**Sojourner Truth day 2--Rhetoric**

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| **Rhetoric:** |
| **Repetition:**  **Why?**   |  |  | | --- | --- | | Repeated word/phrase | Why would she repeat this word/phrase? | |  |  | |
| **Ethos:**  **Why?**   |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | | Example of Ethos | How does this build credibility? | What effect would this use of ethos have on the audience? | |  |  |  | |
| **Pathos:**  **Why?**   |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | | Example of Pathos | How does this appeal to the emotion of the audience? | What effect would this use of pathos have on the audience? | |  |  |  | |
| **Logos:**  **Why?**   |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | | Example of Logos | How does this appeal to the logic of the audience? | What effect would this use of logos have on the audience? | |  |  |  | |
| Which form of rhetoric used by Sojourner Truth do you think is most persuasive to her audience? Explain |
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# **Sojourner Truth said “Ain’t I a woman?” in 1851. Black women today are asking the same thing**

# By [Aamna Mohdin](https://qz.com/author/amohdinqz/) May 29, 2018

On May 29, 1851, Sojourner Truth, an abolitionist and former slave, gave one of history’s most memorable speeches on the intersection between women’s suffrage and black rights. Speaking to the Ohio Women’s Convention, Truth used her identity to point out the ways in which both movements were failing black women. Over and over, according to historical transcripts, she demanded, “Ain’t I a woman?”

It’s a question that continues to resonate with black women today—167 years later.

Born into slavery as Isabella Bomfree in 1797, Truth was sold [four times](https://www.womenshistory.org/education-resources/biographies/sojourner-truth) before she finally fled her captor in New York state and found refuge with a nearby abolitionist family, who bought her freedom. Once she moved to New York City in 1828, Truth became a powerful preacher and campaigned on the issues of women’s suffrage and black rights. She renamed herself Sojourner Truth in 1843, declaring that God had called on her to preach the truth.

It was an aptly chosen name, as illustrated by her speech, in which she at once refutes the prevailing myth that women are weaker than men while challenging social definitions of womanhood—which relies upon ideas about white women’s femininity and purity. Truth says:

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!

Truth criticizes her feminist contemporaries for focusing on the lived experiences of white women. Then she takes aim at the abolitionist movement for solely focusing on the rights of black men:

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.

The speech was particularly poignant as it was delivered at a time, as historian [Nell Painter puts it](http://www.pbs.org/thisfarbyfaith/people/sojourner_truth.html), “when most Americans thought of slaves as male and women as white.” Truth “embodied a fact that still bears repeating: Among blacks are women; among the women, there are blacks.”

Truth’s speech has since taken on a life of its own, inspiring contemporary scholars ranging from black feminist, Bell Hooks, who titled her 1981 book Ain’t I a woman? to black legal scholar Kimberlé Crenshaw, who coined the term “intersectionality.” In a [2016 essay](https://www.routledge.com/Framing-Intersectionality-Debates-on-a-Multi-Faceted-Concept-in-Gender/Vivar-Lutz/p/book/9781409418993), Crenshaw draws parallels between the women’s suffrage and modern feminist movement, noting: “When feminist theory and politics that claim to reflect women’s experiences and women’s aspirations do not include or speak to black women, black women must ask, “Ain’t we women?”

It’s possible that Truth never have actually asked the rhetorical question that has come to define her. There are [differing transcripts](http://sojournertruthmemorial.org/sojourner-truth/her-words/) of the speech. Frances Gage, the president of the women’s convention, wrote the most famous transcript. Though Gage was present during the speech, she didn’t record it until 12 years later. Gage wrote the speech with a Southern dialect, though Sojourner never lived in the South. A reporter who was also present at the speech recorded the speech differently—without the rhetorical question “Ain’t I a woman?”—though the essence of Truth’s message remained the same.

Regardless of which transcript is accurate, there’s no denying that Truth’s rhetorical question remains as relevant today as it did in 1851. Last year, more than [1,500 people](https://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/entry/aint-i-a-woman-march_us_596cbd89e4b0d6341fea6f06) joined the “Ain’t I A Woman” march in Sacramento. The black women’s rights march was organized in response to the “the overwhelming whiteness” of the Women’s March in Washington in the aftermath of US president Donald Trump’s election, and to highlight the multitude of issues black women face. The power evident in such gatherings calls to mind the concluding words of Truth’s speech: “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.”

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| **Motivation** (what is happening/has happened to motivate this to be written?): | | |
| **Step 1:** **Quick summary** (Who, what, where, when, why)  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ | | |
| **Step 2: Choose a verb that describes the**  **author’s purpose**  *Argues*  *Asserts*  *Discusses* | *Considers*  *Says*  *Emphasizes*  *Focuses on*  *States* | *Implies*  *Mentions*  *Concludes*  *Points out*  *Suggest* |
| **Step 3: Stating an author’s claim:** Identify the title, name the author, add in the verb you choose, and state their claim.  In “\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_”, the author \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_that\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. | | |
| **Step 4: Finding evidence that supports the claim.** | | |
| |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | | **Supporting Evidence 1** | **Supporting Evidence 2** | **Supporting Evidence 3** | | | |

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| **Exit Ticket** |
| Do you agree with the claim presented in the article? Explain |
| Is Truth’s message still relevant today? Explain |
| Thoughts from a partner: |

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