

UNIT 4

GENDER IDENTITY

Note: You should review these resources and links before use to check if they are appropriate for your pupils at Key Stage 3 or Key Stage 4 and in line with your school's ethos and RSE policy. Before teaching these lessons, you should liaise with your class tutor or pastoral link to establish if there are issues or sensitivities in the class that need to be considered.

LEARNING INTENTIONS

- Pupils are learning about:
- stereotypes and characteristics that may be assigned to a person based on their gender;
 - problems associated with stereotyping;
 - the main terms linked to gender;
 - how to cope with and respond to negative questions and comments about gender;
 - strategies to make school and society more inclusive; and
 - respecting everyone's voice, even if their beliefs and choices are different from mine.

SKILLS AND CAPABILITIES

- Working with Others
- Thinking, Problem Solving and Decision Making
- Communication.

LEARNING EXPERIENCES

- Offers choice
- Supportive environment
- Positive reinforcement
- Enquiry based.

ATTITUDES AND DISPOSITIONS

- Respect
- Tolerance
- Concern for others
- Personal responsibility
- Integrity
- Moral courage.

Resources

- Resources A–F
- Flip chart sheets
- Coloured pens
- Envelopes or folders
- [Active Learning and Teaching Methods for Key Stage 3](#)

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Activity 1
Stereotypical characteristics

- Print out enough copies of Resource A, which includes statements about different characteristics a man or woman may have, for groups of three or four pupils.
- Cut out the separate statements and put them into an envelope or folder.
- Give each group a set of the Resource A statements and a copy of Resource B, which shows a Venn diagram with overlapping male and female circles.
- Ask the pupils to read the statements and place them where they think is most appropriate in the Venn diagram on Resource B.
- When the groups have finished, pick some statements to discuss and ask the pupils to explain where they placed those statements on the diagram and why.
- The statements you choose should allow the pupils to challenge stereotypes, for example good at housework, always on a diet, aggressive or strong.
- Questions for discussion could include:
 - Why did you place the statement in that position?
 - As a group, were there some statements that you did not agree on where to place? What were they and why?
 - Do you think that our perceptions of some of these stereotypes have changed over the years? Give some examples, explaining how and why.



Activity 2
Problems with stereotyping

- In groups, ask the pupils to discuss three key questions about the characteristics on Resource A:
 1. Do men and women always fit these stereotypical characteristics, or do most people have a mixture of characteristics?
 2. What must it be like for a person who does not fit into the expected patterns of behaviour or appearance? (For example, a man who likes knitting.)
 3. Do people sometimes pretend to be something they're not, just to fit in? If so, what effect might this have on that person, their friends and their family?
- Ask the groups to share their ideas with the rest of the class.
- Then ask the pupils how they could make others, who may experience isolation, feel more included in their school.

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Activity 3
Gender terms

- Before starting this activity, explain to the class that this is a potentially challenging issue to discuss. Pupils will have a range of viewpoints, and the class must treat them all with respect. Remind the pupils that they are entitled to disagree with someone, but they must not be disrespectful or bully each other in their comments and replies.
- Write LGBTQ+ on the board and ask the pupils what the 'T' stands for.
- Then write the pupils' responses on the board.
- Explain to the class that the 'T' for transgender represents a gender identity, as well as an umbrella term for many gender identities.
- Tell the pupils that, in this activity, they will explore the terms **gender identity, gender expression, biological sex, cisgender, transgender and non-binary**.
- Divide the pupils into groups.
- Ask the groups to discuss what the word **gender** means and then share their responses with the rest of the class.
- At this stage, explain the following to the class:
 - Gender is your internal sense of being a girl, boy, both or neither.
 - This is different from your sex, which is understood to be linked to biological (and genetic) differences between males and females (such as different genitals and hormones).
 - Everyone is assigned a gender identity at birth that is based on their sex.
 - Sometimes a person's genetically assigned sex does not correspond to their gender identity (how they view themselves) and they might refer to themselves as transgender, non-binary or gender non-conforming.
 - There are many ways that people identify their gender.
- Print out enough copies of Resource C, which includes gender terms and definitions, for small groups of pupils.
- Cut out the terms and definitions and put them into an envelope or folder.
- Ask the pupils to match each definition to the correct term.
- When the groups have finished, use Resource D to check that they have matched the definitions correctly and explain each one.
- Then reiterate that everyone is different and we should value this. We should respect all identities and accept all other people for who they are.

