

# Citizen games

## Teacher guideline

**Gender Adventure: A serious game about  
Gender identity and gender discrimination**

**2022**



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# Summary

This pedagogical booklet is intended to help teachers organise classroom activities or lessons based on a serious game named 'Gender Adventure'. The game and manual were created as part of the Citizen Games project, a collaboration between NGOs and universities across Europe which was financed by Erasmus+.

The proposed activities are meant for high school students (15-18 years old) and include a short digital game that deals with gender equality and discrimination in public places. The game itself comprises three mini games, each of which plays a part in the wider narrative of gender equality and discrimination in public places.

The first parts of this booklet explain the game's objectives and how to plan a lesson with the 'Gender Adventure' game.

This game is supposed to be followed by a classroom discussion where the students can confront their perceptions and opinions. To facilitate the classroom discussion, this pedagogical booklet includes examples of debriefing questions and additional information on gender-related issues to help teachers lead the debate.

## USEFUL LINKS:

The game can be played using the Chrome or Opera browser:  
[https://play.citizengames.eu/high\\_school\\_game/](https://play.citizengames.eu/high_school_game/)

This manual is complemented by an e-learning module (online training) for teachers:  
<https://view.genial.ly/628e28c6244f73001795b2bf/interactive-content-en-genderadventure-citizen-games>

For more information, visit the project website: [www.citizengames.eu](http://www.citizengames.eu)

# Introduction

Two French and one Dutch non-governmental organisations (NGOs), as well as five higher education institutions from European countries (Belgium, Germany, Poland, Ireland, and Portugal) have joined forces to raise awareness among young people and their teachers about societal issues (environment, gender equality, etc.). For classroom use they have co-designed and -created serious games - educational tools that allow students to learn by gameplay.

This initiative, called Citizen Games, is the follow-up to the 'Citizen School, Serious Gaming for a better Europe' project, which was carried out between 2016 and 2019. This first collaborative experience between the partner NGOs and universities delivered a complete educational package on the topic of migration, which can now be downloaded free of charge from [www.citizenschool.eu](http://www.citizenschool.eu). Its objective was to contribute to the creation of a European society that is more inclusive and respectful of all people. Similarly to Citizen School, Citizen Games has been funded by Erasmus+; its outputs will remain free of charge in the future and are available on [www.citizengames.eu](http://www.citizengames.eu).

The results of this renewed collaboration are two digital educational games. The first one, for middle school students (11-14 years old), was created in 2021. This game, named '#YouToo,' deals with cyberbullying and cybersexism. The second one is for high school students (15-18 years old). To create this game, the partners first surveyed high-school students to find out what topics they would like to know or learn more about. As a result of this survey three themes emerged: plastic soup, gender discrimination in public places, and fighting extremism. Later, students from the partner universities were trained on these topics and met in Porto for ten days to design a concept for the serious game. This was a great experience, especially as the students came from different fields of study (IT, tourism, management, engineering, and social work) and from four different countries in Europe. The winning concept was designed on the topic of gender equality by the Maverick team and was used as a starting point for the creation of the final serious game. Finally, the partners were in charge of fully developing the game, writing this manual and designing an e-learning module for teachers to inform high-school students about gender inequalities and discrimination.

## **Please note!**

The 'Gender Adventure' game deals with gender identities. Yet, it does not deal with sexual orientation although this topic can also be part of gender-related issues and discrimination.

The purpose of this educational manual (available in the six project languages) is to facilitate the organisation of a classroom activity around the high-school serious game “Gender Adventure” by teachers across Europe, and therefore to support them in the appropriation of the technicalities and theoretical content of the game. Designed as a tool for global education, the game only reaches its educational objectives if it is followed by a debriefing-talk and classroom discussion with and between the students. In addition to explanations how to play the game, you will therefore find this manual provides background information for further discussion with the students.

**Please note!**

The game is available on computer only. It has not been adapted to mobile phones, or tablets, because of several reasons. First, this game is meant to be played at school, as part of a classroom activity. Taking into account the reality of schools across the partnering countries, it appears that most schools are equipped with a computer room and that it is therefore not a limiting factor for teachers to use the game. In addition, although most do, not all high-school students have a smartphone, with access to the internet, and it would be unfair to expect that they do so in order to take part in the class activity. Finally, the players will get less distracted on a school computer than on their smartphone where they can receive notifications at any time.

# Definitions

Below are the main definitions needed to understand the game and lead the classroom discussion.

**Sex** refers to a set of biological attributes at birth (chromosomes, gene expression, hormone levels and functions, and reproductive/sexual anatomy). Sex is usually categorized as female or male but there is variation in the biological attributes that comprise sex and how those attributes are expressed.

**Gender** refers to the socially constructed roles, behaviour, expressions and identities of girls, boys, and gender diverse people. It influences how people perceive themselves and each other.

**Sexism** is defined as an “individual’s attitudes, beliefs, and behaviour, and organisational, institutional, and cultural practices that either reflect negative evaluations of individuals based on their gender or support unequal status of women and men”<sup>1</sup>.

**Discrimination** is “an unfair treatment because of a person’s sex, race, age, etc.”<sup>2</sup>.

**Gender identity** is a “person’s feeling of having a particular gender”<sup>3</sup>.

Being **non binary** means you identify yourself neither as male nor female.

Being **cisgender** means your gender identity aligns with the one you find in your birth certificate.

Being **transgender** means that the sex assigned at birth and the gender you live is different.

**Patriarchy** is “a form of social organisation in which fathers or other males control the family, clan, tribe or larger social unit, or a society organised in this way. Patriarchy is also the control by men, rather than women or both men and women, of most of the power and authority in a society”<sup>4</sup>.

**Catcall** is “a loud shout or whistle expressing disapproval, especially made by people in a crowd”<sup>5</sup>.

**Toxic masculinity** is a set of “ideas about the way that men should behave that are seen as harmful. For example, the idea that men should not cry or admit weakness”<sup>6</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Swim & Hyers, 2009, p. 407

<sup>2</sup> Cambridge dictionary, <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/essential-british-english/discrimination> - 25/05/2022

<sup>3</sup> Cambridge dictionary, <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/gender-identity> - 25/05/2022

<sup>4</sup> Cambridge dictionary, <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/patriarchy> - 19/05/2022

<sup>5</sup> Cambridge dictionary, <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/catcall> - 25/05/2022

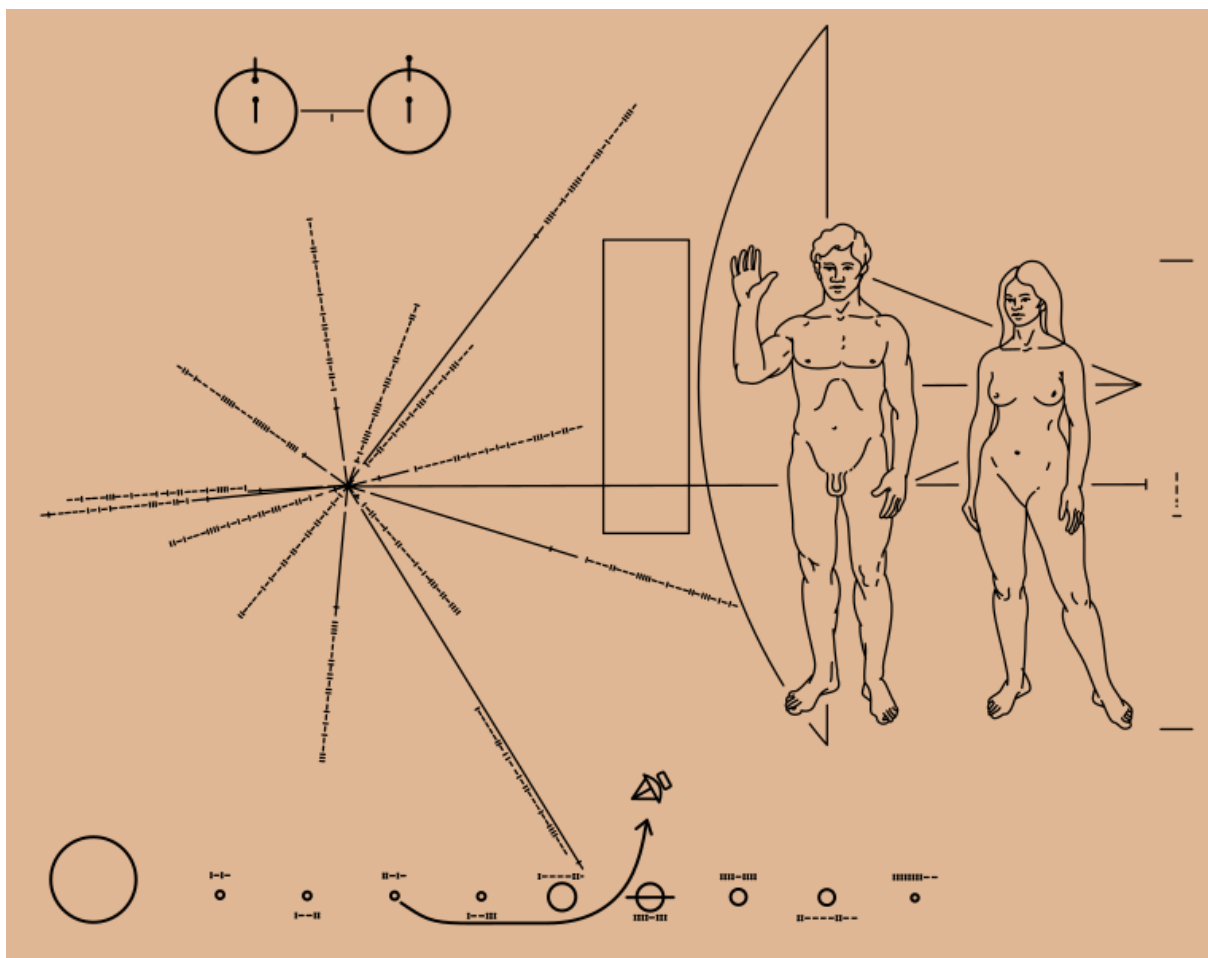
<sup>6</sup> Cambridge dictionary, <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/toxic-masculinity> - 25/05/2022

# Objectives and methodology

## I – Concept of the game

'Gender Adventure' is a serious game that allows the player to experiment with gender discrimination in public places.

In this serious game each student plays as Maverick, an alien who found the Pioneer Plaque<sup>7</sup> in space. Two human bodies, male and female, are represented on this Plaque:



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As all aliens are non-gendered and look similar at birth, Maverick was intrigued by these representations. Maverick thus decided to come and visit Earth in order to do a small experiment about how gender works for humans in daily life.

<sup>7</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pioneer\\_plaque](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pioneer_plaque)

<sup>8</sup> [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Pioneer\\_plaque.svg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Pioneer_plaque.svg)

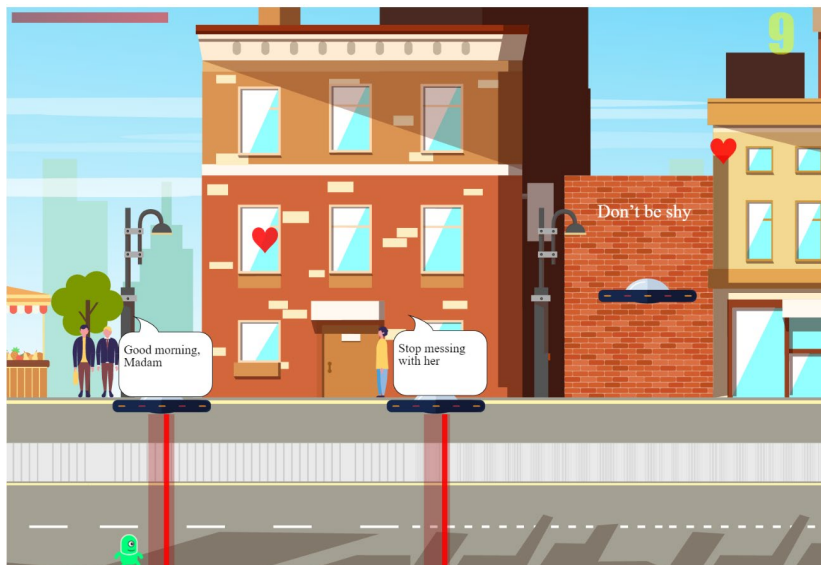
### Please note!

The game only addresses gender discrimination in public places, and not those happening within private circles, like in a family. It also does not directly address online discrimination and cyberbullying. However, it is possible to push the discussion further by mentioning those issues, too.

Maverick gets the chance to follow three humans in their daily life, one person identifying as a female, one as a male, one as non-binary. The more detailed introduction to the game, as included online, can be found in **Annex 1**.

These three scenarios were chosen to show everyday situations in which gender stereotypes arise and lead to discriminatory behaviour. They are designed to reflect real-life situations as well as possible, and to illustrate gender discrimination as clearly as possible.

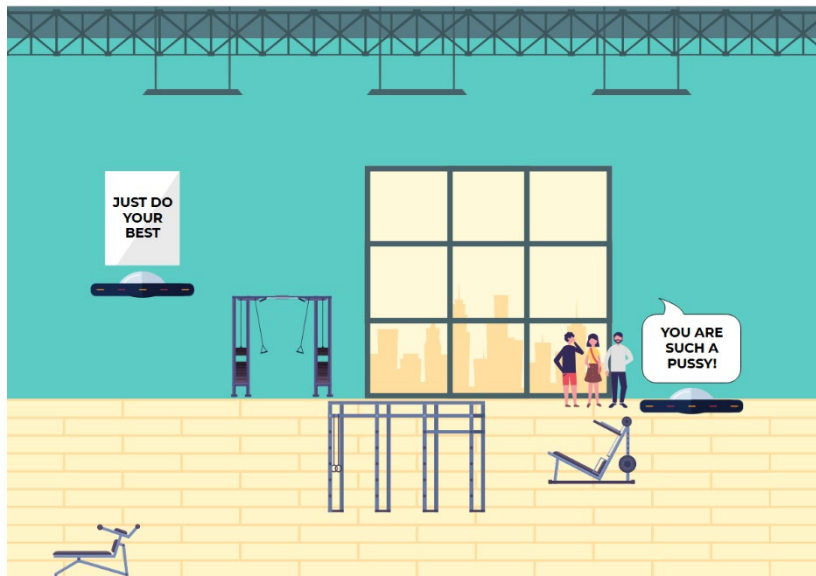
#### *Scenario with a female character: Let's walk the street*



Here, Maverick walks down a street as a woman and experiences catcalling. This type of discrimination was chosen for the female character to be confronted with because it is a major issue and one of the main sources of harassment that women have to deal with in everyday reality. Born from the hypersexualisation of women's bodies in a generally patriarchal context, catcalling most intensely crystallises the discrimination that women can experience in public places.

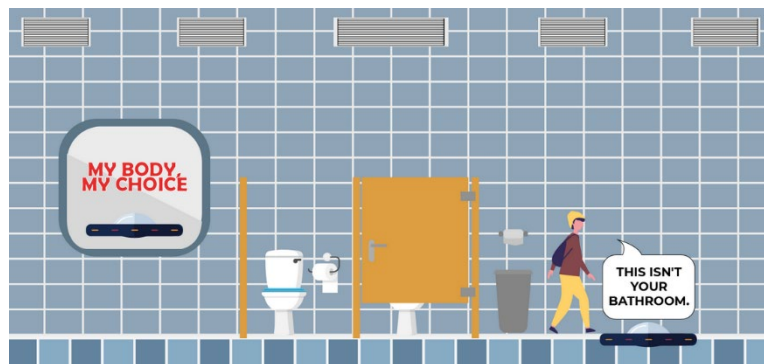


**Scenario with a male character: Time for sports!**



Here, Maverick, in a man's shoes, is confronted with the concept of toxic masculinity. Maverick wants to engage in a few sports activities and goes to a running track, then the gym, and finally to a football field. This scenario was designed around situations that induce physical strength, in which men are especially confronted with what they should or should not be.

**Scenario with a non-binary character: Welcome to our high-school**



Here, Maverick is a non-binary high-school student. The alien lives an ordinary day in different high school places: registration, classroom, schoolyard, bathroom, canteen and library. This scenario was designed to showcase the difficulties that people with diverse gender identities can experience in everyday life, when some people show discriminatory behaviour towards those who do not identify with the sex they were given at birth.

To sum up, this serious game aims at raising awareness on gender discrimination suffered not only by women, but also by men and non-binary people. Indeed, while women still suffer more from gender inequalities and gender-based violence, gender stereotypes and socially constructed roles and behaviour apply to everyone.

### Please note!

The 'Gender Adventure' game was designed in a European project, therefore it reflects views that might not be commonly addressed yet in all national contexts. The manual is designed as a tool that teachers may adapt to their reality and their level of expertise with gender-related concepts. While it is important to push the discussion to a new level and to challenge common gender representations, it is also necessary that teachers master concepts well enough to be comfortable when leading a discussion about it.

An e-learning module (online training) is also available for teachers on the project website ([www.citizengames.eu](http://www.citizengames.eu)), or directly at this link:

<https://view.genial.ly/628e28c6244f73001795b2bf/interactive-content-en-genderadventure-citizen-games>.

## II - Beneficiaries and objectives of the game

The main beneficiaries of this project are high-school students and their teachers. The game can also be used with older teenagers outside school but this manual focuses on providing advice to organise for a classroom session.

The general objective is that students will discuss beliefs and examples about gender stereotypes and discrimination. The specific objectives are the following:

- Students will be able to understand how gender stereotypes and discrimination exist in everyday life.
- Students will be able to debate the consequences of gender inequalities applied to diverse situations.
- Students will be able to identify behaviour to challenge gender stereotypes and discrimination.

## III – Lesson planning

This section includes key elements to plan for a one-hour lesson with high school students. Of course it is flexible, and this activity can either be made to fit a shorter or longer lesson period, or, indeed, be included in a wider project with complementary activities.

### Practical information

Students can only play the serious game on computers or laptops (it has not been adapted for tablets or mobile phones).

Using their Chrome browser (the only other supported browser is Opera), check that the game can be loaded on the school computers: [https://play.citizengames.eu/high\\_school\\_game/](https://play.citizengames.eu/high_school_game/).

It is possible that the player faces some delay at the end of each scenario, before the game displays the wrap-up quiz questions. It is recommended not to refresh the page too much and to be patient!

## A - Before the lesson

It is recommended to play the serious game in an adequate environment, such as a school computer room. It is also recommended to use a spacious room, so that at the end of the game tables can be pushed against the walls, and students can sit in a circle for the teacher to start a class debate.

If the computer room does not have enough computers, it is recommended to split the class so that each pupil can have access to one computer. A smaller group, up to around 15 students, will also make it easier to moderate the discussion and will leave more space for everyone to contribute during the discussion.

## B – Lesson step 1: Introduction (10')

Before playing, carefully read the introduction of the serious game and the instructions with the students, so that they do not rush into the game.

Ask the students to load the serious game on Google Chrome. The first screen will ask the player to choose the language in which they want to play the game.

## C – Lesson step 2: Gameplay (10')

The students will play the three mini-games in any order they want. It is important that they can choose and are not restricted about the order of the three scenarios, as their order choice will be discussed at a later stage.



It is recommended to encourage them to think about the meaning of the game while playing.

In each scenario, the player's objective is to jump through the comments that they consider positive, while avoiding those that they find negative. On the way, they must avoid laser beams placed under the comments; this is so that they can not just run without choosing any of the comments. Extra energy can be collected by jumping through hearts.

At the end of each game, the player will have to answer three wrap-up quiz questions that are related to the scenario. This allows the player to discover facts about discrimination towards the given gender (depending on each character), and thus triggering reflection about gender inequalities. Every correct answer gives the player extra energy. The three questions are meant to encourage the player to reflect on how the game relates to real-life situations.

All instructions are given in **Annex 1** and comments in **Annex 2**.

### **D – Lesson step 3: End of the game and debate (40')**

Once the students have completed the three mini-games, and answered all wrap-up quiz questions, the teacher invites them to leave their computers and to sit in a way that allows everyone to see each other (eg. a circle) in order to open the discussion. The information provided in this manual is a guideline to help the teacher address the issues to be discussed; the next section provides a detailed proposal of questions that can be used to lead the debate. In the 'Additional Information' section, you may find content to deepen some concepts to frame the discussions, and to be better prepared for the moderation of the debate. It is recommended to start this class activity by setting some rules.

#### **Guidelines for a constructive debate**

- Each person speaks only in their own name;
- Each person has the right to express their opinion, as long as it stays respectful of their fellow students and of other people in general (no discrimination or insults are to be tolerated);
- Each person should respect other people's opinion, even if they disagree with the opinion;
- Each person has equal rights to speak and each person should therefore make sure everyone has the opportunity to express their ideas.

The objective is not to determine who's right and who's wrong, but to exchange opinions in order to deepen everyone's understanding of gender-related situations.

## IV - Focus on the classroom discussion

### A - First impressions, feelings and understanding of the game

First of all, we recommend you to welcome students' first impressions and feelings about the serious game.

Here are some sample questions to help you kick-off the discussion:

- **How do you feel after what you just experienced in the game?**
- **How would you feel if you actually used such comments? Why?**
- **How would you feel if you received such messages? Why? What other feelings can the frustration-meter represent?**
- **Did you find some comments worse than others? Were you particularly upset by some comments?**

To facilitate the discussion about the different comments in the game, you can use a "pause" function by pressing "p" while playing. To continue the game, press "p" again.

Then, before moving on to discussing each scenario and more specifically exploring the different gender-related issues addressed in the game, it is important to clarify the game's main idea and structure. Here are some general questions that can help trigger this discussion.

- **What did you understand about the game? What was happening? What was the general objective of the game?**

#### **Please note!**

It is recommended to start the discussion about the female character scenario, then moving on to discussing the male character scenario, and finally the non-binary character scenario. This allows the group to follow a progression in the discussion, and helps towards more easily understanding the concepts.

The beginning of the debate focuses on the most common (and well-known) type of discrimination, the one targeted towards women. It continues with discussing how everyone, and men in particular, can also suffer from having to fit their assigned gender role. The discussion can then move on to less commonly addressed, but nonetheless important topics: gender is more diverse than just male or female and those who do not identify with the gender associated with the sex they were given at birth also suffer from discriminatory situations. Gender concepts in general can then be discussed, to challenge the students' views on the social construction of gender expression and gender roles.

## B - Debriefing of the female character scenario

The female character scenario addresses catcalling. During this discussion, students are expected to understand how women can feel when they are victims of street harassment. Building up from this situation, you can lead the discussion towards discussing patriarchy and how it legitimates men's controlling women's bodies.

Here are some sample questions, and *elements of answers*, to help you moderate the discussion:

➤ **What is catcalling?**

*Catcalling is the "act of shouting or whistling expressing disapproval, especially made by people in a crowd".*

➤ **Why do women experience more catcalling than men? Can you imagine men hearing the same comments while walking down the street? Why?**

*In general, in European societies, women experience more gender inequalities and discrimination than men. One of these being harassment by catcalling. Indeed, in media and art for example, women's bodies have been - and still are - sexualized. As a consequence, some unfortunately consider it normal to imitate this sexualization in public places such as streets.*

➤ **What are the consequences of catcalling? Why can it be discriminatory?**

*Women fear walking down the street alone, especially at night or when using public transport. They may go out less often or choose to take a taxi (so they have to pay more to go out). They may wonder if their outfit can cause catcalling. They can feel responsible for it and lose their self-confidence. Catcalling can also be a first step to physical violence. Catcalling is discriminatory because it reduces the freedom of its victims.*

➤ **What did you learn from and were you surprised by the answers to the wrap-up quiz questions?**

*Wrap-up quiz QUESTIONS and ANSWERS*

1. When asked in an Irish survey carried out by upper secondary students, some 60% of young women and girls under 20 questioned said they had been the subject of 'catcalling' in the previous week.

A. True. It is the correct answer<sup>9</sup>

B. False

2. French anti-street harassment laws differ from those of many other countries. They ...

A. ... hand out stricter sentences

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<sup>9</sup> <https://www.irishtimes.com/news/education/it-s-scary-and-uncomfortable-schoolgirls-seek-end-to-catcalling-1.4520281>

B. ... fine on the spot. It is the correct answer. Law officers fine perpetrators on the street<sup>10</sup>.

3. 'Catcalls of ...' is a world-wide initiative towards awareness and fight-back. Its title is supposed to be completed by the name of the city in which it is used. It focuses on ...

A. ... making catcalling visible. It is the correct answer. Catcalls are identified on the spot where they occurred<sup>11</sup>.

B. ... shaming catcallers.

### C - Debriefing of the male character scenario

The male character scenario highlights the consequences of gender socialisation for men. It aims at discussing the idea that men can also suffer from gender stereotypes.

Here are some sample questions, and *elements of answers*, to help you moderate the discussion:

➤ **Have you ever heard of toxic masculinity? What does it mean?**

*Toxic masculinity is a set of "... ideas about the way that men should behave that are seen as harmful. For example, the idea that men should not cry or admit weakness." Or not share their emotions.*

➤ **Can you imagine women hearing the same comments? Why?**

*Society does not expect women to be strong or good at sport. Quite the contrary, gender stereotypes depict women as weaker and more passive than men.*

➤ **What are the consequences of toxic masculinity? Why can it be discriminatory?**

*Men may feel ashamed and lose their self-confidence if they do not fit the "men are strong" stereotype. They are expected not to share their emotions so it may be more difficult for men to talk with friends, family or health professionals about their problems.*

*Not showing emotions can also lead to men not reacting to discrimination and not developing enough empathy to question the model of the dominated (women) and the dominating (men).*

*Toxic masculinity can lead to discriminations because it reduces the freedom of its victims.*

➤ **What did you learn from and were you surprised by the answer to the wrap-up quiz questions?**

*Wrap-up quiz QUESTIONS and ANSWERS*

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<sup>10</sup> <https://www.forbes.com/sites/stephaniefillion/2021/01/26/2-years-later-what-we-can-learn-from-frances-anti-catcalling-law/?sh=7c90569b75dc>

<sup>11</sup> [Catcalling: Sexuelle Belästigung ankreiden - ZDFheute](#)

1. According to a UK -based feminist-led charity news post, which of these two examples of 'toxic masculinity behaviour' is highest in their top 10 ranking?

A. Being stoic. It is the correct answer<sup>12</sup>.

B. Being dominant

2. In a Luxemburg based gender information centre 'gender drop' entitled 'Boys will be boys,' a *Gillette* video advertisement is presented as ...

A. ... positive campaigning.

B. ... misleading colour washing. It is the correct answer. The video fakes positive action for business purposes<sup>13</sup>.

3. Ireland's youth information website 'spunout' mentions a number of ways to tackle 'toxic masculinity.' Most effective is ...

A. ... to talk about it. It is the correct answer. Talk, whatever you do!<sup>14</sup>

B. ... to challenge it.

## D - Debriefing of the non-binary character scenario

The non-binary character scenario aims at debating the categorisation as woman or man. As gender is socially constructed, its binarity is socially constructed, too. And excluding other gender means some people suffer from being forced to define themselves only as woman or man.

