

## Week Twelve: Ain't I a Woman?

**Weekly Focus:** Comprehension  
**Weekly Skill:** Topic Sentence

**Lesson Summary:** Students will critically read and discuss Sojourner Truth's famous speech, "Ain't I a Woman." They will then write a one-paragraph response to the speech, with a specific focus on topic sentences. Finally, students will work towards defining and identifying pronouns as parts of speech.

**Materials Needed:** Projector and Computer, Sojourner Video, "Ain't I a Woman" Handout, Paragraph Handout, Pronouns Handout, Spider-web Discussion Rules

**Objectives:** Students will be able to...

- create and ask questions as a reading comprehension tool
- identify the parts of a strong paragraph
- identify and write a topic sentence
- practice writing a paragraph
- identify and define a pronoun
- think critically about the relationship between strength and adversity

**Common Core Standards Addressed:** RL.11-12.2., RL.11-12.3, W.11-12.1, W.11-12.10, L.6.1d

**Notes:** This week we will focus on the Comprehension step of the C.A.R.E. model. For newer students, you may find it useful to reintroduce this model using the C.A.R.E. model handout.

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### Activities:

#### Warm-Up/Review: Creative Writing

Time: 20 minutes

Describe a strong woman you know. Write for fifteen minutes and then pair-share.

#### Reading and Short Answer Activity: Ain't I a Woman?

Time: 80 minutes

- 1) **Video and background (10 min.):** Show video and give a brief background of [Sojourner Truth](#).
- 2) **Spiderweb Discussion (30 min.):** See facilitator's handout. Before students begin the discussion, have each student write down one question that she has about Truth's speech on a note-card. Remind students that this week we are focusing on the Comprehension element of our CARE learning model. Asking good questions about what they are reading is an important step towards better understanding the material. Have students think very carefully about the kinds of questions that will allow them to better understand the reading. Let them know that they will soon be able to use their classmates as resources. Below are a list of questions for you to use with the Truth reading:
  - Sojourner Truth begins her speech with a very informal tone, almost as if she is having a conversation with someone in her living room. Why do you think she might choose to do this?
  - What is the **context** of this speech? In other words, what is happening in America during this time period (1851) that makes Truth's speech so important?
  - Who is the **audience** for this speech?
  - Throughout this speech, Sojourner Truth repeats the phrase "Ain't I a woman?" Why do you think she chooses to repeat this?
  - What do you believe Truth's **claim** is in this speech?
  - At the end of the speech, Truth says, "Then that little man in black there, he says women can't have as much rights as men, 'cause Christ wasn't a woman! Where did your Christ come from? Where did your Christ come from? From God and a woman! Man had nothing to do with Him." What does she mean by this?
  - Do you believe that Truth is a strong woman? Why or why not? Give at least one example from the speech.
- 3) **Individual Writing (40 minutes):** Hand-out the Paragraph worksheet and go over with students. Review together what makes a strong paragraph. Remind students that they will have to write several strong paragraphs for their GED extended response items. Today, pay special attention to writing a topic sentence, modeling a potential topic sentence and paragraph for students on the board (you may choose to compose a written response to one of the questions above that sparked good discussion). Students should then use the graphic organizer to help them write an answer to the individual writing question.

Break: 10 minutes

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### Grammar Activity:

Time: 60 minutes

**Warm-Up:** If you feel comfortable, have one or two students choose a sentence from the reading that they find interesting and write it up on the board. As a class, try to break the sentence down into a simple sentence, identifying the subject and verb. You may also want to discuss the structure of the sentence (dependent clause, independent clauses, parts of speech, etc.) further. Be sure students understand that not everyone will understand everything that you are discussing, and that this exercise is only meant to begin to familiarize students with terms and sentence elements that we will continue to discuss in-depth later in the curriculum.

### Introduction:

- 1) What is a Pronoun?: Work together with students to come up with a definition for "pronoun." At their tables, have students come up with a list of as many words as possible that they believe are pronouns.
- 2) Hand-out Pronoun list and go over together. How many of the words they came up with together were on the list?
- 3) Highlighting Pronouns Exercise: Have students return to the Truth reading and, as a group, have them highlight as many pronouns as they can find in it. Have advanced students also list the type of pronoun being used.

### Practice:

- 1) Have each group in the room find an object and then write a sentence about it. The first sentence should contain no pronouns.
- 2) Have students rewrite this sentence replacing nouns with appropriate pronouns.

**Sandboxing:** Have students return to their own writing for today and highlight any pronouns they find.

### Wrap-Up: Discussion of Essential Question

Time: 5 minutes

Based on today's reading, what new thoughts do students have about the essential question, "What is the relationship between strength and adversity?"

### Extra Work/Homework:

Time:

Differentiated Instruction/ELL Accommodation Suggestions	Activity
Have Advanced students help Beginning students develop questions about the reading.	Discussion
Have Advanced students try rewriting one of Truth's paragraphs substituting pronouns for nouns.	Grammar
Have Beginning Students use the CLOZE form to write their paragraphs. Have Advanced Students write another paragraph about why Sojourner Truth's speech is or is not still important today.	Writing

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### Online Resources:

- 1) [Purdue Pronouns](#)
- 2) [Sojourner Truth Biography](#)
- 3) [How to write a good paragraph](#)

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### **Sojourner Truth (1797-1883): Ain't I A Woman?**

Delivered 1851

Women's Convention, Akron, Ohio

Well, children, where there is so much racket there must be something out of kilter. I think that 'twixt the negroes of the South and the women at the North, all talking about rights, the white men will be in a fix pretty soon. But what's all this here talking about?

