

Feminism & Social Media

“The highest result of education is tolerance”
– Helen Keller –

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Task plan

Topic
Feminism and social media
Aims
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• To learn words related to feminism and social media.• To express constructive criticism, coherent opinions and give our arguments to a topic to convince.• To interpret information from texts and to create written and oral content.
Contents
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Use of modal verbs (Netiquette).• Vocabulary related to feminism and social media.
Level
4th ESO
Sequence (pre-task, task and post-task)
Warm-up 1st part of vocabulary activity Reading task 2nd part of vocabulary activity Writing task Grammar activity Speaking task

Topic justification

"This is not a men vs. women issue. It is about people vs. prejudice."

-Laura Bates, founder of Everyday Sexism Project.-

"Social media is not just another way to connect feminist and activist voices - it amplifies our messages as well."

-Jessica Valenti.-

Learning about feminism in a social media context is relevant for students of any sex as it deals with political concerns that are raised and discussed in a communicative environment in which they participate and that consequently [influences](#) them. How women and men differ is a matter of [controversy](#), as are many other issues related to feminism, such as abortion, access to education or what counts as sexual assault. As a political movement, feminism has faced and is still facing attempts to [discredit](#) it. Feminist Eva Cox argues that ongoing [social media abuse](#) is a sign that the "feminism project" is "still far from finished". It is thus an aim of these classes to help students to develop their concept of feminism, to dismantle prejudice and to encourage them to utter criticism constructively.

Feminism promotes gender equality based on the assumption that women are illegitimately disadvantaged compared to men. Though focusing on women's struggle, feminism is also paving the way for men's equal treatment by resolving gender stereotypes, destigmatising survivors of sexual abuse of any sex or promoting legislation that allows men to spend more time with their children, if they choose to. The necessity to raise awareness regarding gender equality in education can be derived from the "Ley Orgánica 3/2007, de 22 de marzo, para la igualdad efectiva de mujeres y hombres". To assure relevance concerning gender equality, feminism will be discussed as being fundamentally about choice, empowerment, and equal opportunity for all sexes.

Feminism is a current topic which has become even more relevant with social media as "feminist activism has jumped into the online landscape, aiming to achieve gender-based dialogue as well as expand its message and reach people beyond borders" (IEMed). Social media has been used by feminists to provide third spaces where everyone can solidarize on a global scale by sharing their experiences of unfair treatment and to raise awareness if they have internet access. The above has changed the impact of the movement, especially for harassment and sexual assault, as prominently shown by the #MeToo campaign.

To sum it up, feminism in a social media context is relevant for the students we are teaching because it is a currently discussed and developed topic on current media platforms. It is essential for women and men as it drives gender equality in a way that improves conditions for both sexes. By allowing students to reflect upon controversial feminist issues in a safe environment, we hope to promote a deeper understanding of the matter, reduce prejudice, and further progress by enabling them to convince with politically correct arguments.

Students should understand that any complex social phenomenon like feminism and social media can be used in good and bad ways and that it is on them to create the (online) society they want to live in.

Context

We have designed this syllabus for a public secondary school located in a city. The school contains a library and a computer room, which students can access throughout weekdays.

As in many state secondary schools, most parents belong to the lower working class, although some are from the middle class. They have secondary studies, but not all of them have attended college. As part of the lower working class, they have long working hours, which makes them unable to participate in school activities or be present to reach a consensus on how to work with the students.

As we live in an internet era, school promotes ICT tools for teaching. Although there is not enough money to provide each student with a laptop, students might use their smartphones for some activities. As they belong to the generation called "digital natives", characterised by quick access to information, this syllabus will focus on being critical about what they read.

The syllabus has been designed for 32 4th of ESO students, 17 of whom are boys and the remaining 15 girls.

The students do not have a positive attitude towards the English subject, as they think a translator will work fine. Thus, the syllabus will focus on a topic of interest, with most of its data in English. Working on different tasks and activities will help the students notice that understanding and communicating without a translator is essential.

Most students are visual learners, though some prefer reading and writing. A few of them are aural learners.

Task sequence

Warm-up (30 minutes)

To introduce the project, we have created a small video to help the students familiarise themselves with the topic. Watch the video of a couple of minutes of different TV shows that show the evolution of the feminist movement and the impact social media has had on it.



After watching the video, the teacher will divide the class into different groups. These must be equitable. The students will not choose their groups, but the teacher, considering previous information about them, will make sure they are balanced. No more than four or five people per group.

The teacher will ask the students how they would define the concept of feminism if they think it is universal and if women and men can be feminists. Each group will have two minutes to agree on an answer and tell the rest of the class.

