

Winning Equal Pay: the value of women's work

TUC History and Work-Related Learning Online

Teachers' Notes by Andrew Miller



www.unionhistory.info/equalpay/

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Teachers' Notes

Contents

	<i>Pages</i>
1. Introduction	3
1.1 What is 'Winning Equal Pay'?	
1.2 About the TUC Library Collection	
2. Contents of the site	5
2.1 Voices from the workplace	
2.2 Images and documents	
2.3 The Road to Equality	
3. 14-19 curriculum links	8
3.2 History	
3.3 PSHE: Economic wellbeing and financial capability	
3.4 Citizenship	
3.5 Creative and media	
4. Curriculum activities	10
4.1 Activity: Equal pay for work of equal value	
4.2 Discussion questions on <i>No more peanuts: Winning equal pay</i>	

1. Introduction

1.1 What is 'Winning Equal Pay'?

Winning Equal Pay: the value of women's work is a partnership initiative between London Metropolitan University and the Trades Union Congress to record the long campaign to achieve equal pay for women. This new learning resource is supported by the European Social Fund EQUAL Programme. The website was completed in December 2007 and shows filmed interviews with women who fought for and won equal pay, many digitised images and documents, plus essays from historians and other experts.

The site is located within a larger website covering aspects of trade union history called *The Union Makes Us Strong*. Topics include: The General Strike of 1926, the Match Workers Strike of 1888, The Workers' War (World War II), The Ragged Trousered Philanthropists and TUC Reports. The Teachers' Notes on The Workers' War contain guidance on technical issues in using these resources, e.g. downloading and copying material from the site (<http://www.unionhistory.info/workerswar/teachersnotes.pdf>).

This Teachers' Guide has been written to accompany the site. Section 2 provides an overview of the contents and section 3 offers some suggestions as to where the resources can be used within the curriculum. Although the site is part of a suite on trade union history the issue of the 'pay gap' is still current. The struggle of women to secure equal pay continues and the campaigns documented here provide excellent examples of active citizenship in action.

The resources are relevant for teachers and students of citizenship and work-related learning. In order to secure their economic wellbeing, as part of the Every Child Matters agenda, students should be made aware of the struggle for gender equality in workplace settings which is exemplified by the fight for equal pay.

1.2 About the TUC Library Collections

The TUC Library Collections, which transferred to the University of North London (now the London Metropolitan University) in September 1996, were first established in 1922 for the use of the Trades Union Congress and affiliated unions. They contain books, pamphlets and other material collected from unions, pressure groups and campaign movements both in the UK and internationally since the second half of the 19th century. The TUC continues to add material acquired after 1996 on a regular basis. They constitute a major research library in the social sciences, with reference and historical works on the trade union movement, union publications, documents relating to working conditions and industrial relations in various industries, and material collected from the various campaigns and policy areas in which the TUC has been involved since its foundation in 1868. A major strength of the Library is the large collection of pamphlets and other ephemera, which have survived here as in few other comparable libraries.

Access for all users is by appointment only. For details of admission arrangements, opening times see the Collections web pages

(www.londonmet.ac.uk/services/sas/library-services/tuc)

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2. Contents of the site

2.1 Voices from the workplace

The first part of the resource comprises eight films which record six actions and campaigns to secure equal pay in the last 40 years. There has been a gap in oral history covering this issue which Sarah Boston and Jenny Morgan aim to address through the films which together comprise *Recording the stories of the fight for equal pay*. Each film is accompanied by a transcript and commentary (in PDF format).

The film, *Winning Equal Pay* (4 mins) is a trailer to the other films in the series. The film *No more peanuts: winning equal pay* is an edited version of the five individual films which lasts around 13 minutes. It gives an overview of each of the five cases:

