



## Controversial Issues

**Age:** Secondary

**Level:** A2-B1

**Knowledge or Attitude and Action:** Attitude and Action

**Standard for Learning Outcome:** Student is exposed to contrary perspectives and views, with an opportunity to debate and accept differences. Student is not subsequently presented with the "right answer" or commonly-agreed consensus or conclusion.

**Learning Outcome:** S.D2.S4.LO1 Critically examine opinions on a controversial issue, including their own

**Standard for Global Skill:** Student acquires the skills to be a questioning citizen.

**Global Skill:** S.D3.S4.LO2 Identify biases

**Sustainable Development Goal:** 5 Gender Equality

### Part 1 (20 mins)

- A.** Draw students' attention to the categories in the chart. Check that they understand the meaning of *chores* (work you do at home) and have them preview the vocabulary. Explain any unfamiliar words. Then point out the Venn diagram. Explain that students should write words they connect with men in the part with the "Men" heading, words they connect with women in the part with the "Women" heading, and words they connect with both in the part with the "Both" heading. Tell students that they should do this quickly and without thinking in too much detail. Then have them compare Venn diagrams in pairs.

Elicit some of your students' ideas, and accept them all at this point. Ask questions such as: *Which adjectives do you connect with men?* and *Which jobs do you connect with women?*

Tell students that they are going to be looking at gender stereotypes, gender roles, and gender bias. Pre-teach the following expressions:

**gender stereotypes:** strong and simple ideas about men and women (e.g. Boys don't cry. Girls should learn to cook.)

**gender roles:** the things men and women can and should do, according to their culture

**gender bias:** unfair differences in the way people behave toward others because they are men or women

- B.** Ask students to think about who or what in their life shaped their opinions about men's and women's roles. Do their opinions come from their own families? From school? Or from their culture? Point out that people with low gender bias usually write most of the words in the "Both" part of the Venn diagram.

### Part 2 (15 mins)

- A.** Ask students to look at the photo and describe what they can see. Elicit how the photo makes them feel.

Explain that photo captions often go with photos like this in newspapers, magazines, and social media. The photos often give information about the opinion of the person who wrote the article or posted the photo. Ask them to read the photo captions. Elicit or explain the meaning of *Another mouth to feed* and *Safe at last*.

#### Answer Key: Possible answers

"Another mouth to feed" could make the reader think: *We don't need refugees in our country using public funds to support them.*

"Safe at last" could make the reader think: *We are championing the refugees' cause.*

Ask students which photo caption shows a positive opinion of the photo and which shows a negative opinion.

#### Answer Key: a negative; b positive

- B.** Divide the class into pairs. Give students a few minutes to look at the two photos and write a positive and negative photo caption for each one. Monitor and help with vocabulary as needed. Then elicit some ideas from the class. Ask students if they found it easier to write the negative or positive captions.

#### Answer Key: Possible answers

- Positive:** Their right to protest / Express their opinion  
**Negative:** Police time wasted on protestors / Protestors cause violence.
- Positive:** Eat whatever you want / Life is good: TV and favorite food  
**Negative:** Lifestyle choices affect health / You are what you eat



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**Part 3 (15 mins)**

- A.** Before class, you could find out which sports often have mixed teams and which never do. You could also give students a few minutes before or at the start of the class to research this online and report on it. Ask students to read the statement and check comprehension. Have them write a number from 1 to 5 to show how much they agree with the statement (1= disagree a lot, 2=disagree a little, 3=undecided, 4=agree a little, 5= agree a lot).
- B.** Give students a few minutes to move around the classroom and find someone with a different opinion. When they are in pairs, give them a few minutes to discuss and make notes on their ideas and the reasons for them. Monitor their discussions, helping with ideas and vocabulary where necessary.
- C.** Have students decide if their opinion changed after their discussion. If it did, ask them to change their rating on the picture. Then ask students whose opinions changed what their partner said that caused them to change it.

**Extension**

- A.** Explain that sometimes people use gender stereotypes in advertising. Elicit any ads that students have seen that support this idea. Ask students to look at the ad and give them a few minutes to answer the questions. Elicit some of their ideas.

- B.** Divide the class into pairs. Have students discuss how they would change the photo and caption in the ad to avoid gender stereotypes. You could pre-teach the word *unisex* (suitable for use by both men and women or boys and girls) so that students can use it to describe toys for boys and girls. Monitor the discussion, helping where necessary. Then ask a few pairs to share their ideas with the class.
- C.** You can have students do this activity individually, in pairs, or in groups. Ask them to discuss whether they think men or women usually buy these products and whether ads target men/boys or women/girls. Then have them design an ad for one of the products that interests both men and women and shouldn't be aimed at one particular gender. If time is limited, have students do this as a homework assignment. Then have them present their ads to the class or display them around the classroom. Ask students which ads avoided gender stereotypes best.

**Answer Key: Possible answers**

1. The ad is for parents of young children.
2. The photo and caption show different toys for girls and toys for boys.
3. The toys for each gender seem to follow gender stereotypes.