

# Women and Sports

## Tracking Change Over Time



**Grade Level: 4th–8th**

### Essential Questions

How do larger historical patterns influence individual experiences?

How does federal legislation affect change in people's attitudes and opportunities and affect our daily lives?

How have opportunities for women to participate in athletics changed over time?

### Activity Description

After examining a photo of a women's basketball game in Missoula circa 1900 using Visual Thinking Strategies (VTS), students will read an essay to learn about the ways that Title IX (a federal civil rights law enacted in 1972 that prohibits sex discrimination in education) changed girls' opportunities to participate in school sports. They will then conduct a survey of their community and analyze the data they collect to see how Title IX affected their community.

**Notes to Teachers:** Although this lesson is about girls and women and sports, Title IX is a much broader law protecting equal access to education, including pregnant teens' right to receive an education and protecting students from sexual harassment. To learn more, see "Title IX: Gender Equity in Education": <https://www.aclu.org/title-ix-gender-equity-education>.

Teachers of advanced students may wish to streamline the lesson plan by consolidating some of the steps outlined for analyzing the article on Title IX.

### Objectives

#### Students will

- analyze a historical photograph
- develop new vocabulary
- determine the main idea of a text and explain how it is supported by evidence
- state a hypothesis
- conduct a survey to collect data
- apply their knowledge of arithmetic (calculating percentages) to manipulate their data
- plot their results on a chart
- analyze the charts they created to compare experiences over time
- draw conclusions about how women's opportunities have (or have not) changed over time
- make an authentic community contribution to an ongoing study of Montana history

**Time:** Four to five 50-minute class periods plus homework.

**Note:** Teachers short on time can end the lesson after Part 1.

# Montana Common Core and Social Studies Standards

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**MMP.1.** Make sense of problems and persevere in solving them.

**MMP.2.** Reason abstractly and quantitatively.

**MMP.4.** Model with mathematics.

**MMP.5.** Use appropriate tools strategically.

**MMP. 6.** Attend to precision.

**MMP. 7.** Look for and make use of structure.

**CCRA.R.1** Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it.

**CCRA.R.2** Determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas.

**CCRA.R.4** Interpret words and phrases as they are used in a text, including determining technical, connotative, and figurative meanings, and analyze how specific word choices shape meaning or tone.

**CCRA.R.7** Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse media and formats, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words.

**CCRA.R.8** Delineate and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, including the validity of the reasoning as well as the relevance and sufficiency of the evidence.

**CCRA.R.9** Analyze how two or more texts address similar themes or topics in order to build knowledge or to compare the approaches the authors take.

**CCRA.W.7** Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects based on focused questions, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.

**CCRA.SL.1** Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with

diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

**CCRA.SL.2** Integrate and evaluate information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally.

**CCRA.SL.4** Present information, findings, and supporting evidence such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning and the organization, development, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

**CCRA.SL.5** Make strategic use of digital media and visual displays of data to express information and enhance understanding of presentations.

**CCRA.L.4** Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases by using context clues, analyzing meaningful word parts, and consulting general and specialized reference materials, as appropriate.

**SS.H.5.2** Understand the inter-relationship of chronological historical events.

**SS.H.5.3** Identify roles of individuals and groups and their impact on United States and tribal historical events

**SS.H.6-8.2** Analyze how the historical events relate to one another and are shaped by historical context, including societies in the Americas.

