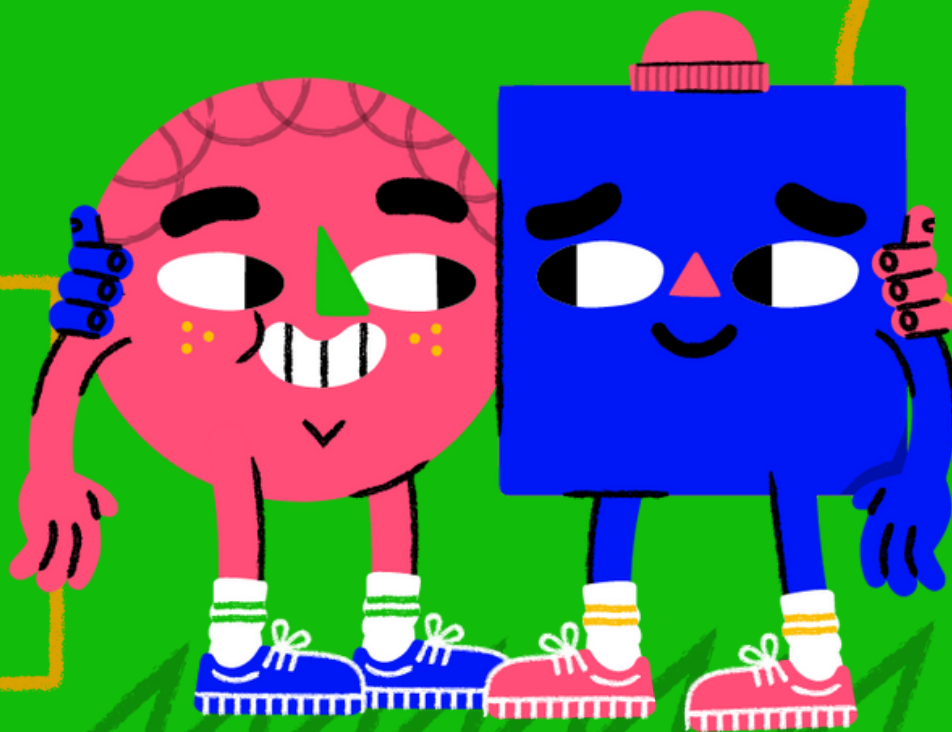


YEAR 5-6: LESSON 1

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

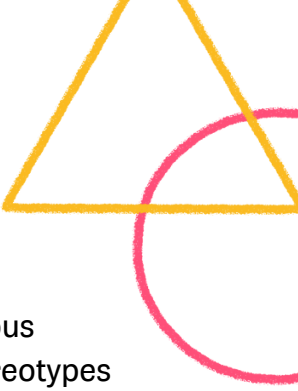
**GLOBAL
BOYHOOD
INITIATIVE**

**Lifting
Limits**

**The
Children's
Society**



CONTEXT



This lesson is the first of four lessons for pupils in upper key stage 2. It revisits previous learning on gender stereotypes (from lower key stage 2), looking at how gender stereotypes can be reinforced as people grow and change, including through online targeting. Pupils discuss the meaning of 'feminine' and 'masculine' and how objects are given these labels. Pupils learn how stereotypes can be limiting and restrictive, and some of the ways this can affect people's choices.

Statutory Relationships and Health Education – Primary (DfE)

Respectful relationships:

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

Internet safety and harms:

- How to be a discerning consumer of information online including understanding that information, including that from search engines, is ranked, selected and targeted.

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; strategies for challenging stereotypes.
- L14. about how information on the internet is ranked, selected and targeted at specific individuals and groups...

LEARNING OBJECTIVE

Pupils learn how gender stereotypes can be reinforced as we grow and change.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Pupils will be able to:

- describe gender stereotypes.
- explain how gender stereotypes can be reinforced as we grow and change (including through online targeting).
- explain how gender stereotypes might affect people.

RESOURCES

- PowerPoint: Year 5/6 - Lesson 1
- Teacher-provided examples of gender stereotypical greetings cards aimed at different age ranges
- Flipchart paper and marker pens
- **Resource 1: Gender messages scenarios**
- **Additional Resource: Circles of Support (can be used in any lesson)**
- Paper/exercise books, pens/pencils

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 / Act like a boy, Act like a girl • Establish ground rules. • Pupils briefly discuss gendered characteristics of boys/men and girls/women.	10 minutes
2. Main Activity 1	Greetings cards stimulus • Pupils analyse different greetings cards, looking at how gender stereotypes are reinforced at different ages.	15 minutes
3. Main Activity 2	Identifying gender stereotypes • Pupils work in groups to discuss different things which are gendered feminine or masculine, or not gendered.	15 minutes
4. Main Activity 3	Targeted gender stereotyping • Pupils discuss situations that are being influenced by gender stereotypes and targeted marketing.	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 / Act like a boy, Act like a girl

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.

