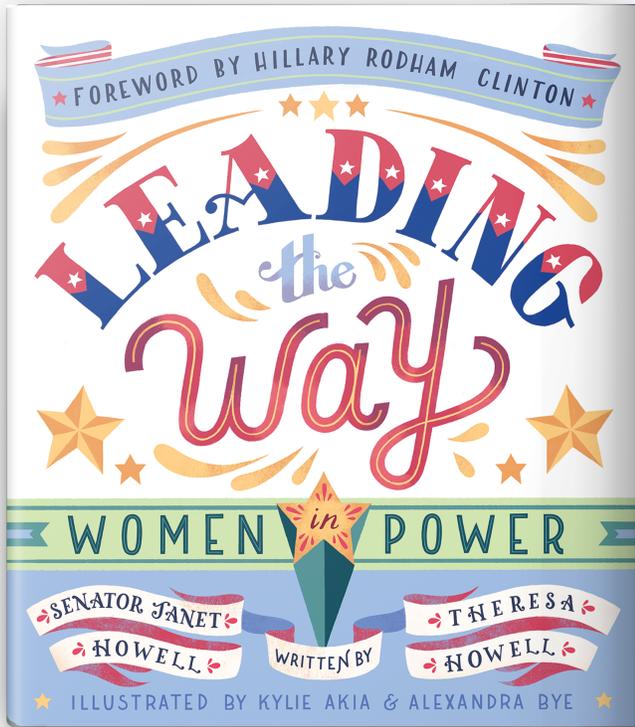


LEADING THE WAY: Women in Power

by Virginia State Senator Janet Howell
& Theresa Howell



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Common Core Connections

This guide, which can be used with large or small groups, will help students meet several of the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) for English Language Arts. These include the reading informational text standards for key ideas and details, craft and structure, and integration of knowledge and ideas (CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI), as well as the speaking and listening standards for comprehension and collaboration and for presentation of knowledge and ideas (CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL). Questions can also be used in writing prompts for independent work.

ABOUT THE BOOK

You can change the world. Do you believe that? After reading these profiles of powerful Americans, you will. You'll see how they grew from ordinary kids with lots of different backgrounds into adults who led the way. They started with small steps, like organizing clubs and serving in student government. They studied and learned from the people around them. And then they went to work, overcoming obstacles, breaking barriers, and achieving powerful roles. From Shirley Chisholm, the first African American woman elected to Congress, to Wilma Mankiller, the first female elected principal chief of the Cherokee Nation, to Sandra Day O'Connor, the first woman to sit on the Supreme Court, these women's stories will inspire you to make a difference now and in the future.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★
INCLUDING A HOW TO STAND UP,
SPEAK OUT, AND MAKE A DIFFERENCE
TAKE-ACTION GUIDE

★ ★ ★ ★ ★



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DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Many of the profiles describe incidents or conditions in the women's childhoods that influenced their lives later on. Discuss some of these influences and talk about the effects they had on the women. Have you had something happen in your life that makes you want to change society, or do you know another young person who has? Describe those situations and their consequences.
2. Identify activities the subjects did when they were children and teenagers, like Girl Scouts or student government, that gave them experience in organizing, working with other people, and being a leader. Talk about how these experiences translated into their careers and leadership skills.
3. Condoleezza Rice "believes sports are a great way to develop leadership skills" (page 79). Do you agree? Why? Which other women profiled here participated in sports?
4. Overcoming serious obstacles is a theme that runs through the profiles. Identify some of the barriers that the people in the book faced. How did they overcome them?
5. Kamala Harris's mother told her, "You may be the first to do many things, but make sure you're not the last" (page 44). What did she mean? Many of the women in this book were the first to do something important. Find examples of some of these firsts and discuss why they were significant. Figure out how long ago the women accomplished these things. Have other women followed in their footsteps?
6. While the biographies provide lots of basic facts and dates, they also weave in anecdotes and other interesting details. For example, Elizabeth Dole won a legal case by arguing that unless a lion involved in the lawsuit was present to testify, the prosecution couldn't prove their case. At one point, Kay Bailey Hutchison owned a candy company. Find other intriguing details in the profiles and discuss what they add to your knowledge and opinion of the subjects. How do such additions enhance the book's appeal?
7. "When people keep telling you that you can't do a thing, you kind of like to try it," said Margaret Chase Smith (page 91). What did she do that she was told she couldn't? What other women in the book defied advice and convention, and what were the results? Why do you think some people tell women to aim lower and be less ambitious?
8. Some of the people profiled are immigrants. Others are first-generation Americans, whose parents immigrated. Talk about the contributions of people in both categories and how the immigration experience—theirs or that of their parents—influenced and strengthened them. Discuss the diversity among the fifty leaders in the book and talk about why diversity matters.
9. "If they don't give you a seat at the table, bring a folding chair," advised Shirley Chisholm (page 20). What does that advice mean in terms of women's progress? Why don't some men want women to share power with them? What are the advantages to society of women being leaders? Discuss another of Chisholm's quotes: "Tremendous amounts of talent are being lost to our society just because that talent wears a skirt" (page 21).