That man over there says that women need to be helped into carriages, and lifted over ditches, and to have the best place everywhere. Nobody ever helps me into carriages, or over mud-puddles, or gives me any best place! And ain't I a woman? Look at me! Look at my arm! I have ploughed and planted, and gathered into barns, and no man could head me! And ain't I a woman? I could work as much and eat as much as a man - when I could get it - and bear the lash as well! And ain't I a woman? I have borne thirteen children, and seen most all sold off to slavery, and when I cried out with my mother's grief, none but Jesus heard me! And ain't I a woman?

Then they talk about this thing in the head; what's this they call it? [member of audience whispers, "intellect"] That's it, honey. What's that got to do with women's rights or negroes' rights? If my cup won't hold but a pint, and yours holds a quart, wouldn't you be mean not to let me have my little half measure full?

Then that little man in black there, he says women can't have as much rights as men, 'cause Christ wasn't a woman! Where did your Christ come from? Where did your Christ come from? From God and a woman! Man had nothing to do with Him.

If the first woman God ever made was strong enough to turn the world upside down all alone, these women together ought to be able to turn it back, and get it right side up again! And now they is asking to do it, the men better let them.

Obliged to you for hearing me, and now old Sojourner ain't got nothing more to say.

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**Short Answer Question: Write one full paragraph answering the following question.**

- 1) Was Sojourner Truth a strong woman? Why or why not?** Use examples from the reading to support your position. Use the format below, or something similar to it, to write your answer.

Sojourner Truth (was/was not) \_\_\_\_\_.

One reason is \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_.

An example that supports this is \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_. Another

reason is \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_.

An example that supports this is \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_.

In conclusion \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_.

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### HOW TO WRITE A PARAGRAPH

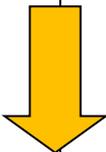
The Topic Sentence should tell your reader what your paragraph will be about. The topic sentence states the main idea of the paragraph.



Supporting Details help explain your main idea to your reader. You may do this through:

- Stories from your own life
- Facts, quotes, or examples from an article you've read or research you've done

You should include 3-4 supporting details.



Your last sentence restates your topic sentence using different words. It should sum up what you just told your reader.

**TOPIC SENTENCE:**

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**SUPPORTING DETAILS:**

**SD 1:**

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**SD 2:**

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**SD 3:**

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**SD 4:**

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**CONCLUSION:**

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**PRONOUNS**

**Pronouns:** Pronouns are words that take the place of proper or common nouns in a sentence.

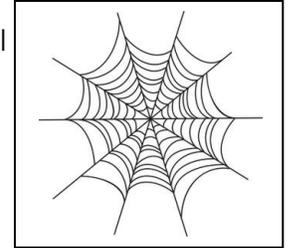
Personal	Possessive	Relative	Reflexive
<p>Personal pronouns are used in place of a common or proper noun.</p> <p><b>Example:</b> <i>She</i> is going to school at the library.</p> <p><b>I</b>  <b>me</b>  <b>he</b>  <b>she</b>  <b>it</b>  <b>him</b>  <b>her</b>  <b>you</b>  <b>we</b>  <b>they</b>  <b>them</b></p>	<p>Possessives show ownership.</p> <p><b>Example:</b> This is <i>her</i> notebook.</p> <p><b>his</b>  <b>hers</b>  <b>its</b>  <b>yours</b>  <b>ours</b>  <b>theirs</b></p>	<p>A relative pronoun links two pronouns into one complete thought or statement.</p> <p><b>Example:</b> <i>Travonda</i> is a student <i>who</i> passed her Writing test.</p> <p><b>who</b>  <b>whose</b>  <b>that</b>  <b>which</b>  <b>whoever</b>  <b>whichever</b>  <b>whatever</b>  <b>whom</b>  <b>what</b></p>	<p>Reflexives are used when the object of the sentence is the same as its subject. Each personal pronoun has its own reflexive pronoun.</p> <p><b>Example:</b> <i>I</i> did not want to hurt <i>myself</i>.</p> <p><b>myself</b>  <b>yourself</b>  <b>himself</b>  <b>herself</b>  <b>ourselves</b>  <b>themselves</b></p>

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### SPIDER-WEB DISCUSSION RULES

**About:** The Spider-web discussion model is a great way to allow your class control of its learning process and to show whose voices are and aren't being heard.

**Guidelines:** The instructor should come to the table as a facilitator. He or she should be prepared with a list of guiding questions but otherwise, as much as possible, should remain as an observer and not a participant in the conversation



#### Rules for Discussion:

1. Have students brainstorm 1 to 2 questions about the reading or topic that you want them to discuss. Students should write these questions on a note-card.
2. Organize students into a large circle. Each student should bring her note-card to the circle with her.
3. Explain to students that they will be in charge of the conversation, and that your role will be only that as an observer and to help prod them along if they get stuck.
4. On a large piece of paper, draw a circle to represent the group (with plenty of room left to write in the margins). Along the circle, according to where they are sitting, write the names of each of the class-members. Include yourself.
5. Remind students that, as much as possible, everyone should speak. Encourages students to ask each other for input and, if the discussion lags, to bring their own questions to the group. Begin by having one person read his or her question aloud.
6. As each person speaks, draw a line to his or her name. For example, if participant A asks the question and participant B answers, draw a line from A's line on the circle to B's. Continue in this way, creating a "spider-web" pattern.
7. Whenever anyone asks a new question, make a star by the student's name and write the question above her name on the page. If someone makes an insightful comment, one, perhaps, that changes the direction of the conversation, star this and note the comment on the sheet near that student's name.
8. If the discussion lags, you may ask a question that you already have prepared.
9. When the discussion time is over, show the class the "spider-web" you've created and ask students what they notice. What did they do well? What would they like to see more of next time?