

Template for a reading comprehension lesson using *American RadioWorks*' "No Place for a Woman" documentary.

In the 1970's, women across the country began breaking into male-dominated professions. The women who took jobs as miners in northern Minnesota faced a hostile reception. "No Place for a Woman" chronicles the women who filed a landmark sexual harassment case against their employers. In this three-part reading comprehension lesson, students will use the secondary sources available on the "No Place for a Woman" website to practice the skills tested on the Minnesota Reading Basic Skills Test while learning about the women and their legal battle.

Students will first read an excerpt together and practice the assessed reading comprehension skills (see "Things to Know" below). After briefly reviewing the practiced skills, students will then apply the same skills to identify relevant content in a second article and construct test questions for a peer. In the third session, students once again practice reading comprehension skills by reading the remaining excerpt and answering the peer-created reading comprehension questions.

Materials:

- Access to a computer for each student for all sessions or copied printouts of each article (see "prep" below).
- Map of Minnesota's Iron Range (see "selected resources" under the April 2006 Sound Learning Page).
- Optional: [Real Audio Player 8.0](#) or higher and headphones for each student.
- A copy of the "Reading Comprehension Tool" for each student (see below).
- A copy of the "Question Forming Tool" for each student (see below).

Objectives for High School Students:

- Students will practice and apply reading comprehension skills necessary to successfully complete the Minnesota Basic Skills Test in Reading.
- Students will describe and discuss a type of working environment women encountered when they tried to enter male-dominated professions.
- Students will identify and describe the various points of view surrounding women working in Minnesota's iron mines.

Correlations with the Minnesota Graduation Standards

Grade	Subject	Strand	Sub-Strand	Standard	Benchmark
9-12	Social Studies	Historical Skills	Historical Inquiry	The student will analyze historical evidence and draw conclusions.	2. Students will identify the principal formats of published secondary source material and evaluate such sources for both credibility and bias.
9 - 12	Language Arts	Reading and Literature	Vocabulary Expansion	The student will apply a variety of strategies to expand vocabulary.	2. Determine the meaning of unfamiliar words and metaphors by using ..., context clues...
9 - 12	Language Arts	Reading and Literature	Comprehension	The student will understand the meaning of informational, expository or persuasive texts, using a variety of strategies and will demonstrate literal, interpretive, inferential and evaluative comprehension.	1. Monitor comprehension and know when and how to use strategies to clarify the understanding of a selection. 5. Summarize and paraphrase main idea and supporting details.

Things to know for the Minnesota Reading Basic Skills Test:

From http://children.state.mn.us/mde/Accountability_Programs/Assessment_and_Testing/Assessments/BST/BST_General_Information/000342.html:

“To meet the basic requirement for reading, a student shall demonstrate the ability to read and comprehend English passages representative of widely circulated material commonly encountered in adult life. Students must read a passage such as a newspaper article and be able to:

Literal Comprehension:

- identify the main idea and purpose
- recognize supporting details
- identify the meaning of words and phrases

Inferential Comprehension:

- recognize the author's point of view
- draw logical conclusions
- distinguish between fact and opinion”

For more information, see the PDF file [Minnesota Basic Skills Test: Reading Test Specifications](http://children.state.mn.us/mde/static/000737.pdf) - <http://children.state.mn.us/mde/static/000737.pdf>

Sample Mini-Unit

PREP - Estimated time: 35 – 45 minutes

- 1) **1 - 2 minutes:** Access the webpage for the *American RadioWorks*' documentary series – “No Place for a Woman”:
<http://americanradioworks.publicradio.org/features/ironrange/>
- 2) **20 minutes:** Peruse the five articles your students will read excerpts from in the three sessions, checking for any content that you might consider inappropriate (due to the nature of the story, there is strong language sprinkled throughout the articles):
 - “A Man’s Job”: <http://americanradioworks.publicradio.org/features/ironrange/a1.html>
 - “A Legal Landmark”: <http://americanradioworks.publicradio.org/features/ironrange/b1.html>
 - “The Legacy”: <http://americanradioworks.publicradio.org/features/ironrange/c1.html>
- 3) Determine if your students are going to read the articles online or in printed form during each session
- 4) **5 minutes:** Print off and make copies of the reading comprehension question tool (see below) for each student.
- 5) **5 minutes:** If not using the computer lab for the first session, print off and make copies of the excerpt “A Man’s World” – see the selected resources at <http://soundlearning.publicradio.org/features/2006/03/>.
- 6) **5 minutes:** If you are not using a computer lab for either the second or third session, print off and make copies of the other excerpts, one for each pair of students – see the selected resources at <http://soundlearning.publicradio.org/features/2006/03/>
- 7) **10 minutes:** Read the article’s excerpt and answer the questions yourself. Think of how to model test-taking skills – for example, reading the questions first and then the selection.

