

# Sneakers and Prejudice: Letters to Challenge Bias

Compelling Question: How can writing letters make a difference?

Grade Level		Time	Common Core Standards
K-2	3-5	40 Minutes	Reading: R1 Writing: W1, W5 Speaking & Listening: SL1, SL2 Language: L6
MS	HS		



## Web Related Connections

### Lessons

- [Mo'Ne Davis and Gender Stereotypes](#)
- [School Lunch Policy: Kids Can Make a Difference](#)
- [The Gender Allowance Gap](#)
- [What "Draw-A-Scientist" Reveals about Gender Stereotypes](#)
- [Moving Beyond Gender Barriers in Our Lives](#)

### Children's Literature

About [Gender & Sexism](#)

### Early Childhood FAQs

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

## Key Words

(See ADL's [Education Glossary Terms](#).)

concern  
customize  
disappointed  
fan  
generation  
labelled  
marketed  
praise  
prejudice  
proudly  
recognize  
sexism  
social media  
stereotype  
support

## LESSON OVERVIEW

In November 2018, a nine-year old girl named Riley Morrison of Napa, CA wrote a letter to Stephen (Steph) Curry, a professional basketball player who plays for the Golden State Warriors. Riley wrote to ask Curry why his Under Armour basketball sneakers, [the "Curry 5s,"](#) weren't available in girls' sizes. She pointed out that they were available in boys' sizes and customizable too. In her letter, she wrote "I know you support girl athletes because you have two daughters and you host an all-girls basketball camp. I hope you can work with Under Armour to change this because girls want to rock the Curry 5's too." Curry thanked Riley for reaching out and told her he would fix the problem.

This lesson provides an opportunity for elementary students to learn about the letters between Riley Morrison and Steph Curry, understand and explore the language of bias and discrimination and reflect on an experience with bias by writing a persuasive letter.

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Students will understand why Riley Morrison decided to write a letter to Steph Curry.
- Students will understand some of the language of bias and reflect on examples from their own lives.
- Students will consider examples of bias from their own lives and express their thoughts and feelings through writing a persuasive letter.

## MATERIALS & PREPARATION

- [Stephen Curry responds to 9-year-old's letter asking why his shoes were only for boys](#) video (2018, 5 mins., CBS This Morning, [www.youtube.com/watch?v=cAUWMI\\_pctU](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cAUWMI_pctU))
- "Girl, 9, asks Stephen Curry why his sneakers don't come in sizes for girls" article (Newsela, December 6, 2018 <https://newsela.com/read/girls-want-curry-sneakers-too/id/47877/>, one for each student)
- [Riley Morrison Letter](#) (one for each student or project on board/smart board)
- [Stephen Curry Letter](#) (one for each student or project on board/smart board)
- [Persuasive Letter Graphic Organizer](#) (one for each student)
- WiFi, internet, computer, screen or LCD projector, speakers
- Board/smart board or chart paper and markers

## PROCEDURES



### Video Viewing

1. Start the lesson by asking students: *Have you heard anything about Steph Curry, a basketball player with the Golden State Warriors, and his Under Armour “Curry 5” basketball sneakers?*
2. Show video [Stephen Curry responds to 9-year-old's letter asking why his shoes were only for boys.](#)



### Reading Activity and Information Sharing

1. In order to have students learn more, distribute the article “[Girl, 9, asks Stephen Curry why his sneakers don't come in sizes for girls](#)” to each student and read it aloud or have each student read it silently (give them 10–15 minutes).

**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 3rd grade reading level or read this aloud. This particular content is available at grades 3, 5, 6, 7 and 8 grade levels. You can register (free) to access.

2. Engage students in a brief discussion by asking the following questions:
  - What happened?
  - Why do you think Riley wrote the letter?
  - How do you feel about the outcome of this story?
3. Distribute the [Riley Morrison Letter](#) to each student or project it on the board/smart board. Ask a student to read it aloud. Then, distribute the [Stephen Curry Letter](#) to each student or project it on the board/smart board. Ask a student to read it aloud. After reading both letters aloud, have students turn and talk to someone sitting next to them and respond to this question: *What do you think about the two letters? Why?*
4. Reconvene the class and have a few students share what they discussed in their pairs.

### Defining Terminology

1. Ask students: *What is happening in the story we just discussed?* If students don't express this, explain that prejudice and stereotypes are playing a role.
2. Ask students: *What is a stereotype?* Elicit and explain that a **stereotype** is the false *idea* that all members of a group are the same and think and behave in the same way. Ask students if they can think of any examples of stereotypes that they have heard or experienced themselves. An example that illustrates this situation is the idea that all boys are good at sports.

Ask students: *What is prejudice?* Elicit/explain that **prejudice** is judging or making a decision about someone or a group of people before you actually know them. Explain that prejudice is often directed toward people in a certain identity group (race, religion, gender, etc.). Prejudice is *an attitude* or opinion that is often based on stereotypes. For example, “I don't like girls.” In this case, the form of prejudice is **sexism**, which is prejudice and/or discrimination based on a person's sex.

