

Preamble to the Declaration

In the preamble to her Declaration, de Gouges mirrors the language of the Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen and explains that women, just as men, are guaranteed natural, inalienable, sacred rights – and that political institutions are instituted with the purpose of protecting these natural rights. She closes the preamble by declaring that "the sex that is superior in beauty as it is in courage during the pains of childbirth recognizes and declares, in the presence and under the auspices of the Supreme Being, the following Rights of Woman and the Female Citizen."



Articles of the Declaration

Article I

The first article of the Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen proclaims that "Men are born and remain free and equal in rights. Social distinctions may be based only on common utility." The first article of Declaration of the Rights of Woman and the Female Citizen responds "Woman is born free and remains equal to man in rights. Social distinctions may only be based on common utility."

Article II and Article III

Articles II and III extend the articles in the Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen to include both women and men in their statements.

Article IV

Article IV declares that "the only limit to the exercise of the natural rights of woman is the perpetual tyranny that man opposes to it" and that "these limits must be reformed by the laws of nature and reason". In this statement, de Gouges is specifically stating that men have tyrannically opposed the natural rights of women, and that these limits must be reformed by the laws of a political organization in order to create a society that is just and protects the Natural Rights of all.

Article V

Article V is similar to the Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen, with minor changes in wording.

Article VI

De Gouges expands the sixth article of the Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen, which declared the rights of citizens to take part in the formation of law, to: "All citizens including women are equally admissible to all public dignities, offices and employments, according to their capacity, and with no other distinction than that of their virtues and talents."

Article VII through Article IX

Articles VII through IX again extend the articles in the Declaration of the Rights of Man to include both women and men in their statements.

Article X

In Article X, de Gouges draws attention to the fact that, under French law, women were fully punishable, yet denied equal rights, declaring: "Women have the right to mount the scaffold, they must also have the right to mount the speaker's rostrum".^[15] This statement would go on to be well-known and spread to wide audiences.

Article XI

De Gouges declares, in Article XI, that a woman should be allowed to identify the father of her child/children. Historians believe that this could relate to de Gouges' upbringing as a possible illegitimate child and allows women to demand support from fathers of illegitimate children.

Article XII

This article explains that the declaration of these rights for women is a great benefit to society and does not only benefit those protected by it. According to her biographer, Olivier Blanc, de Gouges maintained that this article be included to explain to men the benefit they would receive from support of this Declaration despite the advice to her of the Society of the Friends of Truth.

Article XIII through Article XVI

Articles XIII through XVI extend the articles in the Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen to include both women and men in their statements.

Article XVII

The seventeenth article of the Declaration expresses sexual equality of marriage, and that upon marriage, women and men are found equal in the eyes of the law – this means that upon divorce, property is split evenly between the involved parties, and property cannot be seized without reason from women (as it is not seized from men).

Postscript to the Declaration

De Gouges opens her postscript to the Declaration with a declaration: "Woman, wake up; the tocsin of reason is resounding throughout the universe: acknowledge your rights." In her first paragraph, she implores women to consider what they have gained from the Revolution – "a greater scorn, a greater disdain." She maintains that men and women have everything in common, and that women must "unite under the banner of philosophy." She declares that whatever barriers women come up against, it is in their power to overcome those barriers and progress in society. She goes on to describe that "marriage is the tomb of trust and love" and implores men to consider the morally correct thing to do when creating the framework for the education of women.

De Gouges then writes a framework for a social contract (borrowing from Rousseau) for men and women and goes into details about the specifics of the legal ramifications and equality in marriage. In many ways, she reformulates Rousseau's *Social Contract* with a focus that obliterates the gendered conception of a citizen and creates the conditions that are necessary for both parties to flourish.

According to de Gouges's journal, what ails government are fixed social hierarchies that are impossible to maintain. What heals a government is an equal balance of powers and a shared virtue. This is consistent with her continuing approval of a constitutional monarchy. Marriages are to be voluntary unions by equal rights-bearing partners who hold property and children mutually and dispense of same by agreement. All children produced during this union have the right to their mother's and father's name, "from whatever bed they come."

translation source : Wikipedia