

International Women's Day

Pre-Reading

A. Warm-Up Questions

1. When is International Women's Day?
2. What is the main purpose of this day?
3. Do women face inequalities in your country?
4. What do you think this year's focus will be for women?

B. Vocabulary Preview

Match up as many words and meanings as you can.
Check this exercise again after seeing the words in context on page 2.

- | | |
|---------------------|--|
| ___ 1. struggle | a) material, cloth |
| ___ 2. achievement | b) money earned from work |
| ___ 3. progress | c) ending, getting rid of, having no more |
| ___ 4. originate | d) different |
| ___ 5. anniversary | e) a fight |
| ___ 6. textile | f) the start (of a war, fire, disease, etc.) |
| ___ 7. garment | g) ending the use of weapons (guns, bombs, etc.) |
| ___ 8. wage | h) success |
| ___ 9. link | i) a piece of clothing |
| ___ 10. varied | j) to come from, to have as a beginning |
| ___ 11. elimination | k) around the world |
| ___ 12. poverty | l) moving forward, improving, getting better |
| ___ 13. violence | m) the state of being poor |
| ___ 14. disarmament | n) the yearly return of the date of an event |
| ___ 15. global | o) great physical force |
| ___ 16. outbreak | p) to join together |





Reading

1. Every year on March 8, International Women's Day is celebrated by millions of women throughout the world. This day provides the opportunity to remember the **struggles** of women throughout history as well as the **achievements** they have made. Marches, demonstrations, concerts, films, and conferences take place to recognize the **progress** women have made in obtaining equality and also to assess the problems that many women around the world still face today.
2. International Women's Day **originated** at an international congress in 1910 in Copenhagen, Denmark. Women from 17 different countries attended the congress. At that congress, a woman from Germany named Clara Zetkin suggested setting aside a day each year that would be dedicated to fighting for equal rights for women all over the world. Zetkin proposed March 8 as this day because this was the **anniversary** of the first protest march against the terrible working conditions of **textile** and **garment** workers in New York City in 1857. At that time, many of the garment workers lived in crowded tenement houses and worked in firetrap sweatshops for very long hours and very low **wages**. These conditions pushed many women to begin to fight for their political rights, the right to vote, and improved working conditions. Their enthusiasm gave life to the entire movement for women's rights.
3. When Clara Zetkin first suggested making an International Women's Day, there were already signs of the **outbreak** of World War I. For that reason, she called on women everywhere to **link** their fight for equal rights with a fight to preserve international peace. Since that time, women's concerns have grown broader and more **varied**. From the principal demands for better working conditions and the right to vote, the focus has now turned to issues such as equal pay for equal work, equal opportunities for education and training, improved day care and health services, **global disarmament**, and the **elimination** of **poverty**, discrimination, and **violence** against women.
4. In 1977, the United Nations General Assembly passed a resolution inviting every country to proclaim March 8 a United Nations Day for Women's Rights and International Peace. Since then, March 8 has grown to become a truly international celebration.
5. While International Women's Day is now celebrated in nearly every country of the world, the form and content of the celebration varies from country to country. In some countries, it is celebrated as an official national holiday and is used to show respect for the role played by women in society as mothers, workers, and citizens. In some places, the day is observed much like Mother's Day, with women receiving gifts and flowers. As well as being a day to recognize the progress women have made in their struggle for equal rights and world peace, many people use this day as an opportunity to raise awareness and money for disadvantaged women around the world. While a great deal has already been accomplished, there is still much to do.



Comprehension

Practice asking and answering the following questions with your partner. Then write the answers in your notebook.

1. What do people remember on International Women's Day?
2. What types of events take place on this day?
3. Where did International Women's Day originate?
4. Why did Clara Zetkin choose March 8 as the date for International Women's Day?
5. What was life like for the New York garment workers in the mid-19th century?
6. How did International Women's Day become associated with the fight to preserve world peace?
7. What types of issues does International Women's Day focus on now?
8. What role did the United Nations play in making International Women's Day a truly international celebration?
9. How is International Women's Day similar to Mother's Day in some countries?
10. How are disadvantaged women throughout the world helped by this special day?



