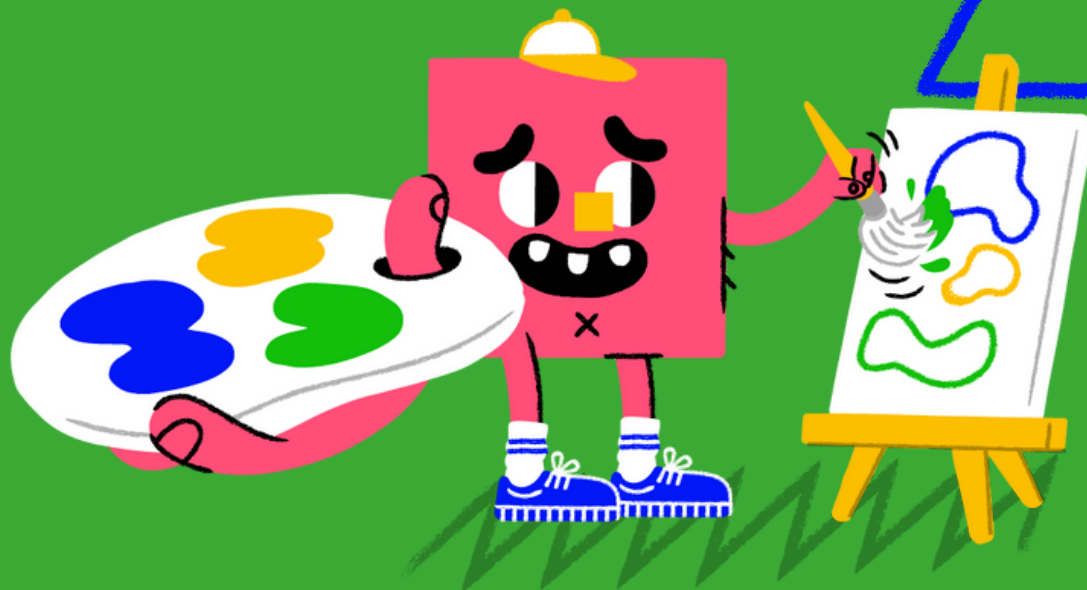


YEAR 5-6: LESSON 3

UNDERSTANDING HOW GENDER STEREOTYPES CAN INFLUENCE ASPIRATIONS AND CAREERS

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**

Cummins

CONTEXT

This lesson is the third of four lessons for pupils in upper key stage 2. It enables pupils to explore how gender stereotypes can influence people's ideas and choices about careers and jobs, and aspirations for themselves and others. Pupils begin to recognise that roles in many jobs are still not gender-equal, but also learn about role models who demonstrate that gender stereotypes about work roles can be challenged. Pupils recognise that it is not gender that defines which roles people should be able to do, but the skills and personal character attributes that they bring to the role.

Statutory Relationships and Health Education – Primary (DfE)

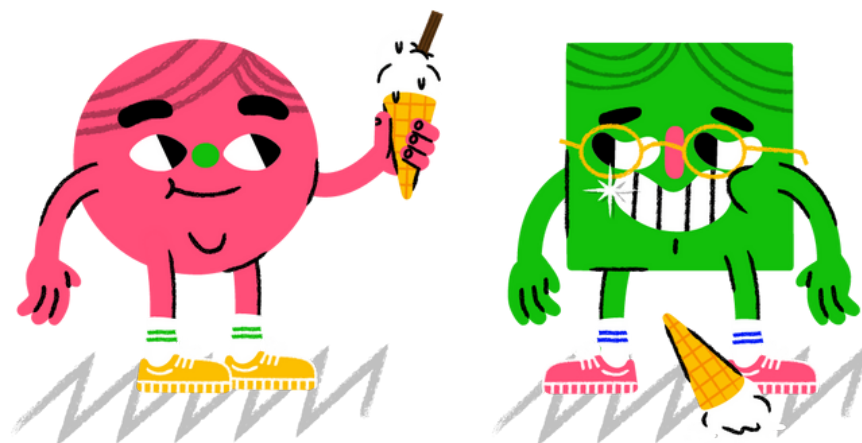
Respectful relationships:

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

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

Living in the wider world:

- L9. about stereotypes; how they can negatively influence behaviours and attitudes towards others; strategies for challenging stereotypes.
- L27. about stereotypes in the workplace and that a person's career aspirations should not be limited by them.
- L28. about what might influence people's decisions about a job or career (e.g. personal interests and values, family connections to certain trades or businesses, strengths and qualities, ways in which stereotypical assumptions can deter people from aspiring to certain jobs).