**SS.H.6-8.5** Explain how Montana has changed over time and how this history impacts the present.

## Materials

Photograph: "Jeannette Rankin, 3rd from left (of girls in bloomers), looking back over her shoulder." Missoula, MT [no date], David Smith, photographer, Montana Historical Society Photo Archives Catalog #PAC 88-29M Oversize print (below, page 8) and in PowerPoint (download here: <https://mhs.mt.gov/education/Women/basketball.pptx>)

Knowledge Rating Chart (below, page 9): one copy for each student

*Fighting for Female Athletes: Title IX in Montana* essay (below, pages 10–11): one copy for each student

Survey Instruction Sheet (below, page 12): one copy for each student

Survey Form (below, page 13): four copies per student

Sample data charts (download here: <https://mhs.mt.gov/education/Women/TitleIXSampleData.pptx>)

Chart templates (download here: <https://mhs.mt.gov/education/Women/TitleIXBlankTemplates.pptx>)

## Part 1: Learning about Title IX

### Pre-Lesson Preparation

- Make copies of Knowledge Rating Chart and Title IX essay and (if desired) copies of the photograph of the women’s basketball game (you can also simply project the image).
- Familiarize yourself with Visual Thinking Strategies (VTS). A brief description of the procedure is below; you can find more information, including videos that show VTS in action, at the Visual Thinking Strategies website: <https://vtshome.org/>
- Familiarize yourself with Vocabulary/Knowledge Rating Comprehension Strategy: [https://www.nbss.ie/sites/default/files/publications/vocabulary\\_rating\\_comprehension\\_strategy.pdf](https://www.nbss.ie/sites/default/files/publications/vocabulary_rating_comprehension_strategy.pdf)

### Procedure

**Hook** (about 15 minutes): Project the picture of the women playing basketball (or print out multiple copies for students to view at their desks) and have students analyze it using VTS. Give the students time to observe the image individually and silently (1 to 2 minutes).

Then ask the simple question: “What is going on here?” It is important to ask this question just as you see it written. Once a student volunteers to share

what he or she sees, paraphrase his or her answer: “I hear you saying . . .”

You can also have a student expand on what they see by saying, “What do you see that makes you say that?” Again, paraphrase the best you can the student’s answer before moving on to the next student.

After about 5 minutes or so, if things start to become quiet, ask the question: “What more can you find?” It is important to ask the question in this exact way, so as not to limit answers to what can be observed by the eyes only (as in what more can you see), but to open observations up to emotion and other senses.

Again, paraphrase student answers before asking (if relevant), “What do you see that makes you say that?”

Plan on spending about 15 minutes discussing the image, and understand that there will be some silence as students think of what else they can see.

Tell students that we don’t actually know very much about this photo. We do know that it was taken in Missoula around 1900 and that one of the basketball players was Jeannette Rankin (third player from left, looking over her shoulder). Rankin grew up in Missoula and went to the University of Montana. She became an active suffragist (someone who campaigned for women’s right to vote.) After women received the right to vote in Montana in 1914, Jeannette Rankin ran for Congress. She became the first woman in the United States to serve in the House of Representatives.

Ask students what they know (or think they know) about the history of women playing sports. Discuss briefly—how does this photo support or contradict their preconceived notions?

### Activity: Reading an Article to Learn about Title IX

Introduce the lesson. Tell students they are going to learn more about the history of women in sports—first by reading an article and then by

doing research in their own community. (**Note:** Teachers short on time can modify this lesson and omit the community research component.)

For those using the entire lesson, let your students know that the research they conduct will make a genuine contribution to our historical understanding. They will be discovering information that no one else knows—and will have an opportunity to share their research by sending it to the Montana Historical Society. (If enough schools submit collected data from their community, the Montana Historical Society will create an online gallery so students can compare their community with other Montana communities.)

**Step 1** Pass out Knowledge Rating Sheets.

**Step 2** Explain the rating scale. If students know a word or concept well enough to define it, they should check “Know it.” If they think they’ve heard the word, but aren’t entirely sure they know exactly what it means, they should check “Not sure.” If they’ve never heard of the word or concept, have them check “Don’t know.”

**Step 3** Read the words out loud. Then have pairs of students discuss each word and complete the “Before” column. Emphasize that they are *not* expected to know or even have heard of all of these words. If they check “Know it,” ask them to write a short definition of the word in the “Comments/Definition” column. If they can’t write a definition, they should change the check mark to “Not sure.”

