

How and why did the women's rights movement develop?

Learning Objectives: To identify how women were viewed in society and to establish the reasons why the women's movement emerged

Key Terms, Events, Names: Betty Friedan, Feminine Mystique, Eleanor Roosevelt, NOW, Women's Liberation Movement, Equal Pay Act 1963, Civil Rights Act 1964, Education Amendment Act 1972



I see, I think, I wonder

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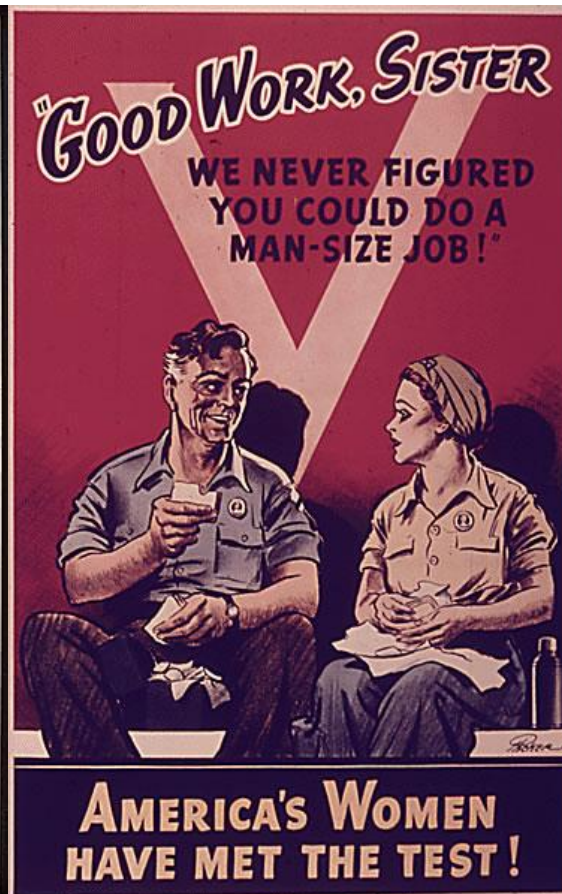
Position of Women Pre-WW2

- Before WW2, American women had a traditional role as **wives and mothers**. There were few career opportunities except in typically 'female' professions such as **teaching, nursing or secretarial work**.
- The 1920s had seen progress for women as women began to wear more daring clothes, some smoked and drank with men and even kissed in public!
- In 1921, women over 20 were given **the vote**.



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Position of Women



How are the views of women different in these three posters?

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The Effect of the War 1941-1945

- In 1941, women made a **huge contribution** to the war effort working in typically male jobs.
- Women in employment rose from **12 million in 1940** to **18.5 million in 1945**.
- 300,000 served in the **armed forces**.
- 1940 – Women make up **19% of workforce**
- 1950 – Women make up **28.8% of workforce**

Review Source A, B & C on pg.
102-103 and complete Qu. 3.



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Lack of Progress after the War

However there was still a **lack of progress**:

1. Majority of women **willingly gave up** their jobs after the war and returned to traditional roles.
2. Women were **excluded** from the top well-paid jobs.
3. Women, on average, **earned 50-60 per cent** of the wage that men earned.
4. Women could **be dismissed** from their job when they married.



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Position of Women post-WW2

- After the war, the media encouraged women to return to their **traditional family roles**.
- Women who went out to work instead of getting married were **treated with great suspicion** by the rest of society.
- One book, *Modern Women: the lost Sex*, even blamed the social problems of the 1950s on **career women**!



How far do the sources on the next 3 slides support the view that the women's role was in the home



“Don't worry
darling, you
didn't burn
the beer!”



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Position of Women post-WW2

“Whether you are a man or woman, the family is the unit to which you most genuinely belong. The family is the centre of your living. If it isn't, you've gone astray.”

Source D: From The Woman's Guide to Better Living, written in the 1950s

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Position of Women post-WW2

Reynolds: The theatre's all right, but its only temporary.

Sinatra: Are you thinking of something else?