LEARNING OBJECTIVE

Pupils learn that a person's career aspirations should not be limited by gender stereotypes.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Pupils will be able to:

- explain how stereotypes could influence the careers or jobs people choose.
- recognise the need for gender equality for career and job opportunities.
- identify the skills required for different careers or jobs, and how they can be developed by people of any gender.



RESOURCES

- PowerPoint: Year 5/6 - Lesson 3
- **Resource 1: Gender and jobs worksheet** (optional)
- **Resource 2: Role model cards**
- **Resource 3: Skills descriptions** (to be enlarged, cut out, and displayed around the classroom)
- **Resource 4: Skills record sheet**
- Paper/exercise books, pens/pencils, clipboards

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 reminder / Sociology study analysis • Remind pupils of ground rules. • Pupils discuss a study where children matched different careers/jobs to people of different genders.	10 minutes
2. Main Activity 1	Occupations by gender • Pupils match the percentage of men or women employed in different roles, discussing unequal representation and gender equity in careers.	15 minutes
3. Main Activity 2	Positive role models • Pupils read information cards about people with different careers and explain how they are challenging stereotypes.	15 minutes
4. Main Activity 3	Gender skill match • Pupils match non-gendered skills and qualities to different occupations.	15 minutes
5. Plenary	Sentence starter • Pupils complete a sentence about how they would challenge a gender stereotype about a person's career choice.	5 minutes
Total		60 minutes

LESSON PLAN

Introduction (10 minutes)

Ground rules reminder / Sociology study analysis

Remind pupils of the class agreement about respectful behaviour for approaching the subject matter and positive ways of working together.

Invite the pupils to imagine that some children their age were asked to match an image of a man and an image of a woman to different careers.

Ask pupils:

Which image do they think these children would match to each of these roles ([answers](#)):

- doctor - [man](#)
- pilot - [man](#)
- cricketer - [man](#)
- firefighter - [man](#)
- surgeon - [man](#)
- dancer - [woman](#)
- teacher - [woman](#)

Ask pupils: Why do you think the children would match the different careers to the different genders? What might influence their decisions?

How pupils respond to this question may depend on their personal experiences. They may not assume stereotypical roles for the different genders exist, and may be surprised that is what the children thought. If this is the case, ask them why they may think differently to these children. Remind them that people have different life experiences and that we need to be aware that not everybody sees or thinks the same as they do.

Draw out from the discussion that from a young age, children may be influenced by gender stereotypes; they may not have seen different genders doing different careers/jobs represented in books, stories, TV programmes or films, or they may not have experience of people of doing all types of jobs.

Reference: For a related study of KS2 pupil's gendered career aspirations, see [Lifting Limits Pilot Report 2019](#)

Main Activity 1 (15 minutes)

Occupations by gender

Explain that pupils are going to do an activity based on some recent information about careers, jobs and gender in the UK.

Display the titles of different occupations using the PPT slide, and/or give out copies of [Resource 1: Gender and jobs worksheet](#) to pairs of pupils.

Ask the pupils to read each career/job title and then suggest whether more men do this job in the UK, more women, or if it is about the same – an equal number of men and women doing that career/job.

Pupils match the job/career to 'more men', 'more women', 'about the same'.

When the pupils have completed the activity, bring the class back together and go through the answers (as below).

Answers:

- **Finance and accounts – about the same** – 53% women (47% men) very slightly more women than men work in finance, and this percentage is increasing.
- **Bakers and cake-makers – about the same** – 53% men (47% women) slightly more men than women fill these roles, and the percentage of men is increasing.
- **Vets – more women** – 83% women (17% men) and the percentage of women is increasing.
- **Pharmacists – more women** – 88% women (12% men) the percentage of female pharmacists is increasing.
- **Teachers – more women** – 76% women (24% men).
- **Nurses – more women** – 85% women (15% men).
- **Electricians – more men** – 98% men (2% women).
- **Members of Parliament – more men** – 65% men (35% women) although the percentage of women is increasing.

