

WOMEN, WORK AND OUR UNION

MODULE 1 – WOMEN, WORK, AND OUR UNION – ACTIVITY 1

ACTIVITY 1. A WOMAN'S EXPERIENCE IN THE WORKPLACE (1950S)

This activity is designed as an individual exploration on a woman's experience in the workplace in the 1950s.

SUGGESTED TIME 2 hours

MATERIALS

- Access to online **Illustrating AUPE** content
- Pens
- Pencil crayons
- Paper

ACTIVITY TYPE:

Individual assignment

OBJECTIVES

- Engage learners on the realities for women in the workplace in the 1950s
- Explore the potential thoughts and feelings of a person who is experiencing barriers in the workplace
- Practice creative ways to enter into material that learners might feel disconnected from

DESCRIPTION

After the learners have reviewed the webcomic titled **Women, Work, and our Union** and the additional resources offered alongside the comic (this can either be done as a large group, in small groups, or on their own), move forward on the following assignment that is designed to focus on struggles that women faced in the workplace:

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INDIVIDUAL ASSIGNMENT

- Invite the learners into the following scenario:
Imagine you are a woman in Alberta in the 1950s who works in a government office in a clerical position. You are not allowed to do certain things that the men in your workplace are allowed to do, and you are not offered the same opportunities for promotions or professional development.
- Choose ONE of the following assignments to complete:

1. **Option #1 Diary entry**

Write 2 diary entries, each at least a 2-3 paragraphs long, about your experiences at work in regards to how men and women are treated different in the work place. Make it personal for the character whose voice you are writing in. Name the woman, other traits, and explore her feelings and thoughts on her situation, while offering some additional information about how women were treated in the workplace.

If you need to do some more web research on women in the workplace during that time do so.

Remember to write your entry in first person!

2. **Option #2 Comic book**

Create a (minimum) 3-page comic book story based on a personal experience that this character is having in the workplace (as a woman in the 1950s). This can be realized as an illustrated diary entry. Make it personal for the character whose voice you are writing in. Name the woman, other traits, and explore her feelings and thoughts on her situation, while offering some additional information about how women were treated in the workplace.

If you need to do some more web research on women in the workplace during that time do so.

Remember to create this comic book diary entry in first person!

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REPORT BACK/SHARING

Ask the learners to share their creations with the rest of the group/class, one at a time. They can read off their diary entries or read through their comic book creation to the rest of the group, and also provide any other comments on what it was like to engage in the activity.

FURTHER DISCUSSION

Discussion questions:

- How are the experiences of these women different than what women experience in the workplace now?
- How did it feel to discover that women were treated these ways in the past?
- How can we ensure that others aren't being treated unequally in work, school, other communities that we are a part of? Flipchart their ideas so you can refer back to them at some point if needed.

EVALUATION

If evaluation is necessary for the group you are working with/teaching, it is suggested that it is based on participation rather than quality of writing, quality of artwork, or level of understanding on the topic.

*Optional: Combine all of the diary entries and comics into a booklet and make copies for each learner or to have as a collection for the class.

EXTRA INFO AND RESOURCES

Women had few job options in the 1950s, says a former head nurse (CBC article with embedded video):
<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/hamilton/headlines/women-had-few-job-options-in-the-1950s-says-a-former-head-nurse-1.2985963>

Women in Canada – History Timeline (UFCW):
http://www.ufcw.ca/index.php?option=com_content&view=category&id=101&Itemid=145&lang=en

Women in the Labour Force (The Canadian Encyclopedia):
<https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/women-in-the-labour-force>