Reynolds: Marriage, I hope. A career is just fine, but it's no substitute for marriage. Don't you think a man is just the most important thing in the world? A woman isn't a woman until she's been married and had children.

Source E: From the 1955 film The Tender Trap – a conversation between two of the leading characters in the film, Debbie Reynolds and Frank Sinatra

Why did the women's movement emerge?



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1. Rising Expectations

- Women from middle-class backgrounds became **increasingly frustrated** with life as a housewife.
- WW2 had shown women what they could do and many resented having to leave their jobs for the **returning soldiers**.



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2. Education

- Women became **more educated** as more families enjoyed **bigger incomes**. In 1950, there were 721,000 women at university.
- By 1960, this had reached **1.3 million**. Education gave women the **confidence** and **aspirations** to forge their own career paths.



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3. Employment

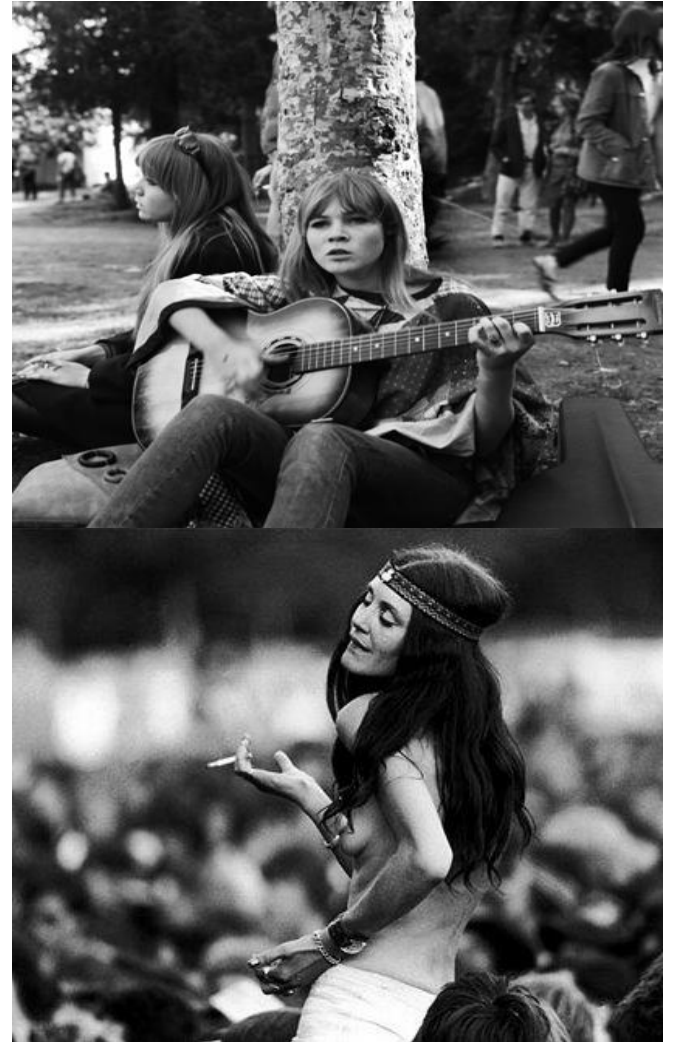
- Despite **post-war sexist attitudes**, the number of women in employment actually **went up!** Women were seen as **cheap**, often **part-time sources** of labour.
- In 1950, women made up 29% of the workforce. This had reached 50% by 1960. This gave more women **financial freedom**.



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4. The Hippy Movement

- Many female teenagers were strongly influenced by the greater freedom of the 1960s and its growing **counter culture**.
- This encouraged women to **challenge traditional attitudes and roles**.



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5. The Contraceptive Pill

- The contraceptive pill gave females much **greater choice** about when or whether to have children.
- This could be prevented or postponed whilst a women **pursued her career.**



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Influential Women

In pairs, create a profile of the two women below. Who were they? What were their roles in the women's protest movement? What were their greatest achievements in the women's protest movement?



