

If you only have 30 minutes ...

The men and women from Central Asia who have come to the US and work in the trucking industry are part of a movement toward more economic opportunity and greater equality for people of increasingly diverse backgrounds. In this activity, explore these ideas, analyzing the impact on American society, the economy and the people themselves.

Directions:

1. Answer the following questions based on your reading. (Answer keys can be found as endnotes at the end of this document.)
 - What similarities and differences do you see between truck driving and nomadic herding?¹
 - What type of bias did the Central Asian female truckers experience?² How is this similar and different than American female truckers?³
 - Why is there currently a scarcity of truckers in the US?⁴ How does this create an opportunity for the industry to see the value of women in the trucking industry?⁵
 - How did economic necessity play a role in steering these women toward driving trucks for a living?⁶
 - How do these women show a sense of pride in what they do?⁷
 - How has social media impacted the lives of truckers in the article?⁸
2. Discuss the following questions in small groups or as a full class. If working alone, you can jot

down your answers.

- Brainstorm a list of occupations that you associate with women and a list of occupations you associate with men. Why are jobs like these usually considered exclusive to one gender or the other? Of the jobs on the list, could any be done by the other gender. Explain how.⁹
- Identify the different ways working in the trucking industry has helped the men and women in the article meet some of their personal goals. How has this opportunity benefited the US economy? How do you feel about women working in traditionally male occupations?¹⁰
- Social media has had a significant impact on the lives of female truckers featured in the article. How might social media have a detrimental effect? What can these women do to counteract that?¹¹

Common Core Standard(s) Met:

CCRA.R.1 Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.

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

CCRA.R.3 Analyze how and why individuals, events, or ideas develop and interact over the course of a text.

¹ Similarities: movement of an economic product; travel across distances; nomadic lifestyle. Differences: Mechanized travel vs. traveling by foot or horse; truck driving offers better working conditions.

² The bias Central Asian women experienced related to the belief that trucking jobs should be filled by men and women should follow the traditional role of females to stay home, cook and raise kids.

³ American women experienced similar bias, but Central Asian women also experienced ethnic bias.

⁴ More drivers are needed, because of the pandemic and retirements.

⁵ Female commercial drivers are less likely than men to be involved in an accident. Women drivers also accept training easily, are more empathetic, and excel at customer relations.

⁶ Many of them have families and want to provide for their families.

⁷ As new immigrants, they see their jobs as typically American. They are proud that they can do work that a man does and still keep their femininity with makeup and clothes. They identify with other women truck drivers, socialize, and take pride when one is signaled out for their accomplishments.

⁸ It has helped them contact each other and stay in touch. It has also highlighted their experiences and fostered encouragement from fellow truck drivers.

⁹ Answers will vary. Students should be able to identify jobs that are traditionally considered for males or females. They should also be able to explain why many of these jobs can be done by either sex.

¹⁰ Answers will vary. Many of them make a good living. They are able to set their own working days and routes. Some have traveled around the country fulfilling that nomadic desire. The US economy has benefited with more truckers on the road able to deliver goods.

¹¹ Answers will vary. Students may say that social media inhibits in-person connections, or possibly endangers people.