

The Gender Allowance Gap

Compelling Question: Does the gender wage gap start in the home with children's allowance?

| Grade Level | | Time | Common Core Standards |
|-------------|-----|---------------|---|
| K-2 | 3-5 | 45 Minutes | Reading: R1, R2 Writing: W1, W5 Speaking & Listening: SL1 Language: L4 |
| MS | HS | | |



Web Related Connections

Lessons

- [Mo'Ne Davis and Gender Stereotypes](#)
- [School Lunch Policy: Kids Can Make a Difference](#)
- [The Gender Wage Gap](#)
- [Toys and Gender](#)
- [What "Draw-A-Scientist" Reveals about Gender Stereotypes](#)

Children's Literature

- [Books about Gender & Sexism](#)

Early Childhood FAQs

- [How Can I Prevent Gender Bias in Young Children?](#)

Key Words

(See [ADL's Education Glossary Terms and Definitions Related to Bias, Injustice and Bullying.](#))

Allowance
Behaviors
Challenging
Equally
Gender
Gender roles
Influence
Organized
Re-create
Sexism
Society
Technology
Unfair
Wake-up call

LESSON OVERVIEW

Could there really be a “gender gap” between what boys and girls earn for allowance? A recent survey showed that in U.S. families, boys are paid twice as much allowance as girls for doing weekly chores. According to the research, boys averaged more allowance than girls in part because they were more often assigned chores that are more physically challenging, including tasks like cutting the grass and bushes. Girls were more often paid for jobs such as cleaning the toilet, loading the dishwasher or sweeping floors. Boys also earned more money because they were paid for jobs girls were not paid for at all, including showering, and brushing and flossing their teeth.

This lesson provides an opportunity for elementary students to learn about the gender allowance gap, reflect on why this is the case and express their knowledge and thoughts about it through a persuasive letter.

[NOTE: As you teach this lesson, be mindful that children in your classroom likely come from different socioeconomic backgrounds. Some may get allowance, some may not and the amounts could vary significantly. In the lesson, students are asked to share if they get an allowance and how much, but in an anonymous survey that only the teacher sees. Be careful not to publicly elicit this information from children.]

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Students will understand the gender gap among children's allowances.
- Students will learn how to conduct a survey and use their classmate's information to learn about the differences in allowance with respect to gender.
- Students will express their thoughts, feelings and new knowledge about this issue through persuasive letter writing.

MATERIALS & PREPARATION

- [Allowance Survey](#) (one copy for each student)
- “Boys get paid twice as much allowance as girls, study finds” (Newsela, August 22, 2018, <https://newsela.com/read/allowance-study-boys-paid-more/id/45363/>, one for each student)
- [Persuasive Letter Graphic Organizer](#) (one for each student)
- Board/smart board and markers

PROCEDURES



Information Sharing

1. Ask students: *What is an allowance?* Write the definition on the board/smart board and ask for a volunteer to read the definition aloud as follows:

Allowance: An amount of money that is regularly given to children by their parents/caregivers (in some cases, for doing chores)
2. Explain to students that they are going to talk about children’s allowances and some differences that we have seen among children. Tell them that the first step is to fill out an [Allowance Survey](#). Distribute a copy to each student and read aloud all of the questions to make sure students understand what is being asked and how to complete the survey. If necessary, you may choose to ask the questions one-at-a-time and have students write their answer on their survey after each question is read aloud. Provide 5–10 minutes to complete this task.
3. After completing the survey, collect them all then ask students: *Why do you think I asked you those questions?*
4. Share some or all of the following information:
 - There was a recent survey that showed in U.S. families, boys are paid twice as much allowance as girls for doing weekly chores. The “average” boy gets a \$13.80 weekly allowance and the “average” girl gets about half as much: \$6.71.
 - According to the research, boys averaged more allowance than girls because they were more often assigned chores that are more physically hard, including cutting the grass and the bushes. Girls were more often paid for jobs such as cleaning the toilet, loading the dishwasher or sweeping floors.