Betty Friedan



Eleanor Roosevelt

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6. Eleanor Roosevelt

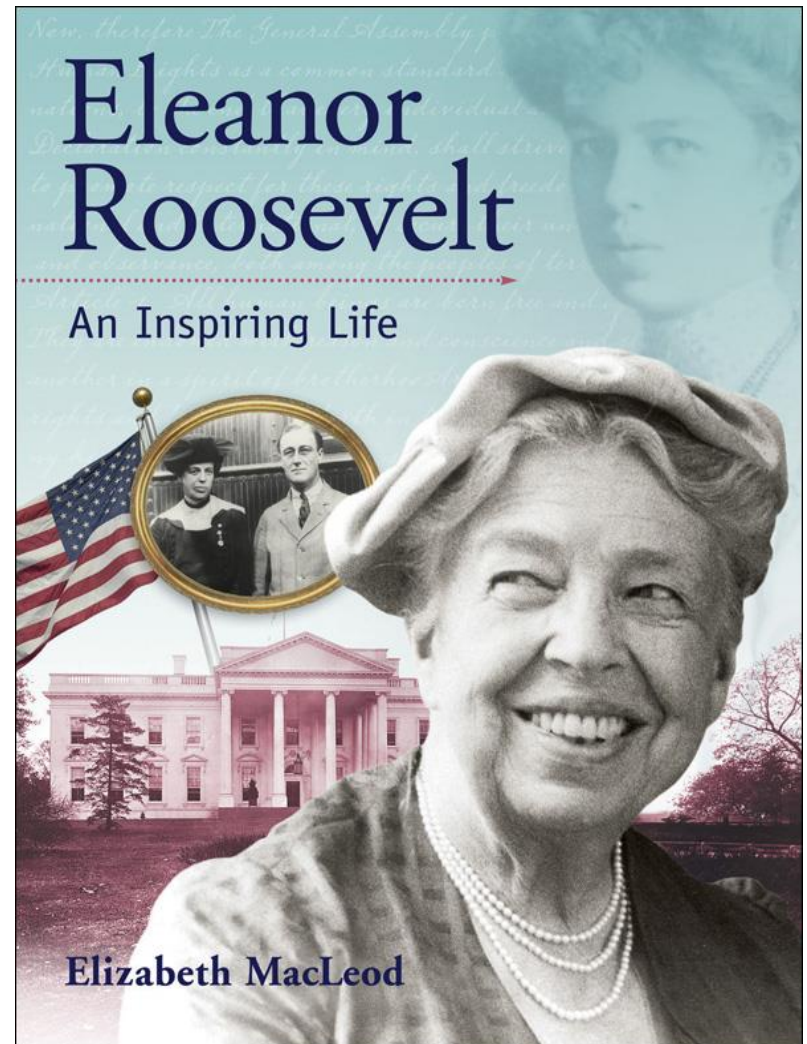
- Eleanor was the widow of President Roosevelt (1933-45) and she campaigned tirelessly for women's rights since the 1920s.
- Her position meant she **attracted publicity** and she could encourage women working by holding **women only press conferences**.



