

Historian tip # 20: Historians often compare information from different cultures to observe similarities and differences between them.

**Today's investigation: Gender stereotypes,
China in the 1300s & the U.S. today**

Outcome of the investigation: Our historians will be able to

1. list the qualities of “honorable men” and “honorable women” in the 1300s in China.
2. evaluate assumptions about men and women which may have resulted in such different “honorable” qualities
3. recount some assumptions which exist in the United States about the appropriate roles for males or females.
4. compare and contrast the gender assumptions from China in the 1300s and the United States today.

Vocabulary: stereotype
assumption
gender

Materials: two films clips from the Disney movie “Mulan”
song lyrics to accompany both clips “Honor to Us All”
and “I’ll Make a Man out of You.”
graphic organizer

Mini-lesson: Before we begin our activities today, I want everybody to take a minute to jot something down in your notebook. I want you to think of a time when you were treated differently, (or you saw somebody else being treated differently), just because you are a boy or just because you are a girl. (Share and chart numerous responses). Now in China in the 1300s, boys and girls were also treated differently. There are many ways that situations for girls have improved all over the world in the past 700 years. We can be thankful for that! However, we still may find some similarities between then and now, even in two very unique countries.

Many times, historians look at the way the same issue affects two different cultures. By doing this, they can see the special way in which the issue affects each of the cultures. For example, today we are going to compare gender stereotypes from China in the 1300s, to gender stereotypes in the United States (or your own country) in the present.

Activities: Watch film clips of, and follow lyrics to “Honor to Us All” and “I’ll Make a Man Out of You.” After watching, students should use the lyric sheets to help them make lists of traits for an honorable woman and an honorable man in China in the 1300s. They can do this in pairs. Then looking back over the list, students should reflect on the list and write “What this is really saying about women” and “What this is really saying about men.” Then have students refer to the chart compiled at the beginning of class, and once again have them analyze “What this is really saying about women” and “What this is really saying about men.”

Group share: Discuss your cross-cultural findings.