



## Curriculum Connections

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# Moving Beyond Gender Barriers in Our Lives

**ADL**  
Anti-Defamation League®

## In This Issue

On June 10, 1963 President John F. Kennedy signed the Equal Pay Act (EPA), which ensures that men and women receive “equal pay for equal work.” At that time, women earned a mere 59 cents for every dollar that men earned.

Despite the establishment of civil rights laws and gains of the women’s movement since that time, significant disparities and barriers remain for women in the workplace. Not only do women of every race and ethnicity earn significantly less compared to men of the same race or ethnicity, women of color suffer both because of their gender and their race.

In 2007, women in the U.S. earned only 77 cents for every dollar men earned and eight years later this increased only three cents. For every dollar men earned in 2016, the female population earned 80 cents and African-American and Latina women earned just 63 cents and 54 cents respectively.<sup>1</sup>

Female workers also remain largely segregated in “women’s jobs,” which pay on average significantly less than “men’s jobs.” Non-traditional occupations offer higher wages for women, yet women are underrepresented in many of these occupations like aviation maintenance, engineering, law enforcement and welding. Young women, for example, are only 1% of automobile mechanics, 7.2% of airline pilots and flight engineers, 12.3% of electronics engineers and 5.2% of the CEO’s in America’s 500 largest companies.<sup>2, 3</sup>

Women who forge paths in male-dominated fields often encounter wage discrimination and gender bias on the job. After working for almost twenty years at a Goodyear Tire plant in Alabama, Lilly Ledbetter discovered that she had been consistently paid less than her male co-workers with the same job. On January 29, 2009, President Obama signed the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act of 2009 (“Act”). The Ledbetter Act recognizes the “reality of wage discrimination” and restores “bedrock principles of American law.”

Situations such as this underscore the importance of making children aware of the gender barriers that still exist for women in our society so that girls do not unconsciously limit their aspirations and boys understand their role in being advocates for a more gender inclusive world.

This edition of *Curriculum Connections* explores gender role expectations and the obstacles that still exist for people who behave in gender non-conforming ways. The early childhood lesson (K–2) helps young students to explore the gender stereotypical beliefs that place limits on the types of activities and interests they pursue. The lessons for older students helps young people explore assumptions about job roles and gender, increase awareness about gender segregation and pay inequality in the workplace and encourage students to move beyond narrow gender role expectations as they pursue interests and envision their own professional futures.

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<sup>1</sup> Catherine Hill, *The Simple Truth about the Gender Pay Gap*, ed. Kevin Miller (Washington, DC: American Association of University Women, 2017), [www.aauw.org/research/the-simple-truth-about-the-gender-pay-gap/](http://www.aauw.org/research/the-simple-truth-about-the-gender-pay-gap/).

<sup>2</sup> United States Department of Labor, “Nontraditional (male-dominated) occupations, 2014 annual averages,” (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Labor), [www.dol.gov/wb/stats/Nontraditional%20Occupations.pdf](http://www.dol.gov/wb/stats/Nontraditional%20Occupations.pdf).

<sup>3</sup> Pew Research Center, “Women and Leadership: Public Says Women are Equally Qualified, but Barriers Persist” (Washington, D.C.: Pew Research Center, 2015), [www.pewsocialtrends.org/2015/01/14/chapter-1-women-in-leadership/](http://www.pewsocialtrends.org/2015/01/14/chapter-1-women-in-leadership/).

# Correlation of Lessons to Common Core Standards

Content Area/Standard	Elementary School Lesson K-2	Elementary School Lesson 3-5	Middle School Lesson	High School Lesson
<b>Reading</b>				
R.1: 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.	X		X	X
R.2: Determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas.	X			X
R.3: Analyze how and why individuals, events, or ideas develop and interact over the course of a text.	X			
R.4: Interpret words and phrases as they are used in a text, including determining technical, connotative, and figurative meanings, and analyze how specific word choices shape meaning or tone.	X			X
R.7: Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse media and formats, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words.			X	X
R.9: Analyze how two or more texts address similar themes or topics in order to build knowledge or to compare the approaches the authors take.	X			
<b>Writing</b>				
W.1: Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.				X
W.2: Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.	X			X
W.3: Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details and well-structured event sequences.	X			
W.4: Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.				X
W.6: Use technology, including the Internet, to produce and publish writing and to interact and collaborate with others.				X
W.7: Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects based on focused questions, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.			X	X

Content Area/Standard	Elementary School Lesson K-2	Elementary School Lesson 3-5	Middle School Lesson	High School Lesson
W.8: Gather relevant information from multiple print and digital sources, assess the credibility and accuracy of each source, and integrate the information while avoiding plagiarism.				X
<b>Speaking and Listening</b>				
SL.1: 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.	X	X	X	X
SL.2: Integrate and evaluate information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally.		X	X	
SL.3: Evaluate a speaker's point of view, reasoning, and use of evidence and rhetoric.				X
SL.4: Present information, findings, and supporting evidence such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning and the organization, development, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.	X		X	X
SL.5: Make strategic use of digital media and visual displays of data to express information and enhance understanding of presentations.	X		X	X
<b>Language</b>				
L.3: Apply knowledge of language to understand how language functions in different contexts, to make effective choices for meaning or style, and to comprehend more fully when reading or listening.	X	X	X	X
L.4: 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.		X	X	
L.5: Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings.	X	X		X
L.6: 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.			X	X
<b>Math: Statistics &amp; Probability</b>				
SP.1: Understand that statistics can be used to gain information about a population by examining a sample of the population; generalizations about a population from a sample are valid only if the sample is representative of that population. Understand that random sampling tends to produce representative samples and			X	X

Content Area/Standard	Elementary School Lesson K-2	Elementary School Lesson 3-5	Middle School Lesson	High School Lesson
support valid inferences.				
SP.2: Use data from a random sample to draw inferences about a population with an unknown characteristic of interest. Generate multiple samples (or simulated samples) of the same size to gauge the variation in estimates or predictions.			X	X
SP.8: Find probabilities of compound events using organized lists, tables, tree diagrams, and simulation.				X

## Elementary School Lesson (Grades K–2)

# Challenging Gender Role Stereotypes

## Rationale

This lesson helps young students explore the gender stereotypical beliefs that place limits on the types of activities and interests they pursue. Through a game about gender roles and musical instruments, small and large group brainstorming and discussion, and children’s literature that celebrates the transcending of gender barriers, students increase their awareness of gender stereotypes and learn about ways to overcome them.

[NOTE: The purpose of teaching students about gender stereotypes is not to pressure them to pursue activities simply because they are gender non-conforming, but rather to broaden students’ notions about the choices open to them. As you encourage students to think beyond gender biases, make sure to also acknowledge and celebrate personal preferences. The girl who wants to study ballet and the girl who wants to take drum lessons should be equally celebrated, without judgment.]

## Objectives

- Students will engage in a learning game that challenges gender role stereotypes.
- Students will name activities regarded as traditionally only for boys or girls, and identify ways to turn those beliefs around.
- Students will engage with literature that challenges narrow gender role expectations.

## Time

2 hours or 2–3 class periods

## Requirements

Handouts and Resources:

- [Making Music](#) (one copy per small group)
- [Making Music Student Photos](#) (one copy per small group)
- [Boys and Girls Making Music](#) (one copy)
- [Discussion Guide for Ballerino Nate](#) (one copy)
- [Discussion Guide for Drum, Chavi, Drum!;/Toca, Chavi, Toca!](#) (one copy)

Other Material:

- Board/Smart board or chart paper, construction paper or newsprint, markers, crayons, tape or glue
- One copy of the book [Ballerino Nate](#) and/or [Drum, Chavi, Drum!;/Toca, Chavi, Toca!](#)
- (Optional) Computer, LCD projector

## Key Words

Different  
Embarrassed  
Instrument  
Reconsider  
Rhythm  
Role model  
Sexism  
Stereotype

## Advanced Preparation

- Reproduce handouts as directed above.
- Photocopy the [Making Music](#) and [Making Music Student Photos](#) handouts, one copy for each small group of 3–5 students. Cut out the student photos and create a set for each small group (see Part 1 #1).
- (Optional) Prepare the [Making Music](#) and [Boys and Girls Making Music](#) handouts or save them on a laptop for projection and viewing them on a large screen.
- Obtain a copy of [Ballerino Nate](#) and/or [Drum, Chavi, Drum!;/Toca, Chavi, Toca!](#) (See Part III). Alternative books with discussions guides are [Grace for President](#), [Jacob’s New Dress](#) and [Rosie Revere Engineer](#).

## Techniques and Skills

brainstorming, cooperative group work, critical thinking, drawing skills, forming opinions, large and small group discussion, reading skills, writing skills

## Procedures

### Part I: Musical Instruments and Gender Stereotypes (30 minutes)

1. Begin the lesson by asking for a show of hands if students like playing musical instruments. Tell them that they will participate in a brief matching game called Making Music. Divide the class into small groups of 3–5 students and provide each group with a [Making Music](#) handout, a set of [Making Music Student Photos and tape or glue](#). Have groups lay out the photos on a table and tell them that each of these children has signed up to learn a new musical instrument. Instruct groups to do the following:
  - Discuss which person they think should learn each instrument, and glue or tape the photos accordingly in the first column when the group has come to an agreement. (Tell students that they can only assign one person to each instrument.)
  - Discuss which of the six instruments they would choose if they could learn a new instrument, and write their names accordingly in the second column. (Tell students that more than one person can choose the same instrument.)

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**ALTERNATIVE PROCEDURE:** If your students are not able to complete this task in small groups, work on it together as a whole class. Project the [Making Music](#) handout on a large screen, board/smart board and, using enlarged copies of the student photos, have students vote on which person they think should learn each instrument. Subsequent small group activities in this lesson can be similarly adapted if necessary.

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2. Reconvene the class and invite a representative from each group, one at a time, to share their group’s decisions. Post the completed handouts where everyone can see them and engage the class in a discussion using some of the following questions:
  - How did your group decide which students should learn each instrument?
  - Did everyone in your group agree? If not, what were some of the different ideas that came up?
  - How did you choose the instrument that you would learn? Do you play an instrument in real life? If so, how did you choose that instrument?
  - Did some people in your group think that certain instruments were for boys and others for girls? If so, which ones were considered “boy instruments” and which ones “girl instruments”?
  - What other reasons—besides being a boy or girl—might make each instrument a good choice for the different children in the photos?

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**NOTE:** The discussion above is structured based on the likelihood that your students will have made “gendered” choices in matching the instruments to people (research shows that children as young as five display preferences for musical instruments closely related to their gender-stereotyped beliefs). However, if gender is not a motivating factor for your particular students, adjust the discussion questions accordingly. Similarly, if other factors emerge as determinants of student decisions (e.g., race, ethnicity, age, size), explore these themes before concluding the discussion.