The teacher will explain to the students what the feminist movement is and will ask the students to reflect on the video they have watched. They can re-watch the video if necessary. Afterwards, the teacher will ask the students what their experience with feminism and social media is and if they know any social media accounts where feminism is the main topic or any essential matters or hashtags used for feminism.

Vocabulary activity part 1 (15 minutes)

Students have to think and say by turns any word that comes to their minds using the topic of feminism and social media. The teacher will write all the words making a list on the board, and the students will write them too in their notebooks. With the teacher's help, the students will comment on the meaning of each word and add the definitions to their vocabulary list.

Reading task

The reading task has three parts:

1. A pre-reading activity, the main objective of which is testing what students know about the topic before they read the text,
2. The reading activity, where they read the text, check if they understand the main ideas and answer some related questions.
3. A follow-up activity to show what they have learned and to acquire more knowledge about the topic of the text.

PRE-READING ACTIVITY: (10 minutes)

In pairs, only with the title of the reading, students are asked to do a KWL chart. This chart helps learners organize information before and after reading, and can be used to engage the students in a new topic, activate and share prior knowledge, and monitor learning.

Students begin by brainstorming everything they already know and write it under the K column (what I know). Then, students list questions or things about the topic that interests them and put them under the W column (what I want to know). The L column (what I learned) will be done after reading the text because this part aims to write things from the text they did not know and have learned by then.

Once the pairs have completed their chart, each will comment on it aloud with the rest of the class.

Complete the following chart about the topic WOMEN IN MEDIA:

Topic: _____		
What I K now	What I W ant to know	What I L earned

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READING ACTIVITY: (40 minutes)

Students first read the text. Then, they re-read the text and circle any words they do not understand. Once they have looked up their meaning, they should answer the questions following the example. Afterwards, the students discuss their answers with the class and correct them.

WOMEN IN MEDIA

This text is an adaptation from the article: Gender Roles in Media published in Huffpost by Allison Lantagne.

"Media plays a large role in creating social **norms**, because various forms of media, including advertisements, television and films, are present almost everywhere in current culture. Gender roles, for example, exist only because society accepts them, but they are **perpetuated** by the media.

I searched for American advertisements with girls playing with action figures and boys playing with dolls. It was useless. Even when choosing a more neutral product, like paint, the advertisement was sending different messages for girls and boys. The girls were all coloring, while one boy who was singing a rap ended up being the main character in the advertisement.

The well-known TV series *The Big Bang Theory*, in its earlier seasons, had only one **consistently** present female character- Penny. She was a **stereotypical** female character: the silly blonde attractive neighbour, who only existed to create sexual tension between herself and one of the protagonists, Leonard Hofstadter. As the show progressed, more females were introduced, but Penny's character still exists primarily to create romantic tension.

There's nothing wrong with accepting gender roles. The problem is that they can cross a line and become **oppressive**. If a young woman wants to become a **miner**, and a young man a nurse, let them be. If a man wants to cry, let him cry. Men feel just as women do.

Gender roles are not likely to change until there is a change in the media. **Regardless** of this, gender roles are just that, roles. The best advice that can be given is to make sure that you are who you want to be, no matter where it fits in society's set of conventional roles."

Answer the question by adding the information underlined. The teacher will give the first part of the answer, and the student has to finish it.

(Example) According to the text, why do gender roles exist? --> Because society accepts them, and they are perpetuated by the media.

Answers

1. What did the search in American advertisements show? --> It was useless because the advertisement was sending different messages for girls and boys, even when choosing a more neutral product, like paint.
2. What was Penny's fundamental role in *The Big Bang Theory*? --> Penny, who only existed to create sexual tension, was a stereotypical female character: the silly blonde attractive neighbour.
3. Can gender roles have a negative side? Why? --> They can become oppressive when they cross a line.
4. What does it take to change gender roles? --> To modify gender roles, we need a change in the media.
5. What is the best recommendation the text provides? --> No matter where it fits in society's set of conventional roles, make sure you are who you want to be. That is the best advice that can be given.
No matter where it fits in society's set of conventional roles, the best advice that can be given is to make sure that you are who you want to be.

POST READING ACTIVITY: (10 minutes)

Students have to complete, in pairs, the L column of the previous chart and share with the rest of the class what they have learned.

Vocabulary activity part 2 (30-40 minutes)

The second part of the activity is closely related to the first one. It is a game called "Backs to the Board". It aims to rehearse and revise the vocabulary that students have put into practice in the first part. Thus, students not only work on vocabulary but also experiment with speaking skills since it is an oral activity.

