

The History of International Women's Day

1 Explore Quotes from Famous People!

In class, read the following quotes and discuss what you think about them.

Women are the largest untapped reservoir of talent in the world.

- Hillary Clinton

A woman is like a tea bag - you can't tell how strong she is until you put her in hot water.

- Eleanor Roosevelt

Women hold up half the sky.

- Mao Zedong

Women are the backbone of society.

- Diane von Furstenberg

2 Time to Discover Some Interesting Facts!

Review the facts presented below. Is there any piece of information that resonates with you? If so, why does it stand out? Conduct online research to gather additional details about the chosen fact, and then share this newfound information with the rest of the class.

- 1 On average, women earn 81.6 cents for every dollar that men earn in the United States.
- 2 International Women's Day has been celebrated on March 8th since 1913.
- 3 The theme for International Women's Day in 2021 is #ChooseToChallenge, aimed at creating a more inclusive and gender equal world.
- 4 The first country to grant women the right to vote was New Zealand in 1893.
- 5 In 1972, the United Nations officially recognized March 8th as International Women's Day.
- 6 Only 7.4% of Fortune 500 companies have female CEOs.
- 7 In Senegal, women make up 61% of parliament, the highest percentage in the world.

- 8 Globally, women do 2.6 times more unpaid care and domestic work than men.
- 9 In the United States, women make up 51.8% of the population but only hold 23.7% of congressional seats.
- 10 International Women's Day is an official holiday in over 20 countries, including Afghanistan and Cambodia.

3

Let's Discuss These Interesting Questions!

Take a look at the following questions. Choose the one that captures your attention the most and prepare a one-minute mini presentation in the style of Pecha Kucha on the topic for the rest of your classmates. If you wish, you can use your mobile phone to search for the necessary information.

- 1 How has the celebration of International Women's Day evolved over time?
- 2 In what ways do different cultures around the world observe and honor this day?
- 3 Can you discuss any significant historical events that have influenced the creation of International Women's Day?
- 4 What are some current global issues that are being addressed on International Women's Day?
- 5 How does the theme for each year's International Women's Day reflect current social and political movements?
- 6 Can you explain the significance of the color purple in relation to International Women's Day?
- 7 How has technology played a role in promoting awareness and activism for women's rights on this day?
- 8 Are there any controversies surrounding the celebration of International Women's Day?
- 9 How can individuals continue to support and advocate for gender equality beyond just one day of recognition?
- 10 Can you share any personal experiences or stories related to International Women's Day and its impact on your life?

4

Which Title Fits Best?

Flick through the text below very quickly and pick the title which you think best matches the content of the text.

- 1 How Women Fought for Their Right to Vote on International Women's Day
- 2 Celebrating Women's Rights: The History and Impact of International Women's Day
- 3 Exploring the Cultural Significance of International Women's Day

5 Time to Read!

Read the text carefully now and choose A, B, C or D for questions 1-7 below.

International Women's Day (IWD) is celebrated on March 8 every year. It is a focal point in the movement for women's rights. After the Socialist Party of America organized a Women's Day on February 28, 1909, in New York, the 1910 International Socialist Woman's Conference suggested a Women's Day be held annually. After women gained suffrage in Soviet Russia in 1917, March 8 became a national holiday there. The day was then predominantly celebrated by the socialist movement and communist countries until it was adopted in 1975 by the United Nations.

In the early 1900s, working conditions for women were harsh. They worked long hours with low pay and had no voting rights. On February 28, 1909, in New York City, the Socialist Party of America organized the first National Woman's Day to bring attention to these issues. More than 15,000 women marched through the streets of New York, demanding shorter work hours, better pay, and voting rights.

The following year, at the International Conference of Working Women in Copenhagen, Denmark, Clara Zetkin, a German politician and advocate for women's rights, proposed that March 8th be established as an annual Women's Day. Her proposal was met with unanimous approval from the over 100 women representing 17 different countries.

The first official International Women's Day was celebrated on March 19, 1911. More than one million men and women attended rallies and demonstrations around the world, campaigning for women's right to vote, work, and hold public office. In 1913, the date was changed to March 8th, and it has been celebrated on that day ever since.

During World War I, International Women's Day became a way for women to protest against the war and advocate for peace. In Russia, on March 8, 1917 (which was February 23rd on the Julian calendar used at the time), women textile workers went on strike in Petrograd (now St. Petersburg) to demand bread and an end to the war. Their strike sparked a series of events that led to the abdication of Tsar Nicholas II and the establishment of a provisional government.

After the October Revolution, the Bolsheviks made International Women's Day an official holiday in Soviet Russia. It was celebrated with parades, speeches, and demonstrations, and women were given the day off work. In 1965, the Soviet Union declared March 8th a non-working day to honor women's contributions to society.

International Women's Day continued to be observed in socialist and communist countries throughout the 20th century. In 1975, during International Women's Year, the United Nations officially recognized March 8th as International Women's Day. The UN began celebrating the

day annually, focusing on a different theme each year.