- 1968 – *A woman's worth: The story of the Ford sewing machinists* – Sewing machinists at Ford Motors Dagenham plant went on strike in 1968 demanding recognition of their skills. In 1984, after a wait of 16 years, they went on strike again to win equal pay.
- 1984 – *Sweeping the Board* - Five women cleaners at the Royal Victoria Hotel in Belfast lodged a claim for equal pay for work of equal value with 'grounds men' and porters. They were supported by their union and the Equal Opportunities Commission, but the claim was resisted by the employer. After six years of industrial tribunal hearings the case went to the High Court where the women were reluctantly pressed into accepting individual settlements.
- 1984 – *Cooking up a storm* – Julie Hayward, a cook at Cammell Laird shipyard in Liverpool, was the first person to lodge a claim under the equal value amendment to the Equal Pay Act. She found that on graduating from an apprenticeship as a cook she was receiving less pay than her male colleagues. The claim was supported by her union, the GMB, but after initial setbacks the House of Lords finally found in her favour.
- 1986 – *Speaking out for change* – Professor Pam Enderby was head of the speech therapy department at Frenchay hospital in Bristol when she brought an equal value case supported by her trade union, ASTMS/MSF (now Amicus). The case was that speech therapists (mainly women) should be paid the same as clinical psychologists and hospital pharmacists (mainly men). After seven years of being defeated in the English courts, the European Court of Justice upheld the claim.

- 1991 – *Just desserts: The Yorkshire dinner ladies fight to win back equal pay* – In 1988, North Yorkshire County Council gave the dinner ladies notices of dismissal and re-employed them on lower rates of pay. This followed the passage of the Local Government Act 1988 which introduced compulsory competitive tendering for local government services. They were supported by their union, NUPE, but lost the industrial tribunal and the subsequent appeal, prior to eventual success in the House of Lords.

The two other films are:

- 1984 - *Catch of the Day – the Hull fish packers* - This relates the story of strong women, and a doughty male union official, who took on the food industries in Hull, to establish an equal pay for work of equal value case. It also demonstrates how male workers' fears about having their own status affected, were disarmed by the stance of Pete Allen, the TGWU officer involved in the case (75% of his members were women, so getting equal pay for them would prevent the employer looking for ways to undercut wages of men in the future – protect, not threat). Following these victories, many other employers decided to settle with the TGWU, rather than take cases through the tribunals.
- *Working for Ford - The Asian Women's Story*
Although not an equal pay dispute, this deals with some deeper and equally important issues. Five Asian women tell their stories of coming to the UK from India, Kenya and St Lucia in the 1960s and early 1970s. Their stories are filled with how they faced the difficulties of getting accommodation, the language barrier, and, finally, getting jobs at Ford's Dagenham plant. Although they faced much adversity, the women also tell the inspirational story of how they made friends at the plant, with white women and men, and how the union helped solve problems as they arose.

Both the short and long versions of all the films shown on the website, plus a longer film on the history of the fight for equal pay - *The Equal Pay Story: scenes from a turbulent history* - are available on DVD from the TUC Publications Department at www.tuc.org.uk/publications or telephone: 0207-467-1294.

2.2 Images and documents

This section of the site contains mainly photographs dating from the early twentieth century to more recent times. However, there are other ephemera and documents including:

- Newspaper articles
- Cartoons
- Leaflets

- Posters
- Election manifestoes.

Each item has supporting information including date, source, description and linked documents and images.

The items in this part of the site go beyond the issue of equal pay and can be used for students and teachers interested in a number of issues:

- Changes in the working lives of women in the twentieth century
- Industrial action
- Women leaders
- Political action and campaigning
- Women and work in World War II
- Role of trade unions and the TUC.

2.3 The Road to Equality

The final section of the site contains seven articles or essays commissioned from experts in different aspects of equal pay.

- An historical introduction to the campaign for equal pay - Mary Davis
- Experiences of *Recording the stories of the fight for equal pay* – in this piece Sarah Boston reflects on the issues involved in capturing on film the stories of the women involved in the fight for equal pay. As well as giving further insights into the accounts, Sarah identifies issues of interest to creative and media students recording similar stories.
- Equal Pay and the Law – in her article, Aileen McColgan of King's College London and Matrix Chambers describes the development of the law on equal pay, critical legal cases and the importance of European law.
- The Equal Pay Act: Its Impact on Collective Bargaining, Grading and Pay - Sue Hastings, a Pay and Employment Advisor, also discusses some of the landmark legal cases, considers developments in job evaluation and collective bargaining, and highlights changing societal attitudes towards 'women's work'.
- The TUC Recording Women's Voices Project: Setting Up the Equal Pay Archive – Jo Morris
- Equal pay and Europe – Jill Rubery

3. 14-19 curriculum links

3.1 History

The site is of interest to higher education students studying labour history, and topics related to women and the workplace in the twentieth century. Students undertaking project work (also extended projects under new curriculum arrangements) will find the site useful for primary and secondary sources. Teachers looking for visual material to support lessons on women and work in the twentieth century will find the images and documents particularly useful.