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### Part II: Debunking Gender Role Stereotypes (60 minutes)

1. Ask students if they believe that boys and girls might each be “right” for or better at certain types of instruments. Project or pass around the photo collage, [Boys and Girls Making Music](#), and reinforce that anyone can play any instrument. Ask students how the trumpet player might feel if someone told her she should switch to an instrument that’s more “lady-like,” or what the flute player might do if other kids kept teasing, “You’re a girl, only girls play the flute.”
2. Ask students how people get their ideas about what girls and boys are “supposed to” do or like. For each response, help students to distinguish myth from reality. For example, if students suggest that boys run faster so they are better suited for soccer, or that girls are neater so they are better suited for housework, challenge these ideas by providing examples of

girls and boys who contradict these notions. Emphasize that narrow ideas about boys and girls roles can be hurtful to others and limit opportunities for everyone.

3. Ask students for examples of interests or activities, besides playing musical instruments, that some people say are “only for boys/men” or “just for girls/women.” Elicit general categories (e.g., toys) rather than specific items (e.g., Barbies). List their responses on the board or a sheet of chart paper.

Examples:

- toys/games we play
  - colors we like
  - clothes we wear
  - TV shows/movies we watch
  - who we play with
  - sports we play
  - chores we do
  - hobbies/things we collect
  - pets/animals we like
  - songs/singers we like
  - jobs that grown-ups have
  - video games we like
4. Have students get back into their small groups and provide each with a large sheet of construction or chart paper and some drawing implements (crayons, markers, etc.). Assign each group one of the topics generated above and ask students to talk about the ways in which girls and boys are set apart (e.g., if the topic is sports, students may discuss how only the boys play soccer during recess and how they don't let the girls join in). After a few minutes of discussion, instruct students to draw a picture depicting what it would look like if girls and boys were not set apart, and to write a caption at the bottom (e.g., “Boys and girls playing soccer together happily in the schoolyard”).
  5. Reconvene the class. Have each group briefly share its work and hang their illustrations where everyone can see them. Emphasize the idea that attaching a gender to activities or interests is hurtful and limiting.

### Part III: Using Literature to Transcend Gender Stereotypes (time will vary)

Reinforce the ideas explored in this lesson by reading one or both of the following stories aloud during subsequent classes and completing one or more of the extension activities included in the discussion guide for each book.

- ➔ [\*Ballerino Nate\*](#) by Kimberly Brubaker Bradley  
*Penguin Young Readers Group, 2006, 32 pages, grades Pre-K–3*

**Summary:** Nate, a kindergartener, wants to become a ballet dancer, but is discouraged by his second-grade, sports-loving brother, who pronounces, “You can’t... You’re a boy.” Despite his parents’ reassurance, Nate is apprehensive when he begins a ballet class and learns that he is the only boy enrolled. After Nate’s mother takes him to a ballet performance, where he sees that half the dancers are men, Nate feels good about his new pursuit at last. ([Discussion Guide](#))

- ➔ [\*Drum, Chavi, Drum!;/Toca, Chavi, Toca!\*](#) by Mayra Dole  
*Children’s Book Press, 2003, 32 pages, grades K–3*

**Summary:** Chavi is determined to play the drums on the school float during Miami’s Calle Ocho parade, but everyone—from her music teacher to her own loving mother—is convinced that because she is a girl, she cannot possibly be good enough. Chavi knows differently, and she practices on anything she can get her hands on: pans, paint cans, car hoods. She just knows she’s good, and before the book is over, so does everyone else. ([Discussion Guide](#))

# Making Music

Instrument	Which person do you think should learn this instrument?	If you could learn a new instrument, which one would you choose?
Guitar 		
Flute 		
Drums 		
Clarinet 		
Violin 		
Trumpet 		

# Making Music Student Photos



**Hassan**



**Jamal**



**Amy**



**Donna**



**Max**



**Maria**

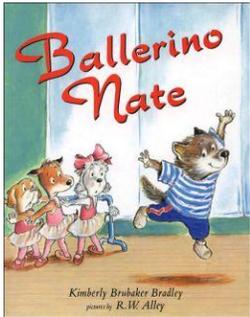
# Boys and Girls Making Music



Discussion Guide for *Ballerino Nate*

# Ballerino Nate

## Summary



Nate, a kindergartener, wants to become a ballet dancer, but is discouraged by his second-grade, sports-loving brother, who pronounces, “You can’t... You’re a boy.” Despite his parents’ reassurance, Nate is apprehensive when he begins a ballet class and learns that he is the only boy enrolled. After Nate’s mother takes him to a ballet performance, where he sees that half the dancers are men, Nate feels good about his new pursuit at last.

*Ballerino Nate* © 2006 by Kimberly Brubaker Bradley, Illustrated by R.W. Alley  
2006, 32 pages, Grades Pre K–3, Penguin Young Readers Group

## Discussion Questions

Read the book *Ballerino Nate* while sitting very close to the children. Place the book in a position easily seen. After reading the story, have a class discussion using the following questions:

- How does Nate feel when his brother keeps saying “Yuck!” about ballet?
- Has your brother or sister (or someone else) ever put down something that you care about? How did it make you feel?
- What does Nate love about ballet? Have you ever felt that way about a special activity or hobby? Describe your feelings.
- How does Nate’s mom react to Ben when he puts down Nate’s interest in ballet? What does she do to support Nate? How have your parents (or other close adults) encouraged you to participate in an activity you love?
- What does Nate do to stay positive and confident despite Ben’s teasing? What keeps you feeling positive when others tease you about an interest you have?
- What does Ben say that starts to make Nate unsure about ballet? How does their dad step in and help?
- What do you think it took for Nate to continue with his ballet class even though he was the only boy? Have you ever been the only boy or girl at an event? Did it matter to you or others? Should it matter?
- How does Nate feel when he goes to a professional ballet?
- What helps to give him confidence in his dancing?
- What is a *role model*? Do you have any role models? How have they helped you to feel good about an activity that you love?

## Vocabulary

Ballerina  
Ballerino  
Ballet  
Company  
Enormous  
Fluttery  
Miserable  
Permission  
Petunia  
Plié  
Professional  
Stretching  
Theater  
Tutu  
Uniform

## Extension Activities

- ➔ Read stories and teach students about male dancers (e.g., Alvin Ailey, Bill T. Jones) and men in other gender non-conforming roles (e.g., nurse, child caretaker, fashion designer). Invite parents and other adults in the school community to visit and talk with students about gender non-conforming jobs or activities with which they are involved.
- ➔ Have students write stories or draw pictures about a time when they were the only boy or girl participating in an activity or event. (This can be broadened to explore being the only one of some other category besides gender). Encourage students to express how they felt and what helped them to stay confident and secure in the situation.

- In the story, Ben tells Nate, “Boys can’t be ballerinas. They never, ever, ever can.” Post a sheet of chart paper and divide it into two columns. Label the first column, “They never, ever, ever can...” and have students list all the things people have told them boys or girls can “never, ever” do. Label the second column, “Yes they can!” and have students research exceptions to each item in the first column in the school library, computer lab or for homework. When their research is complete, post the results in the second column. For example, if one of the items in the first column is “women can never, ever be explorers,” students might paste a photo of Ann Bancroft in the second column with the caption, “polar explorer and first women in history to sail and ski across Antarctica.”
- Throughout the story, Nate is worried that only girls can be ballerinas. At the end of the story, he is pleased to learn that there is a word for male ballet dancers—ballerino. Explore with students how male and female roles are embedded in language and how this influences the choices they make. Have students brainstorm a list of jobs or roles that are “gendered” or primarily associated with one sex (e.g., fireman, policeman, nanny, nurse, etc.). Then have students change each item (e.g., policeman can be changed to police officer) or rewrite it altogether (e.g., nanny can be renamed as caretaker) to be gender-neutral and inclusive.
- In the story, Nate’s love for ballet is described as follows:

*Nate loved the ballet.*

*He loved the fluttery costumes that the dancers wore.*

*He loved the way the dancers jumped and leaped and spun.*

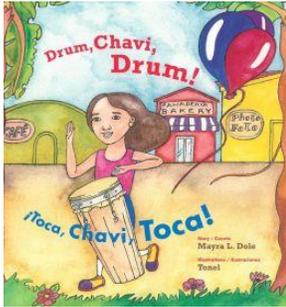
*He loved the way their movements looked like music.*

Have students write and illustrate poems using this structure to describe an activity they love. Have students share their poetry and encourage the class to celebrate their peers’ interests, regardless of gender role expectations.

Discussion Guide for *Drum, Chavi, Drum! / ¡Toca, Chavi, Toca!*

# Drum, Chavi, Drum! / ¡Toca, Chavi, Toca!

## Summary



Chavi is determined to play the drums on the school float during Miami's Calle Ocho parade, but everyone—from her music teacher to her own loving mother—is convinced that because she is a girl, she cannot possibly be good enough. Chavi knows differently, and she practices on anything she can get her hands on: pans, paint cans, car hoods. She just knows she's good, and before the book is over, so does everyone else. (This book is bilingual, English and Spanish)

*Drum, Chavi, Drum!* © 2003 by Mayra Dole, Illustrated by Tonel  
2003, 32 pages, Grades K–3, Children's Book Press

## Discussion Questions

Read the book *Drum, Chavi, Drum!* while sitting very close to the children. Place the book in a position easily seen. After reading the story, have a class discussion using the following questions:

- How does Chavi feel when her teacher tells her that she can't play the drums in the festival because she is a girl?
- Has anyone ever told you that could not do something because you were a boy or girl? How did you feel?
- After Mami throws Chavi's drum sticks in the trash and her grandfather complains about the noise, Chavi says, "No one listens; no one believes in me." What gives Chavi the motivation to continue with her drumming?
- Have you ever believed in yourself even when others did not? What helped you to stay positive?
- How do the men in the community react when they find out they have been fooled by Chavi?
- What ideas do they have about why girls should not play drums? What do you think about those ideas?
- How does Rosario stand up for Chavi? Has anyone ever stood up for you? How did it feel?
- When Chavi finally gets to play the drums at the festival, what feeling does she have inside?
- How do the crowd and the school principal react to a girl drummer? How does their reaction change the way Mami and Mr. Gonzalez feel about Chavi's drumming?
- Is it ever okay for kids to be discouraged from doing certain types of activities just because they are girls or boys? What can you do to make sure this never happens in your school or community?

## Extension Activities

- ➔ Have students write diary entries in Chavi's voice exploring what she might have been thinking and feeling after pivotal events in the story (being scolded by her teacher, rejected by her family, supported by her friend, etc.). Alternatively, have students write a diary entry

## Vocabulary

### English:

Banner  
Bongos  
Confetti  
Conga  
Cuba  
Embarrassed  
Festival  
Float  
Plead  
Reconsider  
Rhythm  
Sway  
Throng  
Unrecognizable

### Spanish:

Abuelito  
Barrio  
Botánica  
Cafecitos  
Calle Ocho\*  
Fábrica  
Gracias  
Mariposita  
Merenguitos  
Mijita  
Niña  
Oye  
Pastelitos  
¿Qué pasa?  
Sombrero  
Toca  
Tumbadoras

\*Calle Ocho (8th Street) refers to the central area of Miami's "Little Havana" and to the large street festival celebrating Latino culture that takes place there every March.

in Rosario’s voice exploring what she was thinking and feeling as she watched Chavi get rejected and decided to stand up for her friend.