NOTE: You can explain average as “a number that helps us describe specific things about large groups of people.” There is more information below about what average means.
 - Boys also earned more money because they were paid for jobs girls were not paid for at all, including showering, and brushing and flossing their teeth.
 - A survey in 2014 showed that parents are more likely to give their sons an allowance than their daughters. 67% of boys received allowance whereas 59% of girls got an allowance.

NOTE: If you need to explain what a “research study” is, explain that it is when a person or company asks many people the same questions in order to get information to understand and describe specific things about people.
5. Engage students in a brief discussion by asking: *What are your thoughts and feelings about what you heard? Does this information surprise you? Why or why not?*
6. If you think your students can understand this, explain that there is something called the “gender wage gap” which refers to the difference between men’s and women’s salaries (the money they earn at work). In general, women make less money than men. In fact, women earn 80% of what men make which means that for every \$1.00 men earn, women earn 80 cents. And for Black, Latino and Native American women, they make even less than what white women make on average. Ask students if they have any questions.



Reading Activity

1. Distribute a copy of the article [“Boys get paid twice as much allowance as girls, study finds”](#) to all students. Give them 10–15 minutes to read the article. Have them underline words they don’t know and circle ideas they want to remember. (While they are reading, tally the survey results; see “Sharing Survey Results.”)

NOTE: This article is from [Newsela](#), which publishes high-interest news articles daily at different reading levels. The article above is a 5th grade reading level. If your students are younger, you can either use the 2nd grade reading level or read this aloud. This particular content is available at grades 2, 5, 7, 9 and 12 grade levels. You can register (free) to access.

2. After reading, have each student call out a one-word response to the article and record those words on the board/smart board.
3. Engage students in a class discussion by asking the following questions:
 - How much more allowance do boys get compared to girls?
 - What are some of the reasons suggested in the article?
 - What did you learn that you didn't know before?
 - What are your thoughts and feelings about what you read?
 - Why do you think the boys and girls have different chores?
 - What does the writer mean by "gender roles?" How do gender roles impact our lives?
 - What is the overall message of the article?
4. If students haven't brought up the word "sexism" yet, ask: *What is sexism?* Elicit/define **sexism** as prejudice or discrimination based on a person's gender.
5. Ask students: *What does this situation have to do with sexism?* After some share responses, explain that because boys and girls earn different amounts of allowance, they are treated differently and this is an example of sexism.



Sharing Survey Results

1. While students are reading the article "Boys get paid twice as much allowance as girls, study finds," quickly tally some or all of the survey results. At minimum, tally the gender and allowance amounts so that you can share the average amount for boys and girls.
2. Share the tally results with students, explaining how you came up with the "average" for boys and girls and define "average" if necessary. You can say something like:

In general, the average helps us describe specific things about large groups of people. The average is the central value of the number. I got the average by adding up all the numbers and then dividing by how many boys and girls did the survey.

Share the information by saying something like, "In our class, the boys' average allowance is \$4.25 per week and the girls' average allowance is \$2.50 per week." Later, or if time permits during the lesson, tally the rest of the results and share that information with the class. Write the results on the board/smart board for students to reference later in the writing activity.

3. Engage students in a discussion about the results by asking the following questions:
 - What did you learn about the allowances of our class?
 - What differences are there? What similarities are there?
 - How would you explain the differences?
 - Do you think it is fair or unfair? Why?
 - What can we do to make sure it is fair?



Writing Activity

1. Explain to students that they will now write a persuasive letter to someone about their thoughts, feelings and new knowledge about the gender allowance gap. They should first decide what their opinion is about the topic and to whom they will write their letter (i.e., who is their audience). Some ideas include their parents or caregivers, their siblings or their members of Congress.
2. Distribute a copy of the [Persuasive Letter Graphic Organizer](#) to all students to help them plan out their letter. They should collect their ideas based on the class survey results, the article they read and class discussion. Using the graphic organizer, have students consider their reasons and “evidence” to persuade the person of their points of view, which should also include a request. Give students 10 minutes to complete the graphic organizer and start writing. They can complete the first draft for homework.
3. Depending on how much time you have, spend a few additional class sessions having students develop and strengthen their writing by revising, conferencing, editing and rewriting their letters to completion.

