

# Year 7 English - Gender Through the Ages



## Essential Knowledge

**The Bible:** Christianity was, and still is, the most followed religion globally. Many traditional ideas stem from the Bible and its teaching that women were made to serve men (Eve was made to be Adam's 'helper' in Genesis).  
Eve fell for the Devil's plan and convinced Adam to eat the forbidden fruit – the original sin.

**The Renaissance Period:**  
Society was extremely patriarchal. Women were regarded as weak, needing a husband to look after them.  
Women were expected to look after the house and the children, only able to work in some roles such as maids and cooks (though a woman would typically only work if single or very poor).  
Women were expected to obey their husbands and could be punished by them, but abuse could sometimes lead to prosecution.

## CONTEXTS

**The Post-War Period:**  
Wartime needs increased labour demands for both male and female workers, heightened domestic hardships and responsibilities, and heightened pressure for people to conform and come together.  
All unmarried women aged 20-30 (later 19-43) had to either join the armed forces, work in a factory or on the land.  
These changes proved women capable of working in such roles.

**The Victorian Period:**  
The two sexes now inhabited what Victorians thought of as 'separate spheres', only coming together at breakfast and again at dinner. The logic behind the separate spheres was based on a belief that women were physically weaker but morally superior to men, which made them suited to the domestic sphere.  
The duty of women was to counterbalance the moral taint of the public sphere (where their husbands worked) and to prepare the next generation.  
The fact that women had such influence at home was used as an argument against giving them the vote.

**What is feminism?**  
Feminism is a political movement that began at the end of the nineteenth century (late Victorian period) aimed at transforming society away from patriarchy and towards equality, believing both sexes to have equal value.

Key Terms	Definition
archetypal character	A very typical example of a certain person stereotypical. E.g. an archetypal villain might look evil, have a deep, threatening voice and a menacing laugh.
connotations	An idea or feeling that a word creates on top of its basic meaning
tone	The writer's attitude created through their word choices, structure and use of devices. See the Grammar Focus
trope	A trope is a significant and recurring theme that is found in a number of different texts (fiction and non-fiction)

Sophisticated vocabulary	Definition
femininity (n.)	Qualities regarded as characteristic of women
hierarchy (n.)	A system in which members of an organisation or society are ranked according to their status/authority
masculinity (n.)	Qualities regarded as characteristic of men
matriarch (n.)	An older woman who is powerful within a family
misogyny (n.)	Hatred or contempt for women or girls. A way of keeping women at a lower status than men
oppressed (adj.)	Subject to harsh treatment and control
patriarchy (n.)	A system of society or government in which men hold the power and women largely do not
submissive (adj.)	Ready to conform to the will of others, passive

**Grammar Focus - Academic Tone**  
When writing academically, such as when writing a What/How/Why paragraph, avoid using slang; contractions (such as 'can't' instead of 'cannot'; personal language like 'you' or 'I', and focus on using correct SPaG. For example, rather than writing 'The girl's dad seems to me like a bad guy', you might write, 'The girl's father is presented as unlikeable and cruel.'

## Writing structure & sentence starters

**What – What impression does the writer create?**  
○ [Writer's name] *has created the impression that...*

**How 1 – How do you know this?**  
○ *This is clear when the writer states...* [quotation]

**How 2 – How can you explore this quotation?**  
○ *This suggests...*[explain what the quotation means/implies]  
○ *The use of the [word/ word class/ technique] conveys that...*

**Why – Why does the writer give us this impression?**  
○ [Writer's name] *has presented [the topic] in this way in order to...*

**WAGOU**  
Carol Ann Duffy has created the impression that the speaker\* has become very angry from jealousy. This is clear when the speaker states she feels 'as though my thoughts/ hissed and spat on my scalp'. This suggests that her thoughts towards her lover had turned nasty. The use of the verb 'hissed' conveys that she like a dangerous animal – inhuman. Duffy has presented the speaker in this way to show how jealousy can change people dramatically.  
\* In poetry, the voice is the 'speaker'.