

# HerStory

## Books about Women's History in the School Library

Categories: J=Junior Fiction S=Senior Fiction A=Autobiography *a shelf number*=Non-fiction

### Early Feminists up to the 1930s

**Boyd, Malcolm**                      **Grace Williams**                      **780**

Think of a composer. It is unlikely a woman will spring to mind. But there are many including Grace Williams who was also a teacher at Camden School for Girls

**Burchell, Doris**                      **Miss Buss's Second School**                      **305.43**

Frances Mary Buss was one of the most important pioneers of women's education in this country. Camden School for Girls was her second school. This is the story of CSG from its beginning in 1971 to its centenary in 1971. If you would like to know more about Frances Mary Buss then I would recommend Josephine Kamm's biography **How Different From Us**

**Busby, Sian**                      **Boudicca - Warrior Queen**                      **942.02**

She may have reigned nearly 2000 years ago, but this feisty female deserves to be remembered alongside all the famous men from Roman history.

**Chancellor, Deborah**                      **The Perfect Rebel - the Life and Death of Emily Davison** **324.6**

**Fitzherbert, Claudia**                      **Emily Davison – the Girl who Gave her Life for her Cause**

Short, very readable biographies of the suffragette who stepped out in front of the king's horse and died.

**Chevalier, Tracey**                      **Remarkable Creatures**                      **S**

A captivating fictional account of the life of Mary Anning, the fossil collector from Dorset whose finds in the early nineteenth century completely changed our understanding of how life on earth began.

**Chevalier, Tracey**                      **Falling Angels**                      **S**

The momentous social change that occurred during first decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century through the eyes of 2 families who own adjacent plots in Highgate Cemetery. The Colemans look forward to a society where women have the vote; The Waterhouses cling to the old Victorian traditions and denounce the suffrage movement.

**Donnelly, Jennifer**                      **A Gathering Light**                      **J**

This Carnegie Medal Winner is both a murder mystery and story about a teenage girl forced to choose between marriage and a career at a time when it was impossible to have both.

**Gilman, Charlotte Perkins** **The Yellow Wallpaper**                      **S**

Charlotte Perkins Gilman was an early feminist in the United States. The Yellow Wallpaper is a 6000 word story published in 1892. It is about attitudes to women's physical and mental health at the time.

**Hardinge, Frances**                      **The Lie Tree**                      **J**

Adventure, intrigue, fantasy, history and very clever writing. Faith is a girl in Victorian times who refuses to conform to Victorian ideas of womanhood.

**Hearn, Julie**                      **Hazel**    **J**  
Hazel witnesses Emily Davison stepping out in front of the king's horse at the Epsom Derby. This incident sparks her interest in the women's suffrage movement. Her family disapprove and she is banished to her family's plantation in the Caribbean.

**Kennedy, Helena**                      **Eve was Framed**    **305.4**  
Helena Kennedy is a well known barrister. In this book first published in 1993 and updated in 2005, she explains how women are discriminated in every aspect of the legal system. A must for anyone contemplating a career in law.

**Lethbridge, Lucy**                      **Ada Lovelace - the Computer Wizard of Victorian England**  
**510.09**  
Ada Lovelace was an English mathematician who worked with Charles Babbage to design the world's first computer. Actually Ada did most of the work, but it was Charles who received the credit, being affectionately referred to as the "father of computers"

**Newbery, Linda**                      **Polly's March**    **J**  
Polly's parents are horrified to find their new neighbours are active in the women's suffrage movement. But Polly, bored with acting the perfect young lady, is enthralled by these dangerous young women. A short read.

**Newbery, Linda**                      **Until We Win**    **J**  
A short, easy novel about a young women who becomes a Suffragette and ends up in Holloway prison.

**Nicholls, Sally**                      **Things a Bright Girl Can Do**    **J**  
Evelyn, May and Nell are teenagers living in London during World War One. They are all committed to the Women's Suffrage Movement, but their reasons for participating couldn't be more different.

**Seacole, Mary**                      **Wonderful Adventures of Mrs Seacole in Many Lands**    **610.09**  
If the name Mary Seacole means anything to you, it is probably as the Jamaican woman who who cared for wounded soldiers during the Crimean War. But this was only part of her story. Confronting prejudice both as a woman and as a mixed race person, she travelled extensively in the Caribbean and Central America at a time when most women never ventured further than a few miles from where they were born.

**Talbot, Mary / Talbot, Bryan**                      **Sally Heathcote: Suffragette**    **J**  
A graphic novel about a working class girl who becomes a militant suffragette. Backed up by meticulous historical research. A must.

**Wilson, Jacqueline**                      **Opal Plumstead**    **J**  
Opal has won a scholarship to a grammar school. When her father is sent to prison, Opal must leave school and go and work in a sweet factory. All her ambitions are thwarted, but maybe the women's suffrage movement offers her a way forward?

**Wollstonecraft, Mary**                      **A Vindication of the Rights of Women**    **305.4**  
This book was written in 1792, when The French Revolution was taking place just across the English Channel. Mary Wollstonecraft lived in Somers Town, Camden. This book is difficult but worth dipping into as it is one of the first feminist works.