Besides, considering only two genders as natural often leads to discrimination.

Here are some sample questions, and *elements of answers*, to help you moderate the discussion:

➤ **What is the difference between someone's sex and gender?**

*Sex is biological while gender is socially constructed. None of these are binary options but more complex concepts, especially concerning gender.*

➤ **What does it mean to be non-binary?**

*It means you define yourself neither as male nor as female.*

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<sup>12</sup> <https://www.aurorand.org.uk/news/top-10-toxic-masculinity-behaviours>

<sup>13</sup> [#8: Boys will be boys?! | CID Fraen an Gender \(cid-fg.lu\)](#)

<sup>14</sup> <https://spunout.ie/life/bullying/how-to-challenge-toxic-masculinity>



- **Why are those comments targeted towards non-binary people? Who else could receive this type of comments?**

*In our current societies we have learnt that only two sexes exist and that these two sexes must be equivalent to the gender we experience. Thus, only two genders are seen as acceptable and this can justify discrimination toward anyone who does not fit the binary categorisation: people that define themselves as non-binary but also women who appear too masculine, men who appear too feminine, etc.*

### To go further...

Being transgender means that the sex assigned at birth and the gender you live is different. Thus, transgender is not a gender itself.

You may be born male and identify as woman or non-binary. Or you may be born female and identify as man or non-binary.

- **What did you learn from and were you surprised by the answer to the wrap-up quiz questions?**

#### *Wrap-up quiz QUESTIONS and ANSWERS*

1. *EIGE*, the European Institute for Gender Equality, claims ‘... education is key for breaking gender stereotypes.’ New research indicates that a major challenge is ...
  - A. ... gender segregation.
  - B. ... traditional career choices. It is the correct answer. Young people tend to choose careers based on traditional gender roles<sup>15</sup>.
2. By 2025, Dutch ID-cards will be gender-free. *ILGA*<sup>16</sup> *Europe* welcomes this as a(n) ...
  - A. ... first step forward towards non-binary registration. It is the correct answer. Good for the Netherlands only<sup>17</sup>.
  - B. ... breakthrough in non-binary registration.
3. July 14 is International Non-binary People’s Day. UK-based *Stonewall* campaigns for non-binary inclusion and strongly focuses on ...
  - A. ... people’s experiences
  - B. ... people’s language. It is the correct answer. Inclusive language-use is a strong tool for stepping up as an ally to non-binary people<sup>18</sup>.

<sup>15</sup> [Education is key for breaking gender stereotypes | European Institute for Gender Equality \(europa.eu\)](#)

<sup>16</sup> International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association

<sup>17</sup> [Education is key for breaking gender stereotypes | European Institute for Gender Equality \(europa.eu\)](#)

<sup>18</sup> [10 ways to step up as an ally to non-binary people | Stonewall](#)

## E - Defining gender socialisation

Because of the above it is important that students understand what gender socialisation is, and how it is developed and shared in society. Here are some sample questions, and *elements of answers*, to help you through the discussion:

- **In which order did you play the three scenarios? Why? Did you feel comfortable playing each character? Why (not)?**

*Did students choose the scenario corresponding to their own gender to begin the game?*

- **In society, in everyday life, what can influence our perceptions of each gender and our representations of what it implies?**

*For example: media, toys, arts (including cinema and songs), advertising, fairy tales, language (grammar).*

*Two explicit examples to highlight how much we care about gender and how far it may be taken, beyond sex-related biological differences:*

- *What is (one of) the first question(s) we ask about a baby? "Is it a boy or a girl"?*
- *Why do we separate male and female toilets (even if there is no urinal) in some public places, while we don't have "gendered" toilets in other places (at home, in trains, in an aeroplane)?*

## F - Fighting gender inequalities

In the three mini-games, some good comments are examples of fighting gender stereotypes and inequalities.

### Relating to game elements

Some elements in the game can help lead the discussion towards the solutions, how to prevent and how to stop discrimination. Questions, and *elements of answers*, that can help identify them are as follows:

- **In the game, what could help the player gain energy? What do the hearts represent? How important are positive comments?**

*Support, love, ...*

### Opening the discussion to real life

- **Can you imagine solutions to avoid negative situations from the game in reality?**
- **Do you know or have you heard about initiatives to fight these situations?**

*There are associations that aim at fighting any sort of discrimination. More specifically, some associations protect women suffering from discrimination and/or gender-based violence, while others protect people from discrimination and violence based on their gender identities.*

*Also, there are more and more (social media) influencers, well-known media figures, and artists (especially in music) who appear as models to question gender socialisation.*

Read “**Annex 3 – Additional resources**” part for examples in your country and check the organisations mentioned in the wrap-up quiz questions.

- **Do you have personal experience of how negative situations could be redressed?**
- **Do you know about your school’s policy on these issues?**
- **What types of behaviour should be adopted or avoided?**

*Adopted: developing empathy, pointing out bad behaviour, questioning why we believe some things are “masculine”, others are “feminine”. Avoided: acting in a way that could harm others, ...*

\*

**We hope that you and your students will enjoy our game  
and that it will help increase their understanding of the issues of gender equality.**

## Additional information

An e-learning module (online training) is also available for teachers on the project website ([www.citizengames.eu](http://www.citizengames.eu)), or directly at this link:

<https://view.genial.ly/628e28c6244f73001795b2bf/interactive-content-en-genderadventure-citizen-games>.