INSTRUCTION

Session 1: Skill Review

Estimated time: 45 - 60 minutes.

- 1) **Building Prior Knowledge, 5 - 10 minutes:** Brainstorm with your class what it would be like to be one of a few people to work in a place with many more people who actively didn't want you to be there and little if no protection from being harassed or threatened. Have they ever encountered such a situation?
- 2) Display map of the Iron Range and explain to your class that over the next three sessions, we'll read about a landmark struggle between women who were the first to work side by side with men on the Iron Range's mines.
- 3) **Purpose, 1 - 2 minutes:** State that each student's task will be to learn about the different sides of the struggle as they practice reading comprehension skills for the Minnesota Reading Basic Skills Test.
- 4) **5 minutes:** Distribute the excerpt "[A Man's World](#)" or point out the link under the "Selected Resources" on the [March 2006 Sound Learning Page](#). Explain that the Reading Basic Skills Test assesses how well students can apply reading comprehension skills to answer specific questions about a passage. One strategy for taking reading tests is to read those questions first and then read the passage. That way, one will have an idea of what information to look for as one reads.
- 5) **10 minutes:** Ask students to try out the strategy by first reading the questions (and not answering them) and then read the passage.
- 6) After an appropriate amount of time, call the class back together and review the article, identifying the correct answers together.
- 7) **10 minutes:** Distribute the Comprehension Tool to review the reading comprehension skills assessed by the Minnesota Reading Basic Skills Test. Point out where in the article students can:
 - identify the main idea and purpose – what is the big idea of the article? What does the article do – inform, persuade, entertain, or express?
 - recognize supporting details – what facts or examples did the author use to support the main idea?
 - identify the meaning of words – using context clues, can you figure out what a word means?
 - recognize the author's point of view – does the author have a clear a point of view? If so, what statements are clues to the author's point of view?
 - draw logical conclusions – based on the details presented, what conclusions can be made?
 - distinguish between fact and opinion – what evidence did the author use to support statements of fact?Point out how each question asked the student to apply one of the reading comprehension skills and whether or not they had to infer the answer.
- 8) **Skills Practice, 15 - 20 minutes:** Distribute the excerpt "[A Man's World](#)" and give students an appropriate amount of time to complete the article. As they read, prompt them to fill out the Comprehension Tool to prepare them for the closing discussion.
- 9) **Closing Discussion, 10 minutes:** Review the impressions students expressed during the brainstorm. Then ask students to state what they think happened when women started to work at the mines. How would you summarize the situation and different points of view? Which point of view do you think is "the truth"? What evidence do they have from the reading, what details are there in the article that supports their conclusion?

Session 2: Skill Practice: Creating Test Questions

Estimated time: 40 – 60 minutes.

- 1) **Review, 5 minutes:** Briefly recall the points students contributed in the first session's closing discussion.
- 2) **Purpose, 1 – 2 minutes:** Explain that in this session, students will learn more about the struggle women workers faced in the Iron Range mines. Students will be able to choose one of the remaining two articles to read. Their task will be to develop questions on their chosen article that tests their peer's reading comprehension. State that all this activity will prepare them for the Minnesota Reading Basic Skills Test.
- 3) **Distribute Reading Articles, 10 minutes:** Briefly summarize what each excerpt covers (e.g., the legal fight, the settlement's legacy). Invite students to pick an excerpt that most interests them and find a semi-isolated spot to read the article. If students are accessing the articles online, point out the link under "Selected Resources" on the [March 2006 Sound Learning page](#).
- 4) **Introduce the Question Forming Tool, 10 minutes:** Review the skills assessed by the Minnesota Reading Basic Skills Test:
 - identify the main idea and purpose – what is the big idea of the article? What does the article do – inform, persuade, entertain, or express?
 - recognize supporting details – what facts or examples did the author use to support the main idea?
 - identify the meaning of words – using context clues, can you figure out what a word means?
 - recognize the author's point of view – does the author have a clear a point of view? If so, what statements are clues to the author's point of view?
 - draw logical conclusions – based on the details presented, what conclusions can be made?
 - distinguish between fact and opinion – what evidence did the author use to support statements of fact?
- 5) Briefly review the questions from the last session and point out which skill the question assesses. Distribute the Question Forming Tool and walk the class through how to use it to form questions on the article they just read.
- 6) **Assignment, 15 - 30 minutes:** Assign students to use the tool to create their own questions and their answers on the article they chose to read. Mention that their peers will use these questions in the next session to assess their own reading.
- 7) **Small Group Check, 10 – 15 minutes:** After an appropriate amount of time, ask the class to form into small groups made up of students who read the same excerpt. Have the groups compare the questions each member created to check for accuracy and relevance. NOTE: if time runs short in this session, this step can be moved to the third session.
- 8) **Collect Papers, 1 – 3 minutes:** Collect the questions and answers, along with the excerpts, to be redistributed next session. Keep each set of questions together with the excerpts to facilitate distribution in session 3. BE SURE students have written their NAME on their question forming tools.

