

ELA: Grade 7, Lesson 10, Lucretia Mott

Lesson Focus: Discuss how a speech by Lucretia Mott compares to Abigail Adams' letter

Practice Focus: Comprehend Lucretia Mott's speech and decide if anything has changed for women since Abigail Adams' letter

Objective: Students will use an excerpt from "Discourse of Women" to learn more about the Women's Rights movement and how things have changed since the writing of the Declaration of Independence.

Academic Vocabulary: petition, disciplines, concessions, emblematic

TN Standards: 7.RI.KID.1, 7.RI.KID.2, 7.RI.KID.3, 7.RI.CS.4, 7.RI.CS.5, 7.L.VAU.5

Teacher Materials:

- Speech Excerpt: Discourse on Women
- Chart Paper and markers

Student Materials:

- Paper, pencil, and a surface to write on

Note: Portions of the primary text were omitted from this lesson for the sake of brevity and clarity.

Teacher Do	Students Do
<p>Opening (1 min)</p> <p>Hello! Welcome to Tennessee's At Home Learning Series for literacy! Today's lesson is for all our 7th graders out there, though everyone is welcome to tune in. This lesson is the 5th in this series.</p> <p>My name is ____ and I'm a ____ grade teacher in Tennessee schools. I'm so excited to be your teacher for this lesson! Welcome to my virtual classroom!</p> <p>If you didn't see our previous lesson, you can find it on www.tn.gov/education. You can still tune in to today's lesson if you haven't seen any of our others. But it might be more fun if you first go back and watch our other lessons, since today we'll be talking about things we learned previously.</p> <p>Today we will be learning about Lucretia Mott's speech entitled "Discourse on Women"! Before we get started, to participate fully in our lesson today, you will need:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Paper, pencil, and a surface to write on <p>Ok, let's begin!</p>	<p>Students gather materials for the lesson and prepare to engage with the lesson's content.</p>
<p>Intro (5 minutes)</p> <p>So, in the previous two lessons we have been discussing Abigail Adams' letter to her husband John Adams, and then John's letter back to his wife Abigail. We noted that Abigail was really beginning to speak up for women's rights in her letter to John by asking him to keep in mind that women</p>	<p>Students recall key concepts, and information from the previous lessons.</p>

<p>should be remembered when drafting The Declaration of Independence. I'm going to write a quick list of what Abigail was asking her husband to do as one of the Founding Fathers. Be sure to copy this list on to your own piece of paper. We'll be referring to it throughout today's lesson. [Pause.]</p> <p>[On chart paper, write list of Abigail's "wishes".] First, Abigail asks that the writers, [Write and talk.] "Remember the ladies and be more generous and favorable to them than your ancestors." [Pause.] She also asks that [Write and talk.] Husbands give up the title of master and then think of themselves more as a friend to women. [Pause.] The next thing she asks is [Write and talk.] Don't think of women as just empty jars that can't think for themselves. [Pause.] She finally asks that men, [Write and talk.] Be protective of women but not the bosses of women. [Pause.]</p> <p>This was all written in 1776. I think that she was ahead of her time, don't you? [Pause.]</p> <p>Today our goal is to read an excerpt from a speech given by Lucretia Mott in 1849. She was considered one of the leading people pushing for more rights for women. After we read and comprehend her speech, we'll decide if much had changed for women over the 75 years between Abigail Adam's letter and Lucretia Mott's speech. We will begin with me showing you what that looks like, and then there will be time for you to practice on your own with my support. Finally, I will assign you independent work that you can complete after the video ends. Ready? Let's get started.</p>	<p>Students will write list on their own paper</p>
<p><u>Teacher Model/Read-Aloud</u> (10 min) Okay, let's read. This is a difficult text, so our goal on this first read is just to get the gist and focus on a couple of powerful vocabulary words.</p> <p>The question is often asked, "What does woman want, more than she enjoys? What is she seeking to obtain? Of what rights is she deprived? What privileges are withheld from her?" I answer, she asks nothing as favor, but as right, she wants to be acknowledged a moral, responsible being. [Pause.]</p> <p>So she's starting out by saying, "People often ask what woman wants." And her answer to that question is that last bit I read: "she wants to be acknowledged a moral, responsible being." But what does that mean? Let's read on to find out. She continues:</p>	<p>Students follow along, comprehending the text. They use teacher think-alouds and tips (e.g., definitions of words) to support their comprehension, and they think or write as directed in response to prompts and questions.</p>

“In marriage, there is assumed superiority, on the part of the husband, and admitted inferiority, with a promise of obedience, on the part of the wife. This subject calls loudly for examination, in order that the wrong may be redressed.”
[Pause.]

