

Remember the Ladies | Lesson Plan

How have the contributions of First Ladies influenced the course of American history and inspired future generations?

Students will understand the significant contributions of several First Ladies to American history and how their efforts have shaped the nation's development.

Learning Objectives:

- Identify key contributions of select First Ladies by matching their portraits to symbols representing their achievements.
- Describe the role and significance of at least three First Ladies in American history.
- Discuss the importance of the contributions made by the First Ladies and how these contributions have impacted the United States.
- Reflect on how students can make a positive impact in their own communities, inspired by the achievements of the First Ladies.

Key Vocabulary:

- **First Lady:** The title held by the wife of the President of the United States, who often engages in social and political activities.
- **Contribution:** An act of giving or doing something to help a cause or improve a situation. The book details how various First Ladies made significant contributions to the nation.
- **Patriotism:** Love for or devotion to one's country. Many First Ladies demonstrated patriotism through their support and advocacy for national causes.
- **Influence:** The capacity to affect the character, development, or behavior of someone or something.

Educational Standards: CCRA.R.7, CCRA.SL.1, CCRA.SL.2, CCRA.L.4, CCRA.SL.4

Academic Topics: Life Lessons, American Values, Women of History

What You'll Need

- Video: *Otto's Tales: Remember the Ladies* (Watch [Here](#))
- (Optional) Book: *Remember the Ladies* by Callista Gingrich (Buy [Here](#))
- Worksheet: *Otto's Tales: Remember the Ladies* (Click [Here](#))
- Printed portraits of the First Ladies mentioned in the book (Wikimedia Commons, Public Domain)
- Index cards prepared with each First Lady's name and contribution

Lesson Plan (45 mins.)

Warm-Up: (15 mins.)



1. Set up a gallery walk around the classroom with portraits of the First Ladies highlighted in "Remember the Ladies." Display the portraits of the First Ladies around the classroom, along with their name. Prepare simple symbols to represent each First Lady's notable achievements, such as the following:
 - Martha Washington - First First Lady (#1)
 - Abigail Adams - Quill and parchment paper / "Remember the ladies"
 - Dolley Madison - Portrait of George Washington
 - Abigail Fillmore - Stack of books for library
 - Mary Todd (Lincoln) - Nursing symbol
 - Nellie Taft - Cow on the lawn or cherry trees
 - Edith Wilson - Helping hands
 - Eleanor Roosevelt - Press badge/microphone
 - Jackie Kennedy - Pearls
 - Lady Bird Johnson - Flowers along a highway
 - Nancy Reagan - D.A.R.E program logo
 - Laura Bush - Children's books
 - Michelle Obama - Hoola hoop
 - Divide the class into small groups and have each group start at a different portrait. Allow students to discuss the portrait, noting her name and what they think the symbols represent before rotating.
 - With thirteen First Ladies to cover, determine ahead of time how many each group should focus on according to the age group and time allotted for this lesson.
2. After all the groups have visited the portraits, come together as a class to share and discuss student findings. Allow students to volunteer their ideas about what they think the symbols mean for each First Lady.
3. Queue up the video. Let the students know that they will learn what the symbols mean as they watch the video.

Watch and Discuss: (15 mins.)

1. Play the video *Otto's Tales: Remember the Ladies* for the students.
2. Pause the video as necessary to check for understanding and to discuss key points. Ask questions like:
 - Who is this First Lady, and what is she known for?
 - How did this First Lady contribute to American history?
 - What symbol represents this First Lady and why?
3. After the video, ask if the students have any questions or thoughts on what they watched. Use guided questions to facilitate discussion:
 - Which First Lady's story did you find most interesting and why?
 - How did the symbols help you understand what each First Lady is known for?
 - Can you think of any other symbols that could represent these First Ladies?
 - Why is it important to remember the contributions of these First Ladies?

Wrap-Up: (15 mins.)

1. Hand out the “Otto’s Tales: Remember the Ladies Worksheet” to each student.
2. Explain to the students that they will see pictures of the First Ladies on one side and pictures of the symbols on the other side. Their task is to determine the symbol that represents each First Lady by noting the corresponding letter on the line provided.
3. Once the students have completed their worksheets, review the answers as a class and collect them as a formative assessment.
4. Close the lesson with a word of encouragement and a call to action. Remind students that they learned about some incredible women today who helped to shape America. Ask them to think about how they can have a positive impact on their family and community in a similar way. Perhaps by helping a friend, cleaning up a park, or even starting a small project at school. Every little action counts!

Don’t have time for the full lesson? Quick Activity (15 mins.)

Watch the video *Otto’s Tales: Remember the Ladies*. Discuss which First Ladies stood out in the video and why it is important to learn about their various contributions and accomplishments.