Vocabulary Practice

1. March 8 is a day that is dedicated to the fight for equal rights for women everywhere.
 - a) described in detail
 - b) demanded by many people
 - c) set apart for a definitive purpose
2. March 8 was the date of the first protest march against terrible working conditions.
 - a) meeting in a government building
 - b) demonstration to show objection or opposition
 - c) discussion about the pros and cons
3. Many of the garment workers lived in crowded tenement houses.
 - a) tents in a campground
 - b) cabins in a forest
 - c) large buildings used by many families
4. They worked in firetrap sweatshops for very long hours and very low wages.
 - a) sweater factories
 - b) exercise studios
 - c) factories with terrible working conditions
5. Their principal demands were better working conditions and the right to vote.
 - a) demonstrations
 - b) what they wanted most
 - c) the least important
6. Their enthusiasm gave life to the entire movement for women's rights.
 - a) strike
 - b) excitement
 - c) entertainment
7. The focus now is on issues such as the elimination of poverty and discrimination.
 - a) attention
 - b) camera
 - c) money
8. One of the important issues is the elimination of discrimination against women.
 - a) crime and punishment
 - b) unfair treatment
 - c) fighting
9. March 8 is a day to raise awareness of the problems facing many women today.
 - a) make money for
 - b) teach people about
 - c) have a protest about
10. March 8 is a day to raise money for disadvantaged women around the world.
 - a) being in a bad situation
 - b) not working
 - c) being far away



Pair Work (Student A)

A. Sharing Information

You and your partner each have some different facts and figures about women around the world. Read your information and then work with your partner to complete the questions in Part B.

Facts & Figures

Women's Leadership Roles, Voting Rights, and Economic Positions as of 2006

Did You Know...?

1. In 1893, New Zealand became the first country to grant equal voting rights to women.
2. In 2006, out of 180 countries, only 11 had elected women as heads of state or government. These 11 countries included Chile, New Zealand, Mozambique, Finland, Liberia, Ireland, Philippines, Germany, South Korea, Jamaica, and Latvia.
3. In 2006, only three countries had female governor generals: Canada, the Bahamas, and St. Lucia.
4. Around the world, there are more women in decision-making positions in local governments than in national governments.
5. Switzerland did not grant full voting rights to women until 1971.
6. In the 21st century, some countries still do not have full voting rights for women. Saudi Arabia and United Arab Emirates are two of these countries.
7. In 2006, Rwanda had the highest proportion of women parliamentarians in the world, with its National Assembly comprised of 48.8% women.
8. In over 60 of the world's states, women's income is 50% lower than men's income.
9. 70% of people who live in extreme poverty—living on less than \$1 per day—are women.



Pair Work (Student B)

A. Sharing Information

You and your partner each have some different facts and figures about women around the world. Read your information and then work with your partner to complete the questions in Part B.

Facts & Figures

Women's Leadership Roles, Voting Rights, and Economic Positions as of 2006

Did You Know...?

1. Women in the United States received full voting rights in 1920, and in 1928 in the United Kingdom.
2. In 2006, only five countries had female vice presidents. These included Costa Rica, Taiwan, Zimbabwe, Gambia, and El Salvador.
3. In 2006, only 16.1% of members of national parliaments worldwide were women.
4. In 1995, Sweden became the first country to have an equal number of women and men in ministerial positions.
5. In 2005, Kuwait gave women full voting rights.
6. In 2006, there were 39 women ambassadors to the United Nations.
7. In the United Nations system, women make up 37.1% of all professional staff, but only 16% of the most senior policy-making positions.
8. Women make up 39% of salaried positions around the world, but women's participation in high levels of economic decision-making remains low throughout the world.
9. In the United States, women hold 50.3% of all management and professional positions, but only 7.9% of Fortune 500 top earners and 1.4% of Fortune 500 CEOs (chief executive officers) are women.



Pair Work cont.

B. Questions

Work with your partner to complete the following questions in your notebook.
(You each have half of the information in your previous reading.)

1. Which country became the first to grant women equal voting rights?
2. When did this event occur?
3. Worldwide, do women hold more government positions at the local or national level?
4. In 2006, what was the percentage of women in parliaments worldwide?
5. Which country granted women full voting rights first: the United States or the United Kingdom?
6. Name 11 countries that had elected female heads of state in 2006.
7. When did women get full voting rights in Switzerland?
8. What percentage of management and professional positions do women hold in the United States?
9. How many countries had female vice presidents in 2006?
10. Which country was the first to have an equal number of women and men in ministerial positions?
11. What percentage of senior policy-making positions in the United Nations do women hold?
12. What does CEO mean?
13. What percentage of US Fortune 500 (top companies) have female CEOs?
14. When did women in Kuwait get full voting rights?
15. How many female ambassadors to the United Nations were there in 2006?



