

Gender Roles



London's Language
Lesson 3
Gender Roles

Lesson 3

1

Gender Roles

Aims

- To understand the gender roles in *Pygmalion*.
- To consider how gender affects participants today.

Materials Required

- **Warm-Ups** (double sided sheet)
- **Appendix 1** (Turn Detective; one per person)
- **Appendix 2c** (Extracts from *Pygmalion*; one per person)
- **Appendix 5A/5B** (What Are Women Made Of?/What Are Men Made Of?; double sided sheet, one per person)
- **Appendix 6A-6D** (Further Discussion; if required)
- **Paper, pencils and marker pens**
- **Whiteboard or flipchart**
- **Index cards**

Duration

- It should take approximately two hours to complete all the activities but the lesson can be reduced or extended as necessary to suit the timetable.
- It is important to stress that the drama sessions will work in a safe and imaginative way, and that participants will be expected to contribute and listen without judgement or criticism from others.

Warm-Up

Select a vocal warm-up and a game from the Warm-Up sheet (choose an exercise from either side of the page).

3.1 Men and Women?

- Ask the participants to begin walking around the space encouraging them to walk as individuals. They should not look at the floor, but keep their eyes up and walk as if going to meet their friends. Ask the participants to become aware of how they are walking, prompt questions might be:

Are you taking big strides?

Are you swinging your arms?

Where is your eye level?

Where do you lead from? Your chest, nose, hips or somewhere else?

- Ask the group to think about their answers to the questions above, then explain that in a moment all the boys will try walking as they imagine a girl would and vice versa. Begin with the instruction: '1 – 2 – 3 – CHANGE' then alternate once or twice between genders. Once the participants have done this encourage discussion with the following prompt questions:

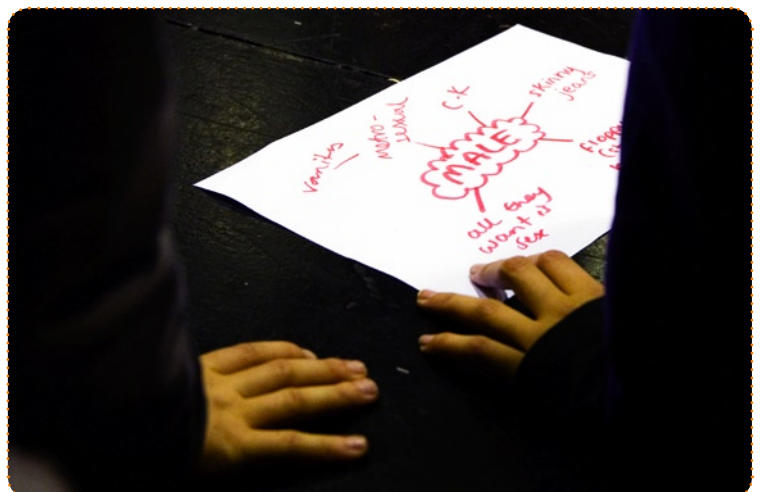
What did you notice about the way you walked this time?

What happened when you walked as the opposite gender?

Did you imagine you were wearing different clothes?

Did this affect the way you moved?

Do all men or women walk in the way that you just explored?



3.3 Mould Me

- Pair the group into boy/girl sets where possible. Ask each pair to select one word, ideally an adjective from the Words, Words, Words exercise. Then ask each pair to create two statues, one male and one female, showing how the different genders might embody the word selected by the pair. Girls should create the male statue and boys the female. It's important that where possible participants don't get caught up in stereotypes, each partner should be happy with their statue.
- After sufficient time see three or four pairs and ask the rest of the groups to become the audience. Get them to note down observations from the following prompt questions:

What was interesting about the statues?

What were the similarities/differences between the men and the women?

What could you see of daily life in each statue?

3.5 What Are We Made Of?

- Ask the whole group: **'What are little girls made of?'** and **'What are little boys made of?'**
- Get some instant feedback and then read the full version of the rhyme (right) believed to have been written in about 1820; around the same time as *Pygmalion*.
- Explore the young men/women texts. Ask the following prompt questions to instigate discussion:

What do you think crocodile tears are?

Referring to an insincere display of emotion. The term originates from an ancient anecdote which said crocodiles wept to lure their prey, or weeped for remorse for the animals they'd killed.

What does leer mean?

Smirk, grin or sneer.

- The poem is as much about the sound and rhythm of the words as the meaning. Can you think of contemporary examples?
- After sufficient feedback ask the participants to create a modern version of this rhyme in smaller groups. Each group should create four versions of the rhyme, using Appendix 5A/5B (What Are Women Made Of?/What Are Men Made Of?).
- Of the four modern versions two should portray men and women in a positive way and the other two should portray men and women in a negative way. Each rhyme should have three items in each line mirroring the poem.
- Each group should then present their favourite rhyme in the form of a tableau, deciding how to present their words most effectively building into a group improvisation using tableau, vocal intonation, volume and accents.

 **DVD Point**

To inspire the group improvisation, select Gender on the enclosed DVD. The scene shown was written by young people in schools and performed by professional actors.



What are little boys made of, made of?
What are little boys made of?
Slugs and snails and puppy-dog tails;
That's what little boys are made of.

What are little girls made of, made of?
What are little girls made of?
Sugar and spice and everything nice;
That's what little girls are made of.

What are young men made of, made of?
What are young men made of?
Sighs and leers and crocodile tears;
That's what young men are made of.

What are young women made of, made of?
What are young women made of?
Rings and jings and other fine things;
That's what young women are made of.



Turn Detective (HOMEWORK EXERCISE)

- As a homework exercise distribute Appendix 1 (Turn Detective worksheet) and read aloud the homework instruction (right).
- Each participant should collect 'London's Language'.
- Collected material can be displayed as an interesting wall display in the classroom.
- In this instance it should have a 'gender' focus.
- To inspire further discussion see Appendix 6A–6D.



Collect two examples of people talking about **GENDER**. It might be someone you overhear on the bus, at school, on the street, a character from television or cut out from a newspaper or magazine. It could be something you agree with or something that makes you angry or makes you laugh, essentially something you find interesting.

