

Name _____

All Men Are Created Equal? Answer Key

1. Jefferson speaks broadly about "all men" having equal rights given by a Creator, focused on liberty and government reform. Abigail Adams, however, challenges the idea that these rights include women. While Jefferson's equality is abstract and political, Abigail demands concrete legal and social rights for women.
2. Jefferson's tone is formal, idealistic, and designed to persuade a global audience. Abigail's letter is personal, witty, and ironic - but still direct. Her playful threat of "rebellion" is bold, especially in a private letter, but it underscores serious concerns.
3. Abigail Adams points out that women are being excluded from the rights the Declaration claims to guarantee. She argues that without representation or consideration, women are essentially under tyranny, just like the colonists claim to be under British rule.
4. Many students may argue her concerns align with the Revolution's ideals - especially the ideas of representation and resisting tyranny. Others may note that her concerns highlight a separate social issue, showing that the Revolution was limited in scope regarding equality.
5. These excerpts reveal that while the Revolution promoted high ideals, they were not fully applied to everyone. The exclusion of women, enslaved people, and others from these rights shows that "all men" did not truly mean all people at the time.