

Preparation for exam question practice

Figure out what the question is asking you.

- Identify key terms.
- Write a plan - stick to it.

To what extent is feminism a single doctrine? You must mention key thinkers.

- There are some key features within feminism such as they all believe that men and women are equal and that historically, women have suffered oppression by the male gender.

Key Beliefs held by most Feminists

- **Recognition of gender differences:** Biological differences exist, but gender is cultural
- **Equality:** Differences between men and women are relevant to political, social and legal equality of the sexes.
- **Patriarchy:** A society that is dominated by men, for men leads to the oppression of women and their rights.
- **The personal is political:** Political activity exists in all spheres of life - not just "public life".
- **Liberal feminists** believe that the patriarchy is rooted in the public world of education, employment and politics. They believe equality is about equal access to the public realm. In terms of the patriarchy, they focus on the under-representation of women in senior positions in the public and private sector. Key thinker: Simone de Beauvoir - "Women are not born, they are made." "One is not born, but is rather made."
 - Radical feminists categorically reject this idea. They see the patriarchy as being a complex set of power structures - including the state.
- **Radical feminists** believe that the patriarchy is rooted in the nuclear family and in the personal relationships between men and women.
- **Socialist feminists** agree with radical feminists that the private sphere of life is significant, but they focus more on economic equalities. They believe that equality is achieved through equal ownership of wealth and economic power. Socialist feminists ignore the patriarchy and blame inequality on capitalism.
 - Socialist feminists believe that sex and economics go hand in hand and are linked. Key thinker: Charlotte Perkins Gilman - "A house does not need a wife any more than it needs a husband."

Most feminists believe that sex and gender are not the same. Simone de Beauvoir argued in '*The Second Sex*' that gender is an artificial construct, and when women are free of the restrictions imposed by gender, they can live independently and truly achieve their potential. "Women are made, they are not born."

- **Radical feminists:** Believe that gender is the deepest division in society. Believe that all relationships between men and women are oppressive. See patriarchy as being rooted in the domestic sphere of a nuclear family. They believe it is the destruction of the nuclear family and the restriction of society on a different basis. Kate Millet: "The complete destruction of traditional marriage and the nuclear family is the goal of feminism."
- **Postmodern feminists:** They believe that the use of the term "feminism" is too simplistic and the everyday experiences of women are more nuanced. Belief that feminism has no clear single belief system. Women have different experiences which depend on their race, ethnicity, disability and nationality. Bell hooks argues that gender is not necessarily the only factor in determining a woman's life - intersectionality.