

Her Century: Scottish women on film

Third to Fourth level – Literacy & English, Social Studies, Expressive Arts, Technologies, Health and Wellbeing

Overview

Learn about women's roles in the twentieth century using clips from Scotland's moving image archive. This learning journey is designed to be used with the educational website scotlandonscreen.org.uk

Three-Step Approach

Our suggestions for learning experiences are organised into three steps:

1. **Explore** – Close reading and discussion
2. **Discover** – Find out more (go into greater depth)
3. **Create** – Make something new

The learning journey is more rewarding when it involves all three steps.

Prior learning:

Learners will reflect on what they know about women's history and struggles towards equality. They may be aware of some examples of influential women from the past and women and girls who are in the public eye. Learners should discuss examples of women and girls they find inspirational.

This resource will provide learners with opportunities to think about women's lives in the twentieth century. This may include reflections on their own family situation and stories passed down generations.

Learners should develop a critical understanding of how the films and television programmes were constructed. How and why were these films made? Who made them? Where were they shown and what audiences were they intended for?

Capabilities:

Successful learners: By exploring women's history using accessible media, I feel enthused and motivated. I use technology to enhance my engagement with learning. I use my creativity and independent thinking.

Confident individuals: The breadth of activities encourages me to achieve success in different areas and to communicate my own ideas. I am encouraged to explain my reasoning.

Responsible citizens: I am developing an understanding of how society is shaped by patriarchy. By considering films from the past I can evaluate women's representation critically and develop informed views.

Effective contributors: I am proactive in my learning journey and I can analyse moving image texts. I can reflect on my own identity and experiences.

Relevant Experiences and Outcomes

Literacy & English

When I engage with others, I can make a relevant contribution, encourage others to contribute and acknowledge that they have the right to hold a different opinion. I can respond in ways appropriate to my role and use contributions to reflect on, clarify or adapt thinking. **LIT 3-02a**

As I listen or watch, I can:

- identify and give an accurate account of the purpose and main concerns of the text, and can make inferences from key statements
- identify and discuss similarities and differences between different types of text
- use this information for different purposes. **LIT 3-04a**

I can show my understanding of what I listen to or watch by commenting, with evidence, on the content and form of short and extended texts. **LIT 3-07a**

When listening and talking with others for different purposes, I can:

- communicate information, ideas or opinions
- explain processes, concepts or ideas
- identify issues raised, summarise findings or draw conclusions. **LIT 3-09a**

I can make notes and organise them to develop my thinking, help retain and recall information, explore issues and create new texts, using my own words as appropriate. **LIT 3-15a / LIT 4-15a**

To show my understanding across different areas of learning, I can:

- identify and consider the purpose, main concerns or concepts and use supporting detail
- make inferences from key statements
- identify and discuss similarities and differences between different types of text. **LIT 3-16a**

Experiences and Outcomes for 3rd level that could be adapted for those working at 4th level

Technologies

Having used digital technologies to search, access and retrieve information I can justify my selection in terms of validity, reliability and have an awareness of plagiarism. **TCH 3-02a**

I enhance my learning by applying my ICT skills in different learning contexts across the curriculum. **TCH 3-04a**

By using problem-solving strategies and showing creativity in a design challenge, I can plan, develop, organise and evaluate the production of items which meet needs at home or in the world of work. **TCH 3-14a**

Social Studies

I can use my knowledge of a historical period to interpret the evidence and present an informed view. **SOC 3-01a**

I can make links between my current and previous studies, and show my understanding of how people and events have contributed to the development of the Scottish nation. **SOC 3-02a**

I can explain the similarities and differences between the lifestyles, values and attitudes of people in the past by comparing Scotland with a society in Europe or elsewhere. **SOC 3-04a**

I can describe the factors contributing to a major social, political or economic change in the past and can assess the impact on people's lives. **SOC 3-05a**

I can discuss the motives of those involved in a significant turning point in the past and assess the consequences it had then and since. **SOC 3-06a**

Through researching, I can identify possible causes of a past conflict and report on the impact it has had on the lives of people at that time. **SOC 3-06b**

I can explain why a group I have identified might experience inequality and can suggest ways in which this inequality might be addressed. **SOC 3-16a**

