

We Can Do It!



POST FEB. 15 TO FEB. 28



WAR PRODUCTION CO-ORDINATING COMMITTEE

WE CAN DO IT POSTER

Look at this picture and tell me what you can see or read:

What ? who? what is she doing? When ? What for?

What happened then?

Let's recap!

The document is a *picture showing* a woman **who** *looks proud* of her muscles.

She is flexing her muscles.

- The document *must be a poster* **since** we can see a *slogan* **that** reads "we can do it".
- The slogan is written in *a balloon* , **as in** *a comic strip*.
- *At the bottom* of the picture, the word "War" *appears*, **so we may conclude** that this is a poster **which** *dates from* the Second World War. (The poster was published in 1942).
- T: Who is this woman? She is a worker, she probably works in *a factory*:
- Opposition *blue-collar worker / white-collar worker*. She is wearing a thick blue denim shirt.
- Who is she looking at? She is looking at us. She is talking to us. "The viewer".
- What is she telling us? Explain/ interpret (think of the period in history)
- What about the colours? Now describe her in detail

Travail avec la worksheet. Voir corrigé page suivante.

Pour la séance suivante: reprendre le contenu de la worksheet et pouvoir présenter à l'oral en venant au tableau. Chercher d'autres reprises de ce poster. Parodies, pastiches, détournement...

Corrigé de la worksheet « WE CAN DO IT »

Page suivante

<p>What ? Nature of the document</p>	<p>A propaganda poster published by Westinghouse industries. It is not a government poster, but it became very famous. It came to symbolize the effort made by women on the home front (au pays/ à l'arrière) while men were fighting on the frontline. It was displayed in factories and became famous later on. The artist is...Miller</p>
<p>Who?</p>	<p>She is a young factory worker . She manufactures weapons, clothes, or planes for the army. She is taking part in the war effort . She probably left her home to do her share in the fight against the Nazis. Many women took up men's jobs and replaced them. These women became known as "Rosies" after the character in a famous song. She is dressed in a thick blue denim shirt bearing the logo of the Westinghouse company.</p>
<p>When?</p>	<p>During the Second World War (World War II), in 1942.</p>
<p>What is she doing? What does she look like?</p>	<p>She is flexing her arm muscles, showing her strength. She wants us to understand that although she is a woman (she belongs to the weaker sex) she is strong. She is dressed in a thick blue denim shirt bearing the logo of the Westinghouse company.</p> <p>She isn't smiling, she looks very serious and determined. This impression is reinforced by her raised eyebrows She isn't joking. She has to take up a challenge, so she is rolling up her sleeve to show how strong she is. Her gesture also reminds us of the comic-strip superhero of the time.</p> <p>She seems to be challenging someone. She is not advertising a product or trying to look attractive. However, she looks feminine and some of her features are delicate, her face, with her perfect make-up reminds us of the pin-ups in the magazines of that period.</p>
<p>What for? Message</p> <p>Implicit message about femininity</p>	<p>The poster is meant to encourage/urge women to work in factories in order to replace men or sometimes simply to be more productive so as to lead the USA to victory. . Of all the images of working women during World War II, the image of women in factories is the most common.</p> <p>Women were portrayed as attractive, confident, and resolved to do their share to win the war.</p> <p>Poster and film images glorified and glamorized the roles of working women and suggested that a woman's femininity did not have to be sacrificed. The Rosie's femininity is not threatened: Her pretty face seems to be stuck on the less feminine part of the picture, as if it was only temporary.</p>
<p>Use of colours / style.</p>	<p>. It reminds us of comic books (the balloon as well). It also looks like a piece of pop art. Very colourful covers were made , primary colours were used in illustrations, with clear outlines and bright colours in the background ,tint area / flat tints : yellow here. The picture is typical of the 1940s. The woman's figure stands out against the yellow background. She is very neatly drawn and the picture is realistic.</p>
<p>Vision of women's role in the poster</p>	<p>On the one hand they should work as hard as men and do their utmost, wear men's overalls and do dirty jobs, but on the other hand they shouldn't sacrifice their femininity. They are expected to remain attractive women who will go back home when the war is over. In fact, society is not threatened by women taking up men's roles. What is</p>

	suggested is that things will go back to normal after the war. When the war is over, the fashionable dress will replace the overalls. Society expects them to go on looking attractive and putting on make-up while taking over men's jobs in factories. Therefore the poster offers a very stereotyped vision of women.
Poster also known as...→ It bears reference to ...→ But the actual picture under that name is.....→	“Rosie the Riveter”= Rosie la Riveteuse The song about a girl named Rosie. A painting and magazine cover by Norman Rockwell .

Slogan	“We can do it!”	We=	Can=	Do it=
Possible meaning		Women	are as strong and competent as men	To do the job they left
		/ Together : American people	It is possible Obama’s campaign: “Yes we can!”(2008)	To win the war: to defeat the Germans / the enemy/To succeed
		Female workers at Westinghouse	Have the strength, courage and determination	To be even more productive to help beat the Germans
Recap	The woman in the picture wants to persuade other women that they can do their share in the war effort and work as well as the men who left. This is a patriotic slogan, not a feminist message!.			

Feminine elements	masculine elements
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - She is manicured and her nail polish is visible: She has visibly painted fingernails. - We can make out a rather sophisticated hairdo under her bandana. - Her eyebrows are delicately drawn - She’s got long eyelashes with some mascara to give them more volume. Her eyelashes are emphasized. - Her lips are full, sensual and well-drawn too. - She’s wearing a red and white spotted bandanna. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - She’s wearing a blue work denim shirt - She’s pulling up her sleeves as manual workers do. - She is proudly showing her muscles/ she is flexing her arm muscles. - She is challenging the viewer.

Conclusion: The woman pictured here is virilised, she is overly masculine (worker’s overalls, determined facial expression, attitude showing off strength and muscles). However she bears very feminine features (make-up, narrow wrists and polished nails) to reassure the viewer and conform to the ideal of femininity of the 1940s.