Today, International Women's Day is celebrated around the world. It is a day to recognize and celebrate the achievements of women in all fields, from politics and science to art and sports. It is also a day to raise awareness about gender equality and women's rights issues, such as violence against women, reproductive rights, and equal pay.

Many organizations and individuals mark the day with rallies, marches, and other events. Some countries, including China, Russia, and Vietnam, have made International Women's Day a national holiday. In some places, men give flowers and small gifts to the women in their lives, such as mothers, wives, and daughters.

Each year, International Women's Day has a different theme. Recent themes have included "Make It Happen," "Pledge for Parity," and "Be Bold for Change." The themes are meant to inspire action and highlight specific areas where progress is needed to achieve gender equality.

While much progress has been made since the first International Women's Day in 1911, there is still work to be done. Women around the world continue to face discrimination, violence, and unequal treatment. International Women's Day serves as a reminder of the ongoing struggle for gender equality and a call to action for individuals and organizations to work towards a more just and inclusive society for all.

6 Pick the Right Answer!

1 **What was the purpose of the Socialist Party of America organizing a Women's Day on February 28, 1909?**

- a To demand shorter work hours for women
- b To campaign for women's right to vote
- c To protest against harsh working conditions
- d To advocate for equal pay for women

2 **Why did Clara Zetkin propose March 8th as the annual Women's Day?**

- a To celebrate women's contributions to society
- b To honor women's achievements in politics and science
- c To advocate for women's right to work
- d To raise awareness about violence against women

3 **When was the first official International Women's Day celebrated?**

- a March 8, 1911
- b March 19, 1911
- c February 23, 1917
- d February 28, 1909

4 **In what way did International Women's Day become a protest against war during World War I?**

- a Women demanded an end to the war
- b Women advocated for peace
- c Women went on strike in Petrograd
- d Women campaigned for their right to vote

5 **Why did the Bolsheviks make International Women's Day an official holiday in Soviet Russia?**

- a To recognize women's contributions to society
- b To honor women's achievements in art and sports
- c To raise awareness about gender equality
- d To celebrate women's rights and give women a day off work

6 **When did the United Nations officially recognize March 8th as International Women's Day?**

- a 1911
- b 1965
- c 1975
- d 1909

7 **What is the purpose of celebrating International Women's Day today?**

- a To mark the achievements of women in all fields
- b To raise awareness about violence against women
- c To advocate for reproductive rights
- d To promote equal pay for women

7

Can You Match These Words to Their Definitions?

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1 to wear many hats | a someone who is powerful, influential, and should not be underestimated. |
| 2 to be in the driver's seat | b to be in control or have the power to make decisions. |
| 3 break the glass ceiling | c to have multiple roles or responsibilities. |
| 4 behind every great man is a great woman | d to challenge and break traditional beliefs or expectations about a certain group of people. |
| 5 to be a trailblazer | e the idea of female empowerment and strength, often used as a slogan or rallying cry for gender equality. |
| 6 a force to be reckoned with | f to be a pioneer or leader in a particular field or movement. |
| 7 to break new ground | g to make significant progress or achieve something that has never been done before. |
| 8 to have it all | h to successfully balance career, family, and personal life. |
| 9 girl power | i to overcome societal barriers and achieve success in a male-dominated field. |
| 10 to shatter stereotypes | j acknowledging the important role that women play in supporting and contributing to their partner's success. |

8

Choose the Topic that You Like and Share Your Thoughts on it!

Develop a concise, one-minute presentation on one of the topics provided below. Ensure to incorporate some of the newly acquired words and expressions learned thus far.

Personal essay topics:

- 1 My experience as a female leader in the workplace and how I have overcome challenges on International Women's Day.
- 2 The importance of celebrating and empowering women on International Women's Day in my personal life.
- 3 How my mother has been a role model for me on International Women's Day and throughout the year.

- 4 The impact of gender stereotypes on my journey to success and how International Women's Day sheds light on this issue.
- 5 The significance of intersectionality in feminism and how International Women's Day highlights the need for inclusivity.

General essay topics:

- 1 On International Women's Day, many people advocate for equal rights and opportunities for women. To what extent do you think this is necessary?
- 2 Some people argue that International Women's Day is no longer relevant in today's society where women have achieved equality. Do you agree or disagree with this statement?
- 3 Gender inequality is still prevalent in many industries, including the film industry. To what extent do you think International Women's Day can bring about change in this area?
- 4 Many companies use International Women's Day as a marketing tactic, offering discounts and promotions targeted towards women. Is this a positive or negative development?
- 5 In some cultures, women are still not allowed to work or have access to education. To what extent do you think International Women's Day can raise awareness and promote change in these societies?



Correct Answers

4 Correct answer:

2

6 Correct Answers:

1 c 2 b 3 a 4 b 5 d 6 c 7 a

7 Correct Answers:

1 c 2 b 3 i 4 j 5 f 6 a 7 g 8 h
9 e 10 d