

Gender and identity: An opinion piece

a) In one minute, name and write on the board the names of famous men and women from history.

Women need to be recognized as a part of our history Shari Boiskin

Women make up 50.8 percent of the world's 7,404,976,783 person population.

That means that there are 3,761,728,205 women. Yet, for some reason, women, throughout time have been, and still are, treated like a nonexistent part of our history.

Yes, men and women differ biologically. When it comes to representation in academia, where it should be equal, it is also different. Women are dropped. I had my nine-year-old brother try to name some important women from history – he was able

to list Betsy Ross, Harriet Tubman and Rosa Parks. When asked to list some important men, he was

able to go on for at least ten minutes – I had to stop him. Where are women in history? It's not like women just recently decided to show up and start doing things. Angela Merkel is

not the first woman to have thought of going into government. Malala Yousafzai is not the first to have thought of advocating for women's right to education.

In 1777, Sybil Ludington went on a midnight ride similar to, but actually twice as long as Paul Revere's. In the 1920s, Zelda Fitzgerald's dancing, writing, and musical talents were always overshadowed by those of her husband, the author of *The Great Gatsby*, Scott Fitzgerald. I never learned about these women in school. I had to discover them on my own.

Abigail Adams sent a letter to her husband John Adams while he was at the Constitutional Convention, in which she wrote, "remember the ladies." Yet, so many women are forgotten in the annals of history.

Women's History Month should be eliminated – as soon as women are treated as complete equals to men.

That will take some time. So, in the meantime, my sister's counselor should crack open a book on Elizabeth Cady Stanton or Rosalind Franklin, or perhaps read more blogs and articles about the importance of women's history. Women need to be recognized as a part of our history.

(From *Eastside*, the school newspaper of Cherry Hill High School East, Cherry Hill, New Jersey)



My sister is in Israel, spending her 10th grade Spring semester abroad. She called me from Israel on International Women's Day to tell me that one of the male counselors from her program had just said that International Women's Day is irrelevant and Women's History Month is neither important nor necessary. She didn't understand why he would say that, and asked me what I would've said if I had been there.

I told her that I would have said yes, and told the counselor that I agree with him. I would have continued to say that I also believe that having an International Women's Day and Women's History Month is pretty ridiculous. I believe that every day should be women's day!

Women should be acknowledged for their role in society not just during one day of the year, and their contributions to the world for not just one month, but for the entire year, every year. After all, men are acknowledged constantly. We study men's history in school. That's why there's no need for an International Men's Day or Men's History month. I would also add that I believe that both International Women's Day and Women's History Month should be eliminated – as soon as women are treated as complete equals to men.

That will take some time. So, in the meantime, my sister's counselor should crack open a book on Elizabeth Cady Stanton or Rosalind Franklin, or perhaps read more blogs and articles about the importance of women's history. Women need to be recognized as a part of our history.

(From *Eastside*, the school newspaper of Cherry Hill High School East, Cherry Hill, New Jersey)

Women's History Month should be eliminated – as soon as women are treated as complete equals to men.

That will take some time. So, in the meantime, my sister's counselor should crack open a book on Elizabeth Cady Stanton or Rosalind Franklin, or perhaps read more blogs and articles about the importance of women's history. Women need to be recognized as a part of our history.

(From *Eastside*, the school newspaper of Cherry Hill High School East, Cherry Hill, New Jersey)

b) Look at the names you wrote in a). Does it support the opinion Shari expresses? Explain why or why not.

gender Geschlecht opinion piece Stellungnahme, Meinungsartikel representation Vertretung, Repräsentanz academia die akademische Welt have sb. do sth. veranlassen, dass jemand etwas tut recently kürzlich show up auftauchen, erscheinen advocate for sich einsetzen für Constitutional Convention verfassungsgebende Versammlung counselor (AE) Betreuer/in ridiculous lächerlich acknowledge anerkennen contribution Beitrag eliminate abschaffen in the meantime in der Zwischenzeit

Writing an opinion piece

Each unit of this book will focus on writing a different type of text.

In this unit, the text in focus is an **opinion piece**. In an opinion piece, you express your view on an issue you feel strongly about. Opinion pieces often appear online, e.g. in blogs or newspapers.

Over the next three pages, you will work through the following steps to produce your opinion piece.

- 1 EXAMINE THE TEXT STRUCTURE
- 2 FOCUS ON LANGUAGE
- 3 WRITE A FIRST DRAFT
- 4 GIVE AND RECEIVE FEEDBACK
- 5 PRACTISE LANGUAGE STRUCTURES
- 6 IMPROVE YOUR STYLE
- 7 EDIT YOUR TEXT

1 EXAMINE THE TEXT STRUCTURE

22 Read about the structure of an opinion piece. Then discuss whether Shari follows these tips.

OPINION PIECE: STRUCTURE

- **Headline** Catch your reader's attention. Make a clear statement, ask a provocative question, promise a solution to a problem.
- **First paragraph** Keep it short. State your topic and opinion clearly. Keep readers interested.
- **Supporting paragraphs** Use statistics, other facts or quotes to back up your main statement.
- **Conclusion** Restate your opinion. Suggest a solution, or call for action.

2 FOCUS ON LANGUAGE

a) Read Shari's text again. Identify the two main tenses and collect examples.

22 Compare your results. Explain why each of the tenses is used.

b) Scan lines 53–75. Find and note down four examples of the use of *should*.

22 Discuss why Shari uses the word *should* so often.

3 WRITE A FIRST DRAFT

a) 22 Discuss why topics like these can be important for people's identities:

women's rights, same-sex marriage, fashion, language, social media, sport, hometown, ...

b) Choose a topic from a). Express your view in a sentence or two, e.g.

• Sport should not be separated by sex. • You don't need to follow fashion. Be yourself.

Then write a first draft of your opinion piece. Consider the points you discussed in 1 and 2.