what extent should feminism be espoused?
3. What makes feminism a problem instead of a solution?
4. What do you think of proposals to accept "non-natural females" or trans-genders in beauty pageants?
5. Should women be accepted in the army? The priesthood? Why or why not?



TALES FROM THE FEMALE SIDE

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Feminism is a movement to gain equality between men and women in a world mostly run by males. There was a time when the movement was very aggressively taken, but I guess I was just too young to comprehend it all. However, seeing as how women nowadays have somehow been able to gain equality with (and even superiority to) their male counterparts, we can conclude that the movement has found its purpose.

Feminists have been variously labeled as furious lesbians or angry gay rights activists. That's a rather spiteful way of seeing the movement, but everyone's entitled to their own opinions just as equally as the next person. To each his own, that's my side. No side is the wrong side. Feminists have their right to voice their opinions too. Taking to the streets to be heard is fine, as long as the natural patterns of our lives do not get unduly disturbed. Pity the children we leave behind just so we can put our cause forward. Maybe, that's a feminist way of making everyone see just how important females are. But what sticks is the fact that children have to suffer just so their moms can be a part of this or that feminist movement.

Females have a right to be heard, too. We have a right to become leaders and captains of our own fate. But we already have great rights now. Why push for more and become a larger part of the problems in society? Don't we have enough on our plates?

I'm sure many feminists will persist to argue that women still do not have enough. Remember that the line that divides enough and too much can often be very thin, too imperceptible to make a difference. The land of the Amazons is in mythology; it doesn't exist on the streets and in our houses.

This comes from a mother who has had her share of fatherhood for nearly six years. It's not easy being both a father and a mother to your kids. There are just too many responsibilities involved. But I have found the experience truly noble and great. You learn new things everyday, develop capabilities that you wouldn't have been aware of if you still had a male partner. But unless this is misconstrued as an encouragement to murder your spouse, let me stop there. Having a partner will still be an easier way to make most of life's journey.

Every day, let us ask ourselves as women: what do we really want in life? When we find the answer/s, let us reflect on whether the partners we have by our side have contributed to the self-fulfillment we all seek. Let us not forget that we have a right to have self-identity apart from those partners. We can be somebody without somebody else always propping us up.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION:

1. Are you able to be the best you can be without a partner? Why or why not?
2. What makes feminism overly aggressive, in your opinion?
3. What substantial gains has feminism brought to society at large?
4. What are other sensible feminist reforms that need to be looked into in society, if any?

How can feminists push for reforms in a more acceptable manner?



HOLDING UP HALF THE SKY

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The feminist movement has always been active in countries like the United States and the United Kingdom. Even cartoons glorify the efforts of feminists who fight for equality in societies where men are considered the stronger sex while women are well, the weaker sex. That has been tempered down by a more respectful address for women as the “fairer sex”.

It has long been felt by feminists everywhere that women are at a less-significant position in society. Centuries before, women were relegated to duties at home: cooking, cleaning, laundry, having babies. I even have a historical romance book where the women swooned and fainted because of the heat, nervousness, or some such silly reason. I recall one of my aunts fainting during one particular occasion in my childhood, all because she was pretty upset about something that I have forgotten what.

Nowadays, we have had thousands (maybe even millions) of females completing undergraduate and graduate studies. We’ve had female bosses and employers, who call the shots at the workplace just as capably as male bosses and employers. Females now are able to run companies just as well as entire countries, with some even commanders of battalions or perhaps even whole armies. Women have ceased being just images of desire and the unreachable other side of the moon, because women have succeeded in reaching for their elusive dreams and even the other side of the moon.

Back in high school, there was this sexy star that was acknowledged not only for her perfect figure, but was also applauded for having become a female pilot. Yes guys, she was a certified pilot, and she has lived a full life. Females are also capable of doing that, you know.

Fortunately for today’s women, we are now given real choices to be our own person. Of course wives still have to subject themselves to their husbands, often playing supporting roles. But we have been able to hold up not only half of the sky but half of the world capably, and how! Many women have proven themselves powerful and inspirational leaders in their time, able to enjoy the privileges of being in control of their worlds and in total domination of their own lives.

Feminism has evolved from just being a movement to a perfectly acceptable component of society. Numerous laws have been passed that encourage greater gender sensitivity and female participation in more community units like the workforce. Women just can’t be rejected for a job anymore simply because they’re female.

However, amidst all the accolades for the victories that women have achieved and the numerous ways by which women have become a strong contributing factor to society, women should never forget their true calling: to be nurturing to the ones entrusted to their care. That’s why we carry higher body fat percentages, remember.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION:

1. What is the purpose of women on earth? Elaborate on your answer/s.
2. Why do you think feminism became a movement?
3. What are the various differences between women of yesteryears and women of today? Be as specific as needed.
4. How has feminism influenced society?
5. Will you support a movement to uphold male domination in society? Why or why not?



A HAPPY FEMINIST

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I can attest to the fact that nowadays, a lot of women are a happy feminist. People at times have a wrong notion of a feminist. There are even myths about feminists being bitter and unhappy. Another part of that myth comes from the fact...

that most of the writing that you see on the web is their activists writing. They forget or did not consider the criticism of that fact as to what do they do if they are not being activist. Of course they live their lives.

What's a happy feminist all about? Feminist have their own hobbies, families, and jobs. They also enjoy books and movies too. They do all their many obligations like cooking, cleaning, gardening and they definitely worry about money too. They even try to figure out how to have their free or leisure time in taking time out of all these "hulabaloo" of life. A feminist can be also identified as a single mother, a wife, a working mother, a social worker, a low corporate employee, a writer, unemployed or even the underemployed.

Some feminists actually enjoy reading about fashion, cooking, and home decorating. Others also enjoy modern arts, theater, or even ballet. Some wants a nice drink, a warm bed or all of the above. As for me I believe that a happy feminist still enjoys the comforts of being a woman at home taking care of her family and at the same time makes her stand regarding male supremacy. When you say a happy feminist, it doesn't necessarily mean that their life is perfect.

In general, feminists are and can be happy because of the fact that they wouldn't exchange their families for anything else. They would love to work for a living but at the same time give quality time to their loved ones too. Time and perseverance play an important factor for a happy feminist to be catered to. These feminists are able to make compromises even if it will take them to go out of their homes and work for the good of their families. They are not even worried going through all over these things in their life.

Given the right opportunities and treating women like me with equality are the only premises why a happy feminist can travail for. A happy feminist would definitely like to be made as a part of the progress in our society which would also mean contributing a lot in the business and entrepreneurial sector. After all, feminists are people and this is true of all activists, regardless of the brand of their activism. Every activist out there, no matter what is fighting for the right to live her life, the right to make the choices she wants and the right to live the life that she wants to live. Each of us has a life of its own to live and this is the point of what activism is all about and is doing to a happy feminist.

Questions for discussion:

1. What is a happy feminist all about? Explain your answer.
2. How can you describe a happy feminist?
3. Would you easily figure out a happy feminist? How?
4. What are the true marks of a happy feminist?
5. Can you identify a feminist when you see one? Why or why not?



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