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1982 Volume VI: The Changing American Family: Historical and Comparative Perspectives

How Changing Sex Roles Have Affected the Family Unit in the United States

Guide for Curriculum Unit 82.06.09
by Mara Dunleavy

Traditional sex roles and the move away from these traditions are the main issues covered in this unit. A summary of the development of the sex roles in the United States is provided within the unit covering our history between post-Revolutionary War times and the present. This summary includes the development of the women's movement and its influence on the change in sex roles. This brief look at our history shows the ups and downs that women have gone through in their struggle for equality. Now, in 1982, with many victories for the feminist movement, there is one that still eludes them, that being the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA). The ERA would have provided for guaranteed equality of the sexes under the law. This is an on-going issue that students can relate to and one that, you as teachers, can refer to for comparisons while discussing other struggles and campaigns of the women's movement. Partly as a result of the women's movement, more females are making careers for themselves outside of the home. The physical and emotional absence of a full-time mother and home-maker have an effect on the family, whether it be positive or negative. How the family has been affected by the changing sex roles makes up the second part of the unit. Has the "family" been destroyed or does it live on in various forms? This is one issue brought out in the unit along with some emotional reactions to the women's move out of the house.

Key Words

Roles American Sexuality

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