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

10. No one is successful without the help of others. Talk about the people who helped and mentored the women in these profiles, including family, teachers, political figures, and others. What form did the help take? What was its significance in the mentored woman's life and career? Similarly, some of the women proved important to other people's careers. Find examples of this and discuss the importance to both people involved.
11. In the final section, "How to Stand Up, Speak Out, and Make a Difference," it says of the people profiled, "They are no different from you" (page 107). Talk about which of the leaders you think you most resemble and why. Then discuss which one you would most like to emulate and why. How might you do that? Is the person you are similar to the same as the one you want to be like?

CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

1. Ask pairs of students to choose two of the people from the book and prepare interviews such as a journalist might conduct. First, one student will serve as interviewer, asking questions of the other student, who takes the part of one of the leaders. The questions should address important points in the person's life and career. The students should then switch roles and prepare an interview with the second leader. Have them perform their interviews for the class.
2. The book is full of insightful, thought-provoking quotes from the women profiled. Ask each student to find a quote from the book that they consider inspiring. Have them write it out and decorate it. Below it, they should write a short essay about what the quote means, how it relates to the woman's life, and why they like it. Decorate the classroom with these inspiring words.
3. The profiles provide excellent introductions to each woman, but there is a lot more to learn about each one. Invite students to choose one of the women profiled or from the list on pages 110–114. They should research her through digital and print sources and create a multimedia presentation to share with the class incorporating facts, images, and possibly video clips.
4. Have students pick two people from the book, compose a letter from one to the other, and then write the response. The two letters should discuss the leaders' accomplishments, setbacks they faced, and what they have in common. The letters should also describe what each person admires about the other.
5. Not all women who make a difference are recognized nationally. Some are only known closer to home. Ask students to choose a woman leader to profile from their family, neighborhood, school, place of worship, or similar local place. Have them write a description of the woman and her accomplishments, referring to traits that she embodies from the "Guide to the Power Symbols" on pages 4–5.

ABOUT THE CREATORS



Photo by Bill Moree

Senator Janet Howell has been a Virginia state senator since 1992. She is second in seniority in the state senate and the longest-serving female Virginia legislator. Credited with major legal reforms, she was also the first woman to serve on the powerful Senate Finance Committee and the first and only woman so far to be appointed as a senate budget conferee. A civil rights worker in college and a longtime community leader, she has been honored with many awards, including a Child Health Advocate Award from the American Academy of Pediatrics. She lives in northern Virginia with her husband, Hunt.



Photo by Meghan Hof

Theresa Howell is the coauthor, with F. Isabel Campoy, of the award-winning book *Maybe Something Beautiful*, illustrated by Rafael López. She is also the author of the picture book series Scout Moore: Junior Ranger. She lives in Colorado with her two daughters and her husband, Brian.



Kylie Akia is a digital illustrator and painter. *Leading the Way: Women in Power* is her picture book debut. She lives in Chicago.



Photo by Alex Tourigny

Alexandra Bye creates illustrations in various media for a range of outlets, including magazines and children's publications. She lives in New Hampshire.

These questions were prepared by Kathleen Odean, a school librarian for more than fifteen years who now gives professional development workshops for educators about new books for young people. She chaired the 2002 Newbery Award Committee and served on earlier Caldecott and Newbery Award Committees.



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