**Step 4** Discuss with students the terms they are familiar with and those they are not too sure about. Have students predict what they think unknown words might mean.

**Step 5** Read the Title IX article out loud. Then have students go back and read it to themselves, underlining in the text the words listed on the rating sheet (10 minutes).

**Step 6** Have students discuss the terms on the rating sheets, using the information and context clues

in the reading, to see if they can discover the meaning of the words they were unsure of or that were unfamiliar. Ask them to share back to the class.

**Step 7** Ask students to complete the “After” column. (Have them turn their sheets in as a formative assessment.)

**Step 8** Discuss the reading more generally. What pattern did the article describe in terms of women’s participation in sports? What changes occurred to give girls and women greater access to playing organized sports in school and in college? How did these changes affect girls’ and women’s lives?

As a class, find the article’s thesis statement (“It took congressional action and a court fight to bring Montana’s young women athletes the resources they needed to pursue the sports they loved.”). Underline it.

Ask students: What evidence does the author provide to support this thesis? Where did she get that evidence? (Interviews with individuals, newspaper articles, other historians’ work.)

As a class, evaluate the article’s quality. Do you think it is a trustworthy source? Do you think the information is correct? Why or why not?

## Part 2: Researching Title IX’s Impact on Your Community

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### Pre-Lesson Preparation

Make copies of the Survey Form (four per student) and the Survey Instruction Sheet (one per student).

Have index cards (or slips of paper) available.

### Activity: Preparing to Conduct a Survey and Generating a Hypothesis

Tell students that the article described the general pattern experienced by women in Montana, but that you—as a class—are going to find out if the experiences in *your* community are the same or different

from the experiences described in the article by conducting a survey.

Hand out one copy of the instruction sheet and four copies of the survey to each student. Review the goals of the survey and the process of conducting a survey (outlined in the survey instructions). Set a deadline for returning the survey.

Have students generate hypotheses. Using what they've learned from looking at the photo and reading the article, what do they *think* they will discover from their community survey?

Depending on your students' skill level and understanding of the scientific method, this may be done as a class or an individual activity. For an individual activity: Give each student an index card. Have each student look at the survey and choose a question that is interesting to them. Have them write a hypothesis: a sentence describing one thing they think their research will find. (For example, "I think more men than women who answer our survey will like sports" or "I think women who went to school after Title IX was passed will like sports more than women who went to school before Title IX was passed.")

Whether working as a class or as individuals, talk to students about the importance of making sure that the hypothesis is one that can be tested against the survey data.

Have students write their names on the cards and turn them in. Tell them that these are their "hypotheses"—and that they will be testing these hypotheses with the data they collect.

### Activity: Analyzing Data (after surveys are returned)

#### Pre-Lesson Preparation

Provide four baskets for students to place their surveys. Label them: A. Male respondents; B. Female respondents who graduated high school **before 1973**; C. Female respondents who graduated high school between **1973 and 1986**; D. Female respondents who graduated high school **after 1986**.

- Make copies of the Survey Data Analysis Worksheet (one per student).
- Make 11 copies of the chart template (from the PowerPoint).
- Familiarize yourself with the Jigsaw strategy: <https://www.readingrockets.org/strategies/jigsaw>.
- Print out sample data charts (from the PowerPoint).

#### Procedure

Tell students they are going to tabulate (arrange information in an organized way so that it can be studied) and process their data.

Have students sort surveys into four groups by placing their surveys into the appropriate basket:

- Group A. Male respondents
- Group B. Female respondents who graduated high school **before 1973** (before Title IX went into effect)
- Group C. Female respondents who graduated high school between **1973 and 1986** (in the early days of Title IX, before the first major court case in Montana to enforce the law)
- Group D. Female respondents who graduated high school **after 1986** (after Title IX was well established)

Assign students to groups: —A, B, C, D— and give each group the surveys from the corresponding basket. As a class, walk through the first few questions on the Survey Data Analysis Worksheet, making sure students understand how to calculate the percentages. Then have them work together to complete the worksheet. Even if they are working together, each student needs to write the answers on his or her own worksheet for sharing later.

