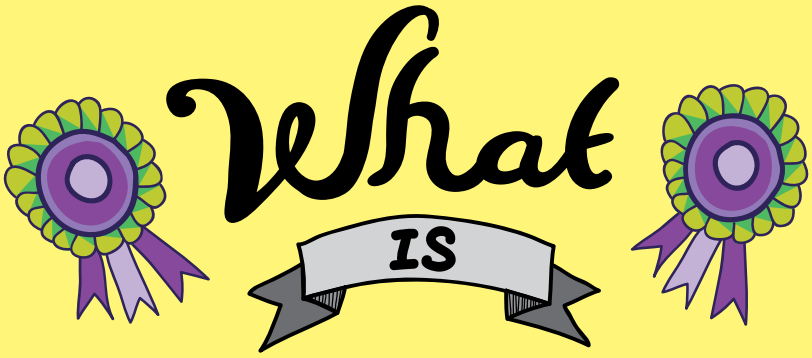


FEMINISM?

Why do WE need it?

& other BIG QUESTIONS



WAYLAND
www.waylandbooks.co.uk

First published in Great Britain in 2016 by Wayland

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ISBN: 978 0 7502 9837 7
10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

Printed in China

MIX
Paper from responsible sources
FSC® C104740

Wayland
An imprint of
Hachette Children's Group
Part of Hodder & Stoughton
Carmelite House
50 Victoria Embankment
London EC4Y 0DZ

An Hachette UK Company
www.hachette.co.uk
www.hachettechildrens.co.uk

Editor: Elizabeth Brent
Designer: Lisa Peacock
Cover design: Dynamo Ltd

The website addresses (URLs) included in this book were valid at the time of going to press. However, it is possible that contents or addresses may have changed since the publication of this book. No responsibility for any such changes can be accepted by either the author or the Publisher.

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Have you ever asked yourself, 'Are boys and girls really that different?', 'Why are most world leaders men?' or 'Why don't men wear skirts?' The aim of this book is to get you to think about questions like these, and to see how they affect your life and the lives of people all over the world.

INTRODUCING *Feminism*

WHY DO WE NEED THIS BOOK?



You may have heard the word 'feminism' before, and wondered what it means. Or perhaps you know a little about it and would like to know more. People have very different ideas about what feminism is and what feminists – people who support equality and the rights of women – are like. This book is going to explain what feminism means and why it exists.

Many people don't think of themselves as feminists, but they still believe that both men and women should have equal rights and opportunities, and want girls to have the same choices and chances as boys. These people might not call themselves feminists, but they believe in feminist ideas. The aim of this book is to help you to understand what feminist ideas are and what feminism stands for.

"When at 15, my girlfriends started dropping out of their beloved sports teams, because they didn't want to appear muscly, when at 18, my male friends were unable to express their feelings, I decided that I was a feminist."

Emma Watson,
Actor and UN Women Goodwill Ambassador

HOW THE *book works*

In this book, we'll look at the history of women's equality, and at some of the amazing stories of men and women who brought about change.



We'll look into the areas of life where women have been, and in many cases still are, treated differently to men. We'll see what feminism has done to change attitudes and laws, and also tackle some big questions, for example, 'Can men be feminists too?' and 'Do we still need feminism today?'





Feminists in the public eye such as Gemma Cairney, Julie Bentley, Adora Svitak, Ben Bailey Smith (AKA Doc Brown), Lauren Laverne and Dawn O'Porter have all written about what feminism means to them and how it has affected their lives. Their stories are spread throughout the book, too. Along the way, you will also find quotes from other people who have said inspiring things about feminism, and questions to get you thinking as you read.



What is a FEMINIST?

A feminist is someone who believes that men and women should be treated equally. Feminists believe that, historically, women have had less power and fewer choices than men, that this is wrong and should be changed. There are different kinds of feminists, who have slightly different ideas about how these problems could be solved, but all feminists share the same basic belief that men and women shouldn't be treated differently just because they're male or female.

WORDS FEMINISTS USE

Patriarchy is a family, group or government that is controlled by a man or a group of men. In a patriarchy, men have more power than women and more control over making rules and laws. For example, in a patriarchal family, men make most of the decisions.

Gender discrimination is when people are treated differently because they are male or female. Gender is the behaviour associated with being a man or a woman. Gender discrimination is usually used to mean the unfair treatment of women.

Sexism is another word for gender discrimination. Sexist attitudes, behaviours and conditions try to dictate what women can and can't do, based on their gender.

A misogynist is a person who dislikes or is strongly prejudiced against women. A misogynist treats women as inferior to men, and is negative towards them.

There is a lot of misunderstanding surrounding what feminism is and what feminists believe. Here are some facts about what feminism does and does not mean to the majority of feminists:

- Feminists believe that women are due the same pay and the same chance to succeed in their chosen career as men
- Feminists believe that women should play an equal role in the governments that make the laws in their countries
- Feminists believe that stereotypes, such as the belief that all men are strong and brave while all women are gentle and weak, are wrong and harmful to both men and women
- Feminism is not about disliking or hating men. Feminists have partners, husbands, sons, friends and relatives who are men and who they like or love very much
- Feminists don't want to take power away from men or to control men. Feminism is about sharing power equally.