Session 3: Applying the Skills`

Estimated time: 50 – 60 minutes.

- 1) **Review, 5 – 10 minutes:** Revisit student impressions of the struggle. Recall the points students contributed in the first and second sessions. Query if there's anything to add to the discussion.
- 2) **Assignment, 25 - 30 minutes:** Invite students to read the one excerpt they haven't read yet and answer the other students' questions from session 2. While students are "taking the test", divide the class into two groups.
- 3) **Small Group Assessment, Round 1, 10 minutes:** Assign one group to be the assessor. Direct them to meet with students who just completed reading the same excerpt each assessor wrote questions for in the second session. The assessor's task is to review the other student's answers to her or his questions and point out where in the excerpt the correct information lies.
- 4) **Small Group Assessment, Round 2, 10 minutes:** Switch the assessor group and repeat step 3.
- 5) **Final Closing Discussion, 5 – 10 minutes:** Ask students to share what they learned about struggle for gender equity in the workplace. Ask student to reflect on ramifications the struggle might have had on their future? What if the struggle hadn't happened?

Name: _____

Date: _____

Hour: _____

Reading Comprehension Tool

Literal Comprehension: *What is actually stated.*

Identify the main idea and purpose –

What is the article's big idea? Summarize what the article is about. What does the article do – inform, persuade, entertain, or express?

Identify supporting details –

What facts and examples did the author use to support the main idea?

Identify the meaning of words –

Identify a word you had trouble understanding or one that you think someone might have trouble understanding. Copy the sentence as it appears in the article. Circle the word and write what you think the word might mean, based on how it's used in the sentence.

Inferential Comprehension: *What information isn't specifically stated?*

Recognize the author's point of view –

Does the author have a clear a point of view? If so, what statements are clues to the author's point of view?

Draw conclusions –

Based on the details the author presented, what conclusions about the subject can you make?

Distinguish between fact and opinion –

What evidence did the author use to support factual statements?

Name: _____

Date: _____

Hour: _____

Question Forming Tool

After you've read the excerpt, use this tool to help you create questions with which to test your peers. Remember to put the correct answer in different answer slots. Your questions should be based on either "The Lawsuit" (<http://americanradioworks.publicradio.org/features/ironrange/b3.html>) or "The Legacy" (<http://americanradioworks.publicradio.org/features/ironrange/c2.html>).

<p>Identify the meaning of words: <i>Find a word that you think your peers might not be familiar with. Write the sentence it is used in and circle the word you chose.</i></p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p><i>Now, write three incorrect definitions for the word, along with the correct definition here.</i></p> <p>In this sentence, the word _____ means</p> <p>A. _____</p> <p>B. _____</p> <p>C. _____</p> <p>D. _____</p>	<p>Supporting details: <i>Identify a supporting detail. Rewrite it so that this question makes sense:</i></p> <p>According to the article, _____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p><i>Now, write three incorrect answers for the question, along with the correct answer here.</i></p> <p>A. _____</p> <p>B. _____</p> <p>C. _____</p> <p>D. _____</p>	<p>Identify the meaning of words: <i>Find a word that you think your peers might not be familiar with. Write the sentence it is used in and circle the word you chose.</i></p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p><i>Now, write three incorrect definitions for the word, along with the correct definition here.</i></p> <p>In this sentence, the word _____ means</p> <p>A. _____</p> <p>B. _____</p> <p>C. _____</p> <p>D. _____</p>
<p>Main Idea: The MAIN idea of the article is ... <i>Write three incorrect possible answer for the main idea, along with the correct answer here.</i></p> <p>A. _____</p> <p>B. _____</p> <p>C. _____</p> <p>D. _____</p>	<p>Distinguish fact and opinion: The author of the article MOST LIKELY believes that ... <i>Write three incorrect answers for the writer's opinion might be, along with a correct statement. HINT: Write "the writer was unbiased" if you think so.</i></p> <p>A. _____</p> <p>B. _____</p> <p>C. _____</p> <p>D. _____</p>	<p>Draw conclusions: After reading the article, you can conclude that ... <i>Write three incorrect possible answer for the what a reader may conclude, along with the correct answer here.</i></p> <p>A. _____</p> <p>B. _____</p> <p>C. _____</p> <p>D. _____</p>