Activity Description

Students will create “word clouds” using excerpts of letters and speeches by famous women. Students may use the Internet and visit the free website http://www.wordle.net to evaluate text in a unique way. Afterwards, students discuss their findings. In word clouds, those words that appear most frequently are given greater prominence, allowing the reader or student to draw conclusions on dominance of themes in a document, or the tone the author intends in the writing. The prominence of specific words can help students predict or reflect on the primary focus of any given document.

Suggested Grade Level

All grade levels

Estimated Time to Complete

Varies

Objectives

Students will

- read primary source documents;
- analyze vocabulary found within primary source documents;
- draw conclusions, evaluate a theme, and identify the tone of primary-source documents.

Materials Needed

- Computers with Internet access
- Primary-source document text
- Computer printer if word clouds are to be printed upon completion

Activity Procedures

1. To get started, the teacher can take students online to access primary-source documents which are to be incorporated into instruction.

2. Once the text is found, students can copy the text from the primary source document and then paste it into the Wordle.net website. (See brief how-to; PowerPoint screen appears below.)
Suggested writings

Susan B. Anthony: On Women’s Right to Vote (abridged)  
http://www.historyplace.com/speeches/anthony.htm

Sojourner Truth: Ain’t I a Woman?  
http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/mod/sojtruth-woman.html

Abigail Adams: Letter to John Adams, March 31, 1776  
http://www.thelizlibrary.org/suffrage/abigail.htm

Elizabeth Cady Stanton, "Solitude of Self," Address before the U. S. Senate Committee on Woman Suffrage  
http://tiny.cc/eztd2

Eleanor Roosevelt, Letter of Resignation from the Daughters of the American Revolution.  
http://tiny.cc/mwv22

Instructions for Wordle.net

1. Go to www.wordle.net, click create.
2. Paste text here.  
   Once text is pasted  
   click the GO button.
3. Modify and edit your wordle using the font, layout, color, and language.