

11.2 Teacher Key

1. Comparing the Language of the Declaration of Independence and the Declaration of Sentiments
 How would you characterize the changes made in the introductory segments of these texts? In what ways do they alter the original text to support the goals of the women’s rights movement?

The language has been changed to be more inclusive of women, and to position “mankind” as the offender (in the same way the “King of Great Britain” was positioned as the offender in the Declaration of Independence) and “woman” as the victim of the offenses (in the same way the people of the States were positioned as the victims in the Declaration of Independence).

2. Examining Grievances in the Declaration of Sentiments and the Resolutions of the Seneca Falls Convention

Excerpts from Declaration of Sentiments and Resolutions of Seneca Falls Convention	My Paraphrase
<p>He has never permitted her to exercise her inalienable right to the elective franchise.</p> <p>He has compelled her to submit to laws, in the formation of which she had no voice.</p> <p>He has withheld from her rights which are given to the most ignorant and degraded men — both natives and foreigners.</p> <p>Having deprived her of this first right of a citizen, the elective franchise, thereby leaving her without representation in the halls of legislation, he has oppressed her on all sides.</p> <p>He has made her, if married, in the eye of the law, civilly dead.</p> <p>He has taken from her all right in property, even to the wages she earns.</p> <p>He has made her, morally, an irresponsible being, as she can commit many crimes with impunity, provided they be done in the presence of her husband. In the covenant of marriage, she is compelled to promise obedience to her husband, he becoming, to all intents and purposes, her master — the law giving him power to deprive her of her liberty, and to administer chastisement.</p> <p>He has so framed the laws of divorce, as to what shall be the proper causes of divorce; in case of separation, to whom the guardianship of the children shall be given; as to be wholly regardless of the happiness of women — the law, in all cases, going upon a false supposition of the supremacy of man, and giving all power into his hands....</p>	<p>Men don't let women vote (and voting is their right).</p> <p>Men make women follow laws that they didn't help create.</p> <p>Men don't give women the same rights they give men who are considered inferior by society.</p> <p>Women are completely oppressed by men because they have no say in who makes the laws.</p> <p>Men don't legally treat women like people once they are married.</p> <p>Men are keeping women from owning their own property.</p> <p>According to the law (passed by men), men are responsible for the actions of their wives and can punish them as they see fit.</p> <p>Men get to decide what counts as a good reason to get divorced and who</p>

	gets custody of the children. Men have full power in situations of marital separation.
<p>Resolved, That woman is man's equal — was intended to be so by the Creator — and the highest good of the race demands that she should be recognized as such.</p> <p>Resolved, That the women of this country ought to be enlightened in regard to the laws under which they live, that they may no longer publish their degradation, by declaring themselves satisfied with their present position, nor their ignorance, by asserting that they have all the rights they want...</p> <p>Resolved, That it is the duty of the women of this country to secure to themselves their sacred right to the elective franchise.</p> <p>Resolved, That the equality of human rights results necessarily from the fact of the identity of the race in capabilities and responsibilities.</p>	<p>God intended men and women to be equal, so it will be good for humankind if they are treated as such.</p> <p>Women should want to learn about the laws that govern them and should no longer be satisfied to let men handle this aspect of life.</p> <p>Women have a duty to make sure they get the right to vote.</p>

3. Considering Audience and Purpose

Write a short paragraph addressing some or all of these questions:

- A. In what ways did the authors of the Declaration of Sentiments model their document after the Declaration of Independence? Why do you think they did so?
- B. In what ways might the Declaration of Sentiments be convincing (or not convincing) to women?
- C. In what ways might the Declaration of Sentiments be convincing (or not convincing) to men?

Some possible responses:

- The language used to open the two documents is nearly identical, with the exception of words tweaked to be more inclusive of women and to characterize a relationship between men and women that was similar to that between the king of Britain and the people of the colonies. The listing of grievances, while somewhat different in substance, is structured in the same way between the two documents, and both draw heavily on concepts of God-given rights, deprivation of rights, and governance without representation. The Resolutions of the Seneca Falls Convention document reads similarly to the closing paragraph of the Declaration of Independence in that it states how things should be henceforth. The authors of the Declaration of Sentiments are drawing on the authority of a well-respected document that was, in part, responsible for a major change in relationships between two parties. The authors hope that they can gain credibility for their arguments by showing the parallels between their arguments and those of the leaders of the American Revolution, and they hope that, similar to the authors of the Declaration of Independence, they too can rally support for big changes in the relationship between men and women.
- The grievances included will be motivating to women because they highlight situations in which a woman is powerless (divorce, property ownership, accusations of misconduct, etc.). Furthermore, the Resolutions of the Seneca Falls Convention seem to be appealing directly to women, calling upon them to take responsibility for changing their current situation.
- This document might help to persuade some men because of the logical connections between the situation of women and the situation of colonists under the king of Britain in the recent past; some men may be able to empathize with the situation of women and be motivated to help change it. At the same time, it may cause other men to balk because of the changing of the language of a revered document and the positioning of men as the oppressors.