"We all fight over what the label 'feminism' means but for me it's about empowerment. It's not about being more powerful than men – it's about having equal rights with protection, support, justice. It's about very basic things. It's not a badge like a fashion item."

Annie Lennox,
Singer-songwriter



MY *feminism* BEA APPLEBY

Bea Appleby is a writer and editor who for many years worked on magazines for girls. She is now editor of The Female Lead, which is a campaign dedicated to celebrating women's achievements.

I have cared about feminism ever since I was a little girl. My mum is a great feminist role model – she was strong, successful and taught me that women should earn their own money and never depend on a man for security and freedom. My dad believed the same, and he and my mum were equal at home.

But when I watched TV and films I saw a different world. Women didn't seem equal to men at all! They were often playing weak, delicate characters, and they were always very pretty. I wondered, is being beautiful the most important thing women can be? If so, that's really very boring.

I also wondered – women make up 50 per cent of the world, why don't they do 50 per cent of the jobs? Why do women wear high heels that they can't run for a bus in? Why don't men? Why do girls play with dolls and boys play with cars? Why do women wear make-up, but men can't?

It didn't seem fair, and still doesn't seem fair, that women were less powerful in the world. Trying to change that is what feminism means to me – having the power to decide what happens to the world we live in, to our bodies, how we behave and whether we are safe. Nowhere in the world are men and women truly equal.

WHAT *drives me now*

Feminism became part of my work when I was editor of a pre-teen magazine called *Girl Talk*. It seemed like everything in that magazine was pink, because it was for girls, and all the features were about fashion, hairstyles and pop stars. I worried that girls reading it would think that they had to be cute, pretty and nothing else.

So I started a campaign to make that magazine feminist – to include stories about sportswomen and scientists, to show all the amazing careers girls can have, from computer-game designers to racing drivers. I wanted the magazine to tell girls about all the millions of ways there are to be a girl, and all the things that girls can do.

THINK ABOUT

Do you see differences in how girls and boys are treated?

Do you think that it is fair?

MY *personal philosophy*

You are never too young to learn about feminism. If girls and boys understand the true meaning of the idea, and what it hopes to achieve, then we can work towards a world that is fair to everyone. And we all want that, right?

MY *favourite quote*

"Women saying, "I'm not a feminist" is my greatest pet peeve. Do you believe that women should be paid the same for doing the same jobs? Do you believe that women should be allowed to leave the house? Do you think that women and men both deserve equal rights? Great, then you're a feminist."

Lena Dunham, actor and writer





MY *feminism* LOUISE SPILSBURY

Louise Spilsbury studied women's writing at university and did a Masters degree in Women and Literature. She co-founded *Aurora*, a magazine featuring creative writing and illustrations by women, based in Liverpool. She then became an author, and has written more than 200 books for young people on a wide range of subjects.

BECOMING *a feminist*

Growing up, I loved watching old films with feisty female characters, and my favourite books were about adventurous girls – but in real life girls didn't seem to have the same chances or choices as boys. I felt annoyed when teachers suggested that, although I was as clever as the boys in my class, I should train to be their secretary – or when adults hinted that my job choices weren't important because I'd stop working if I got married. At university I learned about many wonderful female writers whose stories rarely get heard because of their gender. It was during that time when I discovered feminism.

WHAT *does feminism mean to me?*

Feminism is important to me because I believe treating women and men equally can make the world a better place for everyone. Some people would say that's a bit idealistic, but I believe that patriarchy holds us all back. For one thing, until women get the same chances to succeed in work and politics as men, the world is missing out on a lot of talent and insight.

I feel certain that when we have a more even balance of male and female leaders, the world will be a fairer and safer place. And feminism can help to stop the gender discrimination that affects men, too. For example, it's not fair that men have to hide their feelings for fear of being called 'weak', or be pressured to act tougher or more aggressive than they really feel.

Some people think that because there are laws about women's equality that there is no need for feminism any more. The facts say otherwise. For example, research commissioned by Girlguiding UK in 2015 found that two-thirds of girls believe women are still judged more on their looks than their ability, and one in three say that they are so worried about the way they look that they would consider plastic surgery. Facts like these make me both sad and angry at the same time, and remind me why feminism is still so important today.

MY *favourite quote*

There is a wonderful book called *We Should All Be Feminists* by the Nigerian writer Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, which my daughter Hattie introduced me to. It sums up so much about what being a feminist means to me and I urge everyone to read it. This is one quote from it:

"We spend too much time teaching girls to worry about what boys think of them. But the reverse is not the case. We don't teach boys to care about being likable. We spend too much time telling girls that they cannot be angry or aggressive or tough, which is bad enough, but then we turn around and either praise or excuse men for the same reasons. All over the world, there are so many magazine articles and books telling women what to do, how to be and not to be, in order to attract or please men. There are far fewer guides for men about pleasing women."