“Redressed” basically means “corrected” but in a moral sense—it’s used when we’re talking about righting a wrong, bringing something to justice. So Mott is saying that there is an injustice here that needs to be fixed. [Pause.] She goes on:

“Walker, of Cincinnati, in his *Introduction to American Law*, says: ... ‘the law of husband and wife, as you gather it from the books, is a disgrace to any civilized nation. The theory of the law degrades the wife almost to the level of slaves.”
[Pause.]

Wow—she’s quoting someone who says that, back then at least, being a wife was almost as bad as being a slave! Let’s read on to see how she supports that claim. [Pause.] She says:

“The merging of her name in that of her husband is emblematic of the fate of all her legal rights.... The legal theory is, that marriage makes the husband and wife one person, and that person is the *husband*. On this subject, reform is loudly called for. There is no foundation in reason or expediency, for the absolute and slavish subjection of the wife to the husband, which forms the foundation of the present legal relations. [Pause.]

Do you know what “emblematic” means? [Pause.] That’s right—an emblem is like a symbol, so emblematic means symbolic. If the way a woman loses her family name when she gets married is symbolic of “the fate of all her legal rights,” then maybe Mott is saying that women lose their legal rights when they get married, just like they lose their names? [Pause.] Let’s read on.

“There are many instances now in our city, where the wife suffers much from the power of the husband to claim all that she can earn with her own hands. In my intercourse with the poorer class of people, I have known extreme cruelty, from the hard earnings of the wife being thus robbed by the husband, and no redress at law.... [Pause.]

<p>There's that word "redress" again! Do you remember what it meant? [Pause.] That's right—righting a wrong or finding justice. So where there is no redress, there's no way to right a wrong. [Pause.]</p> <p>Mott wraps up by saying:</p> <p>"Let woman then go on-not asking as favor, but claiming as right, the removal of all the hindrances to her elevation in the scale of being---let her receive encouragement for the proper cultivation of all her powers, so that she may enter profitably into the active business of life;..." [Pause.]</p> <p>All right. So we've been through the text once. Remember those two important words we discussed? [Pause.] First was emblematic, meaning symbolic. Mott says that women losing their names when they get married is emblematic of how they lose other things, like legal rights. Then there was redress: a way to right a wrong. Mott says that women in her time have no redress for the wrongs being done to them.</p>	
<p>Guided Practice (15 min)</p> <p>Okay, now that we've got the gist and a couple of key vocabulary words, are you ready for a second read? [Pause.] I'll read some parts this time that I didn't read the first time, because I think you're ready for more detail. This time let's try to start answering that question Mott starts with: "What do women want?" As I read, every time we find something that Mott mentions she wants for women, just write it down. [Pause.] Then we're going to see if anything has changed between what women wanted in 1776 and 1849. [Pause.]</p> <p>[Begin reading text.] The question is often asked, "What does woman want, more than she enjoys? What is she seeking to obtain? Of what rights is she deprived? What privileges are withheld from her?" I answer, she asks nothing as favor, but as right, she wants to be acknowledged a moral, responsible being.</p> <p>[Pause for think aloud.] Hmm.... So, first Mott starts off with a bunch of questions that are rhetorical. I know that rhetorical questions are questions that aren't necessarily meant to be answered right away, so I'm going to skip to the first statement. She says that everything that she is asking for shouldn't be considered men just doing a favor by granting their wishes. Instead it should be granted as a right because women are moral, responsible beings. So, I'm going to write in my notes, [Pause.] [Talk and write.] Women</p>	<p>Students follow along and think and act as instructed, gradually gaining confidence and competence.</p>

should be granted rights because they are responsible beings just like men. [Pause.]

Wow, sounds like one of the things Abigail Adams was thinking. Interesting. If Mott is still asking for it, I don't think things have changed much since her time. [Pause.] Let's read some more.

