

# What is International Women's Day and why is it important?

KS2

This activity is designed to teach children about the history of International Women's Day and give them an opportunity to consider why International Women's Day is important.

## Linked International Women's Day minutes:

#1 Tumblewash by Daphne Oram  
#3 Are you worried about the rising cost of funerals by Errollyn Wallen

## Other International Women's Day minutes to listen to:

All other International Women's Day collection minutes.

## Links to National Curriculum

### History:

- Roman Empire and its impact on women
- Aspect/theme in British History that extends pupils knowledge beyond 1066
- Regularly address and devise valid questions about change, cause, similarity, difference and significance.
- Construct informed responses that involve thoughtful response that involve thoughtful selection and organisation of relevant historical information.

### Music:

- Appreciate and understand a wide range of high-quality live and recorded music drawn from different traditions and from great composers and musicians.

## Resources

Pencils/crayons/paper for making spider diagrams and posters

## Key Vocabulary

- Equality
- Diversity
- Achievements
- Gender
- Fairness
- Empower
- Suffrage
- Suffragette
- Hunger Strike
- Composer



<b>Key Questions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Why is International Women's Day important?</li> <li>• What does it teach us about equality and fairness?</li> <li>• Why is it important to challenge gender stereotypes?</li> </ul>
<b>Input</b>	<p><b><u>What is International Women's Day?</u></b></p> <p>Since 1911, International Women's Day has been celebrated around the world on the 8<sup>th</sup> March. Every year on International Women's Day, the social, economic, cultural and political achievements of women are celebrated. It is also a day when many people discuss the challenges that women face today and campaign for gender equality, empowering women and girls.</p> <p><b><u>Why do we recognise International Women's Day?</u></b></p> <p>Throughout history, men and women have not had the same opportunities. Traditionally, women had to stay at home and look after children; they were not allowed to go to work or get a university degree. Many women, and some men, have protested and fought hard for gender equality, which for many years was called women's suffrage.</p> <p>Today women's rights have come a long way, but there is still more work to be done. Around the world women have different rights, and even in the United Kingdom many women are not paid the same wage as men are for doing the same job. In Saudi Arabia, women have very few rights and have only been allowed to drive since 2018.</p> <p>Many jobs traditionally taken by men have slowly begun to accept women. It hasn't been easy for many women who have tried to do these sorts of jobs, and women are still underrepresented in many professions such as surgeons, composers, politicians, CEOs, and pilots.</p>
<b>Activity 1</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In groups of 4 create a spider-diagram about what you think a composer is. Are they a man or a women? What sort of music do they write? Can you name any composers?</li> <li>• Many people traditionally think of composers as Caucasian, middle-aged men. Female composers are underrepresented. Why is this?</li> <li>• Start by listening to the minute by Erroyln Wallen. What do you think of her music? Do you like it?</li> <li>• Errollyn Wallen is a successful black, female composer who was born in Belize. She founded Ensemble X and its motto is 'We don't break down barriers in music; we don't see any'. She has composed music for voice and orchestra and was awarded an MBE for services to music in 2007.</li> <li>• Now listen to the minute by Daphne Oram, a British composer and electronic musician. She was a co-founder of the BBC Radiophonic Workshop and provided</li> </ul>



	<p>the electronic sounds for the soundtrack to several James Bond films.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discuss: Is it fair that women composers have to work harder than male composers to have their work recognised?</li> </ul>
<b>Activity 2</b>	<p>In groups of four, design a poster about International Women's Day. On your poster include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is International Women's Day and what does it celebrate?</li> <li>• Choose one women who has made a significant achievement, and explain why they are important?</li> <li>• Give an example of how you could mark International Women's Day at school.</li> </ul> <p>Share your poster with the rest of the class.</p>
<b>Plenary</b>	<p>As a class think about answers to these questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Why is it important that gender stereotypes are challenged?</li> <li>• Do we need to celebrate International Women's Day?</li> </ul>
<b>Supporting information</b>	<p>International Women's Day celebrates the achievements of many women who are female role models.</p> <p><b>Women's achievements to consider:</b></p> <p><u><b>Boudica</b></u> Boudica was a Queen of the British Celtic Iceni tribe who led an uprising against the Roman Empire in AD 60.</p> <p><u><b>Hildegard Von Bingen</b></u> Hildegard was a nun and composer born over 900 years ago. She is often seen as the first identifiable female composer in Western Music!</p> <p><u><b>The Suffragettes</b></u> Before 1918, women were not allowed to vote: only men were permitted. Women believed that they should have the right to vote because they had to pay taxes and abide by the law, just like men. Often called the Suffragettes, The Women's Social and Political Union was formed in 1903, through which women campaigned for the right to vote, often through mass protests and rallies. Many Suffragettes were arrested and taken to Holloway Prison; some even went on hunger strikes and refused to eat until women won the vote. The colour purple is often associated with International Women's Day due to its links with the Suffragettes, whose sashes and banners were coloured purple, green and white.</p>



### Emmeline Pankhurst

Emmeline Pankhurst was a leading British women's right activist who led the movement to win the right for women to vote. She was born in 1858 and died in 1928. She was arrested many times whilst campaigning as a suffragette.

### When did women get the vote?

In 1918, the Representation of the People Act gave voting rights to women over 30. It was not until the Equal Franchise Act of 1928 that women over 21 were able to vote and women achieved the same voting rights as men.

### Marie Curie

Marie Curie is remembered for discovering the elements radium and polonium, as well as her work against cancer. She was awarded the Nobel prize for physics for her work on radioactivity. In 1930, she allowed her name to be used by the Marie Curie Hospital in London; it was staffed by women to treat female cancer patients using radiology. She was one of the first women to make a major contribution to science.

### Valentina Tereshkova

Valentina Tereshkova was a Russian astronaut and the first woman to go to space in 1963. She spent more than 70 hours in space and made 48 orbits of the Earth.

### Gertrude Ederle

Born in 1926, Gertude Ederle was the first woman to swim the English Channel.

### Judith Weir

Judith Weir CBE is a British composer and Master of the Queen's Music. Weir started out as an oboe player, performing with the National Youth Orchestra of Great Britain. She went to Cambridge University and spent several years working in schools, later returning to Scotland to teach at Glasgow University and RSAMD. She's now lived in London since the 1990s, and was artistic director of Spitalfields Festival for six years.

In December 2007, HM The Queen and Sir Peter Maxwell Davies presented her with the Queen's Medal for Music. In January 2008, over fifty of her works were performed during 'Telling The Tale', a three-day retrospective hosted by the BBC Symphony Orchestra at the Barbican, London.

In 2014, she was appointed Master of The Queen's Music, and won The Ivors Classical Music Award at the Ivor Novello Awards the following year. Weir's arrangement of 'God Save the Queen' was first performed at the reburial of King Richard III at Leicester Cathedral on 26 March 2015.

