CELEBRATIONS

International Women's Day

onestopenglish

Teacher's notes

Age: Adults
Level: Upper-intermediate to advanced (B2/C1)
Time: approx. 90 minutes

Activity: In this lesson, students will:
1. read a text about *International Women's Day*, looking at the language involved;
2. read, write and rank pledges;
3. write a short text about a female role model.

Language focus: vocabulary related to *International Women's Day*, equality, pledges and promises.

Materials: one copy of the worksheet per student.

Procedure

1. Women of the world
Working in pairs, students write the name of one well-known women (preferably, but not necessarily, women who are alive today and not just historical figures) next to each category. Set a time limit of five minutes for this part of the task as the aim is not to carry out any research at this stage but to utilize students' own knowledge and ideas.
Then ask students to compare their lists and talk about which categories were easy for them to complete and which ones were not so easy.
Ask whether the students feel that women are (still) under-represented in certain categories and areas of life.

2. Key words and expressions
Students quickly read the article noticing how the key words are used in context. Students then match the key words to the definitions.

Key:

1. enabled	7. vocational
2. challenge	8. discrimination
3. bias	9. movement
4. perceptions	10. suffragettes
5. gender	11. empowerment
6. rallies	12. bunting

3. Comprehension check
Students read the statements and decide whether they are true or false. They should correct and rewrite any that are false.

Key (suggested answers):
1. True.
2. True.
3. False. They were attended by more than one million women and men.
4. False. The United Nations officially recognised IWD in the year 1975.
5. False. Anyone can run an IWD event – they can even order free event packs from the IWD website.

4. 10 pledges for International Women's Day

a. Working in pairs, students read and make sure they understand the meaning of the 7 pledges provided. Then they come up with and write another 3 pledges to bring the total number up to 10.

b. In pairs, students number the pledges 1-10 to show how important they think each one is. Number 1 should be the one that they consider to be most important and/or necessary.

c. Students finally work together in larger groups, comparing and contrasting their pledge lists and the order of importance they have put them in.

Optional extra: combining the best of the pledges, come up with a class list of 10 pledges that will be pinned up and displayed on the wall for all to see and read.

5. Discussion
Working alone and referring back to the women they wrote and talked about in Exercise 1, students choose who they would most like for each situation. Put students into small groups and ask them to discuss and expand upon their answers, giving reasons for their choices.

6. Writing

This task can be done in class or set as homework. Using the sentence beginning provided to start them off, students write about a woman they respect, admire or look up to. They may write about any woman, from the present or the past. This may be a well-known person, but can equally be their mother, grandmother, sister or other family member, their friend, a teacher or indeed anyone else who has somehow touched their lives in a positive way.

CELEBRATIONS

International Women's Day

1. Women of the world

a. Write the name of a well-known female for each category.

politician _____	artist _____
business leader _____	designer _____
scientist _____	writer _____
musician _____	activist _____
actor _____	social media influencer _____

b. Work in pairs. Compare and discuss your lists.

2. Key words and expressions

Read the article about International Women's Day quickly. Find the keywords in context and match them to the definitions below.

bias	bunting	challenge	discrimination	empowerment	enabled
gender	movement	perceptions	rallies	suffragettes	vocational

1. when people are given the ability or opportunity to do something _____

2. question whether something is true, accurate, or legal _____

3. an attitude that you have that makes you treat someone unfairly or differently from the way you treat others

   _____

4. a particular way of understanding or thinking about something _____

5. roles and characteristics historically divided into male and female but now referring to many identities

   _____

6. public meetings that people attend to support or protest against someone or something _____

7. a type of course that teaches the skills necessary for a particular job _____

8. unfair treatment of someone because of their religion, race, or other personal features _____

9. a group of people who share the same aim and work together to achieve it _____

10. women who took part in public protests to give women the right to vote in the early 1900s _____

11. the act of giving someone more control over their life or more power to do something _____

12. a line of small flags on a string, used for decorating buildings and streets for special occasions

    _____

International Women's Day

International Women's Day (IWD) is celebrated globally on 8 March each year.

Each year IWD focuses on a particular campaign theme. The theme for International Women's Day 2020 is #EachforEqual because "an equal world is an enabled world." The official IWD website[1] tells us that "Individually, we're all responsible for our own thoughts and actions – all day, every day," and that "we can actively choose to challenge stereotypes, fight bias, broaden perceptions, improve situations and celebrate women's achievements". We are further asked to remember that, "each one of us can help create a gender equal world."

IWD celebrates the social, economic, cultural and political achievements of women everywhere. It came into being well over a century ago, with the first official IWD gathering on 8 March, 1911 in Austria, Denmark, Germany and Switzerland, where more than one million women and men attended rallies. In addition to the right to vote and to hold public office, they demanded women's rights to work, to vocational training and to an end to discrimination on the job. It was implemented as a continuation of the movement started by the Socialist Party of America, suffragettes and other campaigners for women's equality.

The United Nations began celebrating International Women's Day in 1975. The empowerment of women continues to be a central feature of the UN's efforts to address social, economic and political challenges across the globe.

In 2019, Berlin, the capital of Germany, made International Women's Day a public holiday for the very first time.

These days, in addition to the huge variety of professionally organised International Women's Day events such as concerts and conferences, many local groups run their own. Organisers of IWD events, be they schools, hospitals, libraries, or community groups, can order packs containing posters, selfie signs, balloons, stickers, ribbons, bunting, pens, wristbands, and the like, to help them advertise and decorate their events and tell the world why they are coming together and making the effort to celebrate women.

Regardless of their size, the aim of IWD events both large and small is to raise awareness, celebrate achievement and to bring about change that will lead to a more gender-equal world.

Let's all be #EachforEqual.

Note: International Men's Day is celebrated separately on 19 November each year.

[1]Source: www.internationalwomensday.com

3. Comprehension check

Are these statements true or false according to the text? Correct any that are false.

1. The celebration of International Women's Day is more than 100 years old.

2. The first large IWD gatherings were held at the beginning of the twentieth century in different European countries on the same day.

3. Men were not allowed or encouraged to attend the first IWD rallies.

4. The United Nations officially recognised IWD in the year 1911.

5. People who want to run an IWD event need to ask permission from the Socialist Party of America.

4. 10 pledges for International Women's Day

a. Read the pledges (a–g) below, then write another 3 pledges of your own.

a. I'll mentor a woman and help her build her networks.   ___

b. I'll speak up for women amongst family and friends.   ___

c. I'll listen more openly to everyone, of all genders.   ___

d. I'll reflect on how fair and equal my actions and comments are.   ___

e. I'll value women's contributions and achievements more.   ___

f. I'll be aware of bias and question assumptions I make about women.   ___

g. I'll notice and question when women are not present or equal.   ___

h. I'll _____   ___

i. I'll _____   ___

j. I'll _____   ___

b. In pairs, rank all the pledges above 1–10 (1 = most important) according to how important they are to you.

c. Work in groups. Compare and contrast your lists of 10 pledges and the order of importance you have put them in.

5. Discussion

Complete the task for yourself, then discuss your answers.

Which of the women you noted in Exercise 1 – or other women from history – would you most like to meet to:

ask questions?   _____

have tea with?   _____

spend a day with?   _____

say thank you to?   _____

(other reason, please state)   _____

6. Writing

Write a paragraph about a woman you respect, admire or look up to. State why this woman is a good role model. The person you write about does not have to be famous. She may be someone from your family or from another area of your life.

I **admire** / **respect** / **look up to** *(delete as necessary)* _____ *(name)* because …