

Texts to Inspire Discussion about Feminist Issues

SHORT STORIES

"The Story of an Hour" by Kate Chopin
"I Stand Here Ironing" by Tillie Olsen
"The Yellow Wallpaper" by Charlotte Perkins Gilman
"A Rose for Emily" by William Faulkner
"A Subject of Childhood" by Grace Paley
"Where Are You Going, Where Have You Been?" by Joyce Carol Oates

NOVELS

The House on Mango Street by Sandra Cisneros
The Bell Jar by Sylvia Plath
The Women of Brewster Place by Gloria Naylor
The Awakening by Kate Chopin
Summer by Edith Wharton

PLAYS

A Raisin in the Sun by Lorraine Hansberry
Trifles by Susan Glaspell
The Glass Menagerie by Tennessee Williams

ESSAYS

In Search of Our Mothers' Gardens: Womanist Prose by Alice Walker

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NON-FICTION TEXTS FOR FURTHER DISCUSSION

The following two books are of particular interest to adolescents and can be used in the classroom to inspire students to write their own pieces that illuminate how male and female views and experiences differ.

Reviving Ophelia by Saving the Selves of Adolescent Girls by Mary Pipher, Ph.D. New York: Ballantine Books: 1994.

Pipher's work is an examination of the problems that plague adolescent girls in America and offers a contemporary view of a new "problem that has no name." The book includes case histories.

Ophelia Speaks by Sara Shandler New York: Harper Perennial: 1999.

This response to Pipher's *Reviving Ophelia* is a collection of original works by adolescent girls who write about the issues that young women today face.

The following books can be used primarily by teachers as resource material, but each also include chapters/excerpts that provide solid background material to the feminist movements for students and that can generate serious discussion. This is an abbreviated list that highlights some important works. However, teachers should consider exploring all of the works of these feminist writers.

The Women's Liberation Movement in America by Kathleen C. Berkeley. Westport: Greenwood Press: 1999.

This book presents an overview of the movement from the 1960s through the 1990s

Outrageous Acts and Everyday Rebellions by Gloria Steinem. New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1983.

This is a collection of essays by one of the most important voices in the movement. Of particular interest to students is the essay "Why Young Women Are More Conservative."

In a Different Voice: Psychological Theory and Women's Development by Carol Gilligan. Harvard University Press: reissue edition 1993 (originally published 1982).

This work takes a psychological perspective on women's experience. Gilligan maintains that developmental theory is male-dominated and therefore "wrong" in terms of female growth.

The Beauty Myth by Naomi Wolf Anchor Books: 1991.

Wolf's book examines the idea that in female minds, beauty and self-worth are one.

Backlash: The Undeclared War Against American Women by Susan Faludi New York: Crown Publishers, Inc.: 1991.

Faludi explores the 1980s backlash against the feminist movement. Aspects of this work are of particular interest to students because Faludi examines how pop culture—in terms of television, movies, and advertising—has set the movement back.