Organise the pupils into small groups (three or four pupils in each group). Give them 60 seconds to discuss each question below:

- If someone said 'act like a boy or man' what would they expect to see?
- If someone said 'act like a girl or woman' what would they expect to see?

Whilst the pupils are talking, circulate the room, listening in to some of their discussions. You don't necessarily need them to feedback from this activity, but if you want them to do so, ask each group to share one idea they discussed. You may want to remind pupils that gender stereotypes can change over time – and in the past people had different ideas about what they or others could or could not do, based on their gender.

Pupils may raise issues related to intersectionality during this activity, drawing on their own or others' experiences, and highlighting other aspects of their lives that also affect gender, such as ethnicity, social class or age. For example, they may say 'Asian girls...', 'teenage girls...', 'young Black men...' or 'a middle class man...' You may want to reflect on these observations with the class later during this, or subsequent lessons.

Try not to prompt the pupils too much. The purpose of this activity is to immediately engage pupils and also to gain an insight into their ideas, life experiences, and exposure to gender stereotypes. Note any particular descriptions. Not prompting at this point also helps pupils to resist adhering to an expected 'official version' or 'what the teacher wants to hear'.

Be aware that pupils may or may not share stereotyped views, depending on their experiences.

Main Activity 1 (15 minutes)

Greetings cards stimulus

Before the next activity, you may want to remind pupils of their learning from Year 3/4 on gender stereotypes and remind the pupils that there are also stereotypes that relate to other aspects of people's lives, including ethnicity or cultural background, religion, age, and disability.

If needed, recap the meaning of:

- gender - the way boys and girls, and men and women, are expected to behave and be like (their characteristics), according to the society in which they live.
- gender equality - the idea that all people, whatever their gender, should be treated fairly and have equal rights and opportunities in all areas of life.
- gender stereotype - a widely held, over-simplified idea of a person, or group of people, based on their gender.

Display a set of gender stereotyped greetings cards that reflect different age groups and life milestones (such as birthdays).

Ask the pupils to organise the cards on a timeline from birth to older age.

Then, still on the timeline, ask them to separate the cards into gender. (Which are more likely to be aimed at boys/men, which at girls/women?)

The cards on the PowerPoint slide aimed at children aged roughly 4-8 were also used in LKS2 Lesson 1. If you have enough examples, you could choose to give sets of cards to each group of pupils, so they can complete the task and have discussions in smaller groups, rather than as a whole class.

Ask pupils:

- Why would these cards be described as 'gender stereotypical'? (Are the cards making assumptions about what people will like, or be like, at different stages of their life, based only on their gender?)
- What sorts of assumptions or messages are coming across?
- What are some other examples of where gender stereotypes can be noticed and reinforced as we grow up?

Pupils may say that it is assumed that all girls like animals, unicorns, and pale colours, and women like flowers, baths, pink things; and that all boys like dinosaurs, games and darker colours, and men like cars and planes, music, and sports like golf or football. It could be said that these are all gender-stereotypical assumptions.

Gender stereotypes can also be reinforced, for example through things we buy in shops (including online); TV programmes, films, music videos, and social media; as well as friends and families (what they say or do).

Pupils may also highlight other stereotypes, such as those related to ethnicity, age or disability. If you have time available, hold a short discussion for pupils to share their views about who they feel is included/excluded or targeted in relation to particular ideas or activities, according to other aspects of their lives as well as gender.

Make sure that pupils understand that we are not saying girls and women should not like flowers or the colour pink, for example, or that boys should not like cars, football and the colour blue. However, including only these things on images for different genders may make some people feel excluded or like they don't fit. They might then feel unhealthy pressure not to be themselves.

Main Activity 2 (15 Minutes)

Identifying gender stereotypes

Write the words 'masculine' and 'feminine' on the flipchart or whiteboard. Ask the pupils what they think these words mean and clarify any misconceptions, explaining that:

Feminine or femininities are the behaviour, characteristics and roles that society associates with girls and women. Masculine or masculinities are the behaviour, characteristics and roles that society associates with boys and men. These expectations can vary from society to society and change over time.

Give out a piece of flipchart paper and a marker pen to each group (with three to six pupils in each group). Ask one person to scribe and divide the paper into three sections with the sub-headings: feminine, masculine, non-gendered, making sure that non-gendered is in the middle section.

You may need to explain that non-gendered means that the activity or item is not associated with any particular gender.

Give each group a heading, such as: colours, fashion, sports, hobbies, music, character traits, subjects, places or jobs/careers.

Pupils write the heading at the top of the paper and in each section write characteristics in relation to the heading that might be considered (by society) to be more masculine, feminine or non-gendered.

For example, sports such as gymnastics, horse-riding or ice-skating might be considered more feminine; rugby, boxing or wrestling might be considered more masculine; but swimming might be considered to be non-gendered.

