

# Advanced Reading Comprehension Test 02

During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, almost nothing was written about the contribution of women during the colonial period and the early history of the newly formed United States. Lacking the right to vote and absent from the seats of power, women were not considered an important force in history. Anne Bradstreet wrote some significant poetry in the seventeenth century, Mercy Otis Warren produced the best **contemporary** history of the American Revolution, and Abigail Adams penned important letters showing she exercised great political influence over her husband, John, the second President of the United States. But little or no notice was taken of these contributions. During these centuries, women remained invisible in history books.

Throughout the nineteenth century, this lack of visibility continued, despite the efforts of female authors writing about women. These writers, like most of their male counterparts, were amateur historians. Their writings were **celebratory** in nature, and **they** were uncritical in their selection and use of sources.

During the nineteenth century, however, certain feminists showed a keen sense of history by keeping records of activities in which women were engaged. National, regional, and local women's organizations compiled accounts of their doings. Personal correspondence, newspaper clippings, and souvenirs were saved and stored. These sources form the core of the two greatest collections of women's history in the United States – one at the Elizabeth and Arthur Schlesinger Library at Radcliffe College, and the other the Sophia Smith Collection at Smith College. Such sources have provided valuable materials for later generations of historians.

Despite the gathering of more information about ordinary women during the nineteenth century, most of the writing about women conformed to the "great women" theory of history, just as much of mainstream American history concentrated on "great men". To demonstrate that women were making significant contributions to American life, female authors singled out women leaders and wrote biographies, or else important women produced their autobiographies. Most of these leaders were involved in public life as reformers, activists working for women's right to vote, or authors, and were not **representative** at all of the great mass of ordinary women. The lives of ordinary people continued, generally, to be untold in the American histories being published.

Question 1: What does the passage mainly discuss ?

- A) The "great women" approach to History used by American historians.
- B) The role of literature in early American histories.
- C) The place of American women in written histories.
- D) The keen sense of history shown By American women.

Question 2: The word "contemporary" means that the history was

- A) written at that time
- B) informative
- C) faultfinding
- D) thoughtful

Question 3: In the first paragraph, Bradstreet, Warren, and Adams are mentioned to show that

- A) poetry produced by women was more readily accepted than other writing by women.
- B) even the contributions of outstanding women were ignored.

- C) a woman's status was changed by marriage.
- D) only three women were able to get their writing published.

Question 4: The word "celebratory" means that the writings referred to were

- A) serious
- B) religious
- C) full of praise
- D) related to parties

Question 5: The word "they" refers to

- A) efforts
- B) counterparts
- C) sources
- D) authors

Question 6: In the second paragraph, what weakness in nineteenth-century histories does the author point out?

- A) They were printed on poor quality paper.
- B) The sources of the information they were based on were not necessarily accurate.
- C) They put too much emphasis on daily activities.
- D) They left out discussion of the influence of money on politics

Question 7: On the basis of information in the third paragraph, which of the following, would most likely have been collected by nineteenth-century feminist organizations?

- A) Books about famous graduates of the country's first college.
- B) Newspaper accounts of presidential election results.
- C) Letters from a mother to a daughter advising her how to handle a family problem.
- D) Biographies of John Adams.

Question 8: What use was made of the nineteenth-century women's history materials in the Schlesinger Library and the Sophia Smith Collection?

- A) They were shared among women's colleges throughout the United States.
- B) They were combined and published in a multivolume encyclopedia about women.
- C) They formed the basis of college courses in the nineteenth-century.
- D) They provided valuable information for twentieth-century historical researchers.

Question 9: In the last paragraph, the author mentions all of the following as possible roles of nineteenth-century "great women" EXCEPT

- A) reformers
- B) activists for women's rights
- C) politicians
- D) authors

Question 10: The word "representative" is closest in meaning to

- A) supportive
- B) distinctive
- C) typical
- D) satisfied

# Answer Keys

Question	Answer
1	C
2	A
3	B
4	C
5	D

Question	Answer
6	B
7	C
8	D
9	C
10	C