

# Body Image

## Learning objective

Students analyse how beauty is represented in the media through music and magazines and the impact this, and the perceptions of others, have on personal identities.

## Take Home Messages

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## Curriculum Links

Year 9

- Our identities are influenced by how beauty is represented in the media and how other people perceive us.

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## Curriculum Links

## Key understandings

- Beauty can be stereotyped in the media for both males and females.
- Media, and other people's perceptions, can influence personal identities.

## Materials

- Butcher's paper [6 pieces]
- Old magazines and/or newspapers
- A5 coloured paper
- Internet access

## Before You Get Started

- With so many physical and emotional changes occurring during puberty, it is normal for young people to be more self-aware during this time. In Mission Australia's Youth Survey 2018<sup>1</sup> 30.4% of young people are concerned about body image, and research suggests that less than a quarter of Australian girls and a third of Australian boys are satisfied with their weight<sup>2</sup>. See the Guide: [Body image](#) for more information.
- It is important to highlight the differences between beauty represented in the media and real life. This activity provides an opportunity to discuss and support students' confidence and self-esteem. [Establish a group agreement](#) so students feel safe and respected during classroom activities.

## Learning Activities

Whole Class

Students explore their own perspectives and the perspectives of other students regarding beauty and concepts that relate to beauty.

1. Attach 6 pieces of butcher's paper to the walls of the classroom. Label each piece of butcher's paper with one of the following titles: beautiful, sexy, ugly, handsome, creative, helpful.
2. Allocate a small group of students to each piece of paper.
3. Give students 2 minutes to write things that come to mind when they think of the word that is on their piece of butcher's paper. It might be other adjectives or it might be celebrities. Ensure they do not write names of people they know personally (e.g. other people at school).
4. Move the groups to the next [gallery walk](#) to the right and repeat the process until each group has written on each of the pieces of butcher's paper.
5. As a whole group discuss what the class has written for each concept.
  1. Discuss similarities and differences.

## Learning Activities

### Independent or Small Group

Students develop an understanding of natural beauty and use music and magazines to assist them. Students also explore the impact of the media on own perspectives of beauty.

1. Watch 'Try' by Colbie Caillat on YouTube (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GXoZLPSw8U8>) [3:51min]
2. Ask students what their thoughts and feelings were after seeing the clip.
  1. What is the key message of the song?
3. Give students old magazines/newspapers.
  1. Students are to explore the magazines/newspapers for what they perceive to be natural beauty.
4. Discuss with the students as a whole group what they perceive natural beauty to be and what assumptions do we make from how someone looks. What impact does the media have on our perceptions of what beauty is and how we perceive ourselves?
5. Ask students to reflect independently and silently for two minutes.
  1. How do they perceive themselves physically?
  2. Do they see themselves differently after seeing the clip?

## 3-2-1 Reflection

### Reflection

1. Give each person in a small group a piece of the same coloured paper. Make sure each small group has a different colour.
2. Each person writes their name on their piece of paper then scrunches it up to resemble a snowball.
3. Teacher says 'snowball' and everyone throws their snowball to the group to the right of them.
4. Each person then picks up or catches a snowball from the group to the left of them.
5. The snowballs are unravelled and one positive affirmation is written about the person whose name is on the piece of paper (e.g. thank you for being caring).
  1. Ensure the positive affirmations are not about their physical characteristics.
6. The snowballs are then scrunched up and thrown to the right again and the process continues until each person has received their snowball back.
7. Give the students 2 minutes to read and reflect on the positive affirmations other people have written about them.
8. Discuss as a whole group how it feels to receive positive comments about yourself. Do people agree with the comments other people have written about them? What other comments would you write about yourself? Why?

9. Give students 1 minute to add to their own snowball.
10. Discuss as a whole group how the comments from others can impact on our identities positively and negatively.

#### References:

1. Mission Australia. Youth Survey 2018. Sydney: Mission Australia, 2018.
2. Paxton, S. Research Review of Body Image Programs: An Overview of Body Image Dissatisfaction Prevention Interventions. Melbourne: Department of Human Services, 2002.

## Gender expectations

### Learning objective

Students examine how diversity and gender are often represented in the media and the impact this has on personal identities.

### Take Home Messages

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### Curriculum Links

Year 9

- Our identities are influenced by how gender is often represented in the media.

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### Curriculum Links

### Key understandings

- Gender is often stereotyped in the media.
- Media and societal expectations can influence personal identities.

### Materials

- Internet access
- Teaching Resource: Gender expectations signs [one set]

### Before You Get Started

- Some teachers may experience difficulties dealing with the polarised attitudes of students during these activities. It is essential that teachers address inappropriate comments that may arise when discussing values or ethical issues. Successful strategies can be found in the [Discrimination](#) and [Gender diversity](#) Guides.
- Ensure a [group agreement](#) is established before beginning this lesson. For classes that have already established ground rules, quickly reviewing them can promote a successful lesson.
- If possible, have students work in mixed gender groups for the group activities. This will encourage opposing views to be discussed and result in more meaningful conversations.
- Self-esteem and confidence of some students may also be an issue during this activity. Be

reassuring and supportive.

- Teachers should know and understand the [protective interrupting](#) technique and what, why, when and how it is needed and used before facilitating this activity.