#### Use the Jigsaw Technique

Create new groups of four students with one student from Group A, Group B, Group C, and Group D in each. Make sure they bring their Survey Data Analysis Worksheets.

**Step 1** Explain that students will be creating charts

to help interpret the data they collected by sharing their data.

**Step 2** Assign each group two to three of the worksheet questions to chart (the goal is to have every question charted.) Distribute chart templates to each group (one chart for each question).

**Step 3** Share sample data charts to show them how to record information.

**Step 4** Have the students complete the charts.

**Step 5** Post the charts around the room (or project each chart in turn on the document projector).

**Step 6** Have each group present its data. Make sure they share the following information with the class:

- a. The question they were charting
- b. Their results for each group of respondents (men, women who graduated high school before Title IX, women who graduated in the early days of Title IX, and women who graduated after Title IX was well established.)
- c. How their results compare to the sample data charts.

**Step 7** As a class or individually, reread the Title IX article.

**Step 8** Return the index cards with the students' hypotheses. On the reverse side, have them answer the following question: "Does the data support your hypothesis? Explain." Have them turn this in as a formative assessment.

**Step 9** Hold an all-class discussion:

- a. What, if anything, surprised you about the data you collected? What, if anything, confused you? What, if anything, disturbed you?
- b. How did the data from your community compare with the trends described in the article and the sample data?
- c. What else do you wonder about the history of women and sports? How could you find out the answers?

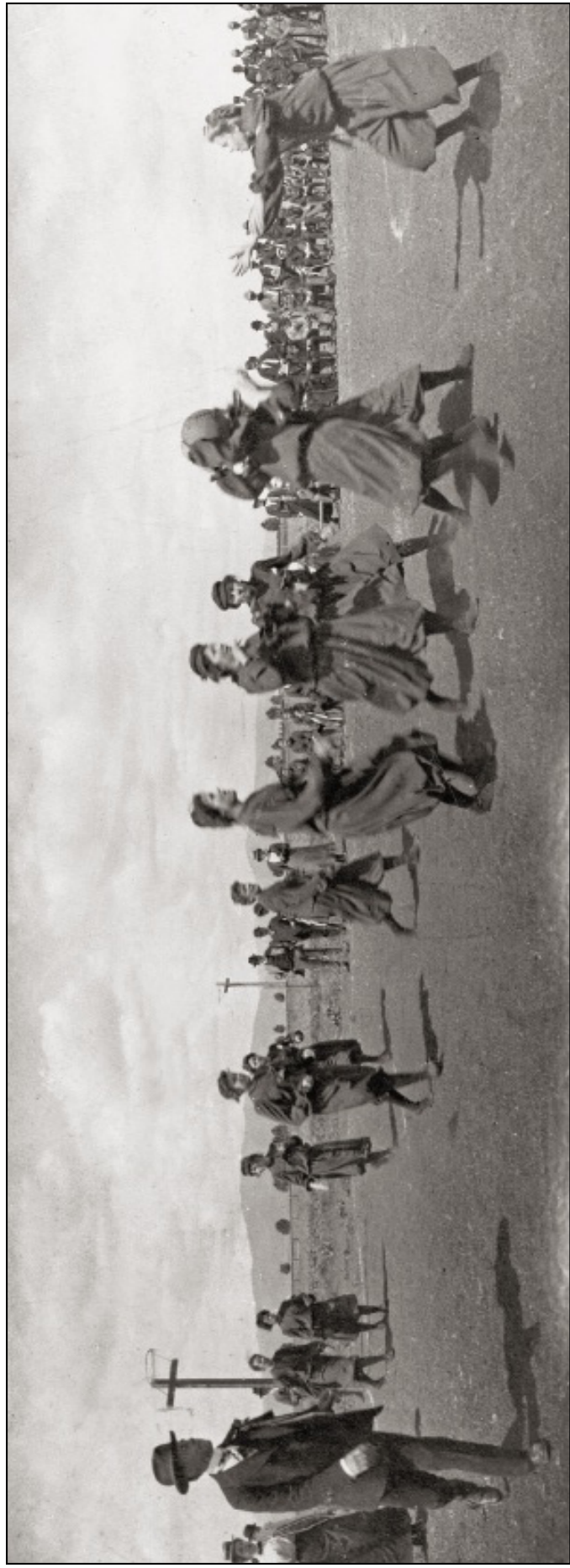
**Step 10** Collect all of the charts. Mail them to

