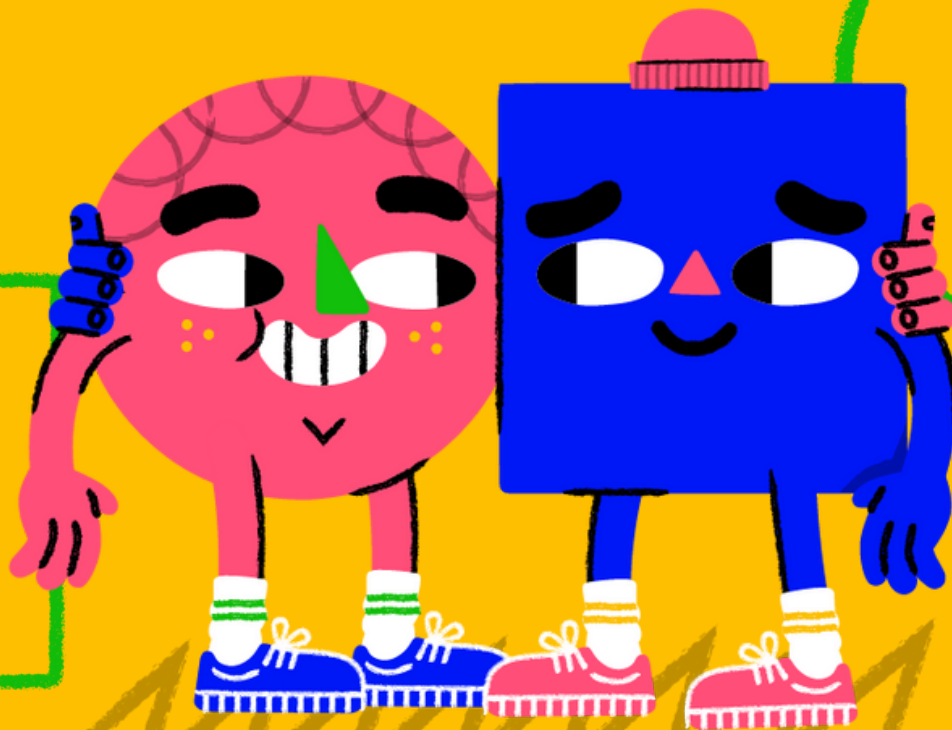


YEAR 3-4: LESSON 1

EXPLORING GENDER STEREOTYPES

A curriculum designed by The Children's Society, Lifting Limits, and Equimundo as part of the Global Boyhood Initiative's Beyond Gender Stereotypes Programme



**Beyond Gender
Stereotypes**

a curriculum by

**GLOBAL
BOYHOOD
INITIATIVE**

**Lifting
Limits**

**The
Children's
Society**



CONTEXT

This lesson is the first of three lessons for pupils in lower key stage 2. It introduces the concepts of gender and stereotypes. Pupils start to explore where and how gender stereotypes can be portrayed, and how they can influence people's ideas, thoughts and behaviour. Pupils begin to understand that stereotypes can be limiting and restrictive, so therefore often have negative effects.

Statutory Relationships and Health Education – Primary (DfE)

Respectful relationships:

- what a stereotype is, and how stereotypes can be unfair, negative or destructive

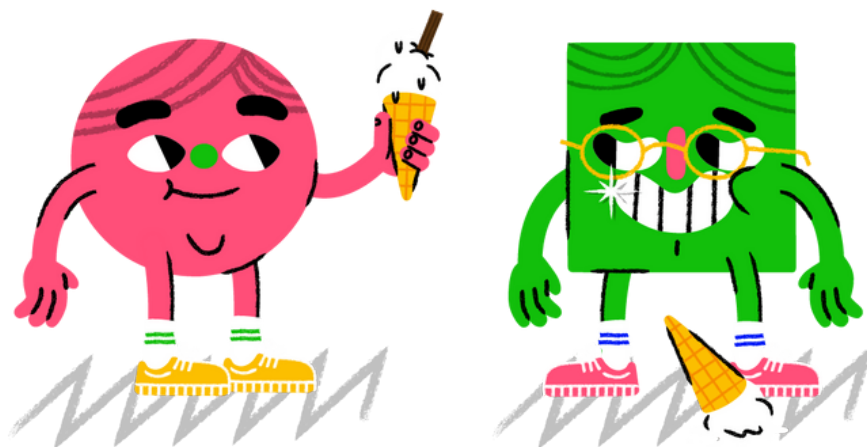
Programme of Study for PSHE Education – Key Stage 2 (PSHE Association)

Health and wellbeing:

- H25. about personal identity; what contributes to who we are (e.g. ethnicity, family, gender, faith, culture, hobbies, likes/dislikes).

Living in the wider world:

- L9. about stereotypes; how they can negatively influence behaviours and attitudes towards others...



LEARNING OBJECTIVE

Pupils learn what is meant by gender stereotypes.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Pupils will be able to:

- recognise what is meant by 'gender stereotype'.
- identify examples of gender stereotypes.
- explain how gender stereotypes might influence how someone thinks or behaves.