The material is most relevant to GCSE History courses on British social and economic history in the twentieth century. For example:

Edexcel GCSE History B: Aspects of British social and economic history

The outline studies section *A2: Changes in work and employment in industry from the late nineteenth to the late twentieth century.*

OCR GCSE in History C: British Social and Economic

Two of the Optional Thematic Studies are particularly relevant: *C. Trade Unions and Working Class Movements c.1800-1990* and *D. The Changing Roles and Status of Women c. 1840-1990.*

3.2 PSHE: Economic wellbeing and financial capability

The programme of study for Economic wellbeing and financial capability incorporates what was previously the statutory requirement for work-related learning at key stage 4. The issue of equal pay comes within the scope of the aims of the guidance to challenge 'stereotyping, discrimination and other cultural and social barriers to choice'.

Understanding the legal framework for equal pay is part of the key concept of 'Understanding the economic and business environment'. Economic wellbeing and financial capability should include a study of rights and responsibilities at work and there is an obvious overlap with the key stage 4 programme of study for Citizenship. The guidance states that schools should provide the following curriculum opportunities: 'use case studies ... to explore work' (i.e. such as those highlighted in Voices from the Workplace), 'explore sources of information and ideas about work' and 'discuss contemporary issues in work'.

3.3 Citizenship

The programme of study for Citizenship at key stage 4 includes as a key concept the idea of justice and 'weighing up what is fair and unfair in different situations' and the role of the law ... in resolving conflict'. Exploring rights and responsibilities is an important concept which overlaps with the programme of study for Economic wellbeing and financial capability. The resources on the site allow students to engage in critical enquiry by evaluating 'different viewpoints, exploring connections and relationships between viewpoints and actions in different contexts'. Students should also be able to explore how citizens can take action to influence decisions and the struggle for rights and freedoms.

3.4 Creative and Media

Teachers and students of creative and media subjects should find *Voices from the Workplace* a useful example of an attempt to capture oral history in an engaging way. The essay by the director of the films, Sarah Boston, also offers insights into the issues encountered when making the film.

4. Curriculum Activities

4.1 Activity: Equal pay for work of equal value

Description

This activity is taken from the TUC's *A Better Way to Work* 14-19 resource for schools and colleges. Teachers' Notes and five activity packs can be downloaded (<http://www.tuc.org.uk/organisation/index.cfm?mins=507&minors=505>) covering the following themes: The role of trade unions, Rights and responsibilities at work, Equal opportunities at work, Health and safety at work, and The future of work.

The article examines continued inequality of pay between men and women. Students can use this case study to discuss the ways in which workers, both men and women, are paid less than workers in similar fields. The suggested activities can be used within a single lesson or as a discussion activity in a youth group setting. A visitor from a trade union would enrich the discussion.

Learning outcomes:

- Young people discuss inequality of pay between men and women.
- They form opinions on the reasons for this inequality.

Method

Ask students to work in groups of two or three and give out copies of the case study. They should read through the case study and discuss some or all of the questions below. Additional discussion questions can be added depending on the exact focus of the session.

- Give some reasons why some jobs are more likely to be done by one sex rather than the other.
 - Brainstorm some jobs that are done mainly by women, and some jobs that are done mainly by men. Find out the hourly rate for some of these jobs if you can. Which are the highest paid jobs?
 - Why does inequality in pay continue long after the 1970 Equal Pay Act was passed?
- Ask each group to appoint a scribe to record the views of the group. Discuss each question in turn by asking a group to report back on its views and then opening up the discussion on that question to other groups.
 - Invite any trade union visitor who is present to comment on the views expressed.

EQUAL PAY FOR WORK OF EQUAL VALUE

The Equal Pay Act 1970 (as amended by the Equal Pay (Amendment) Regulations 1983) provides for equal pay between women and men, if they are doing identical or similar jobs.

Inequality Street

A survey carried out by the Equal Opportunities Commission* finds that women are still being paid less for doing the same job as men. Why is Britain the most sexist country in Europe?