- ➔ Have students write a story or draw a picture about a time when they were discouraged from an activity because of their gender, and another story or picture depicting what would have happened had they been encouraged. As a follow-up, have students role-play some of these situations and practice standing up for themselves and/or others.
- ➔ Have students write a story or create a collage entitled, “[Verb], [Name], [Verb]!”, that celebrates an activity about which they are passionate (e.g., “Swim, Donna, Swim!” or “Paint, Robbie, Paint!”).
- ➔ Hold a class Calle Ocho festival and have students make or bring in a variety of instruments to play. Encourage students to try out different instruments.
- ➔ Read stories and teach students about gender non-conforming musicians. Invite parents and other adults in the school community who have chosen instruments (or other pursuits) considered “wrong” for their gender to visit and share with students.

## Elementary School Lesson (Grades 3–5)

# Job Roles without Gender Boundaries

### Rationale

This lesson explores the assumptions students have regarding job roles and gender, challenges them to examine where those ideas come from, and encourages them to move beyond narrow gender role expectations as they pursue interests and envision their own professional futures.

### Objectives

- Students will participate in a matching game that builds awareness about gender assumptions.
- Students will learn about stereotypes and how they relate to the job roles society assigns to each gender.
- Students will analyze job titles for gender bias and explore the power of language to shape beliefs.
- Students will broaden their ideas about jobs and pursuits open to them in the future.

### Time

2 hours or 2–3 class periods

### Requirements

Handouts and Resources:

- [Employment Office Cartoon](#) (one copy)
- [Neutralizing Job Titles Chart](#) (one copy)

Other Material:

- Chart paper, markers, construction paper, sheets of paper, scissors, glue, drawing implements (markers, crayons, colored pencils)
- Magazines and assorted items for making collages
- (Optional) Computer, LCD projector

### Key Words

Discrimination  
Gender  
Job role  
Neutral/Neutralize  
Prejudice  
Stereotype  
Traditional  
Trait

### Advanced Preparation

- Reproduce handouts as directed above.
- Enlist the help of school staff members. Tell them that you are conducting a lesson on gender role stereotypes and need their assistance in gathering examples of gender diversity in career roles. Ask them to tell you about their former jobs, and write down the job titles and a brief description of each position. Gather job descriptions from about 10 people and try to get an even number of male and female respondents. (Optional: Ask each person for a current photo or take/print a photo of each person.)
- Label a sheet of chart paper, “[Name of School] Job Fair,” and divide it into two columns. Write the name of each staff member in the left-hand column (attach photos if available) and assign each a number (e.g., 1. Mr. Smith, 2. Ms. Jones). Select one job for each staff member and write the title/description in the right-hand column (in random order) and assign each a letter (e.g., a. librarian, b. welder). Post the chart where students will be able to view it.
- Prepare the [Employment Office Cartoon](#) to be projected onto a large screen or smart board (see Part II #3). If this technology is not available, make enough copies of the cartoon to distribute to each student.
- Recreate the [Neutralizing Job Titles Chart](#) on to a large sheet of paper. Include only the headings and do not fill in any of the actual examples (see Part II #4).

### Techniques and Skills

brainstorming, cooperative group work, creating visual art, critical thinking, forming opinions, large and small group discussion

## Procedures

### Part I: Exploring Assumptions about Job Roles (30 minutes)

1. Tell students they will participate in a brief matching game, in which they will explore how well they know the adults in their school community. Distribute a sheet of paper to each student. Draw their attention to the “Job Fair” chart and challenge students to match each staff member to their former job. Allow about 10 minutes for students to take an up-close look at the chart and discuss their thoughts with peers. Instruct them to write their final decisions on their piece of paper.
2. Reconvene the class and discuss each of the people on the chart, one at a time. First ask for a few volunteers to share their guesses and their reasoning, and then reveal the correct answer. After you have revealed all of the answers, engage the class in a discussion using some of the following questions:
  - Did any of the matches surprise you? Why?
  - How did you decide who to match with each job? Were there personal traits that led you to believe a particular person worked at a certain job?
  - Did you have certain ideas about people that turned out to be mistakes (e.g., “Mrs. Alvarez is small so there’s no way she was a construction worker”)?
  - Did the gender of each person (whether they are a man or woman) affect the way you matched them to jobs?
  - What other beliefs shaped your predictions (e.g., race, class, appearance, ethnic background, etc.)?

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**NOTE:** This portion of the lesson has been adapted with permission from *Gender Stereotyping* by Mollie Reams, [www.tolerance.org](http://www.tolerance.org).

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### Part II: Analyzing Language for Gender Stereotypes (40 minutes)

1. Assuming that students made some assumptions based on gender in the activity above, comment that you noticed they had some fixed ideas about what men and women are capable of and interested in doing. Point out some examples (e.g., “many of you assumed that the electrician had to be a man” or “most of you automatically assigned a woman to the flight attendant role”). Ask students if they know what it is called when people hold a belief about a whole group of people—like girls are not tough enough to be football players—that does not allow for each person’s individual differences (stereotype). Ask students why it is important to avoid stereotypes (e.g., they hurt people’s feelings, limit opportunities, lead to prejudice and discrimination, etc.)
2. Ask students to articulate some of the stereotypes inherent in their responses to the “Job Fair” game and chart them (e.g., “women are not mechanical enough to fix things” or “men are not caring enough to be nannies or daycare workers”). Ask students where they think some of these stereotypes about men’s and women’s job roles come from, and add their responses to the chart (e.g., family members, TV, books, magazines, religion, video games, etc.)
3. Project or distribute copies the [Employment Office Cartoon](#). Ask students to describe what is going on and engage them in a discussion using some of the following questions:
  - What does the man behind the desk assume about the person applying for the job?
  - Why does the person applying for the job correct the man behind the desk?
  - Have you ever heard of a woman “lumberjack”? Can women be lumberjacks?
  - What message does the job title send to people looking for jobs?
  - What do you think of the term “lumberjill”? Can you think of a better title for this job?
4. Comment that one way gender stereotypes get communicated is through the language we use and the images we see. Post the [Neutralizing Job Titles Chart](#) prepared in advance. Explain that, like “lumberjack,” many job roles have gender written into the title, and that we are so used to these words that we don’t think about the ways in which they promote stereotypes. Write “housewife” in the first column under “female” and “fireman” in the first column under “male” as further examples. (Leave the other columns blank for now).

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**NOTE:** If students question the idea that gendered job titles are problematic (e.g., “What’s wrong with calling someone a

housewife if the person is a woman?"), emphasize that such titles send messages to all of us about what jobs are open to which people, and that these messages can limit our goals and the choices we make. For example, a boy who loves to sew but has only heard "seamstress" attached to that job might feel ashamed of his interest and believe that there will never be an opportunity for him to pursue it.

5. Divide the class into small groups of 4–6 students and select a volunteer from each group to be the recorder, providing them with a sheet of paper. Instruct each group to come up with as many examples of "gendered" job titles as they can think of (see [Neutralizing Job Titles Chart](#) for some examples that you can use to help groups along if needed). Tell the recorders to list the group's examples on the paper and to add them to the class chart when they are done. Ask recorders to avoid listing job titles that have already been listed by another group; instead, they can indicate that their group also identified this job title by writing a check mark (✓) by the title. Allow about 10 minutes for groups to complete this task.
6. Have students remain in their small groups, but draw their attention to the chart and review all of the examples they generated. Ask students if they have additional examples to add.
7. Tell students that their challenge is to now rewrite as many of the job titles as they can to make them more neutral, so that they do not support gender stereotypes. Building on the examples offered in step #3, suggest that "housewife" might be changed to "homemaker" and "fireman" to "firefighter." Write these alternatives in the blank spaces next to each of the original terms. Allow 10–15 minutes for groups to work and have the recorders add the new job titles to the class chart when they are done.
8. Reconvene the class and discuss the following questions:
  - How do the changes in these job titles change the message that is sent to people about who these jobs are open to?
  - Do any of the new titles sound "weird" or "wrong"? Do we sometimes confuse what's familiar with what's "right"? How can we make the new titles seem more familiar and "right"?
  - Are any of the jobs on the list ones that interest you, but that you thought you could never achieve because of your gender? Have you changed your mind as a result of this activity?
  - What other ways, besides changing the language we use, can we challenge gender stereotypes that we hear from friends, family, on TV, online etc.?

### Part III: Consideration Future Options (30 minutes)

1. As a follow-up to this lesson, have students (either in class or for homework) create a collage that answers the proverbial question, "What do you want to be when you grow up?" Have students paste a photo of themselves in the center of a sheet of construction paper. Direct them to surround the photo with magazine cut-outs, drawings, artifacts (e.g., a button to represent sewing/fashion design), etc. that reflect their different interests and the careers that they dream of pursuing someday.
2. Encourage students to think beyond gender stereotypes and to label their collage with gender neutral terms for the jobs they depict.
3. Allow students to share their collages with the class. Hang their art around the classroom and celebrate each individual's aspirations.

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**NOTE:** The purpose of this project is not to force students to consider job roles simply because they are gender non-conforming, but rather to broaden students' notions about the choices open to them. The boy who dreams of becoming a baseball player and the boy who wants to be a ballet dancer should be equally celebrated, without judgment.

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# Employment Office Cartoon



© CartoonStock

## Neutralizing Job Titles Chart

Female		Male	
TRADITIONAL	<i>GENDER NEUTRAL</i>	TRADITIONAL	<i>GENDER NEUTRAL</i>
housewife	homemaker	fireman	firefighter
saleswoman	salesperson	airman	flier/pilot
barmaid	bartender	guardsman	guard/soldier
maid	housecleaner	garbage man	waste removal engineer
comedienne	comic	stable boy	stable attendant/assistant
ballerina	ballet dancer	mailman	letter carrier/postal worker
actress	actor/performer	policemen	police officer
waitress	server	lineman	line person/guard
usherette	attendant/guide	foreman	foreperson/boss
stewardess	flight attendant	busboy	assistant server/table attendant
hostess	greeter	salesman	salesperson/salesclerk
seamstress	sewer	repairman	repairer/repair person
lunch lady	lunch server	actor	performer
		chairman	board chair
		businessman	business person/executive
		waiter	server
		usher	attendant/guide
		comedian	comic
		fisherman	fisher
		lumberjack	logger

## Middle School Lesson

# Pink Collar Jobs: Gender Segregation and Pay Inequality in the Workplace

## Rationale

This lesson increases student awareness about the issues of gender segregation in the workplace and pay inequity, problems that persist but are often masked by progress in the women's rights movement over the past decades. Through political cartoons and analysis of current statistics, students learn about workplace realities for today's average woman. Students then plan social action projects that address pay inequality.

## Objectives

- Students will explore perspectives on women's opportunities in the workplace.
- Students will analyze and organize data about women in the workplace.
- Students will learn about gender segregation in the workplace and the gender wage gap.
- Students will identify and implement actions for addressing pay inequality.