**Title IX Project  
Outreach and Interpretation  
Montana Historical Society  
PO Box 201201  
Helena MT 59620**

### Extension Activity

Read more about Karyn Ridgeway, one of three plaintiffs in *Ridgeway v. Montana High School Association*, one of the first Title IX athletics cases in the country: <http://www.titleix.info/faces-of-title-ix/Meet-the-Faces-of-Title-IX/Karyn-Ridgeway.aspx>





*Montana Historical Society Photo Archives Catalog #Pac 88-29M Oversize*

## Knowledge Rating Chart

Name:

Word	Before			After			Comments/Definition
	Know it	Not sure	Don't know	Know it	Not sure	Don't know	
Gender discrimination							
Prohibited							
Governmental interference							
Inequities							
Congressional							
Plaintiff							
Proponent							
Title IX							
Fourteenth Amendment							



## Fighting for Female Athletes: Title IX in Montana

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“Some say basketball is a metaphor for life,” mused NBA Hall of Fame coach Phil Jackson during an interview about Montana’s Class C girls’ basketball tradition, “but it’s bigger than that. It’s . . . joy.”

For the first half of the twentieth century, Montana’s young female basketball players knew that joy—sprinting full court in front of enthusiastic crowds. In 1904, ten girls from Fort Shaw Indian School drew enormous crowds in Great Falls and beat all rivals at the St. Louis World’s Fair. Phil Jackson’s mother captained her 1927 Wolf Point girls’ basketball team. And in 1944, the Fairfield High girls team beat the boys, playing boys’ rules.

But by 1950, attitudes had changed. Montana’s female athletes found their opportunities limited to intramural activities—often characterized by cast-off equipment, unskilled coaching, and poor facilities. It took congressional action and a court fight to bring Montana’s young women athletes the resources they needed to pursue the sports they loved.

The question, of course, was never about girls’ physical abilities. The issue was equal access to resources. The first step toward fairer treatment for Montana’s female athletes came when Congress enacted the Education Amendments of 1972. The best-known section of this law read, “No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in . . . or be subjected to discrimination under any educational program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance.” Though it prohibited gender discrimination in all areas of education, Title IX’s most far-reaching impact was felt in women’s sports.

While Montanans clearly enjoyed women’s sports, many opposed Title IX as unwelcome

governmental interference. An editorial in the *Billings Gazette* called Title IX “federal blackmail.” Educators and school administrators agreed, claiming that the issue “would have worked itself out in a few years.”

Not so. Ten years after Title IX became law, Montana high school girls still had fewer sports options than did boys. Boys’ athletics received more money; greater publicity; and better practice times, uniforms, locker rooms, coaches, and transportation. So, in May 1982, a group of female athletes and their parents sued the Montana High School Association (MHSA), claiming that these differences violated Title IX and the equal protection clause of the Fourteenth Amendment.

Karyn Ridgeway, the named plaintiff in *Ridgeway v. MHSA*, was an all-state basketball player at Missoula’s Hellgate High School. “I defined myself in basketball terms and my self-worth depended on it. . . . I loved the pressure. But it was hard not to notice that the boys’ teams were frequently given the better equipment, facilities, and schedules,” she said. With her mother, Karyn attended town hall meetings on the issue. When a moderator asked for volunteers for a test case challenging athletic inequities, Ridgeway stepped up.

