



St Alban's Catholic High School

Getting ready for Y12 English Language

Checklist for Y12:

- Cornell Note book
- Highlighters
- Pens
- Lever Arch File

Wider Reading GENDER

Deadline: _____

Lego to remove gender bias from its toys after findings of child survey – The Guardian - by Helen Russell

Read the information below

Lego has announced it will work to remove gender stereotypes from its toys after a global survey the company commissioned found attitudes to play and future careers remain unequal and restrictive.

Researchers found that while girls were becoming more confident and keen to engage in a wide range of activities, the same was not true of boys.

Seventy-one per cent of boys surveyed feared they would be made fun of if they played with what they described as “girls’ toys” – a fear shared by their parents. “Parents are more worried that their sons will be teased than their daughters for playing with toys associated with the other gender,” said Madeline Di Nonno, the chief executive of the Geena Davis Institute on Gender in Media, who conducted the research.

“But it’s also that behaviours associated with men are valued more highly in society,” said Di Nonno. “Until societies recognise that behaviours and activities typically associated with women are as valuable or important, parents and children will be tentative to embrace them.”



The study found that parents still encouraged sons to do sports or Stem activities, while daughters were offered dance and dressing up (girls were five times more likely to be encouraged in these activities than boys) or baking (three times more likely to be encouraged).

“These insights emphasise just how ingrained gender biases are across the globe,” said Geena Davis, the Oscar-winning actor and activist who set up the institute in 2004 to combat negative gender stereotyping and foster inclusion.

“There’s asymmetry,” said Prof Gina Rippon, a neurobiologist and author of The Gendered Brain. “We encourage girls to play with ‘boys’ stuff’ but not the other way around.”

This was a problem since toys offered “training opportunities”, she said. “So if girls aren’t playing with Lego or other construction toys, they aren’t developing the spatial skills that will help them in later life. If dolls are being pushed on girls but not boys, then boys are missing out on nurturing skills.”

The Danish toymaker commissioned the report for the UN International Day of the Girl on Monday. It surveyed almost 7,000 parents and children aged six to 14 from China, the Czech Republic, Japan, Poland, Russia, UK and the US.

“We’re working hard to make Lego more inclusive,” said Julia Goldin, the chief product and marketing officer at the Lego Group, the world’s largest toymaker.

Since the start of 2021, the Geena Davis Institute has been auditing Lego and consulting to “address gender bias and harmful stereotypes”, and the company has promised to remove gender bias from its lines.

“Traditionally, Lego has been accessed by more boys, but products like [arts and crafts line] Lego Dots or Lego City Wildlife Rescue Camp have been specifically designed to appeal to boys and girls,” said Goldin. The Lego mandate is now to promote nurturing and caring as well as spatial awareness, creative reasoning and problem solving.

The Let Toys Be Toys campaign was launched in 2012 in the UK to put pressure on children’s brands to expand their marketing and include both genders, so that no boy or girl thinks they are playing with “the wrong toy”. But progress is slow. A 2020 report by the Fawcett Society showed how “lazy stereotyping” and the segregation of toys by gender was fuelling a mental health crisis among young people and limiting perceived career choices.

It is rubbing off on parents, too. The Geena Davis Institute found that parents of both sexes rated men as “more creative”, were six times as likely to think of scientists and athletes as being men rather than women, and more than eight times as likely to think of engineers as men.

Goldin said Lego no longer labelled any of its products “for girls” or “for boys”. On Lego.com consumers cannot search for products by gender. Instead, the website offers themes that it calls “passion points”.

“We’re testing everything on boys and girls, and including more female role models,” said Goldin. The recent Lego Con showcased female designers talking about the work they did, while Lego’s Rebuild the World campaign focuses on girls.



“Our job now is to encourage boys and girls who want to play with sets that may have traditionally been seen as ‘not for them’,” Goldin added.

Activity One

Summarise the article in three bullet points:

- _____
- _____
- _____

Activity Two

What does this article tell you about attitudes surrounding gender?

Activity Three

How does this fit into what you have studied already in the course?

Recommended extra reading:

- In Defense of the Princess: How Plastic Tiaras and Fairytale Dreams Can Inspire Smart, Strong Women - by Jerramy Fine (Author)
- Invisible Women: the Sunday Times number one bestseller exposing the gender bias women face every day - Caroline Criado Perez (Author)
- Hood Feminism: Notes from the Women That a Movement Forgot by Mikki Kendall
- Everyday Sexism – Laura Bates

Wider Reading ACCENT AND DIALECT

Deadline: _____

Edinburgh student says people mock his accent as he's not from a 'posh school' – Edinburgh Live - BySean McGill – March 2023

Read the information below

The 93 per cent Club – who campaign across the UK for educational equality for those who didn't attend private school – have criticised the environment at the university.

State-educated students at The University of Edinburgh are claiming they have experienced discrimination based on their accents.

The 93 per cent Club – who campaign across the UK for educational equality for those who didn't attend private school – have criticised the environment at the university.

Students claim that “accent discrimination” is prevalent at the institution, with those with Scottish accents allegedly viewed as “chavs”.

Andrew Wilson, President of the 93 per cent Club at Edinburgh University, is in the final year of his linguistics degree.

He told Edinburgh Live: “For students coming from state schools, there's an overwhelming sense of imposter syndrome. It feels like everyone should be on the same path to learn and grow, but you feel very different.

"As a student from the north of England, there have been countless times where I've had my accent imitated, been on the receiving end of smirks and patronising looks. I've also had ignorant and insulting assumptions about my hometown, with students and staff expressing surprise that I even 'managed to make it to Edinburgh.



“It's staff and students that have been guilty of accent discrimination. It can be the looks given to you when you speak. Scottish students can be seen as the chavs. Students should feel empowered to call out these microaggressions.”

Andrew, who went to school in Blackpool, was previously President of the university's Student Association, claims that senior management have failed to tackle the issue effectively.

He said: “We're trying to raise awareness of the issue because the university almost shies away from it and doesn't want to admit that there's a problem.

“I think staff should be trained on how to deal with it because even when students do feel more comfortable to come forward and share their experiences, staff don't know what to do.

“The University can widen access all they want, but if you feel like an outsider, that's not an equitable experience. Especially at Edinburgh, where there's all this grandeur and pomp. It almost acts as a smokescreen for the poor experiences of students from state schools.”

The 93% Club have launched a new campaign called ‘State School Stories’, with the aim of raising awareness of the supposed challenges students who have not been privately educated face.

Perth-born Lorna, who is the club's outreach officer, said: "I didn't expect to feel out of place, or like an outsider as a Scottish student at a Scottish university.

I think it's important to be state school proud because we literally make up a large majority of the UK population, yet here we feel out of place, or other, or not as intelligent as our peers who had a better education than us."

However, the University has defended its record on state school students, highlighting the rising number of applicants accepted from disadvantaged backgrounds.

Activity One

Summarise the article in three bullet points:

- _____
- _____
- _____

Activity Two

What does this article tell you about attitudes surrounding accent and dialect?

Recommended extra reading:

- Lexis podcast – accent
- Ethnicity and language: Black Listed – Jeffrey Boakye (contains strong language)