**Optional:** Explain **discrimination** which is defined as unfair treatment of one person or group of people because of the person or group's identity (e.g., race, gender, ability, religion, culture, etc.). Discrimination is an *action* that can come from prejudice.

As you define these terms, record the definitions on the board/smart board or chart paper and ask students to copy them in their notebooks.

3. Explain to students that they are going to talk in small groups about examples of prejudice or stereotypes. These examples can be ones they experienced themselves, witnessed or heard about. They can be examples that took place at home, in school, in their community, in their country, and/or in the media.

4. Divide students into small groups of three. Read aloud the following questions, one question at a time, and have each student take one minute to respond to each question.
  - What is an example of a prejudice or a stereotype that you have experienced, seen or heard about?
  - What was the impact of the prejudice or stereotype?
  - Did anyone do or say anything? Please explain.
5. Reconvene the class and engage students in a brief discussion by asking: *Why are stereotypes harmful? What can we do when we see or experience them?* If students don't say it, explain that stereotypes can be harmful because if children or anyone believes the stereotypes, they won't feel free to explore different parts of themselves; stereotypes can send inaccurate messages to them about what they "should" be like, interested in and good at.
6. Explain that one of the things you can do when you experience prejudice is to talk with someone about it and express how you feel; that is what Riley did in talking with her parents and writing the letter to Steph Curry.

 **Writing Activity**

1. Explain to students that they will now write a persuasive letter to someone about prejudice or stereotypes.
2. Engage students in brainstorming by using this opening question: *What are some examples of prejudice or stereotypes that you have seen, experienced or heard about?* Remind students that they can share ideas/examples from their small group discussion they just had. Explain that while Riley decided to write a letter to Steph Curry, she also could have written a letter to Under Armour (the company who makes the sneakers), the school or community newspaper, the Golden State Warriors team or someone else. In addition to brainstorming examples of prejudice, next to each example, you can begin to consider to whom they should write their letter. For some of the ideas they brainstorm, ask: *Who should the letter go to?*

Record their ideas on the board, making a T-chart as follows, including a few examples from the brainstorm.

Prejudice or Stereotype	Letter Goes To...
No "Curry 5" sneakers for girls	Steph Curry Under Armour Town newspaper Golden State Warriors
A Muslim girl was told by her softball coach she could not wear her hijab to practice.	Coach Softball league Town newspaper

3. Distribute the [Persuasive Letter Graphic Organizer](#) to each student to assist them in constructing their letters. Review the categories and explain what each section means. Using the graphic organizer, have students consider their reasons and "evidence" to persuade the person of their point of view, which should also include a request (what you are asking the person to do or change). Give students 10 minutes to complete the graphic organizer; they can begin writing if time permits. Have them complete the first draft of their letter for homework.
4. Depending on how much time you have, spend a few additional class sessions to help students develop and strengthen their writing by revising, conferencing, editing and rewriting their letters to completion. You could also have students choose to illustrate the letter or come up with a slogan like (as Riley said) "Because girls want to rock the Curry 5's too!"
5. When the letters are completed, help students determine the email or mailing address to send their letters and send those out.

## Closing

Have each student read aloud what they included in the first box of their Persuasive Essay: “Opening Statement about the Bias I See.” If possible, record students on video reading their opening statements and consider sharing with parents/family members and/or in the school’s newsletter or website.

## ADDITIONAL READING AND RESOURCES

- [9-Year-Old Girl Protests Stephen Curry Shoes Only Being Sold in Men's Section, Gets Him to Change Listing](#) (*Newsweek*, November 29, 2018)
- [Nine-Year-Old's Letter Prompts Stephen Curry to Change How Under Armour Sells His Shoes to Girls](#) (*Sports Illustrated*, November 29, 2018)
- [Steph Curry Responded to A Little Girl Who Asked Why His Shoes Don't Come In Girls' Sizes](#) (*Huffington Post*, November 29, 2018)
- [This 9-Year-Old Basketball Player Is Asking Steph Curry Why His Sneakers Are Only Made for Boys](#) (*Teen Vogue*, November 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.
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.
SL2: Integrate and evaluate information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively and orally.
Language
L6: Acquire and use accurately a range of general academic and domain-specific words and phrases sufficient for reading, writing, speaking, and listening at the college and career readiness level; demonstrate independence in gathering vocabulary knowledge when encountering an unknown term important to comprehension or expression.