## Age Range

Grades 6–8

## Time

90 minutes or 2 class periods (plus time to implement projects)

## Requirements

Handouts and Resources:

- [Business Executive Cartoon](#) (one copy if projecting; one copy per student if distributing)
- [Corporate Ladder Cartoon](#) (one copy if projecting; one copy per student if distributing)
- [Gender Differences: Education, Jobs and Wages](#) (one copy of each of the five related handouts for each member of one small group)
- [Equal Pay Day: Top 10 Ideas for Action](#) (one copy)

Other Material:

- Chart paper, markers, graph paper, rulers
- (Optional) Computer, LCD projector

## Advanced Preparation

- Reproduce handouts as directed above.
- (Optional) Prepare [Business Executive and Corporate Ladder](#) Cartoons to be project for viewing by entire class.

## Techniques and Skills

analyzing charts, analyzing visual media, brainstorming, collecting and analyzing data, cooperative group work, creating graphs, critical thinking, forming opinions, large and small group discussion, social action

## Key Words

Corporate ladder  
Executive  
Gender  
Inequity  
In the red  
Median  
Pay equity  
Petition  
Pledge  
Segregation  
Stereotypical  
Wage gap

## Procedures

### Part I: Exploring Cartoons about Women in the Workplace (10–15 minutes)

1. Project or distribute copies of the following cartoons (one at a time) and engage students in a brief discussion about each using the questions below.

#### Business Executive

- Who is the woman behind the desk? What is her position?
- What does her husband do?
- Why is the cartoon considered humorous?
- How have women’s roles in the workplace (and men’s roles at home) changed over time?
- What is the cartoonist saying about women’s opportunities in the workplace today?

#### Corporate Ladder

- What is the purpose or function of a ladder? What do you think is meant by the expression “corporate ladder”?
  - Why are there two different sized ladders for men and women?
  - What do you think the woman is thinking and feeling as she looks at the different ladders? How do you know?
  - What is the cartoonist trying to say about opportunities for women in the workplace?
2. Ask students how the message or viewpoint of each cartoon is different. Ask them which cartoon they think most reflects the reality for women today.

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**NOTE:** Encourage students to base their answers on the situations of women they actually know or on what they have learned from the media. Let students know that they do not have to align themselves with one position, that they may see some validity in both viewpoints.

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### Part II: Analyzing Data about Women in the Workplace (45 minutes)

1. Tell students that they will be exploring data that will help them to form a more objective understanding of career opportunities for women in today’s world. Divide the class into five groups. Ask each group to select a recorder and a reporter. Assign each group one of the following topics:
  - Education
  - “Women’s Work”
  - “Men’s Work”
  - Women Doing “Men’s Work”
  - The Wage Gap
2. Distribute a copy of the appropriate [Gender Differences: Education, Jobs and Wages](#) handout to each group. Make graph paper, markers, rulers and other supplies needed for creating graphs available.
3. Instruct groups to complete the following two tasks:
  - a. Review and briefly discuss the assigned handout, making sure that all group members have a common understanding of the data.

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**NOTE:** Several of the handouts include “median” salaries. Be sure that students understand the difference between “median” and “average.” The data from the handouts are taken from Bureau of Labor Statistics [“Labor Force Statistics from the Current Population Survey”](#) which is updated yearly.

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- b. Create a graph that conveys the key information or ideas on the handout. Any type of graph is acceptable, and it is not necessary to include all data from the handout. (For example, the group looking at the wage gap chart listing 20 occupations may select only five representative occupations to depict on their graph.) If computers or tablets are available, students can also create graphs electronically.

4. Reconvene the class and have each group post its graph in the sequence listed above in Part II #1. Ask the group reporters, one at a time, to summarize the key data and themes in the graph created by their group. After all five summaries have been presented, engage students in a discussion using some or all of the following questions:
- Did this data back up what you already thought about women’s roles in the workplace or were you surprised by what you learned? What surprised you?
  - Why do you think there is still a high degree of gender segregation in so many occupations?
  - Why do you think women still earn less on average than men? Do you think this is fair?
  - What value do you think our society places on “women’s work” as compared to “men’s work”? What do you think about this?
  - What do you think can be done to create more equity in the workplace for women?

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**NOTE:** Make sure that students understand the following key points as a result of the data analysis and discussion. If necessary, summarize these points before moving on.

- Women on average have as much or more education than men, and younger generations of women are currently surpassing men in college graduates rates.
  - While there has been much progress for women in the workplace over the last 30–40 years, there is still a high degree of gender segregation in the work world and, in general, “women’s work” is less valued and pays less than “men’s work.”
  - Women who work in traditionally male fields earn more on average than women in traditionally female fields.
  - The average woman, however, still earns less than her male counterpart in the same job, and this gap is even wider for African American and Latina women.
  - Pay inequity is not just a women’s issue. Whole families are impacted when some of the wage earners in a household are underpaid. In addition, research indicates that the salaries for both men and women are less when they supervise, work with or are supervised by females.
- 

### Part III: Take Action by Planning an Equal Pay Day (30 minutes plus time to implement projects)

1. Ask students if there is anything that community members—like themselves—can do if they believe that wage inequity is wrong and discriminatory. List their ideas on the board/smart board.
2. Tell students that an organization called the National Committee on Pay Equity (NCPE) created Equal Pay Day in 1996 to create awareness about the gap between men’s and women’s wages. Share the following:
 

Equal Pay Day is held each April to symbolize how far into the year a woman must work, on average, to earn as much as a man earned the previous year. It is held on the day in April that aligns with how far into the year women must work to earn what men earned in the previous year. To match men’s earnings for 2017, for example, women will have to work from January 2016 to April 4, 2017 an extra four months plus a few days. The day is held on a Tuesday, which is the day on which women’s wages catch up to men’s wages from the previous week. In other words, while the average male works five days per week for twelve months, the average female has to work seven days per week for sixteen months to earn equal pay.
3. Suggest that students can organize an Equal Pay Day (in April or any time of the year) in their school or community and implement one or more of the ideas they generated above in Part III #1. Have students get back into small groups and ask each small group to identify one action that they want to take. If necessary, supplement their ideas with the suggestions on the handout, [Equal Pay Day: Top 10 Ideas for Action](#).
4. Provide time in class to help students organize and implement their actions. Consult the following organizations for further information and resources:
  - [9to5, National Association of Working Women](#)
  - [AFL-CIO](#)
  - [American Association of University Women](#)
  - [National Committee on Pay Equity](#)

- [Institute for Women's Policy Research](#)
- [National Organization of Women](#)
- [National Women's Law Center](#)

# Business Executive Cartoon



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# Corporate Ladder Cartoon



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# Gender Differences: Education, Jobs and Wages

Topic: Education

## COLLEGE TRENDS

### HISTORICALLY

In the U.S., among the population aged 25 and older, a higher percentage of men have attained a bachelor's degree or higher compared to women.

The gap has narrowed since the 1970s, due largely to women's progress in education and workforce participation and to men's wages rising at a slower rate.



### 2014

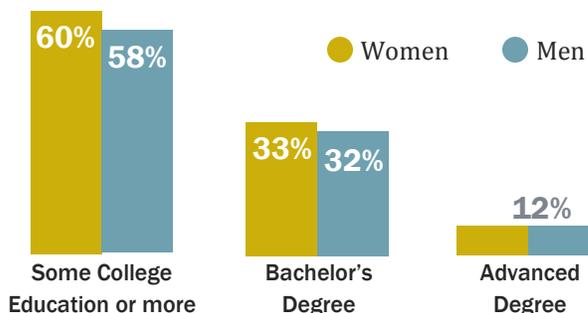
The **first year**, among ages 25 and older, the percentage of women's college attainment (30.2%) was statistically higher than that of men (29.9%).

### 1980-2015

Median weekly earnings for men have been substantially more than women at each level of educational attainment.

*Ryan 2015, Ryan 2016 and Women's Bureau*

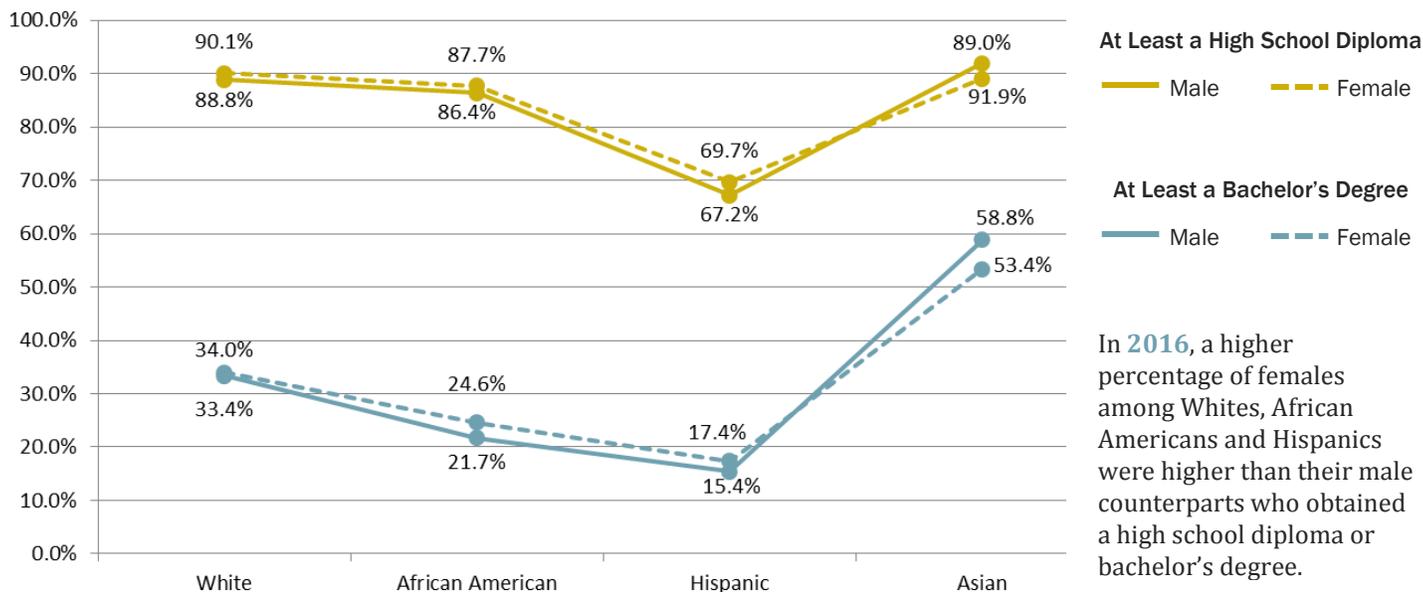
## BY DEGREES



In **2015**, among the population aged 25 and older, a higher percentage of women had completed at least some college or more compared to men.

*Ryan 2015, Ryan 2016 and Women's Bureau*

## BY RACE/ETHNICITY



In **2016**, a higher percentage of females among Whites, African Americans and Hispanics were higher than their male counterparts who obtained a high school diploma or bachelor's degree.

*Census Bureau 2017*

## Sources:

Ryan, C.L., and K. Bauman. 2015. Women Now at the Head of the Class, Lead Men in College Attainment. Washington, DC: U.S. Census Bureau. <https://www.census.gov/newsroom/blogs/random-samplings/2015/10/women-now-at-the-head-of-the-class-lead-men-in-college-attainment.html>.

Ryan, C.L., and K. Bauman. 2016. Educational Attainment in the United States: 2015. Washington, DC: U.S. Census Bureau. [www.census.gov/content/dam/Census/library/publications/2016/demo/p20-578.pdf](http://www.census.gov/content/dam/Census/library/publications/2016/demo/p20-578.pdf).

Census Bureau. 2017. Educational Attainment in the United States: 2016. Current Population Survey, Table A-2. Washington, DC: U.S. Census Bureau. <https://www.census.gov/data/tables/2016/demo/education-attainment/cps-detailed-tables.html>.

Women's Bureau. Women's Earnings and the Wage Gap Issue Brief. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Labor. [www.dol.gov/wb/resources/Womens Earnings and the Wage Gap 17.pdf](http://www.dol.gov/wb/resources/Womens_Earnings_and_the_Wage_Gap_17.pdf).

# Gender Differences: Education, Jobs and Wages

## Topic: “Women’s Work”

Female workers remain for the most part in jobs considered “women’s work.” For example, women make up about 97.7% of all preschool and kindergarten teachers and about 88.6% of all nurses. Only a small number of working women are in jobs considered “men’s work,” such as plumbers or fire fighters.

Occupations with a High Concentration of Women in 2016				
Occupation	% Women	Median* Weekly Salary	% Men	Median* Weekly Salary
Preschool and kindergarten teachers	97.7	\$621	2.5	-
Childcare workers	94.1	\$451	5.9	-
Secretaries and administrative assistants	94.0	\$708	6.0	\$831
Hairdressers, hairstylists and cosmetologists	91.5	\$500	8.8	-
Teacher assistants	90.5	\$525	9.5	\$501
Billing and posting clerks	89.1	\$660	10.9	-
Registered Nurses	88.6	\$1,143	11.4	\$1,261
Nursing, psychiatric and home health aids	86.0	\$498	14.0	\$534
Bookkeeping, accounting and auditing clerks	84.8	\$716	15.2	\$790
Maids and housekeeping cleaners	84.6	\$427	15.4	\$497
Social workers	81.4	\$884	18.6	\$1,039
Elementary and middle school teachers	78.7	\$981	21.3	\$1,126
Medical and health services managers	75.0	\$1,254	25.0	\$1,610

*\*Median means the middle number when a series of numbers are arranged in order. A dash indicates no data or data that meet publication criteria (values were less than \$50,000 annually).*

### Sources:

Bureau of Labor Statistics. 2017. Median weekly earnings of full-time wage and salary workers by detailed occupation and sex. Washington: U.S. Department of Labor. <http://www.bls.gov/cps/cpsaat39.htm>.

# Gender Differences: Education, Jobs and Wages

## Topic: “Men’s Work”

Stereotypical “women’s work” usually pays less than “men’s work.” For example, women’s *median* weekly wage (salary) for a child care worker (considered a “female job”) was \$451 in 2016, while the women’s *median* weekly wage for a truck driver (considered a “male job”) was \$630.

Occupations with a Low Concentration of Women in 2016				
Occupation	% Women	Median* Weekly Salary	% Men	Median* Weekly Salary
Automotive service technicians and mechanics	1.6	-	98.4	\$729
Railroad conductors and yardmasters	1.9	-	98.1	\$1,148
Pipelayers, Plumbers, pipefitters and steamfitters	2.3	-	97.7	\$925
Electricians	2.7	-	97.3	\$951
Firefighters	3.2	-	96.8	\$1,056
Driver/sales workers and truck drivers	4.3	\$630	95.7	\$787
Aircraft pilots and flight engineers	5.9	-	94.1	\$1,600
Police and sheriff’s patrol officers	14.1	\$938	85.9	\$1,008
Clergy (priests, rabbis, ministers, etc.)	14.4	\$893	85.6	\$1,070
Software developers, applications and systems software	19.7	\$1,553	80.2	\$1,863
Computer and mathematical	25.2	\$1,325	74.8	\$1,518
Production	25.9	\$527	74.1	\$723
Sales representatives, wholesale and manufacturing	26.9	\$872	73.1	\$1,140
Chief executives	27.7	\$1,876	72.3	\$2,419
Stock clerks and order fillers	36.6	\$526	63.4	\$533

\*Median means the middle number when a series of numbers are arranged in order. A dash indicates no data or data that meet publication criteria (values were less than \$50,000 annually).

### Sources:

Bureau of Labor Statistics. 2017. Median weekly earnings of full-time wage and salary workers by detailed occupation and sex. Washington: U.S. Department of Labor. <http://www.bls.gov/cps/cpsaat39.htm>.

# Gender Differences: Education, Jobs and Wages

## Topic: Women Doing “Men’s Work”

Women who do “men’s work” earn on average 20–30% more than women who do “women’s work.” For example, a woman working in the field of installation, maintenance or repair will earn a median weekly income of \$781 while a woman working in healthcare support (e.g., medical and dental assistants, nursing aides, massage therapists) will earn \$519.

Occupation (“Men’s Work”)	% Women	Median* Weekly Salary	% Men	Median* Weekly Salary
Installation, maintenance and repair occupations	3.4	\$781	96.6	\$863
Driver/sales workers and truck drivers	4.3	\$630	95.7	\$787
Architecture and Engineering	14.0	\$1,207	86.0	\$1,529
Police and sheriff’s patrol officers	14.1	\$938	85.9	\$1,008
Clergy (priests, rabbis, ministers, etc.)	14.4	\$893	85.6	\$1,070
Software developers, applications and systems software	19.7	\$1,553	80.2	\$1,863
Chief executives	27.7	\$1,876	72.3	\$2,419
Occupation (“Women’s Work”)	% Women	Median* Weekly Salary	% Men	Median* Weekly Salary
Childcare workers	94.1	\$451	5.9	–
Teacher assistants	90.5	\$525	9.5	\$501
Healthcare Support	86.4	\$519	13.6	\$602
Personal care aides	83.5	\$469	16.4	\$514
Medical and health services managers	75.0	\$1,254	25.0	\$1,610
Personal Care and Service occupations	73.4	\$482	26.6	\$613
Office and Administrative Support	71.5	\$669	28.5	\$708

\*Median means the middle number when a series of numbers are arranged in order. A dash indicates no data or data that meet publication criteria (values were less than \$50,000 annually).

### Sources:

Bureau of Labor Statistics. 2017. Median weekly earnings of full-time wage and salary workers by detailed occupation and sex. Washington: U.S. Department of Labor. <http://www.bls.gov/cps/cpsaat39.htm>.

# Gender Differences: Education, Jobs and Wages

## Topic: The Wage Gap

In 2016, women in the U.S. were paid only 80¢ for every dollar a man was paid. Asian American women in the U.S. earned 87¢, African American women earned 63¢ and Latinas earned 54¢ for every dollar that men earned.

According to these percentages, the estimated loss of annual salary is \$7,310 for Asian women, \$21,698 for African American women and \$26,403 for Latinas.

The Gap\* between Median\*\* Weekly Salaries for Men and Women in 2016

Occupation	Median* Salary for Men	Median* Salary for Women	Difference	Wage Gap**
Bartenders	\$701	\$498	\$203	71.0%
Cashiers	\$475	\$403	\$72	84.9%
Janitors and Building Cleaners	\$564	\$476	\$88	84.4%
Computer Programmers	\$1,466	\$1,312	\$154	89.5%
Bus drivers	691	\$589	\$102	85.2%
Cooks	\$459	\$421	\$38	91.7%
Designers	\$1,267	\$922	\$345	72.8%
Physicians and Surgeons	\$2,343	\$1,476	\$867	63.0%
Elementary and Middle School Teachers	\$1,126	\$981	\$145	87.1%
Architects and Engineers	\$1,529	\$1,207	\$322	78.9%
Laundry and Dry-Cleaning Workers	\$486	\$436	\$50	89.7%
Lawyers	\$2,086	\$1,619	\$467	77.6%
Maids and Housekeeping Cleaners	\$497	\$427	\$70	85.9%
Postal Service Mail Carriers	\$1,020	\$931	\$89	91.3%
Registered Nurses	\$1,261	\$1,143	\$118	90.6%
Bailiffs, Correctional Officers and Jailers	\$793	\$672	\$121	84.7%
Food Service Managers	\$853	\$632	\$221	74.1%
Sales Representatives, services, all other	\$1,202	\$826	\$376	68.7%
Secretaries and Administrative Assistants	\$831	\$708	\$123	85.2%
Waiters and Waitresses	\$504	\$441	\$63	87.5%

\*Median means the middle number when a series of numbers are arranged in order.

\*\*A gap of 70% means, for example, that women earn 70¢ for every \$1.00 that men earn.

### Sources:

Bureau of Labor Statistics. 2017. Median weekly earnings of full-time wage and salary workers by detailed occupation and sex. Washington: U.S. Department of Labor. <http://www.bls.gov/cps/cpsaat39.htm>.

National Women's Law Center. 2017. The Wage Gap: The Who, How, Why, and What To Do. Fact Sheet. <https://nwlc.org/resources/the-wage-gap-the-who-how-why-and-what-to-do/>.

# Equal Pay Day: Top 10 Ideas for Action

1. Wear RED on Equal Pay Day to symbolize how far women (especially African-American and Latina women) are “in the red” (or losing money) with their pay.
2. Conduct a public information campaign to raise awareness about the wage gap.
3. Send letters to the editor of your local paper or blog about the issue of pay inequality.
4. Interview women in your community to learn more about how they are affected by the wage gap. Share their stories through your school or local newspaper/Web site.
5. Sponsor an essay contest in your school or community to raise awareness about pay inequality and publish the winning entries in your school or local newspaper/Web site.
6. Encourage your city council, mayor and/or governor to proclaim “Equal Pay Day” in your community, city and/or state.
7. Write letters to or schedule meetings with local and state legislators, and ask them to sign a Fair Pay Pledge ensuring pay equity practices in their own offices and support for local or state level pay equity legislation.
8. Write letters to or schedule meetings with members of Congress, and ask them to sign a Fair Pay Pledge ensuring pay equity practices in their own offices and support for federal pay equity legislation, such as the Paycheck Fairness Act (S. 766/H.R. 1338 and the Fair Pay Restoration Act (S. 1843).
9. Organize a petition to send to legislators that demonstrates support in your community for pay equity legislation.
10. Conduct a survey of local businesses and their employees to determine what benefits and policies are available to working women and their families. Publicize the results in your school or local newspaper or Web site.

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Adapted with permission from American Association of University Women, Pay Equity Ideas for Action, <http://www.aauw.org> (accessed May 2008).