In marriage, there is assumed superiority, on the part of the husband, and admitted inferiority, with a promise of obedience, on the part of the wife. This subject calls loudly for examination, in order that the wrong may be redressed. [Pause.] What is her next subject that she thinks should be examined when thinking about equal right? [Pause.] Good! Marriage. What does she say needs to be reexamined in a marriage? [Pause.] Yup, she feels that men assume that they are superior and that women accept their roles as being inferior. What does she want to be done with this? [Pause.] Good! Let's add to our notes. [Pause.] [Write and talk.] She thinks the structure needs to be looked at again. [Pause.]

And remember that word "redress"? [Pause.] She's saying that reexamining that structure of marriage is the first step toward redressing the wrong being done women in her society. [Pause.]

Alright, let's skip down to line 22 and begin reading from there. [Pause.] Walker, of Cincinnati, in his *Introduction to American Law*, says: "the law of husband and wife, as you gather it from the books, is a disgrace to any civilized nation. The theory of the law degrades the wife almost to the level of slaves. [Pause.]

She cites a person by the last name of Walker saying that any civilized nation should be ashamed of the way this country thinks of marriage. [Pause.] In fact, what does she say the law surrounding marriage practically makes a wife? [Pause.] Yes, a slave. Then she goes on. [Pause.] Listen.

The merging of her name in that of her husband is emblematic of the fate of all her legal rights.... [Pause.] Do you remember what we said that meant? [Pause.] Correct, by taking the last name of the man is a perfect symbol for giving up all of her legal rights. Let's pause for just a minute and look back over our notes about Abigail James that we discussed earlier. [Pause.]

<p>Do you see in similarities between what “rights” the two are asking for? [Pause.] What about differences? [Pause.] You don’t have to write anything down yet; I just want to give you a couple of minutes to think. [Pause.] Alright, let’s move on. Let’s skip down to the last paragraph. [Pause.]</p> <p>Let woman then go on-not asking as favor, but claiming as right, the removal of all the hindrances to her elevation in the scale of being---let her receive encouragement for the proper cultivation of all her powers, so that she may enter profitably into the active business of life;... [Pause.]</p> <p>What is meant by “Let woman then go on-not asking as favor, but claiming as right, the removal of all the hindrances to her elevation in the scale of being...” [Pause.] Great! Mott doesn’t make it a secret that she would like to stop asking for rights, but to demand them so that they can be considered equals. [Pause.] So, what does she mean by “let her receive encouragement for the proper cultivation of all her powers, so that she may enter profitably into the active business of life?” [Pause.] Yes indeed! A woman should be encouraged to become all that she can become so that she can live a full life.</p> <p>Great job dealing with another rigorous passage. I’m really proud of you.</p>	
<p>Independent Work (5 minutes)</p> <p>Wow, we’ve covered a lot of ground in this series of lessons haven’t we? [Pause.] We started with a love poem by a man that we wouldn’t really consider a poet that writes about love. [Pause.] Then we read letters from a couple that were truly in love, so much so, that Abigail James felt comfortable enough to speak out for what she truly believed in (women’s rights). This was in a time period that speaking out in a marriage was frowned upon. [Pause.] Finally, we jumped ahead 75 years to see if at least one woman, Lucretia Mott thought that anything had changed since Abigail spoke out. [Pause.] So that is going to be the focus of your independent work. I’d like for you to look over the notes that we’ve taken and think back upon the things that we’ve talked about. [Pause.] Then, I would like you to write a paragraph about what you think had changed, if anything, related to equal rights for women between 1776 when Abigail wrote about it to her husband, and 1849 when Lucretia Mott spoke about it to a crowd of listeners. Remember to support your thoughts with the information that you wrote down in your notes. [Pause.] Remember to support your thoughts with the information that you wrote down in your notes.</p>	<p>Students will write a paragraph about their thoughts on if things had changed in women having equal rights between 1776 when Abigail Adams spoke about it to her husband and 1849 when Lucretia Mott spoke about it to a crowd.</p>

Closing (1 min)

I enjoyed working on these passages about the women's rights movement with you today! Thank you for inviting me into your home. I look forward to seeing you in our next lesson in Tennessee's At Home Learning Series! Bye!



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