## Riley Morrison Letter

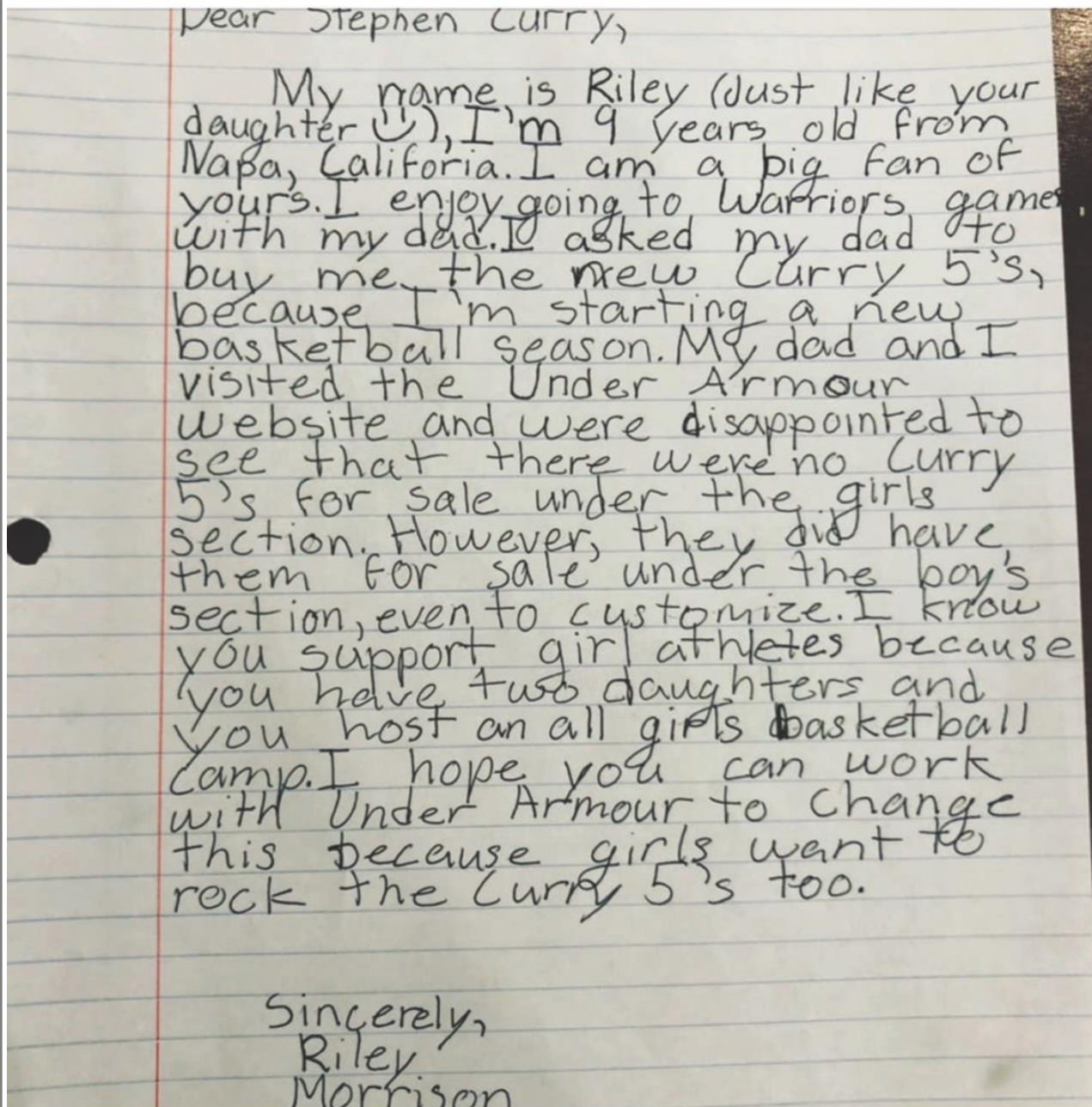


**Chris Morrison**

November 20 at 12:27 AM · 🌐



My daughter's letter to Steph Curry. Her way of attempting to make a difference. Proud of her. #girlshooptoo #kicks #curry5 @stephencurry30 @ayeshacurry Under Armour



👍❤️😱 364

30 Comments 195 Shares

## Stephen Curry Letter



Stephen Curry ✓

@StephenCurry30

Follow



Appreciate you helping us get better Riley!  
We got you. #MoreToCome

HEY RILEY,

I APPRECIATE YOUR CONCERN AND HAVE SPENT THE LAST 2 DAYS TALKING TO UNDER ARMOUR ABOUT HOW WE CAN FIX THE ISSUE. UNFORTUNATELY, WE HAVE LABELED SMALLER SIZES AS "BOYS" ON THE WEBSITE. WE ARE CORRECTING THIS NOW! I WANT TO MAKE SURE YOU CAN WEAR MY KICKS PROUDLY - SO I AM GOING TO SEND YOU A PAIR OF CURRY 5'S NOW AND YOU'LL BE ONE OF THE FIRST KIDS TO GET THE CURRY 6. LASTLY, WE HAVE SOMETHING SPECIAL IN THE WORKS FOR INTERNATIONAL WOMENS DAY ON MARCH 8<sup>th</sup>, AND I WANT YOU TO CELEBRATE WITH ME! MORE TO COME ON THAT, BUT PLAN TO BE IN OAKLAND THAT NIGHT! ALL THE BEST!  
#RUIN THE GAME

- STEPHEN

6:33 AM - 29 Nov 2018

# Persuasive Letter Graphic Organizer

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Who I Am Sending My Letter To (Person/Company):

Opening Statement about the Prejudice I See:

Why I Feel/Think This Way:

Reason #1:	Facts, Quotes, Experiences, Examples:
Reason #2	Facts, Quotes, Experiences, Examples:
Reason #3	Facts, Quotes, Experiences, Examples:

Closing/Summary and Request: