



THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA  
COLLEGE OF SOCIAL & BEHAVIORAL SCIENCES

## Center for Middle Eastern Studies

### Assignment Description (For Educators)

**Title:** Challenges and Change for Iranian Women: Document-Based Writing Prompts

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**Purpose:** This lesson is designed for English classes but also integrates World History and Geography. The lesson helps students analyze the impact of government policy and social norms on women's lives, develop their critical thinking skills, and improve their facility in academic (and possibly creative) writing.

**Overview:** The lesson begins with a short overview of modern Iranian history (from the late 19<sup>th</sup> to early 21<sup>st</sup> centuries). Students then analyze some short documents and photos related to women's issues at various stages of Iran's modern history. Based on what they have read, they write a structured essay about the development of women's rights in Iran. They conclude with a creative writing assignment in which they incorporate facts that they have learned.

**Objectives:** Students are expected to: analyze a variety of primary and secondary sources, write effectively (in both formal and informal writing styles), and develop a greater understanding of Middle Eastern history, culture, and society.

### Suggested Procedures

1. Background reading: Students read the background reading on modern Iranian history. (They can do this for homework or in class, individually or as a group.) **See #2,**

#### **Overview of Modern Iran.**

2. Reading the documents: There are ten documents grouped into three historical periods. A teacher may require students to read all the documents, individually or in groups, OR assign different groups to read – and report on – one of the three document sets. Regardless of the methods, students should have access to and know about all of the documents. (I usually post them online, and have students read them on the computer.) **See Collections 3a, 3b, and 3c.**

3. Sharing ideas: In preparation for writing, students brainstorm a list of rights and restrictions faced by Iranian women.
  
4. Writing a formal essay: Have students write a 5-paragraph essay on the writing prompt about how Iranian women's rights and lives have changed over the course of the last century and a half. Students need to use specific examples from some of the sources provided. According to the teacher's directions, students may be required to include a Works Cited section. **See #4, Questions and Writing Prompts.**
  
5. Optional - Creative writing: Working in groups or individually, students choose one of two creative writing options. They must include at least five specific facts from the readings. **Also #4, Questions and Writing Prompts.**