## High School Lesson

# Women's Inequity in Pay: Could It Be Sexism, Implicit Bias or Both?

## Rationale

This lesson provides an opportunity for students to reflect on their own opinions about sexism, understand the gender pay gap and its various manifestations and consider ways that it can be addressed.

## Objectives

- Students will explore their opinions of and experiences with sexism and gender stereotypes.
- Students will deepen their understanding of the “gender wage gap,” how it manifests in different states and the way it specifically impacts women of color.
- Students will reflect on ways to close the gender pay gap and explore one idea in depth.

## Age Range

Grades 9–12

## Time

90 minutes or 2 class periods (plus time to implement project)

## Requirements

Handouts and Resources:

- [The Big Number: 80 Percent](#) graph (one for each student and to be projected)
- [Wage Gap Data Interpretation](#) (one for each group)
- [Gender Differences: Jobs, Wages and Education](#) (one for each student)
- [“How to Bridge That Stubborn Pay Gap”](#) article (one for each student)

Other Material:

- Chart paper, markers, pens or pencils
- Computer, LCD projector or board/smart board

## Advanced Preparation

- Reproduce handouts as directed above.
- Prepare definitions in Part I #5 to be posted for review.
- Select a large open space and indicate the position of an imaginary line with the farthest left point representing a STRONGLY AGREE response and the farthest right point a STRONGLY DISAGREE response. In between, place AGREE, IN BETWEEN/NOT SURE and DISAGREE along the continuum. Hang up signs with these words on the wall to mark each position (see Part I #1).
- Prepare [The Big Number: 80 Percent](#) graph to be projected for viewing by the entire class and/or distribute a copy to each student (see Part II #3).

## Techniques and Skills

analyzing charts, analyzing data, analyzing visual media, brainstorming, cooperative group work, critical thinking, forming opinions, large and small group discussion, social action

## Key Words

Bias  
 Compensation  
 Discrimination  
 Disparity  
 Flexibility  
 Gender wage gap  
 Implicit bias  
 Institutional  
 Median  
 Negotiate  
 Parental leave  
 Personal  
 Penalized  
 Policy  
 Salaries  
 Sexism  
 Stereotype  
 Unconscious bias  
 Wage

## Procedures

### Part I: Introduction to Bias and Sexism (20 minutes)

1. Explain to students that they will listen to some statements about gender and equity and decide to what extent they agree or disagree with each statement. Explain that some are statements of opinion and some are statements that have factual information. Instruct them to indicate their opinion about each statement by positioning themselves along the continuum posted on the wall, depending upon how strongly they agree or disagree with a statement.
2. Read each statement below, one at a time, requesting that students take a few minutes to decide where they stand in the continuum and to walk silently to that place and observe where others choose to stand. Following each statement, after everyone has chosen their spot, have students spend 2–3 minutes talking amongst themselves (in the groups that formed after choosing where to stand) about why they are standing where they are.
  - Girls and boys in this school are treated equally.
  - Gender stereotypes mostly hurt girls and women.
  - Women and men who have the same level of education generally make the same amount of money.
  - Sexism is a thing of the past.
  - Women who have children make less money than women who don't have children.
  - There are not major differences in salary between women of different races/ethnic backgrounds.
3. After all of the statements have been read, reconvene the whole class and lead a group discussion using the following questions:
  - a. Were some statements easier for you to decide where to stand and some more difficult? How so?
  - b. How did it feel when you might have been the only person or one of a few in a particular place on the continuum?
  - c. What did you base your decision about where to place yourself?
  - d. Did you ever decide to change your position when you saw you did not agree with a majority of the group, or after hearing others' points of view?
4. Ask students if they know what the terms "bias," "stereotype," "sexism" and "implicit bias" mean. Elicit responses for each term. Then, post the following definitions and review them, ensuring students understand the meanings:

**Bias:** an inclination or preference either for or against an individual or group that interferes with impartial judgment.

**Stereotype:** an oversimplified idea about a person or an entire group of people without regard for individual differences.  
*Example: All boys are good at sports.*

**Sexism:** prejudice and/or discrimination based on a person's sex. Sexism is based on a belief (conscious or unconscious) that there is a natural order based on sex. *Example: Someone tells a joke or puts a person down because the person is male or female.*

**Implicit bias:** the unconscious attitudes, stereotypes and unintentional actions (positive or negative) towards members of a group merely because of their membership in that group. These associations develop over the course of a lifetime beginning at a very early age through exposure to direct and indirect messages. When people are acting out of their implicit bias, they are not even aware that their actions are biased. In fact, those biases may be in direct conflict with a person's explicit beliefs and values.

5. Share the following example of implicit bias:

Researchers asked students to rate teachers of an online course. The students were divided into four groups—two groups instructed by a female teacher and the other two by a male teacher. The students never saw or heard the teachers' voices. To one of the group of students, a male teacher claimed to be female and to another group of students, a female teacher claimed to be male. Despite who taught the course, when students believed the teacher to be male, they rated the male more highly. When believed to be female, the teacher was rated significantly lower (Source: Lillian MacNell and Matt Shipman, "[Online Students Give Instructors Higher Marks If They Think Instructors Are Men](#)," NC State News, December 9, 2014).

6. Lead a class discussion by asking the following questions:
  - In what way does this example illustrate implicit bias?
  - Do you think this example illustrates sexism? Why or why not?

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**NOTE:** If it is not mentioned, share with students that in this example, students may have rated the male teacher more favorably because of his gender (i.e. sexism). And, students may have rated the male teacher higher because of biases they have subconsciously learned or were unaware of (i.e. implicit bias).

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- Can you think of other examples of implicit bias?
- What are the challenges and possible consequences of making assumptions about someone based only on the person's gender?

### Part II: Analyzing the Gender Pay Gap (60 minutes)

1. Ask students if they know what is meant by the term "gender pay gap." If students do not know, have them look at the three words separately to determine its meaning. Elicit/explain the definition of **gender pay gap** as the average difference between men's and women's median earnings, reported as either the earnings ratio between men and women or as an actual pay gap. For this lesson, the earnings ratio will be used to reflect the pay gap, calculated as follows:

$$\text{Pay gap} = \text{Women's median earnings} \div \text{Men's median earnings}$$

Also explain that this is also known as "gender wage gap" and the terms are often used interchangeably.

2. Ask students if they believe the gender pay gap is a result of conscious or unconscious bias, or neither? Allow a few minutes for them to share their thoughts.
3. Explain to students that they are going to talk about some data regarding the gender pay gap. Project the graph entitled "[The Big Number: 80 Percent](#)." Give students five minutes to carefully look at the data and then ask them to share some facts about the graph.

4. Provide a more detailed explanation of the graph by reading the following blurb:

Did you know that in 2016, women working full time in the United States typically were paid just 80 percent of what men were paid, a gap of 20 percent? The gap has narrowed since the 1970s, due largely to women's progress in education and workforce participation and to men's wages rising at a slower rate. Still, the pay gap does not appear likely to go away on its own. At the rate of change between 1960 and 2016, women are expected to reach pay equity with men in 2059. But even that slow progress has stalled in recent years. If change continues at the slower rate seen since 2001, women will not reach pay equity with men until 2119.

Ask students if they have any questions and provide responses that facilitate their understanding of the data.

5. Tell students they are going to analyze data regarding the gender pay gap and explore the different ways it manifests. Divide students into small groups of 4–5 students each.
6. Distribute to each group one copy of the [Wage Gap Data Interpretation](#) and to each student the [Gender Differences: Jobs, Wages and Education](#) handout. Instruct students to look at only the information in the "Occupations" section and to take note of the jobs classified as "Women's Work" and as "Men's Work." Explain to students that throughout the years, society has continuously classified positions like these according to perceptions of gender roles and whether a woman can perform executive/management level jobs or jobs viewed as labor intensive. This handout represents a sampling of occupations reflecting high and low concentrations of women.
7. Give students ten minutes in their small groups to study and discuss the data for each position. Ask for volunteers to indicate what they think the data reveals. Come to an understanding of the following:
  - Occupations classified as "Women's Work" generally involve nurturing, teaching or desk work while occupations classified as "Men's Work" generally involve leadership, decision making or labor/construction work.
  - Men make more money than women in both "Women's Work" and "Men's Work."
  - Women make more money doing "Men's Work" than doing "Women's Work."

8. Ask each group to select a recorder who will complete the [Wage Gap Data Interpretation](#) handout based on their small group discussion. Instruct groups to read the rest of the [Gender Differences: Jobs, Wages and Education](#) handout, studying and discussing the information and data while they answer the questions on the handout as a group. Allow 15 minutes for this part of the activity.
9. Reconvene the whole class and ask for someone from each group to report their groups' responses to questions 1–3 from the *Wage Gap Data Interpretation* handout. Allow 20 minutes for reporting.
10. Lead a class discussion by asking the following questions:
  - a. Taking into consideration all the data you have reviewed and discussions you've had, what did you learn that made you either change your point of view or made you feel more strongly about the position you took during the exercise at the beginning of this lesson when asked the following questions? Read each statement one at a time allowing a few responses for each statement
    - Women and men who have the same level of education generally make the same amount of money.
    - Sexism is a thing of the past.
    - There are not major differences in salary between women of different races/ethnic backgrounds.
  - b. Taking into consideration your discussions about question four on the *Wage Gap Data Interpretation* handout, what do you think are some of the reasons that women earn less (record responses on board/smart board)?

Following up on the last discussion question, explain that the gender wage gap is due to a variety of causes including: discrimination in hiring, differences in education choices, differences in preferred job and industry, salary negotiation differences, the types of positions held by men and women, difference in length of work week and breaks in employment due to parenting.

11. Distribute a copy of the article "[How to Bridge That Stubborn Pay Gap](#)" to each student. Give students ten minutes to read the article silently.

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**NOTE:** The wage gap-related statistics in the article are somewhat different than what is in the article because the lesson has been updated since this article was written. However, the article still provides key and relevant information on how to close the wage gap.

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12. Engage students in a class discussion by asking the following questions:
  - According to the article, what are some of the reasons for the gender wage gap and what factors make it difficult to determine the exact reasons for the gap?
  - What are some of the suggested ideas to address the gender wage gap? What are your thoughts about those suggestions?
  - Which of these examples reflect conscious bias and which reflect unconscious bias and why?

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**NOTE:** If students ask questions about what the federal government has done to address this problem, share the following:

In 2009, the first piece of legislation that President Obama signed was the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act, a bill that makes it easier for women to sue companies who pay women less than men for the same work. In June 2012, another bill would have banned companies from retaliating against women for seeking equal pay but it failed in the Senate. Then it failed twice more in the Senate in 2014. It is important to note that according to estimates from the National Organization of Women (NOW), over her lifetime, the wage gap will cost the average high school graduate \$700,000, the average college graduate \$1.2 million and the average advanced degree graduate \$2 million.

Additionally, you may recommend students read an interactive article, "See What Your State Is Doing to Close the Gender Wage Gap," at <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/us-news/see-what-your-state-doing-close-wage-gap-n741351> for additional information on what the government is doing.

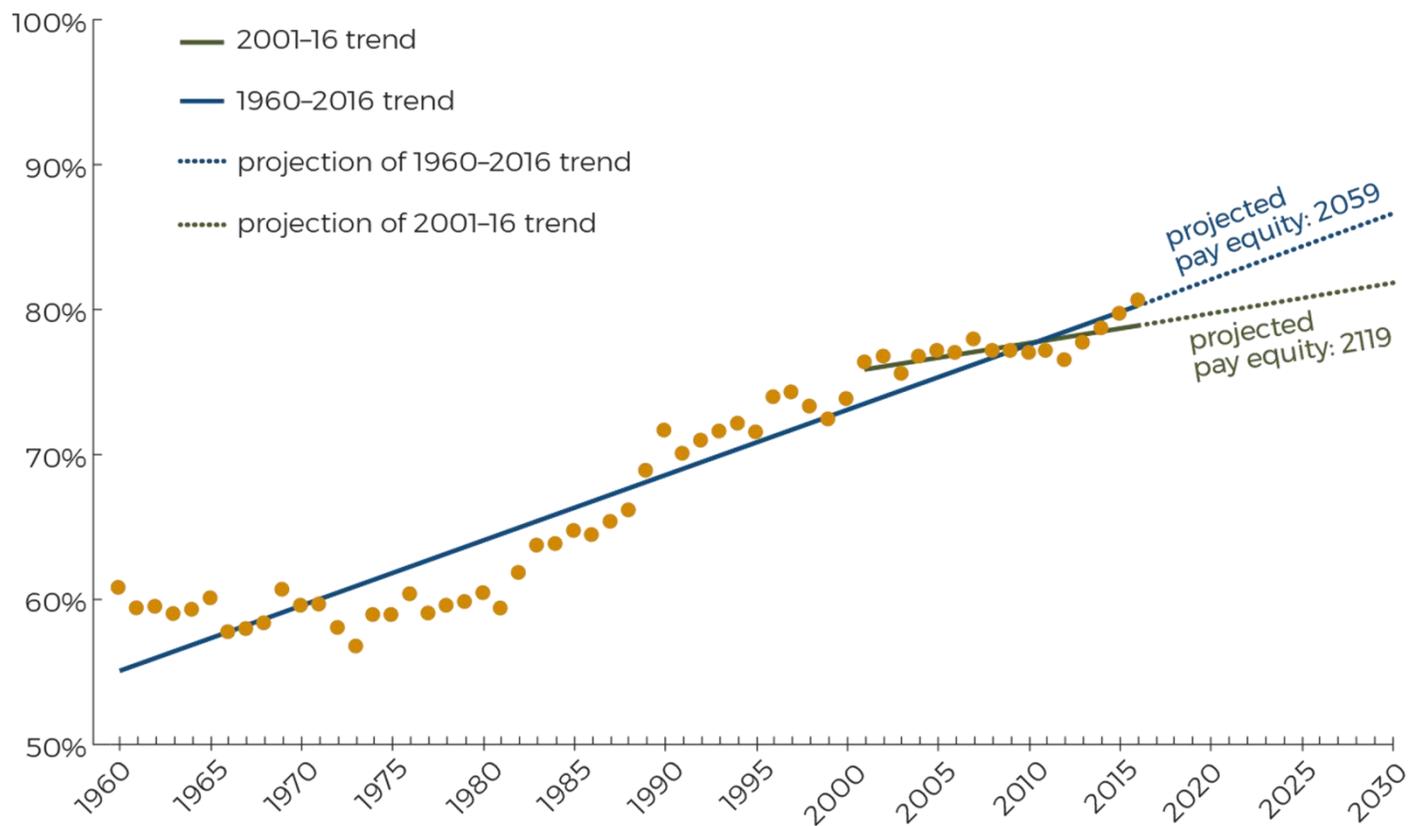
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**Part III: Social Action Essay Writing (10 minutes)**

1. Explain that bias can be personal and institutional and, similarly, the solutions can be personal or institutional. Ask students how they think the two are different and provide the following definitions of personal and institutional bias:
  - **Personal** manifestations of prejudice or discrimination include individual acts of bias, meanness or exclusion.
  - **Institutional** manifestations of prejudice or discrimination include policies and practices that are supported and sanctioned by power and authority, and that benefit some and disadvantage others.
2. Explain to students that they are going to brainstorm ways to address the gender wage gap. Ask them to reflect on everything they have discussed, read and learned—on both a personal and institutional level—and call out ways they think the gender wage gap can be addressed. Record their responses on the board/smart board.
3. Instruct students to select one of the ideas generated from the brainstorming session to expand upon. Explain that for homework they are to write an essay (or a research paper) to be completed over the course of the next day or several weeks, depending on the writing assignment, but they are to write the opening paragraph now, in class. In addition, and if time allows, students can also make a video, PowerPoint presentation or use social media to get their message across to a larger audience.
4. Close by having all the students share the opening paragraph from their essays (or research paper). Then indicate when their paper is due.

# The Big Number: 80 Percent

Women’s Median Annual Earnings as a Percentage of Men’s for Full-time, Year-round Workers, 1960–2016 and Projections



Source: AAUW analysis of Semega et al., 2017 and previous publications.

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# Wage Gap Data Interpretation

Directions: Based on all the data from the *Gender Differences: Job, Wages and Education* handout that your group has reviewed and analyzed, discuss and answer the following questions within your group.

1. Do men and women who have the same level of education generally make the same amount of money?
2. Does education have an impact on how much you can earn in the workplace? Explain.
3. Are there major differences in salary between women of different races? How about women of color (African-American, Latino, Asian) compared to white men? What are the differences among women of color (African-American, Latina, Asian)? Explain.
4. Do you think the gender wage gap is a result of conscious or unconscious bias, or neither? Please explain.

# Gender Differences: Jobs, Wages and Education

## Occupations

The gender wage gap is the average difference between men's and women's median earnings, reported as either the earnings ratio between men and women or as an actual pay gap. The wage (pay) gap, as earnings ratio, is calculated as follows:

$$\text{Wage gap} = \text{Women's median earnings} \div \text{Men's median earnings}$$

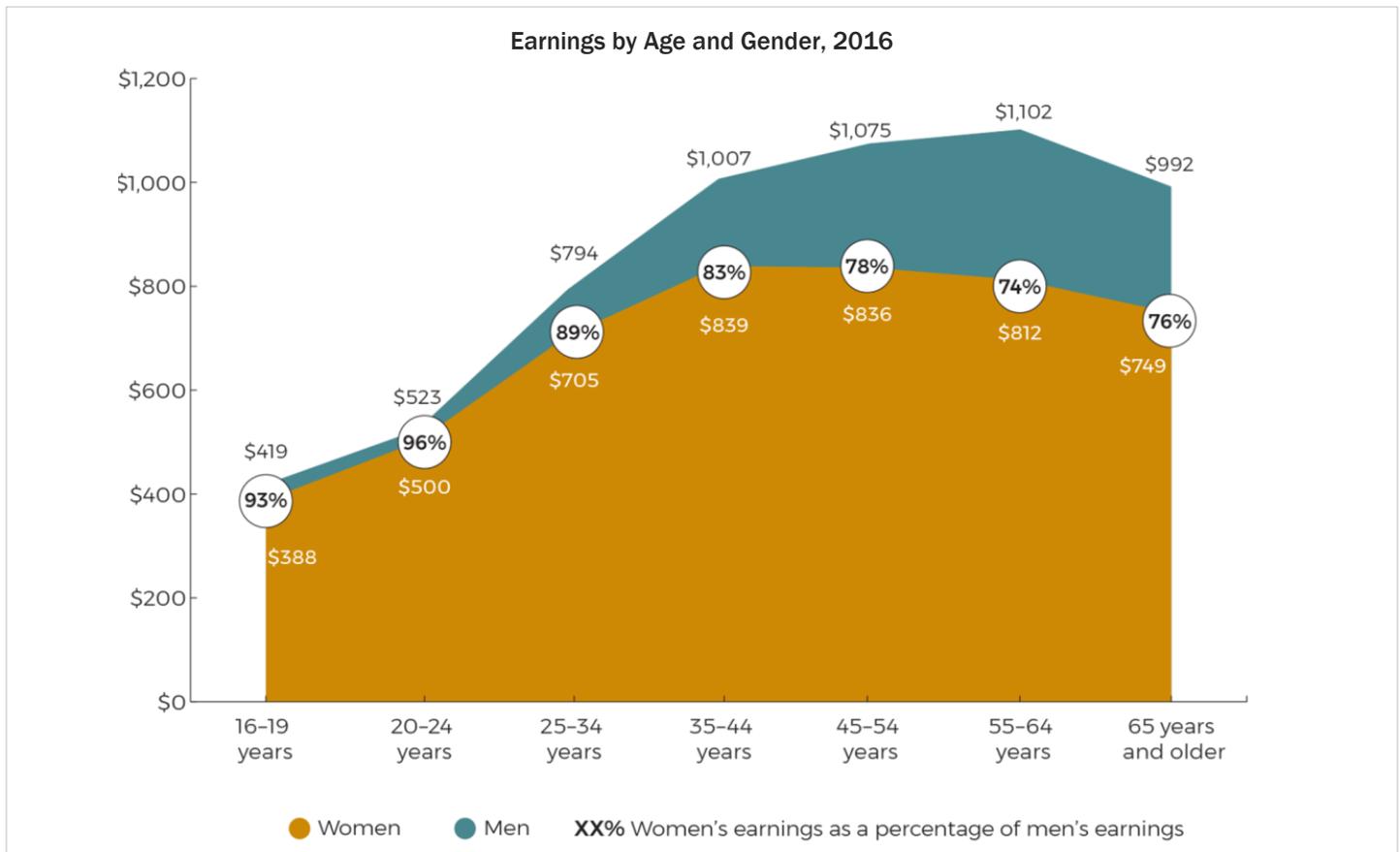
<b>"Women's Work"</b> (Occupations with a High Concentration of Women in 2016)	<b>% Women</b>	<b>Median* Weekly Salary</b>	<b>% Men</b>	<b>Median* Weekly Salary</b>	<b>Wage Gap**</b>
Preschool and kindergarten teachers	97.7	\$621	2.5	–	
Childcare workers	94.1	\$451	5.9	–	
Secretaries and administrative assistants	94.0	\$708	6.0	\$831	85.2%
Registered Nurses	88.6	\$1,143	11.4	\$1,261	90.6%
Nursing, psychiatric and home health aids	86.0	\$498	14.0	\$534	93.3%
Bookkeeping, accounting and auditing clerks	84.8	\$716	15.2	\$790	90.6%
Maids and housekeeping cleaners	84.6	\$427	15.4	\$497	85.9%
Social workers	81.4	\$884	18.6	\$1,039	85.1%
Elementary and middle school teachers	78.7	\$981	21.3	\$1,126	87.1%
Medical and health services managers	75.0	\$1,254	25.0	\$1,610	77.9%
<b>"Men's Work"</b> (Occupations with a Low Concentration of Women in 2016)	<b>% Women</b>	<b>Median* Weekly Salary</b>	<b>% Men</b>	<b>Median* Weekly Salary</b>	
Chief executives	27.7	\$1,876	72.3	\$2,419	77.6%
Computer and Mathematical	25.2	\$1,325	74.8	\$1,518	87.3%
Software developers, applications and systems software	18.0	\$1,415	81.9	1,751	80.8%
Clergy (priests, rabbis, ministers, etc.)	14.4	\$893	85.6	\$1,070	83.5%
Architecture and Engineering	14.0	\$1,207	86.0	\$1,529	78.9%
Driver/sales workers and truck drivers	4.3	\$630	95.7	\$787	80.1%
Installation, maintenance and repair occupations	3.4	\$781	96.6	\$863	90.5%
Firefighters	3.2	–	96.8	\$1,056	
Electricians	2.7	–	97.3	\$951	

\*Median means the middle number when a series of numbers are arranged in order. A dash indicates no data or data that meet publication criteria (values were less than \$50,000 annually).