RESOURCES

- PowerPoint: Year 3/4 - Lesson 1
- Teacher provided examples of children's gendered items that display an array of gender stereotypes, such as: toys, baby and children's clothing, party products, images of characters from cartoons and films, magazines aimed at boys/girls, gendered birthday cards and books, (also include some gender-neutral examples)
- Paper/exercise books, pens/pencils, clipboards
- **Resource 1: Investigation record**
- Flipchart paper and marker pens

POSITIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT AND KEY VOCABULARY

Before teaching this lesson, ensure that you have set a positive learning environment. Please read the Teacher Guidance document, which explains how to do this effectively and includes a glossary with explanations of key terms which may be referred to during the lesson.



LESSON SUMMARY

Activity	Description	Timing
1. Introduction	Ground rules / Introducing gender • Establish ground rules. • Pupils reflect on the ideas and assumptions in gender stereotyped greetings cards. • Explain that people can have expectations of themselves and others according to gender.	10 minutes
2. Main Activity 1	Gender stereotypes in films and books • Pupils read and discuss summaries of some of the action from a film and a book.	10 minutes
3. Main Activity 2	Product investigation • Pupils look for messages about gender in a range of everyday items, including clothing, toys and books. • Explain the meaning of the word 'stereotype' and the term 'gender stereotype'.	20 minutes
4. Main Activity 3	Re-writing stereotypes • Pupils rewrite stereotypical sentences into non-stereotypical sentences, and discuss their ideas.	15 minutes
5. Plenary	Sentence starters • Pupils complete sentence starters about gender stereotypes to review their learning.	5 minutes
	Total	60 minutes

LESSON PLAN

Introduction (10 minutes)

Ground rules reminder / Introducing gender

Before teaching this lesson, make sure you have a class agreement about respectful behaviour for approaching the subject matter and positive ways of working together.

Display (images of) gender stereotyped greetings cards suitable for this age group of children.

Ask the pupils to separate the (images of) cards into those that are more likely to be aimed at boys, or at girls, or both.

Give the pupils a few minutes to discuss this as a whole class, in pairs or small groups. If you want to, provide an opportunity for pupils to draw or write their ideas, or if working as a whole class, record their ideas on the whiteboard or flipchart.

Take feedback, comparing responses.

Ask the class why different cards might be seen as suitable for boys or for girls. What assumptions might be involved about what boys and girls are interested in, or what they are like?

Try not to prompt the pupils too much – part of the purpose of this activity is to gain an insight into their lives and experiences, which will help inform how to pitch later learning. Not prompting at this point also helps pupils to resist adhering to an expected ‘official version’ or ‘what the teacher wants to hear’.

Responses may or may not be gender stereotypical, depending on the pupils’ lives and experiences. Pupils may even begin to highlight that not all girls or boys like the same cards. Accept all the pupils’ responses without attempting in-depth explanations at this point of the lesson.

Explain:

- People can have expectations, of themselves or others, that are linked to their gender: men do this, women do that, boys do this, girls do that, boys are like this, girls are like that.
 - Gender is the way boys and girls, and men and women, are expected to behave and be like. [See Teacher Guidance – key terms and definitions.](#)
 - Gender stereotypes can change over time. In the past, people had different ideas about what they and others could or could not do, based on their gender.
 - There are lots of different things that make up who we are; gender is one part of this, but it can also include someone’s culture, faith, hobbies, where they were born and where they live.
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Main Activity 1 (10 minutes)

Gender stereotypes in films and books

Display the two examples below, and read them aloud:

How To Train Your Dragon

Viking Chief Stoick to his son Hiccup: "You can't lift a hammer, you can't swing an axe, you can't even throw one of these!" [He holds up a weapon.] "You're not my son."

Teacher notes: In this scene, the Viking chief is using weapons and strength to define what it means to be a "real" man or son. He suggests that if his child can't fight or use weapons, he doesn't belong—this shows a stereotype that boys must be strong and aggressive to be accepted. It's important to help children see that everyone, including boys, can show strength in many ways—like being kind, smart, or creative, and refusing to be violent—and that we all belong just as we are.

The Paper Bag Princess

A fierce dragon burns Princess Elizabeth's castle and clothes, and kidnaps Prince Ronald. Elizabeth puts on a paper bag, and sets out to rescue Ronald. She cleverly tricks the dragon into getting tired and falling asleep, and rescues Ronald.

But Prince Ronald looks at her and says, "Elizabeth, you are a mess! Your hair is all tangled, and you are wearing a dirty old paper bag. Come back when you are dressed like a real princess."

Teacher Notes: What Prince Ronald says is influenced by the idea that girls 'should' not look messy and dirty with tangled hair – but this is more acceptable for boys. He also undervalues her bravery and resourcefulness

Discuss the examples with the pupils, asking questions like:

- Do they like the stories? Why or why not?
- What is the message about boys?
- Are all boys like this?
- What is the message about girls?
- Are all girls like this?