This section is offered as a complement, giving additional background and theoretical information on the concepts and situations presented in the game.

### I - Gender-role socialisation: how do societies create men and women?

#### A - Difference between sex and gender

**Main idea:** Sex relates to the anatomical attributes while gender corresponds to the identity and expression of oneself.

First of all, it is important to differentiate between 'sex' and 'gender'. Indeed, 'sex' and 'gender' are often used interchangeably, despite having different meanings. On the one hand, sex refers to a set of biological attributes at birth (chromosomes, gene expression, hormone levels and function, and reproductive/sexual anatomy). Sex is usually categorized as female or male but there is variation in the biological attributes that comprise sex and how those attributes are expressed, intersex people being an example. On the other hand, gender refers to the socially constructed roles, behaviours, expressions and identities of girls, boys, and gender diverse people (such as non-binary people who identify as neither male nor female). It influences how people perceive themselves and each other. Gender identity is not confined to a binary choice (girl/woman or boy/man); rather, it exists along a continuum. Gender identity is also not static and can change over time. There is considerable diversity in how individuals and groups understand, experience and express gender through the roles they take on, the expectations placed on them, relations with others and the complex ways that gender is institutionalised in society<sup>19</sup>.

It is important to differentiate between gender identity (female, male, non-binary, etc.) and between being trans or cis. Being cis-gender means your gender identity aligns with the one you find in your birth certificates. Being trans means that the sex assigned at birth and the gender people live is different. Being cis- or trans- is

<sup>19</sup> Canadian Institutes of Health Research, (2020). What is gender? What is sex?

not a gender as such. Rather, people can be cis-male (if they were born “male” and feel “man”), cis-female (if they were born “female” and feel “woman”), transmale (if they were born “female” and feel “man”), transfemale (if they were born “male” but feel “woman”), or else...

## **B - The social construction of gender identities**

At a young age, children learn first they are supposed to behave like a boy or a girl, depending on their sex at birth. Then, they learn what it means to be a boy or a girl in our society through a myriad of activities, opportunities, encouragement, discouragement, suggestions, overt behaviour, covert behaviour, and various forms of guidance: this way, children experience the process of gender role socialisation. Socialisation in its broadest sense introduces children to social values and examples of socially acceptable behaviour and roles for their gender<sup>20</sup>.

According to the differential socialization theory, people acquire different gender identities involving cognitive, emotional, attitudinal and behavioural styles, and stereotypical rules of behaviour assigned to each sex<sup>21</sup>. This socialisation affects relationships and couples, since we learn what falling in love means, which feelings are appropriate, how a relationship should be, and how we should behave in one<sup>22</sup>. Therefore, as stated by these authors, if gender identity is constructed in a sexist way, adolescents could identify themselves with the problems traditionally associated with male and female stereotypes – passivity, dependence, and submission, in the case of women; and control, toughness, and use of violence, in the case of men.

A lot of factors can influence gender socialisation. Some are institutionalised: legal context, religion and even language (depending on masculine and feminine visibility in grammar rule and vocabulary; some languages even have a single word for biological sex and social gender). Others are not as official, but nevertheless they can be very ominous: advertising, art, fairy tales, toys, media. All those can be vehicles of gender stereotypes; for example: women doing nothing and waiting for their Prince Charming to save them, or men having to fight and kill monsters to marry the Princess.

Finally, it is important to note that gender-role socialisation exists in all countries but with differences, since it is socially and culturally constructed. Therefore, the roles assigned to each gender, and how identities are commonly defined, will vary from one part of the world to the other, and can often also see differences inside

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<sup>20</sup> Hoffman, L. W. (1977). Changes in family roles, socialization, and sex differences. *American Psychologist*, 32(8), 644.

<sup>21</sup> Walker, S., & Barton, L. (1983). *Gender, class and education: a personal view*. Gender, Class and Education. New York: Falmer.

<sup>22</sup> Sanchez-Prada, A., Delgado-Alvarez, C., Bosch-Fiol, E., & Ferrer-Perez, V. A. (2021). Implicit and explicit attitudes toward intimate partner violence against women: An exploratory study. *Journal of interpersonal violence*, 36(9-10), 4256-4276

of the same country. For example, in some countries, it is up to the groom's family to give a dowry for the bride; whereas in others, it is the bride's family that has to bring the dowry to the man.

Similarly, gender socialisation can change in time. For instance, in historically Christian nations, blue used to be a female colour (related to Virgin Mary) while now, it is mostly associated with masculinity.

## II - Consequences: how do differences lead to inequalities and discrimination?

### A - The impact of gender socialisation

#### 1- Gender roles

**Main idea:** Gender socialisation impacts each and every person in different ways.

Gender socialisation not only means defining social and cultural differences between men and women. It justifies domination of one gender above the other. In European (and most) societies, it has justified male domination in politics, in the economy, in family life, etc for centuries.

One example of this domination is that women's bodies are considered to belong to men and are sexualised to satisfy men's so-called desire. Catcalling is based on this idea. It is most often aimed towards women, often restricting their right to be safe in public spaces. Women often face this situation in public places, which makes them uncomfortable, even guilty sometimes, and makes them lose their self-confidence. Since 2018 catcalling has been illegal in France, even though some previously considered whistling a part of French romanticism.