Vocabulary, Idioms & Expressions

A. Reference

VOCABULARY, IDIOM, OR EXPRESSION	DEFINITION	EXAMPLE
be on the same footing / be on an equal footing <i>(idiom)</i>	to be equal or have an equal status or position	Women have fought a hard struggle to be on an equal footing with men.
suffrage <i>(noun)</i>	the right to vote	In 1893, New Zealand became the first country to grant suffrage to all women.
suffragette <i>(noun)</i>	a woman who fought for women's voting rights	In the early 1900s, many suffragettes were put in prison for their actions in trying to win the right to vote.
girl Friday <i>(idiom)</i>	a female employee who does a variety of low-level office jobs	Ask Mary to mail those letters. She is the girl Friday in our office.
glass ceiling <i>(idiom)</i>	a barrier or obstacle that prevents women from moving up in the professional or business world	Even though Jennifer has excellent skills, she never moves any higher in her company. She can't break the glass ceiling .
make a living <i>(idiom)</i>	to earn money to live, to support oneself	She can't make a living in that job. The wages are too low.
breadwinner <i>(idiom)</i>	the person who makes the living in the family or the one who supports the family	She has been the main breadwinner ever since her husband lost his job last year.
affirmative action <i>(expression)</i>	a program that requires a certain number of people from a minority group to be hired	Because of the government's policy on affirmative action , the university must hire a woman for that position.
get one's foot in the door <i>(idiom)</i>	to get a chance to advance or move forward	Affirmative action policies helped many women get a foot in the door of the business world.
be in charge of <i>(idiom)</i>	to be the top person or the one in control	Amy has a lot of responsibilities at work. She is in charge of her department.





Vocabulary, Idioms & Expressions cont.

A. Reference cont.

VOCABULARY, IDIOM, OR EXPRESSION	DEFINITION	EXAMPLE
climb the corporate ladder <i>(idiom)</i>	to move up in the business world	She has climbed the corporate ladder very quickly and is now the CEO of the company.
gender <i>(noun)</i>	sex, class (male or female)	Many application forms ask you to state your gender .
feminine <i>(adjective)</i>	of or like women, opposite of masculine	They wanted their new baby girl's room to look very feminine , so they painted it pink.
feminist <i>(noun)</i>	someone who fights for women's rights	The hard work of feminists has helped to improve the lives of many women around the world.
gender discrimination <i>(expression)</i>	unfair treatment because of one's gender	Women are still working hard to end gender discrimination around the world.

B. Practice

Now write your own sentences using the vocabulary, expressions and idioms on this and the previous page.



Listening

 <http://blog.esllibrary.com/2012/03/07/podcast-international-womens-day/>

Fill in the blanks as you listen to the recording.

1. Every year on March 8, International Women's Day is celebrated by millions of women throughout the world. This day provides the opportunity to remember the _____ of women throughout history as well as the achievements they have made. Marches, demonstrations, concerts, films, and conferences take place to recognize the _____ women have made in obtaining equality and also to assess the problems that many women around the world still face today.
2. International Women's Day _____ at an international congress in 1910 in Copenhagen, Denmark. Women from 17 different countries attended the congress. At that congress, a woman from Germany named Clara Zetkin suggested setting aside a day each year that would be dedicated to fighting for equal rights for women all over the world. Zetkin proposed March 8 as this day because this was the _____ of the first protest march against the terrible working conditions of textile and _____ workers in New York City in 1857. At that time, many of the garment workers lived in crowded tenement houses and worked in firetrap sweatshops for very long hours and very low _____. These conditions pushed many women to begin to fight for their political rights, the right to vote, and improved working conditions. Their enthusiasm gave life to the entire movement for women's rights.
3. When Clara Zetkin first suggested making an International Women's Day, there were already signs of the _____ of World War I. For that reason, she called on women everywhere to link their fight for equal rights with a fight to preserve international peace. Since that time, women's concerns have grown broader and more _____. From the principal demands for better working conditions and the right to vote, the focus has now turned to issues such as equal pay for equal work, equal opportunities for education and training, improved day care and health services, _____ disarmament, and the elimination of poverty, discrimination, and _____ against women.
4. In 1977, the United Nations General Assembly passed a resolution inviting every country to proclaim March 8 a United Nations Day for Women's Rights and International Peace. Since then, March 8 has grown to become a truly _____ celebration.
5. While International Women's Day is now celebrated in nearly every country of the world, the form and content of the celebration varies from country to country. In some countries, it is celebrated as an official national holiday and is used to show _____ for the role played by women in society as mothers, workers, and citizens. In some places, the day is observed much like Mother's Day, with women receiving gifts and flowers. As well as being a day to recognize the _____ women have made in their struggle for equal rights and world peace, many people use this day as an opportunity to raise awareness and money for disadvantaged women around the world. While a great deal has already been _____, there is still much to do.