Health and Wellbeing

As I explore the rights to which I and others are entitled, I am able to exercise these rights appropriately and accept the responsibilities that go with them. I show respect for the rights of others. **HWB 3-09a**

I am investigating different careers/occupations, ways of working, and learning and training paths. I am gaining experience that helps me recognise the relevance of my learning, skills and interests to my future life. **HWB 3-20a**

I recognise that power can exist within relationships and can be used positively as well as negatively. **HWB 3-45a**

I reflect on how my attitudes, beliefs, values and morality can influence my decisions about friendships, relationships and sexual behaviour. **HWB 3-46a**

I can explain the importance and the enduring and complex responsibility of being a parent/carer, and the impact on life choices and options. **HWB 3-51a**

Expressive Arts

I can use and combine the visual elements and concepts to convey ideas, thoughts and feelings in expressive and design work. **EXA 3-03a**

While working through a design process in response to a design brief, I can develop and communicate imaginative design solutions. **EXA 3-06a**

I can create, develop and sustain a realistic or stylised character through the use of voice, movement and language. **EXA 3-12a**

Having developed ideas from a range of stimuli, I can contribute to devising, rehearsing and presenting drama or scripts. **EXA 3-14a**



Herring Harvest at Yarmouth

(1910c. 6 mins) 35mm/B&W/Silent

The clip shows 'Scotch lassies' at work in Yarmouth, cleaning the fish and moving them into barrels.

Look out for: **The friendships and protective groups formed by the young women**
The ages of the women working in Yarmouth
The working conditions experienced by the women

EXPLORE

Reading, Listening and Talking

Key Questions: *Questions can be set as an individual reading activity with pupils writing their answers OR as a talking activity splitting the class into groups.*

The film was made just before the First World War. What do you know about that time in history and how women lived?

What can you learn about the fishing industry from watching the film? What jobs did people do and what was the scale of the industry?

What has changed since this time, both in terms of the fishing industry and job opportunities available to young women and teenagers?

What do you think working and living conditions would have been like for the 'Scotch lassies' in Yarmouth and at home in Scotland?

What do you notice about the way the women are dressed and how they interact with one another?

DISCOVER

Social Studies

What can you find out about women living in fishing communities today and in the past?

Research traditions of seasonal and itinerant labour in Scotland. Is there greater or less demand for this sort of work today than in the past?

What expectations would society have of young women and teenage girls living in Scotland in 1910? How are these different from today?

Sciences / Health and Wellbeing

Find out about the status of fishing in Scotland today. How has the industry been affected by overfishing and fishing policies? What role might climate change play in the future?

Should we include fish in our diet? Weigh up the evidence available to you.

CREATE

Technologies

Create a film or webpage for your school about the culture and heritage of fishing communities.

Download and edit together footage from the Scotland on Screen website showing women at work.

Literacy / Expressive Arts - Drama

Write a script about women gutting and packing fish in Yarmouth. Think carefully about the different characters and their stories.

Write and record a short monologue about travelling from a Scottish village to work in Yarmouth, told from the perspective of a young woman.



The Coming of the Camerons

(1944. 10 mins) 16mm/Colour/Silent

Documentary following postwoman Jean Cameron who requested trousers as her uniform instead of the regulation skirt and began a fashion for 'Camerons'.

Look out for: **The physically demanding postal route, including the use of a bicycle**
1940s fashions
Positive attitudes to women's changed roles during the Second World War

EXPLORE

Reading, Listening and Talking

Key questions: *Questions can be set as an individual reading activity with pupils writing their answers OR as a talking activity splitting the class into groups.*

What can you see happening in the film? Write down what happens and discuss how Jean and the location are represented. How does the film make you feel?

What do you know about the role of women during the Second World War? What do you think rural life was like during this time?

Watch other films from the period that show women at work.

Do you cycle? Why/why not? What are the advantages of cycling over other modes of transport?

DISCOVER

Social Studies / History / Expressive Arts

Research the history of trousers in women's fashions. When were trousers seen as utility wear and when were they promoted as fashionable? What other information can you find about the 'Camerons'?

Find out what roles were available to women during the Second World War. What jobs were women actively recruited into that involved working outdoors? Which jobs did women do that were traditionally associated with men?

Find out about the links between cycling and the women's Suffrage movement earlier in the 20th century.

Find out about the importance of mail on the Home Front during the Second World War. How was mail processed and were there any restrictions? What role did letters play in spreading information and how else was information received?

Technologies

How was the design of the bicycle adapted to be more convenient for women who wore skirts?

Compare examples of different bike designs, in the past and today.

CREATE

Expressive Arts

Design a modern uniform for delivering mail in the Scottish highlands.

Edit together a one- or two- minute film of Jean Cameron's postal route and create some music or a song to go with it.

Citizenship / Technologies

Create a digital presentation, blog or talk about how small, individual acts can lead to more significant changes.

Make a short video about a woman or girl who has challenged the status quo.



A Day in the Home

(1951. 13 mins) 16mm/B&W/Sound

This film was made to educate schoolgirls to become housewives. The film portrays the everyday chores carried out by an idealised middle-class family in an early 1950s tenement flat.

Look out for: **The different tasks carried out by various family members**
The instructional manner in which the (mother's) narration is delivered
The mother's few opportunities for leisure time and relaxation

EXPLORE

Reading, Listening and Talking

Key questions: *Questions can be set as an individual reading activity with pupils writing their answers OR as a talking activity splitting the class into groups.*

Before watching the film hold a discussion about who does the household labour in your home. Think about all aspects of maintaining the household, including bills, shopping, cleaning, cooking and childcare.

Talk about the various tasks performed by the mother. How realistic do you think this portrayal is of a 1950s household? (Note: this was not a real family. The parts of husband and wife are played by two teachers.)

Why do you think this film was shown to girls at school?

What social class does this family represent? What makes you think this?

Talk about the contrast between this film and propaganda films that show women working outside the home during the Second World War. If you had been a young woman in the 1940s and early 1950s, how do you think you would have felt about the changes taking place in society?

DISCOVER

Social studies / history

What can you find out about the changing status of women's employment from 1900 to 1960? Were there times when women were encouraged into the workplace? When, and why, were women encouraged to be 'homebuilders'?

Find out how everyday life in an early 1950s household was different from today. Look at heating and lighting, labour-saving devices, food storage and different sorts of accommodation.

Can you find some historical sources that show us how different women lived in the 1950s in Scotland? These might be newspaper articles, advertisements, museum objects, songs or films.

Research rationing and cooking during the Second World War and afterwards (rationing was gradually phased out, finally ending in 1954).

Watch some public information films from the same period to see how the instructional documentary style influenced the making of this film.

CREATE

Health and wellbeing

Keep a diary of all the things you notice that are done, and that you do, in your household. Take notes about how you think the distribution of household labour might affect how people feel and how they interact with others in the household.

Create a poster or presentation on 'the ideal family'. What does this mean to you? What would you like it to mean?

Expressive Arts

Create an alternative soundtrack for the film – a monologue where the mother reveals her true thoughts and feelings.

Create a comic strip on the theme 'A Day in the Home' – set it in the past or today.

Technologies

Design a computer game or app based on what happens in the film 'A Day in the Home'.



Glasgow's First South Asian Policewoman

(1974. 6 mins) 16mm/Colour/Sound

Television rushes for a news interview with Sawarnjit Matharu, the first South Asian woman police officer in Scotland.

Please note the clip contains the use of the term 'coloured'. This was an accepted term for black, Asian, or mixed-race people until the 1960s but is now regarded as offensive.

Look out for: **The television journalist's voice-over and framing of the story**
The press and photographers are all men
Sawarnjit Matharu's reaction to the press attention

EXPLORE

Reading, Listening and Talking

Key questions: *Questions can be set as an individual reading activity with pupils writing their answers OR as a talking activity splitting the class into groups.*

Discuss what is happening in the video. What in this video tells you that it is unedited news footage ('rushes')?

Why was Sawarnjit Matharu's recruitment to the police force seen as a news story? What do you notice about how the story is framed and the way Sawarnjit is positioned throughout?

How do you think it might have felt for a young, South Asian woman joining the police in Scotland in the 1970s?