# Feminism in the 1940s to 1990s

- Carson, Rachel**                      **Silent Spring**                      **577**  
In this seminal text published in 1962, Rachel Carson, a scientist, alerted the world to the dangers of pesticides and thus helped launch the environmental movement.
- De Beauvoir, Simone**              **The Second Sex**                      **305.4**  
**Friedan, Betty**                      **The Feminine Mystique**              **305.4**  
**Greer, Germaine**                      **The Female Eunuch**                      **305.4**  
Key feminist works from this period. Demanding reads. Best suited to 6th Formers.
- Frank Anne**                      **The Autobiography of a Young Girl**              **A**  
Anne Frank never set out to be famous. She just wanted to return to the normal life that she lead before her family were forced into hiding. But more than any other, it is her diary, the work of a teenage girl that has come to symbolize the horrors of The Holocaust.
- French, Marilyn**                      **The Women's Room**                      **S**  
This novel became the "bible" of Second-wave Feminism. Set in the 1950s, it is about a conventional young women who gradually takes control of her own life.
- Levin, Ira**                      **The Stepford Wives**                      **S**  
Published in the 1970s, this story about a "perfect" American suburb where women always do as they are told. When this book was published in the 1970s, it was viewed as a parable about men's fears of the feminist movement.
- Moore, Charles**                      **Margaret Thatcher (2 volumes)**                      **324.2**  
Whatever you have been told about Margaret Thatcher, she deserves recognition for being Britain's first female Prime Minister. This brick of a book is her authorised biography, published after her death as per her own instructions. Margaret Thatcher was brought up in Grantham, Lincolnshire. She was a teenager during World War 2. During part of World War Two, CSG was evacuated to Grantham. Did Margaret become friends with any CSG girls?
- Sharman, Helen**                      **Seize the Moment**                      **523**  
Did you know that the first British astronaut was a woman? In 1991 she went on a British-Soviet spaceship to the Mir Space Station. This is her story.
- Wein, Elizabeth**                      **Code Name Verity**                      **J**  
Books about women in World War Two usually focus on the Home Front. But as this thriller reveals, some women were on the front line. Working together as pilot and spy, Maddie and Julie become inseparable. Until their plane is shot down by enemy fire.
- Wolf, Naomi**                      **The Beauty Myth**                      **305.4**  
Naomi Wolf believes that as long as women are expected to look pretty, they will never achieve parity with men. When it was published 25 years ago, this book rocked the feminist movement. It remains just as pertinent today.

# Feminism in the 21st Century

**Alderman, Naomi**      **The Power**      **S**  
If the men are taking desperate measures to control women in the 1970s, (see **The Stepford Wives** above) in this novel published in 2016, the women have the upper hand, literally, when they develop the power to electrocute others by a mere touch.

**Al Mansour, Haifaa**      **The Green Bicycle**      **J**  
Wadjda is an independent young woman. However, Wadjda lives in Saudi Arabia where women cannot go outside without wearing an abaya and they are forbidden to drive cars. So what is the likelihood of her ever riding her own bike?

**Bates, Laura**      **Everyday Sexism**      **305.4**  
**Girl Up**      **305.4**  
Laura Bates' concerns about the way women are still belittled and marginalised in every aspect of modern life lead to her starting the *Everyday Sexism Project* in 2012.

**Criado-Perez, Caroline**      **Do it Like a Woman**      **305.4**  
When Caroline Criado-Perez suggested that Elizabeth Fry should be replaced by another woman on British banknotes, she received death threats. This book was written as a result. It is about women who have done extraordinary things only to find their achievements unrecognised, belittled or even condemned.

**Hennessy, Claire**      **Like Other Girls**      **J**  
When Lauren becomes pregnant, she decides that she wants an abortion. However, she lives in Ireland, a country where abortion is illegal.

**Moran, Caitlin**      **How to be a Woman**      **305.4**  
A manifesto for the 21st century woman. Moran believes it is the little things that really matter. Sound advice and totally hilarious.

**Reed, Amy**      **The Nowhere Girls**      **J**  
A hard-hitting story about 3 young women who speak out against the misogynistic culture in their American high school as they attempt to get justice for a female student who was gang raped.

**Smith, Kelly**      **Footballer - My Story**      **796.33**  
Look at the sports pages in any newspaper. Often not a single woman will be mentioned. It is only relatively recently that the Football Association have promoted women's football. Until 1971 women were banned from playing on official football pitches. Kelly Smith is regarded as the greatest English female footballer, though that perception may depend on whether you support Arsenal or not!

**Yousafzai, Malala**      **I am Malala**      **A**  
Malala was born in Pakistan. She lived in a part of the country where women were often not allowed to attend school. When she was just 11 years old she started to campaign against this injustice and when she was 15 she was shot and almost killed for voicing her views. Malala now lives in the UK and attends Oxford University.

## Quick Dip - a Few Biographical Compilations

Appignanesi/Holmes/Orbach (editors)	50 Shades of Feminism	305.4
Beer, Anna	Songs and sweet airs - the forgotten women of classical music	780
Cavallo, F / Favilli E	Good Night Stories for Rebel Girls	305.4
Cooke, Rachel	Her Brilliant Career - 10 extraordinary women of the 50s	942.085
Fara, Patricia	Scientists Anonymous - Great Stories of Women in Science	500.09
Forster, Margaret	Significant Sisters - The Grassroots of Active Feminism	305.4
Gauthier, Xaviere	Women of Consequence - Heroines who shaped the World	305.4
Greer, Germaine	The Obstacle Race - The Fortunes of Women Painters & their Work	709
Jaffe, Deborah	Ingenious Women - From Tincture of Saffron to Flying Machines	620
Leon, Vicki	Outrageous Women of the Renaissance	940.2
Toksvig, Sandi	Heroines and Harridans - a Fanfare of Fabulous Females	305.4
Toksvig, Sandi	Girls are Best	305.4