In this game, the teacher will make small groups. In each team, one member will sit with their back to the chalkboard. Afterwards, the teacher will write a word from the list we have on the blackboard, each group has to explain the word without using it, and the student with his back to the board has to guess what the word is.

The first person with their back to the chalkboard who guesses the word correctly will score for their team, and at the end of the game, the group with the most points will be the winner.

Writing task

The writing task includes the production of three written texts, the first consists of answering a question, the second should be a piece of "[Reflective writing](#)", and the third an informal online comment. To introduce the topic, the teacher will talk about the "Everyday sexism" project and show the students the project [page](#) with the classroom projector. To make students familiar with the genre of "Reflective writing", an integrated approach has been chosen, starting with a short vocabulary task with words from the sample text about this project, followed by a reading and questions to help students understand the features of the genre. The reflective writing will be produced in a group to lower the risk of individual frustration and to promote exchange about the topic chosen.

Pre-Task 1: Preparation (5 minutes)

Students are asked to match the words with the definitions:

Feminist	A person who has a profound influence on others and is a source of inspiration
Guiding light	A committed feminist or a strong-willed woman (referred to pejoratively)
Gender inequality	A person who believes in feminism, and tries to achieve change that helps women to get equal opportunities and treatment
rape	women and men not treated equally
feminazi	to force somebody to have sex

Pre-Task 2: Reading text (10 minutes)

This text is an [adaptation](#) from the article: [What I have learned from five years of Everyday Sexism](#) by Laura Bates, Mon 17 Apr 2017

To be a feminist is to be accused of oversensitivity and hysteria. But in the face of the abuse the project uncovered, the strength and humour of women has shone like a guiding light.

A week after setting up a website to catalogue experiences of gender inequality, I asked Lady Gaga for her support via Twitter. Interested in raising awareness of my newly created Everyday Sexism Project, I hoped she might spread the word among her millions of followers.

The next morning, I saw more than 200 new messages. I clicked eagerly on the first message and was shocked. It was a brutal rape threat. The threats continued to flood in. Who were these men?

Over time, things became clearer. I met men who opposed feminism in different settings and began to recognise their tactics.

In some ways, the online abusers were the least threatening. The repetition in their arguments (if you can call “get off your high horse and change your tampon” an argument) made it clear that their fury rooted in a fear of that man-hating “feminazi” of online forum fantasy.

More sinister were the smart critics who hid in plain sight. Men claiming that sexism in the UK was a thing of the past and I should look to other countries to find “real problems”. People with the power to change things and the will to keep them the same.

Despite this, the site was a success, and over the next five years many women shared their experiences. I hadn’t expected the practical and emotional help offered by other women. I felt a great sense of responsibility to make sure women’s voices were heard. I began to work with schools, universities, businesses, and politicians to try and ensure that the stories of one generation could change things positively for the next. It helped hugely to feel that change could come directly from the project.

That’s why I can honestly say that the experiences and lessons of the past five years have left me more hopeful than despairing. In five years, I have learned that the problem is immense, but the will to fight it is greater still.

Task 1: Individual writing activity (35 minutes)

Students are asked to analyse the text by answering one of the following 4 questions. To secure answers to every question, students are assigned numbers from 1 to 4. Everyone with the number 1 answers the first question, number 2, the second and so on:

Number 1: Reflective writing is more personal than other types of academic writing. What does the author say about her feelings during the project?

Number 2: What went well, what was challenging and what did the author learn during the project?

Number 3: How is the text structured?

- What do you learn from the introduction of the article?
- Where does the author evaluate the most important things about the experience, including solutions to problems?
- Does she say what she would do differently next time?
- Say what the author learned overall.

Number 4: What problems does the author write about, and what solutions does she propose?

The students have 15 minutes to take notes on sticky notes and then stick them below their number on a prepared whiteboard.

The teacher or a willing student reads the suggestions out loud, and the teacher discusses them shortly. The task aims to familiarise students with the essential features of reflective writing.

Task 2: Group writing activity (40 minutes)

Students are divided into 8 groups of 4 students. The task is to write a reflective text of around 200 words about one of the following topics:

- What is your experience with feminism on social media?
- How has gender affected your life? ([source](#))
- Thinking back to the last lessons, how has your opinion about feminism and social media changed?

Instructions for the students:

- Make a brainstorming in the group first.
- Write an introduction, a main part with arguments and a conclusion.

One speaker per group is selected by lottery to read the final text. This reading will be recorded and uploaded to the class forum.

Post-task

Homework: Students watch each other's contributions and comment below each of the 8 videos in the forum.