Discuss whether you think Sawarnjit Matharu remained in the police force or went on to do other things. Then watch the (much later) interview with her made by Colourful Heritage and talk about what you've learned.

What do you think about news reporting today? Is it impartial? Are you aware of debates around the representation of black, Asian and ethnic minority people on the news?

DISCOVER

Social studies / history

Research the history of women in the police force – when were they first recruited? What jobs did they tend to do? What about today?

Find out about relationships between the police force and black and ethnic minority communities. What can you learn about racism and 'race relations' within the police force in the United Kingdom and the USA?

Modern Languages / Geography

The video tells us that Sawarnjit Matharu could understand Punjabi. Find out about the different languages spoken or understood by the South Asian people whose families moved to Scotland.

Research the history of South Asian communities in Glasgow or where you live. Why did people emigrate and what did they experience when they arrived?

Find out about the achievements of South Asian women in Scotland.

CREATE

Expressive Arts / Social Studies

Using collage, create an identity 'mind map' poster that considers what it might be like to have both a South Asian and a Scottish identity.

Ask permission to conduct an interview with women from a South Asian background to discuss their experiences living, working and raising children in Scotland. You may wish to film it if you have permission.

Make a painting or drawing of a woman who has inspired you.

Expressive Arts – Drama / Literacy

Write a dramatic scene in which a young woman who works with the police force helps another woman who does not.

Technologies

Re-edit the video into a coherent television news story. You may need to create your own voice-over to do this.

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Moving Image Archive



Red Skirts on Clydeside (clips 1 and 2)

(1984) 16mm/Colour/Sound

Documentary about the process of recovering women's history using the 1915 Glasgow Rent Strikes as a focal point.

This film was made by the Sheffield Film Co-op and was directed by Jenny Woodley and Christine Bellamy. In the clips, women speak about their memories of being politically active in Glasgow and remember personalities involved in the Rent Strikes.

Questions

- What do you know about women during the First World War?
- Why does the film start outside a classroom and what is the teacher talking about?
- What is oral history and why is it important?
- What can you learn about the 1915 Rent Strikes from this film?
- In what ways do you think a person's upbringing can influence their politics and beliefs?

Activities

- Visit a local archive, library or museum to research women's history.
- Conduct interviews with older women in your community about a time in the past.
- Find out about the Glasgow Women's Library and what they have in their collections relating to the First World War period.
- What ethical and moral values do you hold as important? Create a personal project explaining these beliefs and thinking about where they came from.



Male and Female (clips 1 and 2)

(1980) 16mm/Colour/Sound

Film made to trigger discussion amongst teenagers about gender roles. From the Scottish Health Education Unit series 'Teenage-Talk In'.

This film was directed by Sarah Erulkar, a highly experienced documentary filmmaker who made many public information films. Erulkar was Indian and Jewish and raised in England where she spent most of her career.

Questions

- What examples are given of stereotypical and non-stereotypical behaviours by men and women in this film?
- Where does the voice-over support the images and where does it go against what we are seeing?
- What public health films or campaigns do you remember seeing?
- What are the barriers to women working today? And in the 1970s?
- Who are "women libbers"? Is this a positive or derogatory term?

Activities

- Discuss the filmmaking techniques used and whether you find them effective.
- Create a scene for an updated version of this film.
- Hold a debate on gender equality.
- Use the film as a starting point for a creative, feminist project such as zine-making or creating activist posters.

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Weblinks

Her Century film website and zine

<https://www.hercenturyfilm.com/>

Glasgow Women's Library website

<https://womenslibrary.org.uk/>

Colourful Heritage website

<https://www.colourfulheritage.com/>

Jean Cameron profile by The Postal Museum

<https://www.postalmuseum.org/blog/wearing-the-trousers/>

Cine Cycles – women and bicycles in the National Library of Scotland Moving Image Archive (blog and video)

<https://blog.nls.uk/cine-cycles-women-bicycles-and-a-sense-of-freedom/>

History of the Sheffield Film Co-op

<https://womensfilmandtelevisionhistory.wordpress.com/2014/04/04/becoming-sheffield-film-co-op/>

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