

# Ontario Women: Vanguarders of Science & Society

To read aloud, or choose a student to read aloud: A “vanguard” is someone leading the way with new ideas and innovations. A vanguard sometimes accomplishes something great, and sometimes gives other people inspiration or support to do great things themselves. A vanguard changes lives around her and the lives of the people after her.

Have students read their handouts individually, in pairs, or in groups. Then, have students answer the assigned questions individually or in discussion with other students. Below are some of the possible answers your students may have found in the handouts.

## Mary Ann Shadd Cary

1. In what ways is this woman a vanguard?

- opened one of the first racially integrated schools in Canada
- first female news publisher in North America; first black female news publisher in North America
- wrote about the abolition of slavery during the American Civil War
- one of the first women to go to law school in the United States
- first black woman to cast a vote in an American national election

2. How did this woman change the lives around her and the lives of the people after her?

- ran a popular publication focusing on the experiences of black people in North America
- made it more acceptable to be a woman publishing ideas about politics, philosophy, and opinion
- provided education to black children in America and Canada, when such things were rare
- supported the Underground Railroad and helped escaped slaves travel north

3. What challenges did this woman face while working towards her accomplishments?

- was not able to put her own name on her work because she was a woman
- had to fight to get into law school and fight to be given the right to vote

4. Did this woman have to deal with difficulties due to her gender?

Yes

Did this woman have to deal with difficulties due to her racial background?

Yes

5. What would be different in Canada if this woman hadn't achieved what she did?

- the first woman-run publication may have been created later
- the treatment of black people in Canada may have been worse for longer
- Canada's attitude towards abolition and support for escaped slaves may have been worse for longer
- black children may not have had education as early as they did
- integrated schools may not have had precedent in Canada

# Ontario Women: Vanguarders of Science & Society

To read aloud, or choose a student to read aloud: A “vanguard” is someone leading the way with new ideas and innovations. A vanguard sometimes accomplishes something great, and sometimes gives other people inspiration or support to do great things themselves. A vanguard changes lives around her and the lives of the people after her.

Have students read their handouts individually, in pairs, or in groups. Then, have students answer the assigned questions individually or in discussion with other students. Below are some of the possible answers your students may have found in the handouts.

## Irene Uchida

1. In what ways is this woman a vanguard?

- she was a famous scientist who discovered several important things about disorders and health
- she survived internment with her family and stayed, alone, in Canada when they returned to Japan
- she was one of the first Japanese Canadians to study and work in Toronto after World War II
- she worked for greater civil right for Japanese Canadians
- she published almost 100 scientific papers about her discoveries and research results

2. How did this woman change the lives around her and the lives of the people after her?

- she discovered several causes of Down Syndrome that allowed the disorder to be better treated
- she proved that Japanese Canadians, and women, can excel in the sciences
- she inspired more women and people of Japanese descent to follow in her footsteps
- she proved that mothers are not the main contributing factor to Down Syndrome in their children

3. What challenges did this woman face while working towards her accomplishments?

- she survived internment during World War II and stayed in Canada even though racism persisted
- she worked hard to pay for her studies and life in Toronto, including as a seamstress and dishwasher
- she overcame racism from her classmates and teachers when becoming a scientist
- she faced indifference and lack of support when investigating the causes of Down Syndrome

4. Did this woman have to deal with difficulties due to her gender?

No

Did this woman have to deal with difficulties due to her racial background?

Yes

5. What would be different in Canada if this woman hadn't achieved what she did?

- we may still not know the causes of Down Syndrome that she discovered
- mothers may still be blamed for causing Down Syndrome in their children
- we would not have her as proof of the intellect, resilience, and inventiveness of Japanese Canadians
- we would not have her other contributions to science, genetics, and medicine

# Ontario Women: Vanguarders of Science & Society

To read aloud, or choose a student to read aloud: A “vanguard” is someone leading the way with new ideas and innovations. A vanguard sometimes accomplishes something great, and sometimes gives other people inspiration or support to do great things themselves. A vanguard changes lives around her and the lives of the people after her.

Have students read their handouts individually, in pairs, or in groups. Then, have students answer the assigned questions individually or in discussion with other students. Below are some of the possible answers your students may have found in the handouts.

## Pauline Johnson

1. In what ways is this woman a vanguard?

- a female writer, poet, and performer when very few women were
- an Indigenous writer, poet, and performer when very few other Indigenous people were
- successful enough to support her family on her income when very few women were independent
- one of the most famous members of the early Canadian literary scene
- first Canadian woman to appear on a Canada Post stamp; named a Person of National Significance

2. How did this woman change the lives around her and the lives of the people after her?

- she showed people that a woman could produce great literature
- she documented and shared the ways of life of Indigenous people in Canada
- she showed people that a woman could support her family with her income
- she dispelled stereotypes about Indigenous people by representing them in settler society

3. What challenges did this woman face while working towards her accomplishments?

- she and her sisters were not recognized as part of Mohawk or settler communities
- she and her family had no income when her father died
- she had no female or Indigenous mentors in the literary scene and was often the only woman performing at events

4. Did this woman have to deal with difficulties due to her gender?

Yes

Did this woman have to deal with difficulties due to her racial background?

Yes

5. What would be different in Canada if this woman hadn't achieved what she did?

- we wouldn't have these works documenting Indigenous women's perspectives from this time
- the Canadian literary scene would be less representative of the people living here when the country was founded
- her famous articles, published internationally, would not have informed people of the struggles of Indigenous communities in Canada

# Ontario Women: Vanguarders of Science & Society

To read aloud, or choose a student to read aloud: A “vanguard” is someone leading the way with new ideas and innovations. A vanguard sometimes accomplishes something great, and sometimes gives other people inspiration or support to do great things themselves. A vanguard changes lives around her and the lives of the people after her.

Have students read their handouts individually, in pairs, or in groups. Then, have students answer the assigned questions individually or in discussion with other students. Below are some of the possible answers your students may have found in the handouts.

## Emily Stowe

1. In what ways is this woman a vanguard?

- one of the first Canadian women to graduate from medical school; the second woman granted a medical license to practice in Canada
- the first female principal of a public school in Canada
- one of the suffragettes who fought for women’s right to vote; founded an activist group
- taught about and practiced medicine specifically for women; the first female medical practitioner

2. How did this woman change the lives around her and the lives of the people after her?

- she petitioned medical schools in Canada to allow women to study
- she worked towards the right of women to vote in Canada
- she developed and shared knowledge about medical care for women’s needs
- she inspired many women to study and practice medicine, including her own daughter

3. What challenges did this woman face while working towards her accomplishments?

- she was denied entry into medical school in Canada and had to take classes in the United States
- she was denied a license to practice in Canada until she had been working as a doctor for 13 years
- when she was allowed to study medicine in Canada, her male classmates and teachers harassed her
- she had to support her family on her teaching income when her husband was sick

4. Did this woman have to deal with difficulties due to her gender?

Yes

Did this woman have to deal with difficulties due to her racial background?

No

5. What would be different in Canada if this woman hadn’t achieved what she did?

- it would have taken longer for women to be allowed to work and study as doctors, and fewer women would have been inspired to try
- it would have taken longer for women to be allowed to vote
- women’s health issues would have been less understood and less recognized for longer
- her daughter would not have achieved what she had, including founding a women’s medical school