



1990: Birth of British actress Emma Watson



Emma Watson, a feminist icon

Emma Watson is a British actress who was born in 1990 in Paris. Her career began in 1999 when she was cast to play the role of Hermione Granger in the *Harry Potter* saga. She wanted to be an actress from the early age of 6 and was able to train at the Stagecoach Oxford Headington performing arts school. At 15, she was the youngest person ever to make the cover of *Teen Vogue*. She played in several movies such as *My Week with Marilyn* (2011), *The Perks of Being a Wallflower* (2012), *Beauty and the Beast* (2017) and *Little Women* (2019).

She was only 24 when she was asked to be a United Nations (UN) Women Goodwill Ambassador. In September 2014, she delivered a speech at the UN headquarters to launch “HeForShe”, a campaign urging men to support women and advocate for gender equality. In that speech, which went viral, she described feminism as “the belief that men and women should have equal rights and opportunities” and asserted that “man-hating has to stop”. As an activist, she started a book club named “Our Shared Shelf” to make people discuss literary works related to feminism. In 2016, she Instagrammed herself planting copies of Maya Angelou’s *Mom & Me & Mom* (2013) around the London Underground!

Teaching ideas

★★★ **CYCLE 4** - Tell students that they have been selected to participate in the international campaign “HeForShe” organised by the UN. Show students Emma Watson’s speech at the UN and give them some excerpts to help them. In groups, ask them to write and deliver a speech (inspired by Emma Watson’s) to defend gender equality in their school.