Answer Key

LESSON DESCRIPTION:

International Women's Day is celebrated by millions of people throughout the world on March 8. In this lesson, students learn facts and figures about women's roles and rights around the world.

LEVEL: Int – High Int

TIME: 1.5–2 hours

TAGS: women's day, international women's day, gender, women, woman, idioms, voting, equality

Pre-Reading

A. WARM-UP QUESTIONS

1. International Women's Day is on March 8.
2. The main purpose of this day is to remember the struggles and achievements of women in history.
3. Answers will vary.
4. Answers will vary.

B. VOCABULARY PREVIEW

- | | | | | | |
|------|------|------|-------|-------|-------|
| 1. e | 4. j | 7. i | 10. d | 13. o | 16. f |
| 2. h | 5. n | 8. b | 11. c | 14. g | |
| 3. l | 6. a | 9. p | 12. m | 15. k | |

Reading (and/or Listening)

Read individually, in small groups, or as a class. You can also play the listening as your students read along. A gap-fill version of the reading is available on page 10. Help your students with vocabulary and expressions that they are unfamiliar with.

Comprehension

1. People remember the struggles and achievements of women throughout history.
2. Events such as marches, demonstrations, concerts, films, and conferences take place.
3. International Women's Day originated at an international congress in 1910 in Copenhagen, Denmark.
4. Zetkin chose March 8 as the date because it was the anniversary of the first protest march against the terrible working conditions of textile and garment workers in New York City in 1857.

5. Many of the garment workers lived in crowded tenement houses and worked in firetrap sweatshops for very long hours and very low wages.
6. International Women's Day was being established at the same time that the first World War was about to begin.
7. International Women's Day now focuses on issues such as equal pay for equal work, equal opportunities for education and training, improved day care and health services, global disarmament, and the elimination of poverty, discrimination, and violence against women.
8. In 1977, the United Nations General Assembly passed a resolution inviting every country to proclaim March 8 a United Nations Day for Women's Rights and International Peace.
9. It is similar to Mother's Day in some countries as some women are given flowers and gifts.
10. They are helped by those who use this day as an opportunity to raise awareness and money for disadvantaged women around the world.

Vocabulary Practice

- | | | | | |
|------|------|------|------|-------|
| 1. c | 3. c | 5. b | 7. a | 9. b |
| 2. b | 4. c | 6. b | 8. b | 10. a |

(continued on the next page...)

Answer Key cont.

Pair Work

A. SHARING INFORMATION

The stats in this pair work activity are from 2006. As an extra research activity, have students try to find stats for the current year. Discuss whether or not things have improved for women.

B. QUESTIONS

- | | |
|--|-----------------------------|
| 1. New Zealand | 7. 1971 |
| 2. 1893 | 8. 50.3% |
| 3. at the local level | 9. 5 |
| 4. 16.1% | 10. Sweden |
| 5. the US | 11. 16% |
| 6. Chile, New Zealand,
Mozambique, Finland,
Liberia, Ireland, Philippines,
Germany, South Korea,
Jamaica, and Latvia | 12. chief executive officer |
| | 13. 1.4% |
| | 14. 2005 |
| | 15. 39 |

Vocabulary, Idioms & Expressions

B. PRACTICE

Answers will vary.

Listening

1. struggles, progress
2. originated, anniversary, garment, wages
3. outbreak, varied, global, violence
4. international
5. respect, progress, accomplished

SPELLING NOTE:

This lesson shows the American spelling of the word *Practice*. Most other English-speaking countries spell it this way: *Practise* (when used as a verb, *Practice* when used as a noun). Make it a challenge for your students to find this word in the lesson and see if they know the alternate spelling.

EDITOR'S NOTE:

This lesson uses the word *Progress* (noun) in the reading and vocabulary sections. You might want to point out to your students that the stress for this word changes depending on whether it is a noun or a verb. The stress is on the first syllable for the noun and on the second syllable for the verb.