Main Activity 2 (20 Minutes)

Product investigation

Display a range of children's items targeted at different genders (and including some gender-neutral items) around the classroom or on a display table, such as: toys, baby and children's clothing, party products, images of characters from cartoons and films, boys' or girls' magazines, gendered birthday cards and books.

If possible, it is recommended that teachers organise a display of real-life objects, as this will be more engaging for pupils. Some examples are also included on the PPT slides. Try to include diverse representations of ethnicity among the products.

Working in pairs, give the pupils a set amount of time to analyse the different products and take notes about what messages are being put across about gender (for example: girls like to play with dolls, boys like football). Pupils can write notes on paper, or in their PSHE education exercise books, and may find it useful to use clipboards.

Prompt questions to support pupils whilst participating in the activity include:

- Do you think boys/girls would like this? - Why or why not?
- What are the girls like who are being shown?
- What are the boys like who are being shown?
- What messages does this send about being a boy/girl?
- Do you think all children, whatever their gender, would like this? Why or why not?

Bring the class back together and take feedback.

Pupils may identify that:

Products targeted at girls are often coloured pink, purple or bright colours, and depict images like princesses, unicorns, dancing, flowers and friendship; show girls in caring roles or using make-up. This might suggest that girls are more creative, kind, helpful, caring, and more likely to be good friends, good at dancing, more concerned with how they look etc.

Products targeted at boys are more likely to be blue, green or dark colours, and depict images such as dinosaurs, sports, cars and jokes; show boys being strong, or more likely to be doing mathematical puzzles or building. This might suggest that boys are more funny, strong, courageous, independent, fast, and more likely to be good at maths and building etc.

Discuss the examples that were targeted at all children, whatever their gender. Ask pupils to think of other products and activities that are not gendered (targeted at a particular gender) and to share their ideas with the class. Discuss why some things seem gendered and others don't.

Pupils might give examples of activities that all children (whatever their gender) may like or do, such as: swimming, cycling, learning to play a musical instrument, watching TV, Harry Potter books/films.

For pupils requiring support:

Pupils can record their thinking on a simplified tick-chart – [Resource 1: Investigation record](#).

For pupils requiring challenge:

Ask pupils to suggest other examples of products, activities or characters from film/TV, discuss whether they are targeted at a particular gender or not, and what messages they give.

Explain to pupils that many of the examples in the previous activity can be described as 'stereotyped' or 'stereotypical' and explain that this means a widely held, oversimplified idea about a person, or group of people.

Break down the word 'stereotype' to help explain the meaning, asking pupils to say aloud and explain both parts of the word:

- Stereo - to hear all around, surrounds somebody, seems to come from more than one place

- Type – a category, group, something with similar characteristics

Explain that a gender stereotype is the idea that people of the same gender all look and behave in the same or similar ways, and that they all like the same things. However, it is not true that everybody of the same gender looks, thinks, behaves and feels the same. Stereotyping can be a problem because people can feel limited or boxed in. People may also treat others differently because of gender stereotypes.

Stereotypes can be based on any number of characteristics that make up who someone is, including age, faith/religion, cultural background or disability.

Main Activity 3 (15 Minutes)

Re-writing stereotypes

Organise pupils into groups. Ask them to rewrite/re-say stereotypical sentences into non-stereotypical sentences, for example:

- All girls like make-up.
 - Pupils might say 'Some girls might like make-up, but some girls might not. Some boys might also like make-up.'
- Only girls like caring for babies.
 - Pupils might say that both boys and girls can care for babies.
- All boys like action films.
 - Pupils might say that both boys and girls like exciting films with lots of action – but some children do not.
- Girls are kinder than boys.
 - Pupils might say that all children should be kind to each other.

Bring the class back together and take feedback.

Teacher Notes: If you have time, you could explore with the children the ideas that underlie these stereotypical sentences. For example, there are stereotypes which suggest that boys should be very active and aggressive. You could ask the children what these specific stereotypes are based on. But it is important that the ideas come from them, and you should be realistic about the extent to which they will be able to critically analyse these statements.

Explain that a benefit of people not being limited by gender stereotypes is that people do not experience these restrictions and are more likely to feel happy and fulfilled.

Plenary (5 Minutes)

Sentence starter

Pupils complete the sentence starters:

- Something I learned in this lesson about gender and stereotypes that I didn't know before is...
- A question I still have is...

This can be a written activity, with pupils recording their ideas on paper, in journals or exercise books, or it can be a spoken activity with pupils sharing in pairs, or as a whole class.

ADDITIONAL / EXTENSION ACTIVITIES

- If pupils were to photograph or film an advert for one of the items on the display (Product Investigation) that didn't portray the role expected of that the gender stereotype, what or who would they include, what would their advert look like?

Pupils might also want to consider other aspects of people's lives, such as ethnicity or disability, when considering how they would advertise the product, to be more inclusive.

- If pupils were to re-write one of the two examples from a film or book from earlier in the lesson, without the gender stereotype, what would it say and how would it sound?