Closing

Have each student read aloud the sentence or two they wrote in the first box of the Persuasive Essay Organizer: “What I think about the allowance pay gap.”

EXTENSION ACTIVITIES

School/Community Survey

Use the survey questions from this lesson to get input from a larger group of children such as other classes in your grade or the whole school. Administer the surveys using paper/pencil or use [Google Forms](#) to do a digital version. After the results are collected, have groups of students work on tallying the information and illustrating different results. They can be published in a school newsletter or online or presented at a school assembly.

Illustrative Report

Have students create graphs, charts or an infographic that illustrate the results from the classroom survey as well as the larger survey that includes other classes/whole school. Divide up the survey questions and have students work in teams to create their graphs/charts. Then instruct them to come up with a title for the graph and a short explanation about what the graph/chart means.

Public Service Announcement (PSA)

Have students create PSA videos that reflect their opinion about the gender allowance gap. They can work in small groups and decide on their main message/opinion, write the script, enlist “actors,” decide on props and scenery and make the video. The videos can then be shared online or as a classroom event where parents/family members are invited in to participate.

Gender Wage Gap

Engage students in a discussion about the gender wage gap, using background, resources and information from ADL’s lesson on [The Gender Wage Gap](#). Elicit from students what patterns and connections they notice (especially in relation to the allowance pay gap) and what they think can be done to convince people that there shouldn’t be differences in allowance or salaries.

ADDITIONAL READING AND RESOURCES

- [Busy Kid](#)
- [“Gender pay inequality starts at home. Parents pay boys twice as much allowance as girls”](#) (*USA Today*, July 3, 2018)
- [“Parents pay boys twice as much allowance as girls, study finds. Here’s why”](#) (*The Star*, August 14, 2018)
- [The Simple Truth about the Gender Pay Gap](#) (AAUW)
- [“There’s Even a Gender Gap in Children’s Allowances”](#) (Think Progress, April 23, 2014)
- [“Where the gender pay gap may start: At home”](#) (CBS/Money Watch, June 29, 2018)

Common Core Standards

| CONTENT AREA/STANDARD |
|---|
| Reading |
| R1: Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text. |
| R2: Determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas. |
| Writing |
| W1: Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence. |
| W5: Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach. |
| Speaking and Listening |
| SL1: Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others’ ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively. |
| Language |
| L4: Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases by using context clues, analyzing meaningful word parts, and consulting general and specialized reference materials, as appropriate. |

Allowance Survey

1. What is your gender? _____
2. How old are you? _____ years old
3. Do you get allowance? Yes No
4. In your family, is your allowance connected to doing chores? Yes No
5. How much is your allowance? _____
6. If you get allowance, how often do you get it?
 Weekly Monthly Other: _____
7. What chores do you do in your house? *(Check all that apply)*

| | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Take out garbage | <input type="checkbox"/> Set the table |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Help with laundry | <input type="checkbox"/> Clear the table |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Feed pet | <input type="checkbox"/> Walk dog |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Water plants | <input type="checkbox"/> Help with meal preparation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Wash dishes or empty dishwasher | <input type="checkbox"/> Sweep floors |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ | |
8. If you have any sibling(s), write their age, gender and how much allowance they get below.

| Sibling's Name | Gender | Age | Allowance |
|----------------|--------|-----|-----------|
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Persuasive Letter Graphic Organizer

Student Name: _____

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| Person Letter Is Sent to: |
|----------------------------------|

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|---|
| Statement of What I Think about the Allowance Pay Gap: |
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| | |
|-------------------|------------------------------------|
| Reason #1: | Facts, Quotes and Examples: |
| Reason #2: | Facts, Quotes and Examples: |
| Reason #3: | Facts, Quotes and Examples: |

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|---|
| Summary/Final Statement and Request: |
|---|