References:

- Working Futures 2023, <https://careersmart.org.uk/occupations/equality/which-jobs-do-men-and-women-do-occupational-breakdown-gender>
- House of Commons Library 2024, <https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/sn01250/>

With the pupils, compare their responses and discuss, for example:

- If most of them thought more men than women were vets or pharmacists, what made them think this?
- Did they think that more women would be bakers and cake makers, (rather than it being about the same number as men), and if so, why might they have thought this?
- Did they know that currently more women than men are teachers and nurses? Are they surprised by this? Why or why not? Why might women be assumed to be better nurses than men?

- Did they know that currently more men than women are electricians? Are they surprised by this? Why or why not?
- Why might there be less women than men in government (as Members of Parliament, MPs)?

Then discuss:

- What might stop women from doing a career or job that might be stereotypically seen as for men? What sort of barriers (if any) might a woman face who wants a job catching fish, for example?
- What might stop men from doing a career or job, that might stereotypically be seen as for women? What sort of barriers (if any) might a man face who wants to become a 'childminder', for example?
- What do you think should change so that all people, whatever their gender, feel that they can do any career or job?

Explain:

- In the past women were not allowed to do some jobs, e.g. only men could be a Member of Parliament (MP) until 1918.
- In some careers and jobs, the opportunities for all people, whatever their gender, are becoming more equal, and emphasise that this is a positive sign.
- However, many careers are still seen as 'jobs for men', or 'jobs for women'.
- There are still lower numbers of men who work as carers or childminders. Why might this be?
- There are still fewer women working in manual labour (such as in building), and in leadership roles (such as senior managers) and in Parliament (as MPs).

This is partly because of gender stereotyping, which can affect people's career/job choices and whether they are selected for specific careers/jobs (eg carer, electrician etc) - because of expectations about what careers/jobs are appropriate for their gender. For example, one reason for the far lower level of male childminders and carers might be because women are still often seen as being more caring than men – but is this really true?

Career/job choices are also affected by levels of pay (which reflect the value placed by society on different roles – eg banking and care work). Some boys may be reluctant to choose less well paid careers/jobs because of expectations that men should earn a lot of money.

Gender is just one factor that can affect someone's opportunity to do different jobs and careers. Other characteristics, including ethnicity, disability and age, have in the past, and can still today, influence which jobs and careers people do.

For pupils requiring support:

Choose a few examples that the pupils may have more direct experience with, such as teachers.

In our school, do we have more men teachers or women teachers? If you've been in a hospital, did you see more men nurses or more women nurses?

For pupils requiring challenge:

Ask pupils to suggest the percentage of men or women they think currently do specific jobs in the UK. *The content of this activity is purposefully designed to reflect positive social norms. Therefore, wherever possible, occupations have been chosen that challenge the stereotypical view. Taking a positive social norms teaching approach is said to promote healthy standards and expectations.*

Main Activity 2 (15 Minutes)

Positive role models

With pupils working in groups, give out the role model cards about people working in non-stereotypical occupations – [Resource 2: Role model cards](#).

You should choose the role model cards that are most appropriate for your class.

Ask the pupils to read the information and discuss what the career/job is, what inspired the role model, what they enjoy about it, what skills or qualities they bring to the role, their achievements, and how they are challenging gender stereotypes.

You could give each group a different role model card, or you could give each group all of the role model cards to read.

You could also do this as a carousel activity where the pupils are given a short time to read and discuss one role model and then move on to the next role model. This is repeated until all pupils have read and discussed all of the examples.

Ask each group to share one piece of information about one of the role models and explain how they are challenging gender stereotypes.

