

ADA4E: Instructions for Small Group Role Play**Introductory Script**

In 1915, it was considered that a woman's place was in the home. What she was allowed to do was very restrictive. She could not vote, and the range of jobs open to her was severely limited. And if she did work, as a teacher for instance, she was expected to follow a most unfair set of rules. Some women, known as suffragettes, were starting to organize to demand equal rights, including the right to vote.

At the same time another event was unfolding that would have an even greater impact on the status of women - the First World War is just entering its second year and tens of thousand of Canadian men were going overseas to fight. Canada was also expected to help supply the war effort, and would eventually increase its manufacturing sector massively.

But without men, how can Canada keep the economy rolling? People are starting to hear rumours that the Imperial Munitions Board, which effectively ran the Canadian economy at the time, is introducing orders to allow women to work in factories producing munitions.

Small Group Role Play

How would different groups respond to this rumour? Have the students get into groups of four or five. Each group is to assume the role of one of the following and discuss the rumour (add to the list as you see fit):

- A family at the dinner table. They have a son off fighting.
- A group of soldiers
- A group of women who work as cleaners but want to earn more;
- Men who work in the factory;
- The factory owners;
- Older, conservative citizens
- A group of suffragettes

Allow the students a minute or two to perform simultaneously.

Script

The rumour was true. If Canada was going to be able to keep the economy going and supply the war effort, thousands of women would need to be hired. Even though the majority view was that a woman's place was in the home, that women were unable to do "men's work," industry was indeed directed to start hiring women. While some sectors, such as ship-builders, absolutely refused to hire women, the majority, often reluctantly, started opening their doors to females.

Women are now being hired. How might they have felt as they prepared for that first day of work? How might the males already at work have felt?

Small Group Role Play

In groups of four or five, imagine you are either a male or female worker on the morning of that first day of work. What kind of conversation takes place as you eat breakfast and prepare to leave the house?

Briefly role play simultaneously, then spot perform for the class.

Script

The new female employees are starting to arrive, often in the hundreds, for their first day of work at the factory. What kind of reception might they have received? What kinds of attitudes might they have encountered?

Corridor of Voices

Select about a third of the class to take on the role of the new female employees. Have the other students form two lines, facing each other. They are the male workers. In ones and twos, have the “new workers” walk between the rows, imagining they are entering the factory. As the women walk, the lines call out using words and phrases what they think about the women workers.

Following this, have the new workers express in words and phrases how it felt to go through the corridor.

Group Discussion:

What it was like to go through the corridor as well as the other scenes?

What was it like to be in the women's shoes?

Do any situations exist today where women may feel the same way?

Scene Creation/Expressive Movement/Soundscape

Put students into larger groups of up to eight students. They are to imagine the women are now on the factory floor with the men. Have them create the assembly line using a series of interdependent, repetitive mechanical movements. Add repetitive mechanical speech or vocalizations to represent sounds of the machinery. Punctuate this with words or phrases with the various workers might be thinking about the jobs and each other.