

HANDOUT TEXT

Virginia Woolf's *A Room of One's Own* is an essay version of two invited lectures given in 1928. The lectures were about women writers of fiction. She was speaking to a British audience.

Excerpt: *A Room of One's Own* (1929)

I should never be able to fulfil what is, I understand, the first duty of a lecturer to hand you after an hour's discourse a nugget of pure truth to wrap up between the pages of your notebooks and keep on the mantelpiece for ever. All I could do was to offer you an opinion upon one minor point—a woman must have money and a room of her own if she is to write fiction; and that, as you will see, leaves the great problem of the true nature of woman and the true nature of fiction unsolved.

OPTION

If you are not assigning students to do their own research on Virginia Woolf, you may also want to include this biographical information in the handout:

Virginia Woolf (b.1882-d.1941), author of several best-sellers, is among the most important authors in 20th-century literature. Her writing is known for its feminist themes and stream-of-consciousness prose. Her best-known works are still in print today.

The writer was also influential as a founding member of the Bloomsbury Group, a loosely organized group of British scholars, artists, and writers that posed a cultural counter to Victorianism. They espoused liberal ideas, including pacifism and the importance of discovering one's intrinsic value—not merely one's functional value as a cog filling a particular role in society.

Historians looking back have also noted that Woolf was complex. She was married, but had significant relationships with women, including author Vita Sackville-West. Her husband was Jewish, but there are threads of anti-Semitism in her writing.