Grammar activity

The grammar activity is again an integrated task dealing with modals and the rules of appropriate social media behaviour or "Netiquette", which, failing to comply with, is a problem for feminist social media sites as previously seen in Bates' text. Students will have individual computers at their disposal in the computer room and will be asked to access the page and insert the PIN to participate.

Pre-task (5 minutes)

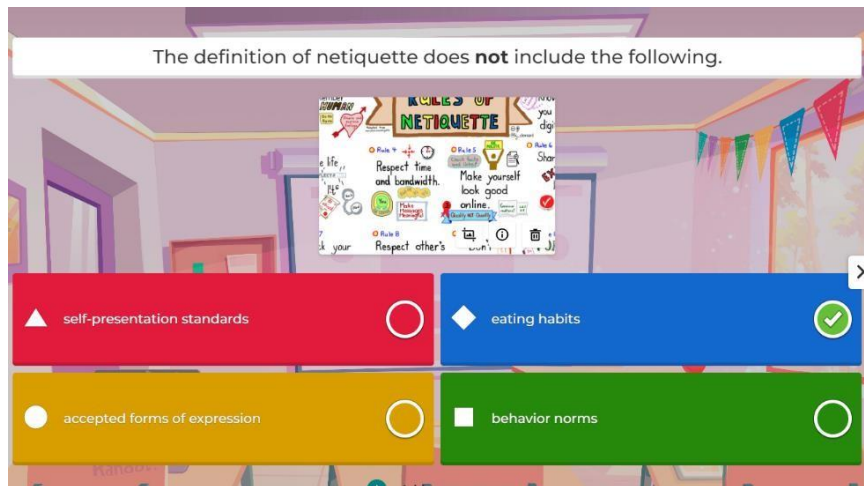
The comments on the homework shown on the beamer are used to introduce the subject of "Netiquette". The teacher reads some selected comments and asks the students how they feel about them, whether they are polite, convincing, well-structured or appropriate and if there are ways to improve them. She then briefly explains what netiquette is and asks students to do the Kahoot! The Kahoot is a repetition of the use of modals, a theme that will be treated more in-depth in the following lessons.

Task (10 minutes)

Themed Kahoot game about Netiquette and the use of modals.

https://kahoot.it/challenge/03725631?challenge-id=dd5d9fa7-f3b3-49b9-968f-fe6a18375a3d_1671465261364

Game PIN: 03725631



Speaking tasks

This task consists of two different activities. The first one will serve as preparation for the central one. Afterwards, the teacher will explain the second task to the students and assign them homework so they can fully prepare for the next lesson.

First task (25 minutes)

Students must be motivated. Especially in speaking activities, because most of them are reluctant to participate. As the impact of social media on feminism is a current topic, the students will already be interested. The previous lessons will have made the students more comfortable, given them the needed vocabulary, and made them reflect on it.

It is important to note that teachers will already have worked on a series of speaking sequences so that students can talk fluently and freely about any topic, and they will be able to talk about their lives.

We will aim in the following lessons to prepare students for a formal debate. To do so, we will have a whole-class discussion as part of a game to help them relax and to make them more confident.

This first task will be an unplanned discussion in a game format. At the beginning of the class, the teacher will give some phrases for agreeing and disagreeing, such as "I think I disagree; I'm not sure; Yes, definitely; Maybe you've got a point there". The teacher will also give some phrases for challenging someone's ideas, such as "Have you considered the fact that...? I take your point, but..., I see where you're coming from, You have to look at it from both sides". After the teacher gives the basic notions of challenging someone's ideas and agreeing or disagreeing, she will divide the classroom in half, and the students will stand in the middle of the class. Afterwards, the teacher will read the first statement of the following list. Students will have to move to one or the other side of the classroom, depending on if they agree or disagree with it. Then, the teacher will choose a student, preferably one who is confident, extroverted and has done well in the previous unprepared instant speaking activities of former lessons, and will make her ask another student from the opposite class why they are there. They will initiate a small-scale debate, where the different students ask questions to make the other one change their opinions and bring them to their side. When the time is up, the side of the class with more students will win a point. Each round will take between 5 and 10 minutes, depending on how

quickly the students ask and answer the questions. When the game ends, the team with more points will have a "free pass" for the following activity. This "free pass" will be explained in the next task.

List of statements to debate:

- There is already equality.
- Abortion should be legal.
- Feminism empowers women and disempowers men.
- If someone is on social media, I can tell them whatever I want, because it's freedom of speech.
- I am anonymous, I can't be harassed on social media.

This game is a remix of "Pick a Corner" and "Where do you stand?"

