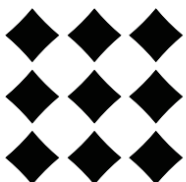


# BOOK CLUB QUESTIONS

## Discussion Prompts for Adult learners

Let's talk about women's history. Dive deeper into the themes of the museum's first digital exhibition, *Becoming Visible: Bringing American Women's History into Focus*, with this discussion guide for communities of lifelong learners. These discussion prompts are designed for use in book clubs, team-building exercises, and other group settings.

Best for adults and teens.



SMITHSONIAN  
AMERICAN  
WOMEN'S HISTORY  
MUSEUM

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## Getting Started:

These discussion prompts are a companion resource for the digital exhibition, *Becoming Visible: Bringing American Women's History into Focus*, by the Smithsonian American Women's History Museum. These questions can be used in book clubs, team retreats, and other group settings. Prior to the discussion, all participants should visit [BecomingVisible.si.edu](https://BecomingVisible.si.edu) to experience the exhibition. Additional resources on the exhibition's themes and topics can be found at [womenshistory.si.edu/becomingvisible/](https://womenshistory.si.edu/becomingvisible/).

## Discussion Questions:

1. This exhibition uses the metaphor of “disappearing ink” to convey how, even when women’s work and lives have been recorded, their stories often vanish from mainstream U.S. history narratives. Can you think of another woman whose story disappeared in this way? What are some books, movies, or plays aimed at recapturing those stories?
2. Think about a time when you made choices about what to keep and what to throw away—for example, when you moved homes, or after a family member passed away. Perhaps you set aside certain objects in a box to remember your baby’s early days, or maybe you helped your company save certain records and tossed others. How did you make your choices? What guided your thinking? What was fun about it, and what was difficult? How does this give you insight into the processes involved in documenting history on a broader scale?
3. What ends up in our archives, museums, and history books is, in large part, due to a series of choices that people make about who and what is important. Choose one of the stories from the digital exhibition *Becoming Visible* to discuss the following questions: what choices shaped the outcome in that instance? How was that woman’s story originally

recorded, and then what made it seem to disappear? What role might gender, race, class, or other elements of identity have played?

4. How does decision-making by historians, archivists, and curators shape what we learn in school, in libraries, and in museums? What women's history do you remember learning growing up? Where did you learn it? Who taught you? What was missing?
5. Pick one of the women's stories from the exhibition to discuss. What did you find most interesting, compelling, or troubling about her story? How does learning about this specific woman affect the way you understand women's history more broadly? How does it seem relevant to today?
6. Are you inspired to share this digital exhibition with others in your life? Why or why not? What do you think their reaction might be?
7. How much influence does the way we learn about the past have on how we think about our own present and our own future? How might the fact that so much women's history has disappeared shape our ideas about women in the world today?
8. Although it's still a long time off, imagine what it might be like to walk into a new Smithsonian American Women's History Museum in Washington, D.C. What do you think it would feel like? What do you hope it will do? What kinds of choices would you make for which stories should get told? What do you hope future generations will learn about women's history, and how can we help ensure that happens?