## Learning Activities

### Whole Class

Students explore their own personal values and beliefs regarding gender expectations and stereotypes.

1. Prior to the commencement of the lesson, attach the gender expectations signs (Teaching Resource: Gender expectations signs) along a wall in the classroom to create a 'values line'.
2. Read out the following questions to the students (it is also useful to have these questions written on a PowerPoint or large pieces of paper so they can consider them silently while moving along the line). You may not use all these questions for your class.
  1. Is it okay for guys to clean the house and take on household responsibilities?
  2. Is it okay for girls to take on the gardening responsibilities?
  3. Is it okay for guys to wear make-up?
  4. Is it okay for girls to play footy?
  5. Is it okay for guys to cry?
  6. Is it okay for guys to do ballet?
  7. Is it okay for girls to run global companies?
  8. Is it okay for guys to do hairdressing and fashion design?
  9. Is it okay for guys to stay at home and look after their children?
  10. Is it okay for a girl to have sex at 16?
  11. Is it okay for a guy to have sex at 16?
  12. Is it okay for guy to put pressure on other boys to have sex with girls?
  13. Is it okay for girls to put pressure on other girls to have sex with boys?
  14. Is it okay for girls to say no to sex?
  15. Is it okay for guys to say no to sex?
  16. Is it okay for guys to have sex with lots of people?
  17. Is it okay for girls to have sex with lots of people?
  18. Is it okay for guys to hug their male friends?
  19. Is it okay for girls to hug their female friends?
3. Ask students to stand on the values line according to their personal views on the topic.
  1. Have groups (Yes, No, Maybe) discuss and justify their decisions, then ask a volunteer from each group to explain their own reasoning, not others. Also tell students to not respond to other student's comment when sharing to the whole classroom.
4. Highlight the definition of a stereotype (a widely held and fixed image or idea of a particular type of person or thing) and gender roles (societal expectations about the typical and appropriate behaviour of men and women). This will be explored further in the small group activity.

Ask:

1. Where do we get our ideas about gender from?
2. Does society's ideas of gender roles change over time?
3. How do gender roles impact relationships between boys and girls?
4. Do you think there are double standards for sexual behaviour for boys and girls amongst your friends or in your community?
5. Do you think that boys are often permitted and sometimes pressured to be sexually active where girls are often discouraged from being sexually active? Is this fair?
6. Do you think gender equality is a matter of human rights?

5. Use the teaching strategy [think-pair-share](#) to identify some things that are expected of students because of their gender and some things they expect of other people because of their gender.

## Learning Activities

### Independent or Small Group

Using their prior knowledge regarding gender stereotyping, students analyse historical advertisements and make comparisons of gender expectations from the 1900s to today.

1. Explore advertisements from the 1930s to the 1970s using the list of [advertising clips](#) from the SeeMe website.
2. Select one advertisement from your exploration and answer the following questions:
  1. What is the advertisement about?
  2. How are men and women represented? Think about the setting (kitchen, laundry, workplace, etc.), the activities they are engaged in, the language that is used by, and about, men and women, etc.
  3. Who is represented and who is omitted?
  4. How do you feel about the advertisement?
  5. What is the literal and implied message of the advertisement?
  6. Who is it aimed at?
  7. How would this advertisement be received today?
  8. What does this tell us about how ideas about gender change over time?
3. Using the internet, research current advertisements and identify whether it highlights stereotypical views about gender and whether it affirms diversity. Alternatively, you may want to find and print out recent advertisements for the students to discuss.
  1. How is the advertisement achieving this? Consider the roles of the males and females; what do they say, what are they wearing, what is the product promoting?
4. After exploring these advertisements, and thinking about the advertisements you see around you today in the media, discuss the following question in a small group.
  1. To what extent has advertising about boys and girls, and men and women, changed over time?

For additional information go to the [SeeMe: The media, my world and me](#) website. This site promotes positive body image and tackles the impact of young people's internalisation of idealised media portrayals of beauty and gender stereotypes.

## 3-2-1 Reflection

1. Groups share and discuss their findings using the focus questions from the previous activity with the whole class.
2. Identify similarities and differences and discuss any misconceptions they have as a result of these findings.
3. Discuss the impact the media (e.g. magazines, TV ads) has on our perceptions of gender roles and our expectations about how to behave in society (e.g. because I am female I need to wash the clothes).
4. Discuss the influence of the media and gender expectations on shaping identities. Use the focus questions and comments from the above activity to guide the discussion. Guide students to consider how the advertisements impacted on them personally. How did the advertisement encourage them to participate in something new or different?
5. Iterate with students it is important that we are allowed to express ourselves and who we are. We should not feel pressure from the media or other places to act or look a certain way because

the expectations put on us. We also should not pressure others to act or look a certain way because of their gender.

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### **3-2-1 Reflection**

#### **External related resources**

[The practical guide to love, sex and relationships](#)

A teaching resource from the Australian Research Centre in Sex, Health and Society, La Trobe University.

Year 7/8

[Topic 3: Freedom fighters](#) (Gender)

- Social expectations and gender expectations: Is it ok for a girl to ask a boy out? Would a girl be called a slut if she had lots of boyfriends? What happens to a boy who is 'different'?