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6. Eleanor Roosevelt

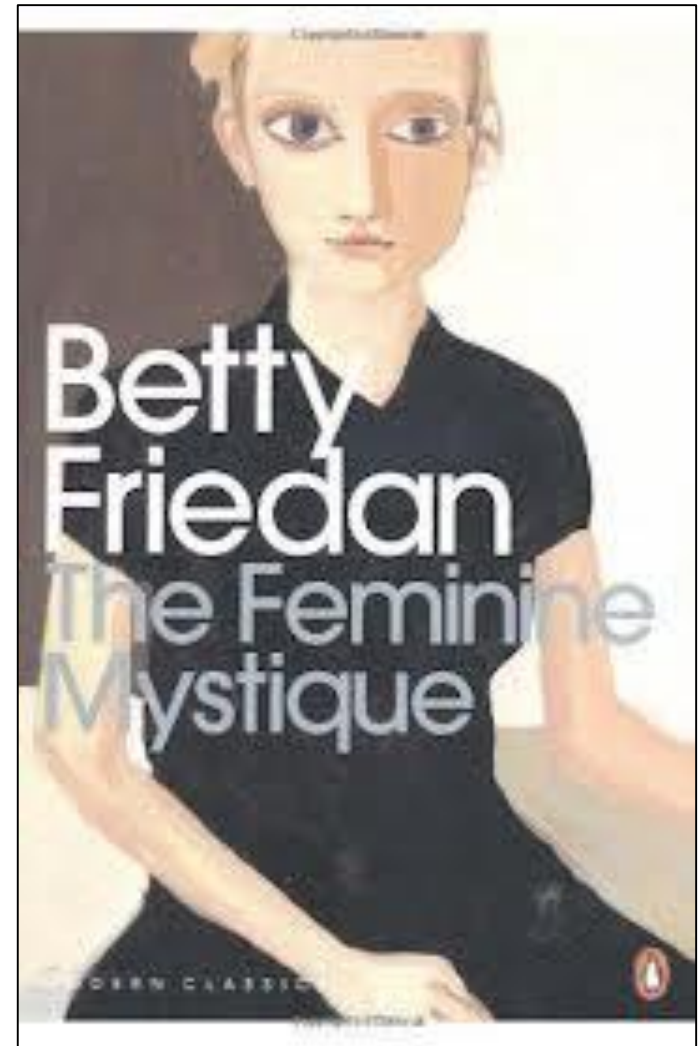
- Her campaigns made the idea of the working women **more acceptable** to many people. In 1960 she persuaded JFK to **set up a commission** to investigate the status of women at work. She was appointed Chair.



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7. Betty Friedan

- Betty was an author who's 1963 book, ***The Feminine Mystique***, expressed the thoughts of many women – there was more to life than being a mother and housewife.
- She was important because she called for women **to reject their traditional roles**. She went on to set-up the **National Organisation for Women (NOW)** in 1966.



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8. NOW

- In June 1966, Betty Friedan and others set-up the **National Organisation for Women (NOW)** as a women's civil rights group.
- It's aim was to bring women into 'full participation in American society now, with all its **privileges and responsibilities**, in truly **equal partnership** with men'.
- NOW campaigned for women's rights across the USA.

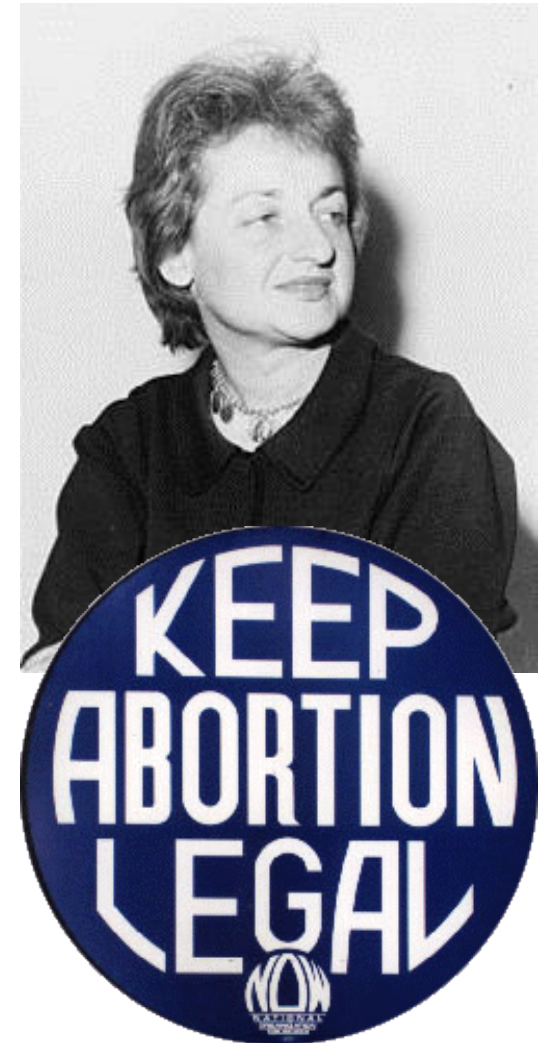


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8. NOW

NOWs main aims were:

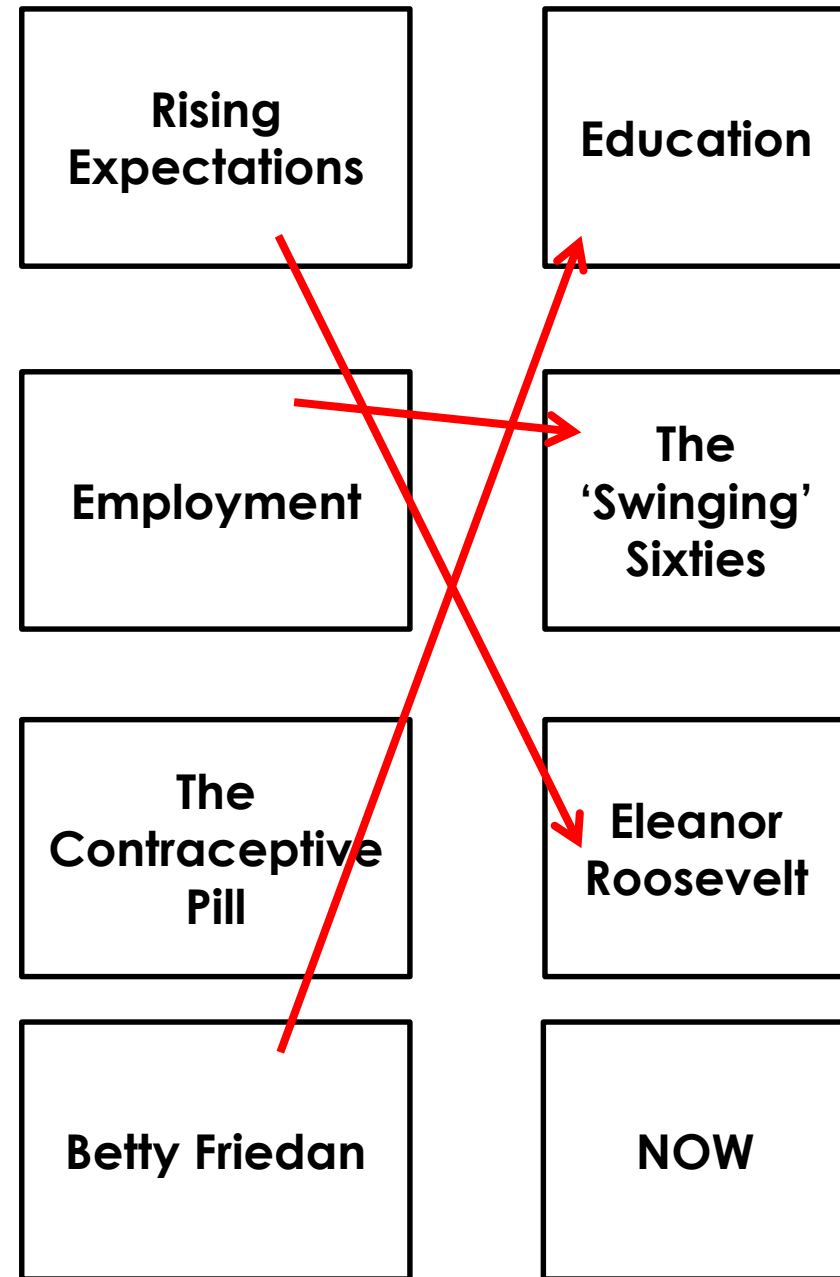
1. Equal Rights in the constitution
2. Law banning sex discrimination in the workplace
3. Maternity Leave Rights
4. Child day care centres
5. Equal education
6. The right of women to control their reproductive rights.



Linking Causes

A key skill in history is being able to explain how causes are linked.

1. Arrange each of the causes on your sheet of paper in clockwise order of which you feel was the greatest cause of the women's protest movement.
2. Now draw lines connecting the causes that are linked.
3. Explain briefly next to each line why they are linked.





You mean a woman can open it?

If your husband ever finds out *you're not "store-testing" for fresher coffee...*

*... if he discovers you're
still taking chances
on getting flat, stale coffee
... woe be unto you!*

*For today
there's a sure
and certain way
to test for freshness
before you buy*

