

Name: _____ Teacher: _____ School: _____

Grade 7: Lesson 8 Write a letter to Abigail Adams in response to her letter to John.

An Introduction to the correspondence between John and Abigail Adams

The roughly 1200 letters of correspondence between John and Abigail Adams traces one of the most fascinating, romantic, and inspirational partnerships in American history. He was her “Lysander” (a famous Greek military hero) and she was his “Miss Adorable.” More importantly, they were both each other’s “Dearest Friend.”

John and Abigail were incredibly close and their correspondence proves it. The letters, written over 50 years of marriage, reveal a marriage that was full of affection, intimacy, mutual respect, humor, and love.

Additionally, these exchanges provide readers with a unique window into the founding of the United States and into the lives of two of its founders. Not only was Abigail John Adams’ wife and true love, she was his intellectual equal and they shared a common outlook on the world.

Their letters record conversations about the American independence and the Revolutionary War, the rights of women and the immorality of slavery. She was as his primary political advisor and managed their household when he was often away from home.

Following the end of his political career, John and Abigail retired together at their home in Massachusetts. No more letters were written.

Abigail’s Letter to John

I long to hear that you have declared an independency—and by the way in the new Code of Laws which I suppose it will be necessary for you to make I desire you would Remember the Ladies, and be more generous and favourable to them than your ancestors. Do not put such unlimited power into the hands of the Husbands. Remember all Men would be tyrants if they could. If perticular care and attention is not paid to the Laidies we are determined to foment a Rebellion, and will not hold ourselves bound by any Laws in which we have no voice, or Representation.

That your Sex are Naturally Tyrannical is a Truth so thoroughly established as to admit of not dispute, but such of you as wish to be happy willingly give up the harsh title of Master for the more tender and endearing one of Friend. Why then, not put it out of the power of the vicious and the Lawless to use us with cruelty and indignity with impunity. Men of Sense in all Ages abhor those customs which treat us only as the vassals of your Sex. Regard us then as Beings placed by providence under your protection and in imitation of the Supream Being make use of that power only for our happiness.

Note: The spelling and language have not been changed from the original letter.

Task: Review your notes about our discussion of the letter from Abigail. Then write a letter back to Abigail as if you are writing as John. Next time, we’ll compare your letter and John’s letter to Abigail to see if you have any of the same thoughts!