Feminism

New Internationalist Easier English
Ready Intermediate Lesson
Today’s lesson:

Speaking

Reading 1

Reading 2

Speaking and understanding infographic

Writing a letter
Discuss:

1/ How important is feminism?
2/ What did feminists fight for in the past?
3/ What are feminists fighting for now?
4/ Is feminism fighting for the same things all over the world? What are some of the different issues?
What do you think is happening here, and why?
While you read the text (next two slides), decide which of these summaries is the best:

The women wear false beards:

a) so that they look as important as men and can get into important meetings.

b) because they’re angry that men are more important than them and want to protest.

c) to make people question the control of men.
“La Barbe”

Put on a false beard and walk into a space of power. This is what the French action group *La Barbe* (‘Beard’ in English) do. With no invitation, they walk into important French events where there are mostly men. ‘We show them what is happening, like in a mirror,’ says Chris Blache, from *La Barbe*. ‘We walk in and say to the men – “this is beautiful, fantastic, nothing has changed since the 19th century! Keep it like that.”’

*La Barbe* started as a protest against the people who were very sexist about Ségolène Royal when she ran for president in 2007. A little later, it grew into all areas where there are not enough women.
‘We found that men were also leading the very respectable groups – leftwing, civil society groups and the arts. They said, “Oh my god, how can you do this to us? We do good every day” or “But art is not the same as other areas!”’

People noticed this effective method and it became more popular. Women now use it all over France and the world, eg. in Australia. In Mexico, it is called Las Bigotonas – ‘the moustaches’.

Blache says it’s a good idea for all women to take a false beard with them all the time, because they might need it.
Text 2: What do you think is happening here, and why?
What do you think the article is about, from this headline?

“India’s Muslim women say ‘No second wife!’”
What do you think these 2 groups of women think about:

a) polygamy (having more than one wife) and
b) girls getting married very young?

1/ educated, middle-class Muslim women in India
2/ poor, illiterate Muslim women in India
‘No Second Wife, please’ is an interesting headline. It described some unexpected reactions from Indian Muslim women’s groups to banning polygamy. An Indian Muslim women’s movement has been working on Personal Indian Muslim law. What they found was very surprising: in 10 states, most poor, illiterate Muslim women voted to stop the practice of having more than one wife. But educated, middle-class Muslim women did not want to change the law. Even when it means that 13-year-old girls get married before they finish school. The women with no education wanted their daughters to have education, and chose 21 as a good age to marry.
And now, a quiz (in pairs?):

1/ Name one of the least equal (women and men) countries in the world.
2/ Name one of the most equal countries.
3/ Name one country where inequality is getting worse.
4/ Name one country where inequality is improving.
5/ What % of women in the world have experienced violence from a partner.
6/ Which country has the highest % of women in government?
Now check your answers and find two more interesting facts on this infographic (enlarged on next page, or accessible here: http://newint.org/features/2014/07/01/facts-for-feminists-infographic/)
Facts for Feminists
Twists and turns along the road to equality

Equal Rights

Gender Inequality 2011

Freedom from Violence
Among the most common human rights abuses worldwide, male violence is more likely to kill or maim women aged 15-44 than cancer, malaria, war and traffic accidents combined.

30% of women worldwide have experienced violence by an intimate partner.
117 million girls thought missing due to 'sex selection' before birth, neglect and infanticide.
20,000 ‘honour’ killings estimated to take place each year, globally.
2 women are murdered every day in Guatemala.

Sexual violence
Rape case attrition in selected European countries

50% of sexual assaults worldwide are committed against girls under 16.
100,000 women (adults, children and infants) are raped in South Africa every year, the highest rate worldwide.

Legal redress
64% drop in domestic violence in the US (1994-2010), following the Violence against Women Act.
125 countries outlaw domestic violence.

Political Power
Women enjoy growing influence. In 1911, just 2 countries in the world allowed women to vote. Now the right is near-universal.

Women parliamentarians

Reproductive Rights

68,000 women die from unsafe abortions each year.
61 countries severely restrict women’s right to abortion.

Domestic Work

Canadian women as % of university graduates in selected subject areas, 2011

Employment

53% working women employed in 'vulnerable', insecure jobs globally.
10-30% the average pay gap between men and women.

Earnings / $1 paid to a white man in the US

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Health and education

Girls

Girls have made important gains in literacy and education.

20% increase in girls attending primary school in Southern Asia and sub-Saharan Africa 2000-11.

80% Girls are more likely than boys to attend secondary school in Latin America and the Caribbean.

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Writing:
In pairs, write a letter to your imaginary 5-year-old daughter. Tell her a little about feminism around the world, and about what she, as a girl, can expect to do in her life.
Homework:

Read the original articles:

1)  http://eewiki.newint.org/index.php/New_Feminism:_3_stories_from_Egypt,_France_and_Brazil

2)  http://newint.org/blog/majority/2014/07/10/india-polygamy/

And more Easier English articles about feminism:

3)  Is there a feminist spring?:
    http://eewiki.newint.org/index.php/Is_there_a_feminist_spring%3F

4)  Can plastic surgery make you feel free?
    http://eewiki.newint.org/index.php/Argument:_Can_plastic_surgery_make_you_feel_free%3F