

TRAILBLAZERS (K-4)



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Introduction

A Trailblazer is a person who leads the way in any new field or endeavor; someone who is among the firsts in a particular field. Another related word is pioneer.

In this activity, you will look at ten photos of women who were trailblazers in their professions. They all chose professions that were at the time considered men's jobs and that many Americans, both men and women, considered inappropriate for women. These photos will help us learn how expectations for professional women changed over time and how some of them stayed the same.

Answer these questions before you look at the photos:

1. In what professions do we see more women than men? Why do you think this is the case?
2. In what professions do we see more men than women? Why do you think this is the case?
3. List one profession that women cannot choose and that is only available to men. What profession is it?
4. List one profession that men cannot choose and that is only available to women. What profession is it?
5. Who would you like to be when you grow up? What kind of job would you like to do?

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Photo 1: Dr. Fannie M. Cooper, a dentist in Little Rock in 1895. She was listed in the bulletin for the Atlanta Exposition as one who “takes High Rank among Women Dentists of the South.” (Women in Arkansas photograph collection, ca. 1850s-1980s)



Photo 2: Emma Thompson Morris (1858-1917). She inherited a farm after her husband’s death. Her experiments with rice culture on Prairie Longue in 1902 made her the first successful rice farmer in Arkansas, not dated, ca. early 20th century (Women in Arkansas photograph collection, ca. 1850s-1980s)

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Photo 3: Emily Alquest, who owned and operated her own photographic studio in Paragould after working for a male photographer in the early 1900s, not dated, ca. early 20th century (Women in Arkansas, ca. 1850s-1980s)



Photo 4: Charlotte Stephens (1854-1951), the first African American teacher in the Little Rock school district, worked as a teacher for 70 years, not dated (Women in Arkansas photograph collection, ca. 1850s-1980s)

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Photo 5: Helon H. Arlitt, first female pilot in Jefferson County and one of the earliest in the state, ca. 1920 (Women in Arkansas, ca. 1850s-1980s)



Photo 6: Mrs. Frances Hunt of Pine Bluff (right) and Miss Erle Chambers of Little Rock (left) walk down a street. They were Arkansas's first two female legislators, 1923 (Women in Arkansas photograph collection, ca. 1850s-1980s)

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Photo 7: Roberta Waugh Fulbright (1874-1953) was the owner and publisher of the *Northwest Arkansas Times*, not dated, ca. early 20th century (Women in Arkansas photograph collection, ca. 1850s-1980s)



Photo 8: Florence Smith Price (1888-1953). She was the first female African American composer in the United States whose work was performed by a symphony orchestra, not dated (African Americans photograph collection, ca. 1890-1954)

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Photo 9: Charlie May Simon (1897–1977) signs a book for a young fan. Simon was an author known primarily for her children’s literature (Charlie May Simon Papers, 1927-1977)



Photo 10: Dr. Joycelyn Elders (b. 1933), pediatrician and public health administrator. She is the second woman, second person of color, and first African American to serve as Surgeon General of the United States, ca. 1980 (Horizons: 100 Arkansas Women of Achievement Records, 1980)

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Questions:

1. Examine all the ten photos and read the caption for each photo. Who are the women in the photos? Write down their names and professions.
2. Look at your list of ten women and ten professions. In which of these ten professions are there more men than women today? In which of these ten professions are there more women than men today?
3. Do you know any women in any of these professions today?
4. Do you think that it was easy or difficult for these women to enter their professions? Why?
5. Which of the ten professions do you find the most interesting?