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Activity 4
Coping with gender questions and comments

- Explain to the class that some people may experience negative comments and questions about their gender identity or the views they have about it and this can greatly affect their emotional and physical wellbeing.
- This may have affected some of the pupils in your class, so it's important to allow time for reflection, questions and comments, and remember to be sensitive.
- Divide the pupils into pairs and ask them to discuss how these types of negative comments and questions might affect a young person.
- Encourage pupils to come up with a few examples such as feeling frightened, confused, hurt and sad.
- Ask each pair to join with another pair to discuss this in small groups and add any new ideas to each pair's original suggestions.
- Then give each group a copy of Resource E, which includes some negative comments and questions about another person's gender that they may hear in or around the school.
- Ask each group to discuss the comments and questions and write down on Resource E how they might respond when they hear them.
- Ask the groups to share their ideas with the rest of the class and discuss any advantages and disadvantages of different responses.
- Reiterate to the pupils that we must take a zero-tolerance approach to bullying and to all negative language and comments about gender.



Activity 5
Making school more inclusive

- Explain to the class that it's important to make school more inclusive and welcoming for pupils with a range of identities. This includes creating a space for voices and opinions that they may not agree with.
- Encourage the pupils to suggest some ideas for increasing inclusiveness in school, such as:
 - anti-bullying policies;
 - tackling gender-based language; and
 - making everyone welcome in all extracurricular groups and activities.
- Divide the class into groups and give each group a flip chart sheet and coloured pens.
- Ask the groups to discuss ideas for how their school could be more **gender inclusive**. Keep in mind that this activity may not match some pupils' beliefs. Make sure these pupils know that their opinions will also be heard and respected.
- Then ask each group to share their ideas with the rest of the class.
- Using Resource F, ask each class member to take on the role of a pupil who has decided to write a letter to the Department of Education or their school Principal, detailing how they believe schools could be more supportive of all pupils.
- You could also use this activity as a literacy task in English class.

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Activity 6
Review of learning intentions

It's important that pupils have opportunities to reflect on their learning. You can choose from a range of methods detailed in our [Active Learning and Teaching Methods for Key Stage 3](#) resource, such as:

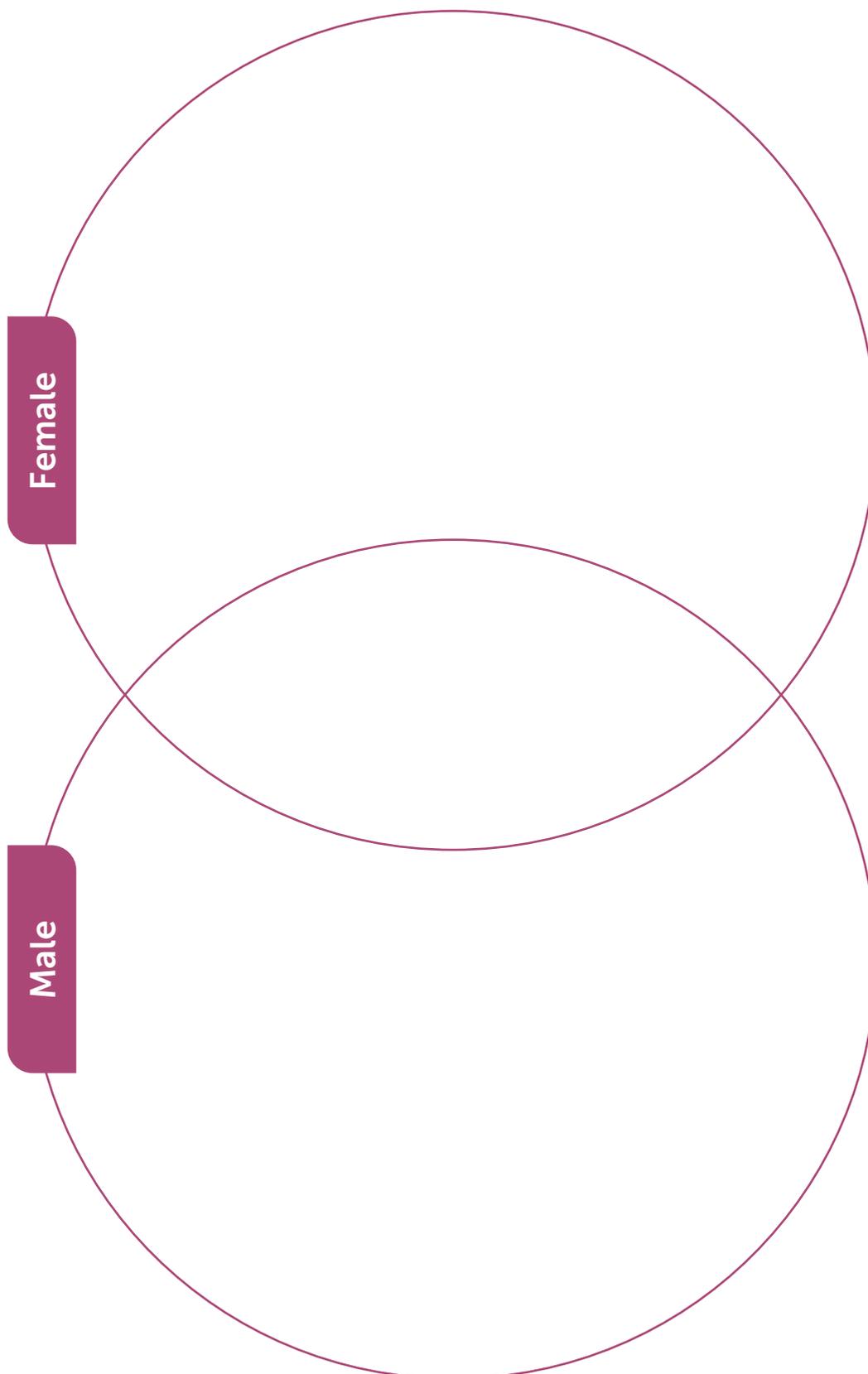
- Dartboard Evaluation
- Graffiti Board
- Fist-to-Five
- KWL (Know – Want to Know – Learned) Grid
- Post-It Collection
- Think, Pair and Share.

RESOURCE A:
CHARACTERISTICS

Drinks beer	Good at housework
Good with children	Romantic
Takes risks	Jealous
Emotional	Sweet
Shows off	Strong
Aggressive	Does not talk about emotions
Likes fashion	Always on a diet
Caring	Flirty
Sensitive	Loves sport
Careful driver	Hurt easily
Likes to gossip	Cries easily



RESOURCE B:
MALE AND FEMALE CHARACTERISTICS



RESOURCE C:
GENDER TERMS

Term	Definition
Gender Identity	A person's internal sense of their own gender, which may or may not match with the sex (biologically determined) they were assigned at birth
Gender Expression	How a person externally shows their gender identity, which can include their clothing, hairstyle, make-up, name and pronoun choice (for example he/him/his, she/her/hers or they/them/theirs)
Biological Sex	Assigned at birth (generally male or female) based on the genitals a person is born with
Cisgender	Someone whose biological sex assigned at birth matches their gender identity and expression
Transgender	Someone who has a gender identity that does not fully correspond to the biological sex assigned to them at birth
Non-Binary	A gender that is not exclusively male or female (also known as gender queer)

RESOURCE D:
GENDER TERMS (CORRECT ANSWERS)

Term	Definition
Gender Identity	A person's internal sense of their own gender, which may or may not match with the sex (biologically determined) they were assigned at birth
Gender Expression	How a person externally shows their gender identity, which can include their clothing, hairstyle, make-up, name and pronoun choice (for example he/him/his, she/her/hers or they/them/theirs)
Biological Sex	Assigned at birth (generally male or female) based on the genitals a person is born with
Cisgender	Someone whose biological sex assigned at birth matches their gender identity and expression
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RESOURCE E:
RESPONDING TO NEGATIVE COMMENTS AND QUESTIONS

Comment/Question:

'Why is her hair so short? She looks like a boy!'

Your Response:

Comment/Question:

'James plays with dolls. That's weird! (James identifies as a boy.)'

Your Response:

Comment/Question:

'He's a boy, so why does he dress like a girl?'

Your Response:

Comment/Question:

You overhear a pupil calling another pupil (who identifies as a boy) a 'girl' in an insulting way.

Your Response:

