**Feminist Theory—**

**Gender roles dictate much of how we interact, and that’s true in literature too.**

*Some key beliefs*

1. The Western world is largely a patriarchy. (That means men made the rules and those rules are still in effect.)
2. Women are oppressed in a patriarchy. They may be literally oppressed, or they may be treated as secondary (the “other”).
3. Biology determines our sex. Culture sets the rules for gender—male vs. female roles
4. The goal of feminism is gender equality.

# Some key questions

1. What role do women play in the text?
2. What are the power relationships between men and women (or characters who assume more masculine/feminine roles)?
3. How does the book seem to define “male” and “female”?
4. Do characters adhere to or reject stereotypical masculine/feminine gender roles?
5. What happens as a result?
6. What position does the text take—consciously or not—on the role of women?
7. What does the work reveal about how patriarchies work economically or psychologically or socially?

In the Real World…

**A Simple Definition of Feminism**

**1 : the theory of the political, economic, and social equality of the sexes**

**2 : organized activity on behalf of women's rights and interests**

**from the *Merriam-Webster Dictionary***