

## The Arts & History

# Women Through Time



Throughout time, women—pioneers, writers, homemakers, adventurers—have made vast and varied contributions to society. Often, the accomplishments of women have not been highlighted. Do this interest project as a way to take a look back in history and to discover the power and presence of women in all walks of life.

**E**ach interest project contains activities which are organized into four different categories: Skill Builders, Technology, Service Projects, and Career Exploration. By doing these activities, you will gain insights about yourself—your strengths and weaknesses, your likes and dislikes. You will have a range of new experiences, and you will develop valuable skills and expertise in specific areas. *To earn an interest project award, you must complete at least seven activities as follows: two Skill Builders activities; one Technology activity; one service project activity; one Career Exploration activity; Two activities from any category that you choose.*

### Skill Builders

1. Explore your personal history by finding out about the women in your family. Look back at least two generations by reading family records or by talking to relatives to find out about rites of passage, educational or work experiences, travels, illnesses, or major family events. How did those events reflect what was happening in the world at the time? Record interesting details about the women's lives, personalities, and traditions in a scrapbook, on audiotape, or on videotape.
2. Conduct an oral history interview with an older woman. Ask her what it was like growing up. What were the educational and work opportunities? What are the major changes from her childhood to now? Ask about changes in technology, communication, travel, entertainment, social roles, and responsibilities.
3. Go to a library or a museum and look through magazines or newspapers from 20 or more years ago. How were women written about? If possible, go back even further in time. Can you see changes in the roles of women from one period to the next? What are the differences and similarities between images then and now? Be creative and make a historical or artistic collage to illustrate your findings.

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4. Explore the life of Juliette Gordon Low. Visit her birthplace in Savannah or read about her in historical materials. What events in her life gave her the strength and vision to inspire the Girl Scout movement? Write an essay or discuss your findings with your troop or group.

#### **Technology**

1. After searching the Web for information on female leaders throughout history, develop an interactive game, videotape, or audiotape describing their accomplishments.
2. Find a way to share information and to celebrate the role of women in science and technology for National Women's History Week (March), or other appropriate celebration.
3. Put together a multimedia program that honors the contributions of women in a particular field: for example, the visual and performing arts or the sciences.
4. Learn a skill, domestic art, or craft practiced by women in earlier times but replaced by technology and busy lifestyles, such as home canning, quilting, knitting, soap making, weaving, or basket making. Make something as a gift for someone.

#### **Service Projects**

1. Develop a display about women's history or a women's issue for your local library or school: for example, women aviators or the suffragettes, who fought for the right of women to vote. Present the information to younger girls in a lively way.
2. Create a walking tour that addresses the historical contributions of women in your community. Include streets and buildings named after women, historic residences, places of business, and historic events.
3. Help develop a brochure or hands-on activity for a historical museum that interprets the daily lives and times of girls and women. Or assist as a guide.
4. Become well-informed about an issue affecting women, such as breast cancer, domestic violence, elder care, or child care. Volunteer to help an organization that deals with the issue.
5. Organize or participate in an event to honor the contributions of women; for example, a women's history fair, a women's film festival, an awards program to honor the contributions of women in your community, or an event honoring Girl Scouts.

#### **Career Exploration**

1. Interview someone who works in a field that deals with women's history: for example, a research librarian, an archivist, a costume maker, an author or journalist, or a women's studies teacher. Find out what she likes about her job and how she sees it as connecting the past with the present and the future.

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2. Research the changes in women's career opportunities in professional sports over the past 30 years. Find out about the lives of three or four women who have contributed to changes in this area. In a troop or group meeting, or with your family, discuss the changes and what these women have envisioned as the future of women's professional sports.
3. Explore women's roles and opportunities in the U.S. military service or in politics. Trace women's historical impact and present-day service. Interview a woman who has served in the military or in politics.
4. Read about a woman who was a "pioneer" in a nontraditional career. Or interview a woman who works in a career such as engineering or aviation, in which there are relatively few women. What obstacles did she face, if any? Did anyone serve as her mentor?
5. Investigate at least three different women's history or women's studies courses in schools of higher education. What areas are encompassed in women's studies, and to which possible career options do they lead? If possible, interview someone who is a student or advisor in one of these programs.

### *And Beyond*

Look at toys in a museum (or read about the toys girls played with historically) and compare them with what is being offered for girls today. Have toys changed? Compile a list of toys for girls that avoid sex-role stereotyping, or design your own.

Consider reading historical novels or biographies about outstanding women.

Can you think of more ways—from sewing to science—in which women through time have influenced and shaped history? No field is without a woman's contribution. To find out more, try these related interest projects: Games for Life, Reading, Leadership, From Fitness to Fashion, Family Living, Artistic Crafts, Heritage Hunt, It's About Time, Child Care, Women's Health.

**This badge can be found in the book *Interest Projects for girls 11 - 17*, page 146. This text has been reproduced with permission from Girl Scouts of the USA—this document may not be copied or reproduced in any way.**