4.3 Feminist Thinkers: Mary Wollstonecraft and Betty Friedan: 30-minute Pack

EDEXCEL 9PL0 · about 30 minutes

Total Marks

Name: _____ Date: ____ / ____ / _____

Answer ALL questions. Short-answer items may use brief sentences. For levels-marked questions, write structured responses with accurate political knowledge, named thinker references and clear evaluation where required. The final question is the 30-mark essay.

1 Analyse two ways in which Wollstonecraft's ideas reflect liberal feminism, using A Vindication of the Rights of Woman, 1792, as your source. Answer should focus on the two specified ways and include developed explanation and an evaluative reference to liberal feminist principles.

(Total for Question 1 is 10 marks)

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2 Evaluate the extent to which Mary Wollstonecraft and Betty Friedan agree on how women's equality should be achieved. Refer to A Vindication of the Rights of Woman (1792) and The Feminine Mystique (1963) in your answer. Make a sustained judgement.

(Total for Question 2 is 24 marks)

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Mark scheme · 4.3 Feminist Thinkers: Mary Wollstonecraft and Betty Friedan: 30-minute Pack

Question 1

Level 0 No relevant content. **0**

Level 1 Identifies one or two basic ways with limited development or explanation and little linkage to liberal feminist principles. **1-3**

Level 2 Provides clear analysis of two distinct ways Wollstonecraft reflects liberal feminism, with developed explanation for each and some linkage to ideas like individual rights, reason and legal equality. **4-7**

Level 3 Provides detailed, well-supported analysis of two ways, with strong development, precise use of Wollstonecraft's arguments and explicit evaluative linkage to liberal feminist principles such as equal rights, rational individualism and reform through education and law. **8-10**

Indicative content:

- Way 1: Emphasis on individual reason and rational equality, reflecting liberal feminism's core claim that women are autonomous individuals entitled to the same civil and political rights as men; Wollstonecraft argues women possess reason and should be treated as moral equals.
- Development 1: Explain how Wollstonecraft locates the problem in socialisation and lack of education rather than in natural inferiority, matching liberal feminist faith in reform through equal rights and institutions rather than radical overthrow of social structures.
- Way 2: Demand for legal and educational reforms, reflecting liberal feminism's focus on achieving equality through legal change, access to education and gradual reform rather than revolutionary social transformation.
- Development 2: Show how Wollstonecraft's proposals for access to education, property reforms and civic participation exemplify liberal feminist policy prescriptions aimed at removing formal barriers to equality.
- Evaluation: Consider limits and complications, e.g. Wollstonecraft's occasional appeals to virtue and the domestic role might be read as partial to the gendered context of her time, or liberal feminism's reliance on legal reform may be critiqued for insufficiently addressing deeper social and structural patriarchy. Balance by noting how her stress on individual capacity and legal rights remains central to liberal feminist strategy.

Question 2

Level 0 No relevant content. **0**

Level 1 Basic, limited knowledge of Wollstonecraft and Friedan with little or no developed comparison or evaluation. Responses are descriptive with few accurate references. **1-6**

Level 2 Clear, accurate knowledge of both thinkers with some developed analysis of similarities and differences; evaluation is present but may be one-sided or underdeveloped. Some use of textual or historical detail. **7-12**

Level 3 Detailed, accurate knowledge deployed in a sustained comparison that addresses both agreement and disagreement on how equality should be achieved, with well-chosen examples and developed evaluation leading to a supported judgement. **13-18**

Level 4 Sophisticated, wide-ranging and accurate engagement with both texts showing deep understanding of their methods and aims, a balanced evaluation that weighs theoretical and practical differences and similarities, and a clear, well-justified final judgement on the extent of agreement. **19-24**

Indicative content:

- Areas of agreement: both argue women are constrained by social institutions and expectations rather than by innate inferiority, and both stress the importance of education as a route to greater autonomy and equality.
- Wollstonecraft: emphasis on rational individualism, formal legal and educational reforms, and equal civic status; method is Enlightenment-influenced argument that reason and rights should be extended to women via legal and educational change.
- Friedan: emphasis on cultural critique of domestic ideology, the psychological effects of the 'feminine mystique', and the need for structural supports such as access to higher education, paid employment and childcare; method is sociological and experiential, drawing on interviews and contemporary social analysis.
- Key differences: Wollstonecraft focuses on legal reform, rights and civic participation within the late 18th-century context, while Friedan foregrounds cultural norms, psychological liberation and structural supports in mid-20th-century America; Friedan is more concerned with changing social attitudes and institutions that limit opportunities, whereas Wollstonecraft emphasises formal equality and cultivation of reason.
- Points of evaluation: assess whether the thinkers' different historical contexts explain methodological differences; consider whether Friedan's focus on social supports goes beyond liberal legalism to address practical constraints that Wollstonecraft may underplay, or whether Wollstonecraft's insistence on rights and education provides a foundational framework that complements Friedan.
- Consider criticisms from other feminist perspectives: both might be critiqued by radical feminists for insufficiently challenging patriarchal structures or by intersectional approaches for insufficient attention to class and race, but the question focuses on their relative agreement on routes to equality.
- A concluding judgement might argue that there is substantial agreement on the centrality of education and the rejection of natural inferiority, but important differences in emphasis and method mean they do not fully agree on the means: Wollstonecraft prioritises legal and moral arguments for rights and education, while Friedan supplements legal equality with a cultural and structural programme to enable women to exercise those rights in practice.

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