The *Ridgeway* parties arrived at a settlement for the 1985–86 year. The MHSA agreed that districts should offer the same number of sports for girls and boys; all coaches should be equally qualified and paid; and practice times, uniforms, equipment, publicity, and recognition should be comparable.

But the *Ridgeway* parties could not agree on seasons for girls’ basketball and volleyball. Going against national norms, Montana held girls’ basketball in the fall and girls’ volleyball in winter. The plaintiffs argued that switching seasons would allow athletes to compete in national tournaments and attract college

recruiters. But schools resisted the change because splitting boys' and girls' basketball seasons allowed them to use the same coaches and facilities.

Proponents for conventional seasons refused to give up. They believed girls should have the same opportunities to play in national tournaments as boys did. That could only happen with conventional seasons. In 2000, the Montana Human Rights Bureau finally ordered MHSA to make the switch.

Passing Title IX was not enough to ensure girls the right to play. It also took a brave student athlete, Karyn Ridgeway, to sue for her rights under the law. Only after the *Ridgeway* case did Montana girls gain equal opportunities in high school and college sports.

This article was adapted from an essay by Annie Hanshew and Marcella Sherfy Walter published by the Montana Historical Society on its Women's History Matters website.

## Sources

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# Survey Instruction Sheet

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## Dear Parents,

Our class is looking at how Title IX—a federal civil rights law enacted in 1972 that prohibits sex discrimination in education—changed girls’ opportunities to participate in sports in our community.

For our study of Title IX to be successful, we need *every* student to bring back survey data.

Please encourage your student to complete this assignment and return the surveys to school by

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Thank you!

## Dear Students,

To figure out how Title IX affected our community, we need to find out about people’s experiences with sports. The easiest way to find this out is to ask them! To look at change over time, we need to ask people of different ages. We will be comparing the answers from these four groups:

1. men
2. women who graduated high school before Title IX
3. women who graduated high school in the early days of Title IX
4. women who graduated high school after Title IX was fully in effect

So, to complete this assignment, you will need to survey four people from our community: **one** man and **three** women. Please try to find three women of different ages:

- one who graduated from high school before 1973 (before Title IX was enacted)
- one who graduated from high school between 1973 and 1986 (in the early years of Title IX)
- one who graduated high school after 1986 (after Title IX had been law for at least 10 years).

You do **not** need to ask people their ages or when they graduated high school before asking them to take the survey! Just try to find a good age spread.

Please don’t call relatives who live out of town. We want this to be a survey of people who live here.

You can conduct the survey in person or on the phone. Please complete one sheet for each person you interview.

## How do you gather survey data?

1. Ask politely if the person would be willing to take a survey to help you with a class project. Tell them that the survey will take less than 10 minutes.
2. Read them each question and record the response before going on to the next question.
3. Make sure to say “Thank you.”

Talk with your parents about where you can find people to survey; maybe you can survey your neighbors or people you know from church or some other community group.

Your respondents may want to know more about the project. You can tell them that we are studying Title IX (a federal civil rights law enacted in 1972 that prohibits sex discrimination in education). We are conducting a study to see how, if at all, the law changed women’s participation and appreciation of sports in our community. We will be sharing the data we collect with the Montana Historical Society.

If they ask, please assure them that you will not be sharing their name with your class or with the historical society—just their answers.

If they still have questions, feel free to have them contact me: \_\_\_\_\_.

## Survey Form

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Name \_\_\_\_\_

Class \_\_\_\_\_

Read the questions aloud. Record your respondent's answers below by writing on the line provided or circling the answer.

1. What year did you graduate from high school? \_\_\_\_\_

2. Are you male or female?

Male \_\_\_\_\_ Female \_\_\_\_\_

3. Do you like to watch or play sports?

Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

4. As I read the following list, please tell me all the places you played sports when you were young. (Mark an X on the line for each place that the respondent played sports.)