\*\*A gap of 70% means, for example, that women earn 70¢ for every \$1.00 that men earn.

## Earnings

Women are integral to today's workforce. Almost half of U.S. workers are women yet they only earn 80% of what men earn. Earnings for both female and male full-time workers tend to increase with age, though earnings increase more slowly after age 45 and even decrease after age 55 (see graph below). Women's median weekly earnings in 2016 were highest among ages 35–54. The gender pay gap was the smallest between ages 16–24 and grew with age. Older female workers earned considerably less than their male counterparts and experienced a wage gap considerably larger than the male/female differences in wages among younger workers.

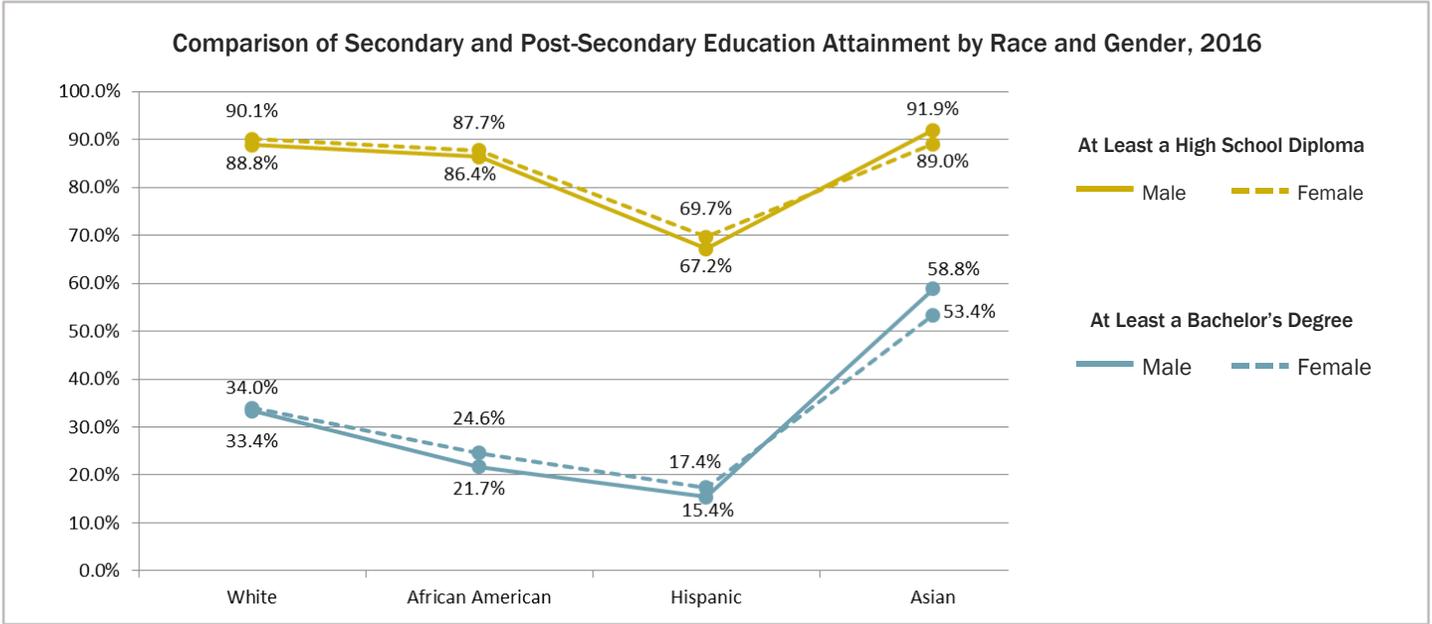


Note: Based on median usual weekly earnings of full-time wage and salary workers, 2016 annual averages

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (2017c). Illustration reprinted with permission from *The Simple Truth about the Gender Wage Page*. © 2017 The American Association of University Women, [www.aauw.org](http://www.aauw.org).

## Education

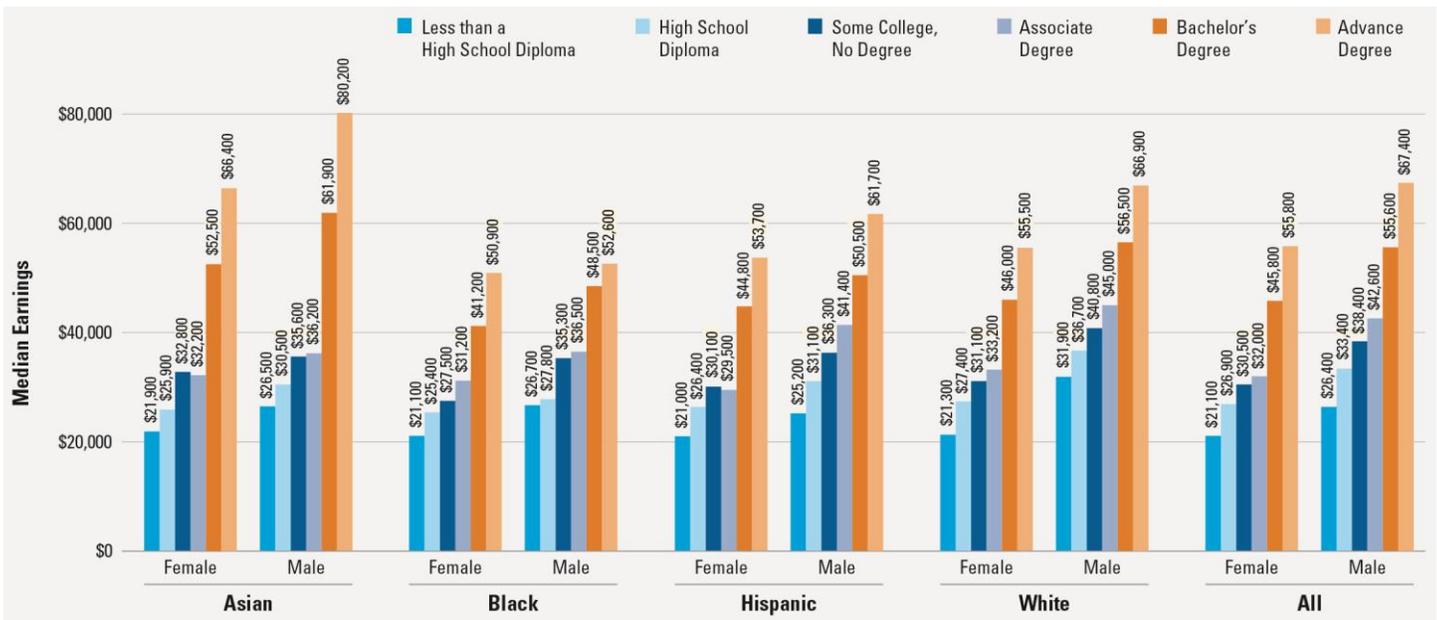
As educational attainment increases, the percentages of men and women who participate in the U.S. labor force also increases. The gap between men's and women's labor force participation rates also narrows as educational attainment increases. Between 1980 and 2015, the median weekly earnings for men have been substantially more than women at each level of educational attainment with 2014 being the first year, among ages 25 and older, where the percentage of women's college attainment (30.2%) was statistically higher than that of men (29.9%). In 2016, men had higher labor force participation rates than women at nearly every level of educational attainment. A higher percentage of females among Whites, African Americans and Hispanics were higher than their male counterparts who obtained a high school diploma or bachelor's degree. But, the percentage for Asian males was statistically higher than their female counterparts (see the graph below).



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Educational Attainment in the United States: 2016

A report by the College Board shows that median earnings of females with a bachelor's degree exceeded the median earnings of female high school graduates by 66% in 2015. For males with a bachelor's degree, their median earnings exceeded the median earnings of male high school graduates by 72%. The graph below reflects the median earnings of full-time workers age 25 to 34 by race/ethnicity, gender and education level.

**Median Earnings of Full-Time Workers Age 25 to 34 by Race/Ethnicity, Gender and Education Level**



Notes: Based on combined data from the 2014, 2015 and 2016 Annual Social and Economic Supplement of the Current Population Survey. Earnings in 2013 and 2014 are adjusted to 2015 dollars using the Consumer Price Index for all urban consumers. Median earnings are the medians of combined data. The "Asian," "Black" and "White" categories include individuals who reported one race only and who reported non-Hispanic.

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, Annual Social and Economic Supplement, 2014, 2015 and 2016; calculations by the authors. Reprinted from Jennifer Ma, Matea Pender and Meredith Welch, *Education Pays 2016: The Benefits of Higher Education for Individuals and Society* (New York: The College Board, 2016),

## Race/Ethnicity

Among full-time workers in 2016, Hispanic or Latina, American Indian or Alaska Native, Black or African American and Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander women had lower median annual earnings compared with non-Hispanic white and Asian women. Compared with salary information for white male workers, Asian women's salaries show the smallest gender pay gap, at 87% of white men's earnings. The gap was largest for Hispanic women, who were paid only 54% of what White men were paid in 2016.

### Women's Earnings as a Percentage of White Men's Earnings, by Race/Ethnicity, 2016

Women	Current Population Survey (CPS)	American Community Survey (ACS)
Hispanic or Latina	54%	54%
Black or African American	63%	63%
White (non-Hispanic)	79%	77%
Asian	87%	90%
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	–	59%
American Indian or Alaska Native	–	57%

Note: Based on median annual earnings of full-time, year-round workers. CPS includes workers 15 and older; ACS includes workers 16 and older. The CPS is the preferred data source for income estimates but lacks sufficient sample size for reporting on smaller demographic groups. See page 6 for a more detailed description of the CPS and ACS.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau (2017a, 2017b)

According to the percentages listed above, for women of color, the wage gap translates into an annual loss of \$26,403 for Latinas, \$24,007 for Native women, \$21,698 for Black women and \$7,310 for Asian women. Closing the wage gap is, therefore, particularly important for Black, Latina and Native women who have lower incomes, and are more likely to be in poverty than white, non-Hispanic women and Asian women. (Source: "[The Wage Gap: The Who, How, Why and What to Do](#)," Workplace Fact Sheet (Washington, DC: National Women's Law Center))