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| Name: |  | Date: |  |

## Preparation

* Download “Medieval Women in Western Europe, c. 1000–1350 CE”
* Download “Women in the Song Dynasty of China, 960–1279 CE”

## Purpose

The experiences of women throughout history might differ between regions and time periods. However, through historical investigation, including comparison, we can view how women in history confronted similar challenges and common social expectations, regardless of place and time. By zooming in on the stories of women in specific societies, we can better understand the challenges women faced throughout history and, in many parts of the world, continue to face today. Through comparing the experiences of women across different regions and time periods, we can see how societies constructed the roles and status of women within them, perhaps learning to question the ways in which women’s roles are defined today.

## Practices

### Contextualization, CCOT

While the primary focus in this activity is comparing the experiences of women in specific regions and times, you will examine the context in which women’s roles were constructed and identify who had the power to define women’s roles and status in each instance. Additionally, you will need to identify how women’s roles stayed the same (continuity) and changed compared to women’s roles today.

## Process

In this activity, you’re going to compare women in different regions during similar times in history. Ultimately, you will think about how the roles of women in different places compare to the roles of women in your life today.

1. Your teacher will either hand out or have you download the articles “Medieval Women in Western Europe, c. 1000–1350 CE” and “Women in the Song Dynasty of China, 960–1279 CE.”
2. Your teacher will divide the class in half and assign one of the articles to each half. As you read your assigned article, answer the questions in Part 1: Identifying and Describing of the Comparison Tool, which is included with the worksheet.
3. Once you’re finished reading your assigned article, your teacher will pair you with a student who read a different article, and you’ll work together to complete the similarities and differences column in Part 1 of the tool.
4. Once you and your partner have completed Part 1 of the tool, you’ll work together on Part 2: Analyzing to write two thesis statements in response to the following prompts.
   * What was the most significant *similarity* between women’s experiences in medieval Europe and Song Dynasty China?
   * What was the most significant *difference* between women’s experiences in medieval Europe and Song Dynasty China?
5. Remember that you can use the acronym ADE (amount, depth, and endurance) to help determine historical significance. Consider if all women were affected by these similarities and differences (amount); if women were deeply affected by these similarities and differences (depth); or if these similarities and differences were long lasting (endurance).
6. After you’re finished writing your thesis statements, join with another pair of students to form a group of four. Share and discuss your thesis statements in your new group and build upon or revise your thesis statements based on these discussions.
7. Return to your seats and individually write an exit slip on the back of your worksheet answering the following questions (remember to support your answers with evidence from this activity):
   * Considering the roles of women in these societies, which society was the most desirable for women? Why?
   * If we compare medieval Europe and Song China to today’s society, how have women’s roles changed and how have they stayed the same?
8. Turn in your worksheet at the end of class so your teacher can assess how your comparison skills are progressing.

## Part 1: Identifying and Describing

1. Write the topic of comparison at the top of the chart, and then add the cases you’re comparing and their associated time periods.
2. Respond to the questions in the Part 1 chart for each case you’re comparing. Use the resources provided for this comparison.
3. After responding to the questions for each case, identify and describe the similarities and differences between these cases.

## Part 2: Analyzing

1. If you were going to write two essays about the similarities and/or differences you’ve identified for this topic, what are two thesis statements you might use? Write one thesis statement about similarities and one about differences in spaces provided.
2. If required, use your thesis statements to craft a response to the comparison prompt for this activity.

## Topic of Comparison

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## Part 1: Identifying and Describing

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| --- | --- | --- |
| Cases You’re Comparing |  |  |
| Time Period |  |  |
| Location |  |  |

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **P&D**  How did women of different classes contribute to the  economic wellbeing of their families and society? |  | **Similarities** |  |
|  |
| **Differences** |
|  |
| **Community**  How were women’s status and roles in their communities defined or limited by laws? |  | **Similarities** |  |
|  |
| **Differences** |
|  |
| **Belief systems**  How did belief systems impact women’s lives in these regions? |  | **Similarities** |  |
|  |
| **Differences** |
|  |

## Part 2: Analyzing

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| --- | --- |
| Thesis Statement 1: Similarities |  |
| Thesis Statement 2: Differences |  |
| Response |  |