\_\_\_ In gym class and/or at home or in the park (not in an organized league)

\_\_\_ On a high school team

\_\_\_ On an organized team outside of school (for example, Little League)

\_\_\_ On a college team

\_\_\_ Nowhere. I did not play sports.

5. When you were in high school, did you ever watch one of the boys' teams play?

Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

6. When you were in high school, did you ever watch one of the girls' teams play?

Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

7. Last year, how many boys' sporting events did you attend (high school or college)? (It is ok to estimate.) \_\_\_\_\_

8. Last year, how many girls' sporting events did you attend (high school or college)? (It is ok to estimate.) \_\_\_\_\_

**Comments:**

# Survey Data Analysis Worksheet

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Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Circle your data set:

- A. Men
- B. Women who graduated high school before Title IX went into effect (1973)
- C. Women who graduated high school during the first ten years of Title IX (1973–1986)
- D. Women who graduated high school after Title IX was well established (1987 or later)

Terms: **Total** is the total number of people in your data set (category).

**Respondent** is a person in your data set who responded to your survey.

How many surveys do you have in your data set? \_\_\_\_\_ (Total)

1. How many respondents liked to watch or play sports? \_\_\_\_\_ (Answer)

What **percentage** of the total is that? (You can figure this out by dividing the number of **respondents** who like to watch or play sports by the **total (the number of respondents in your data set)**—or  $\text{Answer} \div \text{Total} (=X)$ . That will get you a decimal. Convert your decimal into a percentage by multiplying it by 100 and adding a percentage mark (%).

$$\text{Answer} \div \text{Total} = X \qquad X \cdot 100 = \text{_____}\%$$

2. How many respondents never played sports? \_\_\_\_\_ (Answer)

What **percentage** of the total is that?

$$\text{Answer} \div \text{Total} = X \qquad X \cdot 100 = \text{_____}\%$$

3. How many respondents played sports in gym or at home or in the park?  
\_\_\_\_\_ (Answer)

What **percentage** of the total is that?

$$\text{Answer} \div \text{Total} = X \qquad X \cdot 100 = \text{_____}\%$$

4. How many respondents played sports on a high school team? \_\_\_\_\_ (Answer)

What **percentage** of the total is that?

$$\text{Answer} \div \text{Total} = X \qquad X \cdot 100 = \text{_____}\%$$



5. How many respondents played sports on an organized team outside of school?

\_\_\_\_\_ (Answer)

What **percentage** of the total is that?

$$\text{Answer} \div \text{Total} = X \qquad X \cdot 100 = \underline{\hspace{2cm}}\%$$

6. How many respondents watched at least one boys' game when they were in high school?

\_\_\_\_\_ (Answer)

What **percentage** of the total is that?

$$\text{Answer} \div \text{Total} = X \qquad X \cdot 100 = \underline{\hspace{2cm}}\%$$

7. How many respondents watched at least one girls' game when they were in high school?

\_\_\_\_\_ (Answer)

What **percentage** of the total is that?

$$\text{Answer} \div \text{Total} = X \qquad X \cdot 100 = \underline{\hspace{2cm}}\%$$

8. How many respondents attend MORE boys' games than girls' games now?

\_\_\_\_\_ (Answer)

What **percentage** of the total is that?

$$\text{Answer} \div \text{Total} = X \qquad X \cdot 100 = \underline{\hspace{2cm}}\%$$

9. How many respondents attend MORE girls' games than boys' games now?

\_\_\_\_\_ (Answer)

What **percentage** of the total number of people in your category is that?

$$\text{Answer} \div \text{Total} = X \qquad X \cdot 100 = \underline{\hspace{2cm}}\%$$

10. How many respondents played on a college team? \_\_\_\_\_ (Answer)

What **percentage** of the total is that?

$$\text{Answer} \div \text{Total} = X \qquad X \cdot 100 = \underline{\hspace{2cm}}\%$$