After the pupils have had time to discuss in their groups, bring them back together and as a class discuss questions like:

- Why might people think some things are more feminine or more masculine?
- Where might people get these ideas from, or where might they see/hear examples like this?
- Are all feminine things *necessarily* associated with girls/women, and are all masculine things *necessarily* associated with boys/men?
- What happens when boys do things labelled as 'feminine'?
- What happens when girls do things labelled as 'masculine'?
- Why do some things seem to be gendered and others not?
- How has this changed over time? Do you think this will change again in the future?
- How might associating something with being masculine or feminine be restrictive or limiting?

Draw out from discussion:

- In shops, catalogues, on websites and other places, things can be divided into 'for boys/men' or 'for girls/women' but this does not take into account the different preferences of all people, whatever their gender.
- Although society often puts a gender label on different things, these are not necessarily gendered or meant only for a specific gender. For example, in the greetings cards activity, the cards for girls/women might have included flowers, but this does not mean boys/men don't like flowers; although the cards for boys/men included sports, this does not mean girls/women do not enjoy sport.
- Gender stereotypes are not fixed – they can change over time. For example, in the past, girls were often not encouraged to play sports, and boys were often discouraged from cooking.
- All activities and characteristics are appropriate for all people, regardless of their gender.
- Gender stereotypes can make some people think that some things are only meant for a particular gender. This might mean that people don't get to participate in things they might enjoy or be good at – which can limit and restrict their lives.
- This does not mean that girls should not enjoy feminine things and boys should not enjoy masculine things. It is just about thinking carefully about how people can feel excluded when things are labelled in this way.

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:

Give the pupils a topic such as colours, hobbies or jobs. Provide them with the words for the colours, hobbies or jobs on cards, so they can move them into the relevant sections of the chart.

For pupils requiring challenge:

As the pupils categorise the different words, ask them to discuss where they think these ideas might come from.

Main Activity 3 (15 Minutes)

Targeted gender stereotyping

With pupils working in pairs, give out one of the examples from [Resource 1: Gender messages scenarios](#) to each pair of pupils. Ask them to read the dilemma and discuss:

- What or who is influencing the character?
- What opportunities or choices are they being given, or not given?
- What messages are they getting about their gender? (Are these similar to the gender stereotyping in the greetings cards activity?)

You could give each group a different scenario, or you may choose some scenarios for the whole class to focus on, with each group discussing the same examples.

Choose examples that best suit the needs of your class context and school community. All children are likely to be influenced by binary thinking about gender and gender stereotypes, so these scenarios should be relatable for all pupils, whatever their gender. On the other hand, teachers should be mindful that any scenario that refers to 'boys' or 'girls' may leave some non-binary children feeling that they do not fit. Jules' scenario is specifically written to include non-binary or gender-questioning children. You must ensure you are working within your school policies and guidelines if including this scenario.

After pupils have had time to discuss their dilemma, bring the class together, and as a class, discuss questions like:

- How are teenagers being targeted according to their gender?
- Why might companies target people, especially teenagers, in this way?
- How are people influenced by friends or others?
- Is this the same as in the past, or do you think things have changed? What might your parents or grandparents say about this?
- How might someone be affected in terms of their behaviour, attitudes or expectations for themselves and others?
- Is there pressure to look or behave a certain way when people grow into teenagers, and where does this come from? For example, does this come from friends?
- What could someone do, if they felt this was happening?
- What would make this easier, or more difficult? For example, do you think pressure from friends can stop people doing things they want to do, or being how they want to be?

Allow the discussion to come from the pupils as far as possible, prompting and guiding with the questions above.

Pupils may identify that there is pressure on teenagers to think, feel, behave in certain ways according to their gender, and the different places this comes from, including social media. Be aware that the legal age for social media is 13 years, although it is likely many pupils are engaging with social media from a younger age.

Draw out from the discussion:

- Stereotypes, which start when we are young children, continue and are often further developed as we grow up and change.
 - Companies sometimes use gender stereotypes to help them sell products, making them appealing to who they think will want them most, which also means the stereotype gets reinforced.
 - If people are only exposed to the stereotype, they may feel that they don't fit in and they need to do something else to be like others.
 - Stereotypes can promote unrealistic (or extreme) versions of how people are in reality, which are not helpful for people who may then feel they need to match this unreal version.
 - Gender stereotypes can sometimes cause people to feel pressure about how they look as well as how they behave.
 - Feeling pressure can, for some people, be really difficult to deal with. If someone feels pressure, it is important for them to talk to someone they trust about what they are experiencing – refer to [Circles of support](#).
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Plenary (5 Minutes)

Pupils complete the sentence starters:

- Something this lesson has made me think about gender stereotypes 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 they were asked to re-design one of the greetings cards to be non-gendered OR non-gender-stereotypical, what would the pupils change, and why?
- Pupils can design a greetings card, for a specific age group or life event, which is non-gender-stereotypical.

Pupils might also want to consider other aspects of people's lives, such as ethnicity or disability, to make the card more inclusive.

- In future art lessons, it may be useful to reflect on how different genders are represented, for example through portraiture. Discuss: Do images reflect or challenge gender stereotypes? Does it matter?

