



SOUNDTRACKS

SONGS THAT DEFINED HISTORY

Second Wave: Women's Rights and Music in the 1960s

OVERVIEW

ESSENTIAL QUESTION

What was second-wave feminism, and how did music contribute to the movement?

OVERVIEW

In this lesson, students will investigate second-wave feminism and the fight for women's liberation in the United States. Students will analyze the work of author Betty Friedan and singer Lesley Gore and their influence on women of the 1960s and 70s.



With men beginning to return home from the battlefields of World War II in 1945, many Americans were eager for a sense of normalcy. Post-war economic growth, a booming birth rate, and the development of suburban living appealed to many young families as the nation moved into the 1950s. But suburban life relied heavily on gender expectations and the idea of the nuclear family: where men were expected to be the breadwinner and provider, with women left at home to tend to the kids and all of the household duties such as cooking and cleaning. This expectation of domesticity was reflected in pop culture, as well as the emerging consumer culture that targeted suburbanites with items like new household appliances. While the suburban lifestyle became part of the definition of the “American Dream,” for many women who were seen as nothing but a housewife it was anything but a dream.

One housewife who had begun to question this “problem that had no name” was Betty Friedan. Influenced by French feminist Simone de Beauvoir and her 1949 book, *The Second Sex*, Friedan published her own work titled *The Feminine Mystique*, in 1963. The book centered on how unhappy American housewives were, and the need for women to be more than just a housewife and mother. *The Feminine Mystique* was a hit as much as it was controversial, with many accusing Friedan of attempting to destroy the American family and demonizing happy housewives. In spite of the backlash, the book went on to sell about one million copies in its first year and influence a generation of women determined to carve out paths for themselves beyond societal expectations and pressures.

The 1960s and 1970s saw women like Friedan becoming more vocal against societal norms that expected them to be obedient and domestic. One major event where this became apparent was the protest of the 1968 Miss America pageant in Atlantic City, New Jersey. Over 200 women participated in the demonstration, carrying signs and banners criticizing the pageant's focus on women's bodies and beauty ideals. The protest helped launch the women's liberation movement into the public as it was covered by several media outlets.

A few years prior to the demonstration, seventeen-year-old singer Lesley Gore recorded the song “You Don’t Own Me” in 1963. In the song, Gore emphasizes being independent and free to make choices as a young woman. It reached No. 2 on the Billboard Hot 100 in February 1964. While not intentionally written with the emerging feminists radicalized by Friedan’s work in mind, “You Don’t Own Me” soon became an unofficial anthem associated with second-wave feminism. The song has been covered by artists such as Joan Jett and Kristin Chenoweth.

Second-wave feminism didn’t only encourage women to aspire to break free from societal expectations for women and gender norms. It also mobilized women to fight for legislation that protected women and secured autonomy. For example, Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 outlawed discrimination based on sex. The U.S. Supreme Court decision in *Roe v. Wade* (1973) ruled that “unduly restrictive” state regulations on abortion are unconstitutional. Organizations also formed, such as the National Organization for Women (NOW) in 1964, whose first president was none other than Betty Friedan. Second-wave feminism continued the work of first wave feminists, who were victorious in their fight for women’s suffrage in the early 20th century. It also laid the foundation for Third Wave Feminists of the early ‘90s who centered their work around diversity and sexuality.

OBJECTIVES

Upon completion of this lesson, students will:

1. KNOW (KNOWLEDGE):

- The founding of second-wave feminism and its guiding principles
- Betty Friedan’s book *The Feminine Mystique* and the impact it had in the United States in the 1960s
- The Miss America protest in 1968
- The role music played in articulating the principles of the feminist movement

2. MASTERY OBJECTIVE:

- Students will be able to identify the principles and actions of the second-wave feminist movement by reading excerpts of Betty Friedan’s *The Feminine Mystique*, watching clips from the *CNN Soundtracks* series, and analyzing the song “You Don’t Own Me” by Lesley Gore.

ACTIVITIES

MOTIVATIONAL ACTIVITY

1. Give students several minutes to write down on a piece of paper what they think of when they hear the word “feminism.” Tell students they can make any association they would like to with the word, whether it’s a person, place, object, feeling, time period, phrase, etc.
2. After the time allotted, encourage students to share what they wrote with the class.
3. Together, create a class definition of the term “feminism.”

PROCEDURE

1. Play **Clip 1, Betty Friedan and the “Feminine Mystique”**. Ask students:

- Based on the commentary from the people interviewed in the clip, what were traditional expectations of women?
- How did Betty Friedan’s *The Feminine Mystique* attempt to challenge these traditional expectations?

2. Show students **Image 1, Book Cover of *The Feminine Mystique*** and pass out **Handout-Excerpt from *The Feminine Mystique***. Students may read the excerpt to themselves, you may select a reader, or read the excerpt as a class. Then ask students:

- According to the excerpt, what do you think is “the problem with no name”? Why would this problem have no name?
- What might Betty Friedan be claiming in *The Feminine Mystique*?
- Who do you think was Friedan’s audience? What type or groups of women? Can you think of any groups of women excluded by Friedan’s beliefs?
- Why do you think the book was controversial? How do you think it would be received if it were published today?