The teacher's role in this game is the following:

- The teacher will make sure students give coherent arguments.
- The teacher will guarantee students use the correct language without insults, discrimination, or personal attacks.
- The teacher will help students to find suitable words and give synonyms so they can express ideas in various ways.
- The teacher will ask questions and motivate the students if they do not come up with questions or arguments.

Other than that, the teacher will not interfere in the process and will let the students express themselves, even -or especially- if their opinion is controversial.

Second task

Pre-task (25 minutes)

The teacher will inform the students that in two lessons, they will have a formal debate on how social media has impacted the feminist movement. It is an activity that will enable the students to review what they have learned in the previous lessons and to make some conclusions on the topic. Furthermore, it will allow them to practise debating an idea or statement.

As this assignment is a prepared discussion, we will divide it into a sequence of different activities that will lead to the task itself, the debate.

To do that, the teacher will explain what a debate consists of and give the students some information about what the discussion will be. With this task, the teacher will be able to explain how debates in the UK's parliament consist.

After the teacher states the significance of discussions, she will show the following video:

<https://ahaslides.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/Theresa-May-to-Corbyn-He-can-lead-a-protest-lm-leading-a-country.mp4>

Once the students have watched it, the teacher will start informing them how the discussion will proceed.

- Title: This House states that the impact of social media on the feminist movement has been positive.
- Teams: Team Affirmative and Team Negative. Each team will have four members, and their job is as the following table shows. Each student will get their team assigned randomly. Those students who achieved a "free pass" in the previous class can choose to switch groups.

Team Affirmative	Team Negative	Time Allowance for Each Team
Opening statement by 1st speaker. They will state their main points of support to the proposed change	Opening statement by 1st speaker. They will state their main points of support to the proposed change	5 minutes
Prepare rebuttals.	Prepare rebuttals.	3 minutes
Rebuttal by 2nd speaker. They will argue against the points presented in Team Negative's opening statement.	Rebuttal by 2nd speaker. They will argue against the points presented in Team Affirmative's opening statement.	3 minutes
Second rebuttal by 3rd speaker. They will rebut Team Negative's rebuttal.	Second rebuttal by 3rd speaker. They will rebut Team Affirmative's rebuttal.	3 minutes
Prepare rebuttal and closing statement.	Prepare rebuttal and closing statement.	5 minutes
Final rebuttal and closing statement by 4th speaker.	Final rebuttal and closing statement by 4th speaker.	5 minutes

- Debate's structure: See table above.
- The rules: Stick to the structure. Stay on topic. No swearing. No resorting to personal attacks.
- The scoring system: students will vote through a Kahoot poll. Students must vote using the following criteria: impactful statements, data-backed evidence, eloquent delivery, body language and deep understanding of the topic.

As homework, the teacher will send the students a video of a student's debate on VR:



Students will also need to research information on the topic, depending on their team and write their arguments, which they will analyse in the next class. To help them prepare for the debate, the teacher will send them a few questions to answer:

Guideline questions	Answers	Evidence
How will you state your position?		
What points will you make?		
How do you expect your opponent to refute you?		
How will you re-affirm your position?		
How will you refute your opponent's main points?		
How will you summarise your position and be convincing?		

The teacher will also send them the following list of words they can use for making points, giving reasons, evidence and refuting arguments.

First and foremost	Next	All things considered	For this reason
Finally	For instance	For example	Furthermore
In addition	In the first place	In the same way	Therefore
Actually	For this reason	Accordingly	As a consequence
However	As a matter of fact	As a result	Similarly
In fact	Be that as it may	Consequently	In the same way
Ultimately	Even so	Ironically	

Task (1 hour)

Once the students have their arguments and information on the debate's topic, the teacher will remind them of the directions and structure of the discussion. Afterwards, the teacher will show the students their link to a Kahoot poll, which allows them to vote on which team wins.

https://kahoot.it/challenge/01784565?challenge-id=277617a7-5fd6-4d73-97d6-ba234e5ea5fd_1672910950305

Pin Game: 01784565

The teacher will call the first group of students to begin their speeches. The teacher will only intervene if they break any rule, when the time's up and to help find a word or synonym. The teams which win the round will get a free pass in the next class, meaning they can do whatever they want in the next lesson.

Post-task (10 minutes)

After all the groups have participated, the teacher will ask a final question to the students: "Can a complex phenomenon be considered good or bad? Is social media's impact on feminism

positive or negative, or does it depend on how we use it?" With this final question, we hope students conclude that no complex occurrence or topic is black or white, but it depends on people and people's communication skills.

Timeline



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