If you care about how your wage packet compares with the man who does the same job as you, you're better off in France, Germany or even Portugal. The wage gap in these countries is less than in Britain – where a woman working full time earns just 82% of her male colleague's salary. For a part-time female worker this sinks to 60%.

If you care about paid maternity leave, you'd better up sticks and move to Italy (where a mother gets five months maternity leave) or Finland (nine months as well as 42 days for paternity leave); in Britain you get a paltry 18 weeks. Add to this poor childcare provision and, in predominantly female professions such as nursing, an average of 6% less than overall average male earnings in the UK, and you can see why the European Council of Ministers told the UK to get down to work on closing the pay gap.

They have their work cut out for them. Thirty years since the Equal Pay Act was passed, staff at the EOC can name endless cases of women who have had to take their employers to court to receive fair treatment.

Take Lorna Chessum, a female lecturer at Leicester's De Montfort University, who discovered that she had been appointed on a lower salary – £6,000 less – than a similarly qualified male colleague. She received £10,000 in compensation in an out-of-court settlement in September 2000.

Then there's Doreen McManus, who worked as a payroll administrator for Rentokil. She claimed that over three years she did the same work as a male colleague whom she trained, and who was paid £3,000 more than her. She took the matter up with her employer, who agreed to review her pay. Her salary was increased – but she was still earning less than her colleague. She lodged an equal pay claim and Rentokil settled the case, paying her £10,500 compensation.

Two small victories in a war we thought we'd won. Mary Davis, who heads the Centre for Trade Union Studies at London Metropolitan University, argues 'industry by industry, the gender pay gap has actually widened since 1997. I see no evidence, apart from the

introduction of the national minimum wage, to support the view that we are witnessing a narrowing of the gap'.

The market has become a fig leaf behind which employers can hide discrimination. You can get away with paying Jane less than Joe by signing them up to individualised contracts. There are a million weasel words that allow you to claim that what she is doing is not exactly the same as what he is doing.

Those of us who feel that if Jane and Joe carry out the same work they should bring home the same pay packet will simply have to provide fodder for the EOC's case studies. Or move to Lisbon.

Adapted from an article of the same title by Christina Odone, which appeared in the Guardian, 27 February 2001.

THE GENDER PAY GAP 2006

The 2006 EOC *Campaign: It's time to get even* has a number of recent statistics on the gender pay gap. In spite of the operation of the Equal Pay Act:

- The difference between average hourly earnings if men and women working full-time in Britain is 18%.
- The gap between women working part-time and men working full-time is 40%.
- The gap between men's and women's full-time annual salaries (which includes bonuses and overtime payments) is 25%.
- Men working full-time earn £599 (gross) and £374.53 (net) more per month than women working full-time.
- Men working full-time earn £12.88 per hour against a full-time women's equivalent of £10.58.

The three main causes of the gender pay gap are:

- *Discrimination in pay systems, i.e. women being paid less for doing the same job as a man or a job requiring the same level of skill, effort and responsibility as a job done by a man.*
- *Occupational segregation, i.e. large groups of women are concentrated in a narrow range of low paid jobs such as cleaning, catering and caring.*
- *Caring responsibilities, i.e. the responsibility for looking after children and other relatives falls on women more than men which affects promotion at work.*

**The EOC was replaced by the Equality & Human Rights Commission in 2007 (see <http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/pages/eocdrcre.aspx>)*

4.2 Discussion questions on No more peanuts: Winning equal pay

The film *No more peanuts: winning equal pay* is an edited version of five individual films which illustrate struggles for equal pay which lasts around 13 minutes. The following questions can be used to stimulate discussion about the film?

- *What was unfair about the situations in which the women in the film found themselves?*
- *What examples of blatant sexism do the women describe? Do you think that things are different at work today and, if so, what are the reasons for this?*
- *What arguments were used by managers to reject the women's case for equal pay for work of equal value?*
- *What is meant by comparator jobs? How easy or difficult is it to compare the skills required for different jobs?*
- *What personal qualities did the women demonstrate that are important for active citizens?*
- *How did being members of trade unions assist the women in their fight for equal pay?*
- *What would you do if you found that jobs in your company involving equivalent levels of skill and mainly being done by men were better paid?*