To support pupil feedback:

- **Louise** – is a scientist. She loves her job because she helps to solve important problems and really make a difference. About 40% of scientists in universities, and in business, in the UK are women.
- **Dorothy** – is an engineer who helps design equipment for deep-sea divers. She says that engineering is for everyone, whatever their gender or background. But only about 16% of engineers in the UK are women.
- **Jordan** – is a UK musician and author who talks openly about what it's like to be a boy or a man who has a hard time speaking about feelings. He teaches kids that expressing emotions is good and asking for help is brave.
- **Lola** – is a computer engineer who helps websites run smoothly. She wants all young people to know that computer coding is creative and fun, and not just for boys. Only about 20% of UK software engineers are female.
- **Graham** – only 15% of primary school teachers are men, but Graham is a man and a primary school teacher.
- **Joss** – is a nanny, meaning someone who looks after other people's young children, often because their parents are doing other jobs. Traditionally nannies were female, but Joss is male and is just as able to look after young children.
- **Brian** – only about 11% of nurses are men, but Brian is a man and a nurse, and he shows how men can have careers in caregiving.
- **Liam** – is a young man who likes baking cakes, a role that stereotypically might be associated with being a woman; at university he baked cakes as a hobby which might not be an activity people expect students to do.

- **Dina** – is a key figure in British athletics. Whilst diverse globally, track and field athletics has historically seen fewer Black women achieving prominence in the UK, compared to the US (this could be due to various social and economic factors, as well as different levels of support and opportunities.)
- **Ashley** – less than 3% of women work catching fish, but Ashley loves this job. Some people might think only men can do this job, because it is hard physical work, but Ashley shows that this is not true.
- **Stella** – only about 40% of MPs are women, but Stella is a woman and an MP. The percentage of women MPs was below 10% until the 1990s, but has been growing since then. (In the past, women were not allowed to do some jobs, including being an MP, until the law changed in 1918).

To promote positive social norms profiles have been chosen to counteract the statistics that demonstrate careers/jobs that are currently less well represented by people of all genders.

References:

Working Futures 2023, <https://careersmart.org.uk/occupations/equality/which-jobs-do-men-and-women-do-occupational-breakdown-gender>

School Workforce in England 2024, School workforce in England, Reporting year 2023 - Explore education statistics - GOV.UK (explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk)

New reference: <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2021/jan/03/this-is-where-i-need-to-be-the-uk-women-defying-fishing-stereotypes>

Main Activity 3 (15 Minutes)

Skills hunt

Around the classroom, display different skills ([Resource 3: Skills descriptions](#)) that might be required for different careers and jobs. Give out [Resource 4: Skills record sheet](#) to pairs of pupils.

Ask the pupils to choose three different careers or jobs from a list including: scientist, engineer, doctor, influencer, textile designer, playworker, carpenter, lawyer, bus/train driver, sportsperson, performer, carer, and write the name of the career/jobs along the top of the chart on [Resource 4: Skills record sheet](#).

Ask the pupils to 'go on a skills hunt' around the classroom. When they find a skill that might be needed for one (or more) of the careers/jobs they have written on their record sheet, they write it down in the correct column. (Be sure to let pupils know that the same skill is often needed for different jobs.)

When the pupils have collected different examples of skills to match their selected careers/jobs, bring the class back together. Discuss how similar skills are needed across a range of careers and jobs.

For example, to be an engineer, a carer or a doctor, a person needs to be patient, a good listener and have problem-solving skills.

Next, ask them to discuss in their pairs whether they think these skills should be matched to a particular gender or rather to all people whatever their gender, and why?

Praise pupils if they reiterate that people of all genders can do all jobs, if they want to. Reinforce the idea that in the past people may have been limited in their choices due to gender stereotypes and social pressures, but that this is changing, and that this a positive thing.

Explain that all people, whatever their gender, can have these skills, qualities and characteristics - so therefore all people, whatever their gender, can fulfill these careers and jobs. In other words, careers and jobs do not need to be gendered because the skills, characteristics and qualities required to do them are not gendered.

For example, being patient, a good listener and having problem-solving skills are characteristics that all people can have, whatever their gender.

Plenary (5 Minutes)

Sentence starter

Pupils complete the sentence starters:

- If someone said a person couldn't do a career/job because of their gender, I would say...

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

- Pupils can draw an image of themselves doing a career, job or voluntary role they might like in the future, and write about it, explaining what skills and personal qualities they would bring to the role.
- Pupils can write and design an advertisement for a specific career, job or voluntary role which encourages all people, whatever their gender, to apply.