3. Play **Clip 2, “A Cannon Shot”**. Then ask students:

- According to the clip, What are the connections between second-wave feminism and the generations of women prior?
- What are some events or earlier movements that may have inspired this generation of women to organize?

- Based on the video, list some of the topics mainstream second-wave feminists are questioning.

4. Play **Clip 3, The Miss America Pageant Protests**. Then ask students:

- Why might have the Miss America Pageant been chosen as a place for this demonstration?
- This clip emphasizes how women organized together to protest the Miss America Pageant and the items that represented women’s oppression. What do you think makes an effective protest?
- What might the “freedom trash can” symbolize? What other items aside from the bra shown, do you think women might have thrown in the freedom trash can?

5. Have students watch **Clip 4, “You Don’t Own Me.”** After watching, display **Image 2, “You Don’t Own Me” Chorus** to the class. Ask students:

- What do you think Gore is singing about?
- Gore was 17 at the time of recording “You Don’t Own Me.” Why might this have appealed to teenage girls and young women at the time?
- Why might the song have become associated with second-wave feminism and the Women’s Liberation Movement? How do the messages of the song and the movement compare or relate?



SUMMARY ACTIVITY

1. Ask the class:

- How should we define second-wave feminism?
- What are some key issues the women's movement were fighting for during second-wave feminism?
- How does it relate to today's discourse around gender equality and gender overall?

EXTENSION ACTIVITIES

1. Discover how second-wave feminism developed with the TeachRock lesson **Third Wave: Women's Rights and Music in the 1990s**.

STANDARDS

NATIONAL STANDARDS FOR MUSIC EDUCATION – NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR MUSIC EDUCATION (NAFME)

Core Music Standard: Responding

Interpret: Support interpretations of musical works that reflect creators' and/or performers' expressive intent.

Evaluate: Support evaluations of musical works and performances based on analysis, interpretation, and established criteria.

Core Music Standard: Connecting

Connecting 11: Relate musical ideas and works to varied contexts and daily life to deepen understanding.

NATIONAL CORE ARTS STANDARDS

Creating

Anchor Standard 1: Generate and conceptualize artistic ideas and work.

Anchor Standard 2: Organize and develop artistic ideas and work.

Anchor Standard 3: Refine and complete artistic work.

Performing/Presenting/Producing

Anchor Standard 5: Develop and refine artistic techniques and work for presentation.

Anchor Standard 6: Convey meaning through the presentation of artistic work.

Responding

Anchor Standard 7: Perceive and analyze artistic work.

Anchor Standard 8: Interpret intent and meaning in artistic work.

Core Music Standard: Connecting

Anchor Standard 10: Synthesize and relate knowledge and personal experiences to make art.

Anchor Standards 11: Relate artistic ideas and work with societal, cultural and historical context to deepen understanding.

COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS

College and Career Readiness Reading Anchor Standards for Grades 6-12 for English Language Arts

Reading 1: Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.

Reading 2: Determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas.

Craft and Structure 4: Interpret words and phrases as they are used in a text, including determining technical, connotative, and figurative meanings, and analyze how specific word choices shape meaning or tone.

Craft and Structure 6: Assess how point of view or purpose shapes the content and style of a text.

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas 7: Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse media and formats, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words.

College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards for Speaking and Listening (K-12)

Comprehension & Collaboration 1: Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

Comprehension & Collaboration 2: Integrate and evaluate information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally.

Comprehension & Collaboration 3: Evaluate a speaker's point of view, reasoning, and use of evidence and rhetoric.

Presentation of Knowledge 4: Present information, findings, and supporting evidence such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning and the organization, development, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards for Language (K-12)

Language 1: Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.

Vocabulary Acquisition and Use 5: Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in a word meaning.

Vocabulary Acquisition and Use 6: Acquire and use accurately a range of general academic and domain-specific words and phrases sufficient for reading, writing, speaking, and listening at the college and career readiness level; demonstrate independence in gathering vocabulary knowledge when encountering an unknown term important to comprehension or expression.

SOCIAL STUDIES – NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR THE SOCIAL STUDIES (NCSS)

Theme 1: Culture

Theme 2: Time, Continuity, and Change

Theme 3: People, Place, and Environments

Theme 4: Individual Development and Identity

Theme 5: Individuals, Groups, and Institutions

Theme 6: Power, Authority, and Governance

Theme 10: Civic Ideals and Practices



RESOURCES

VIDEO RESOURCES

- *CNN Soundtracks*- "You Don't Own Me"
- *CNN Soundtracks*- A Cannon Shot Video
- *CNN Soundtracks*- The Miss American Pageant Protest
- *CNN Soundtracks*- Betty Friedan and The Feminine Mystique

HANDOUTS

- Handout- Excerpt from *The Feminine Mystique*.