Objective

• I can explain the background of the women’s movement and the impact of feminism on women’s lives in the United States.

Definition: Feminism

• Theory favoring the political, economic, and social equality of men and women.
• Remember, it’s not about women trying to gain the upper hand. It’s about women gaining equal footing.
The Feminist Movement

- The feminist movements of the late 1800's and early 1900's did not achieve the full equality women sought.
- The normal stereotype of women was a meek housewife who knew her place was in the home.
- This thought was in conflict with reality.
  - In 1960, 38% of women held jobs away from home.

An example of stereotypes against women.
• In 1950, 25% of Bachelor of Arts degrees were earned by women. – In 1970, that number had risen to 43%.
• Employers did not want to hire women even if they were educated.

• Employers expected women to leave the job after a few years to start a family and did not want to invest money in hiring them.
• Even if they were hired they made less money than men doing the same job.
• Wage Gap between men and women.
  – In 1963, women made $0.59 to every dollar a man earned.
  – In 1973, the figure had dropped to $0.57.
  – In 2008, the figure is around $0.77 to $0.80.
Civil Rights Movement and Women

- The Civil Rights movement of the 1950s and 1960s did not just help African Americans.
- Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 added gender discrimination to the list of illegal acts.

Feminist Organizations

- National Organization for Women (NOW) - Organization formed in 1966 to promote the full participation of women in American society.
  – Attacked the false image of women in the media.
  – Called for the balance of marriage responsibilities.
- After 4 years now had 15,000 members.
- Many viewed NOW as too extreme, while others viewed it as not extreme enough.

False Portrayals

- Women in society are faced with unrealistic expectations when it comes to image.
- One of NOW’s main goals is to combat this problem.
Revolutionary Product and Decision

- **Birth Control** — the invention of “The Pill” allowed women to choose when they wanted to become pregnant.
- **Roe v. Wade** — U.S. Supreme Court decision to legalize abortion.

Critics

- The issue of abortion has become one of the most polarizing issues in America today.
- Many critics also blame birth control for the nation’s loose morals and the rise in STDs.

The Equal Rights Amendment (ERA)

- Proposed constitutional amendment, never ratified, to prohibit discrimination on account of sex.
- The ERA was proposed in 1972 and needed 38 states to be ratified.
  - By 1977, 35 states had ratified it.
    - Looked like it was going to be passed.
  - Strong opposition sprang up and the ERA could not get votes it needed before it’s 1982 deadline.
- The ERA died.
The Opposition Irony

• Political activist Phyllis Schlafly led the campaign to block the ERA.
• “It won’t do anything to help women, and it will take away from women the rights they already have, such as the right of a wife to be supported by her husband, the right of a woman to be exempt from military combat, and the right...to go to a single-sex college.”
  -Phyllis Schlafly

Women Today

• Women have been making very large strides in American society.
  – The majority of college graduates are women.
  – Women are holding more and more leadership positions.

Quick Check

• What types of stereotypes did women face before the feminist movement?
• Briefly describe the wage gap that exists between men and women.
• What feminist organization attacked the false image of women and called for a balance in marriage responsibilities?
• What medical product revolutionary to the women’s movement?
• What Supreme Court case made abortion legal?
• What is the name of the proposed constitutional amendment aimed to make discrimination based on sex illegal?