Defining relationships between men and women in terms of domination also means men have to fit a behaviour pattern of being dominant. Toxic masculinity is a social pressure targeted at men, requiring them to be strong, not to share their emotions, and not to admit weaknesses. It is interesting to note that, in various countries, men statistically commit suicide more than women. For example, in France, in 2016, there were 27.7 suicides out of 100000 inhabitants for men and 8.1 for women<sup>23</sup>. Several reasons can explain this unfortunate trend, one of these being toxic masculinity. However, it is necessary to acknowledge that this unfortunate trend can not be attributed to toxic masculinity only; in fact, in some countries, women try to commit suicide more than men.

<sup>23</sup> <https://www.vie-publique.fr/en-bref/21976-suicide-donnees-chiffrees>

## 2 - Gender-based discriminations

**Main idea:** Gender socialisation also leads to discriminatory and violent behaviour.

Sexism is defined as an “individual’s attitudes, beliefs, and behaviours, and organisational, institutional, and cultural practices that either reflect negative evaluations of individuals based on their gender or support unequal status of women and men”<sup>24</sup>. It is based on attitudes, stereotypes, and cultural practices that promote the belief that women are less competent and less deserving of power and status than men. Sexism is prevalent in today's society and is a threat to social gender equality.

Sexism comes in two forms<sup>25</sup>: hostile and benevolent. While hostile sexism is characterised by an explicitly negative attitude, benevolent sexism is subtler. Hostile sexism is angry and expresses an explicitly negative viewpoint. Benevolent sexism, on the other hand, is often disguised as a compliment. In addition, there is an admiration for the stereotypical role of women as mothers, daughters, and wives, placing women on a pedestal but reinforcing their subordination. Although these beliefs can be perceived as being subjectively affectionate, they are condescending because women are perceived as weak and incompetent. Consequently, benevolent sexist ideology reinforces power differences between women and men. For instance, benevolent sexist justifications heighten women’s acceptance of discriminatory acts<sup>26</sup>. Moreover, relative to blatantly hostile sexism, exposure to benevolent sexism increases women’s satisfaction with the societal system<sup>27</sup> and undermines women’s participation in collective action to counter gender discrimination.

Women and men endorse sexist beliefs because they are unaware of the prevalence of different types of sexism in their personal lives<sup>28</sup> but when women are encouraged to pay attention to sexism, they show a stronger rejection of sexism. In contrast, for men paying attention to sexism did not have these effects. Men’s endorsement of sexist beliefs can be reduced if attention to sexism and emotional empathy for the target of discrimination is encouraged.

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<sup>24</sup> Swim, J. K., & Hyers, L. L. (2009). Sexism.

<sup>25</sup> Glick, P., & Fiske, S. T. (1996). The ambivalent sexism inventory: Differentiating hostile and benevolent sexism. *Journal of personality and social psychology*, 70(3), 491.

<sup>26</sup> Moya, M., Glick, P., Expósito, F., De Lemus, S., & Hart, J. (2007). It's for your own good: Benevolent sexism and women's reactions to protectively justified restrictions. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 33(10), 1421-1434

<sup>27</sup> Jost, J. T., & Kay, A. C. (2005). Exposure to benevolent sexism and complementary gender stereotypes: consequences for specific and diffuse forms of system justification. *Journal of personality and social psychology*, 88(3), 498.

<sup>28</sup> Becker, J. C., & Swim, J. K. (2012). Reducing endorsement of benevolent and modern sexist beliefs: Differential effects of addressing harm versus pervasiveness of benevolent sexism. *Social Psychology*, 43(3), 127.

## B - Gender normalisation

**Main idea:** Through gender socialisation we learn that we must act like man or woman, depending on how we were born: male or female. But other situations exist. These situations appear unnatural to some people, who tend to reject them.

In our current societies two genders are considered the most normal: male and female.

Yet, non-binary identities exist and have existed throughout the world for decades and even centuries. Three examples:

- In Europe, one of the cultural traditions beyond our modern understanding of trans/non-binary are "sworn virgins" in and around Albania. Women swearing an oath and taking on a male identity, which is rigorously enforced on them but also others<sup>29</sup>.
- In some ancient North American indigenous cultures, there were "two-spirit" people. They had a social identity and social roles beyond women or men expected duties<sup>30</sup>.
- In India and surrounding countries, Hijras are recognized as a third gender, neither male nor female, which can be experienced in diverse ways<sup>31</sup>.

Besides, in 2010, a recommendation of the Council of Europe encouraged member states to take measures to guarantee legal recognition of a person's gender reassignment. Changing name and gender in official documents for example.

By 2025, Dutch ID-cards will be gender-free. This shows that acknowledging diversity among communities can lead to legal change and therefore give way to limiting discriminations.

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<sup>29</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Albanian\\_sworn\\_virgins](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Albanian_sworn_virgins) - 07/06/2022

<sup>30</sup> <https://www.nicoa.org/two-spirit-persons/> - 07/06/2022

<sup>31</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hijra\\_\(South\\_Asia\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hijra_(South_Asia)) - 07/06/2022



### III - Preventing and reacting: what are the solutions against gender discrimination?

Empathy is defined as taking the perspective of another and imagining how that person's circumstances affect them<sup>32</sup>. Eliciting empathy for targets of prejudice and discrimination is a feature of many effective interventions to reduce prejudice. Following these elements, Cundiff, et al.<sup>45</sup> (2014) have set up the experiential learning to reduce the endorsement of sexism, then the Workshop Activity for Gender Equity Simulation (WAGES) was created to demonstrate the cumulative effect of common and seemingly minor experiences of bias and discrimination experienced by women in the workplace. During game play, individuals experience the effect of gender bias on personal development. Discussion concludes with consideration of actions that can be taken at the institutional and individual level to counteract the operation of unconscious gender bias. This method of delivering information about gender bias fosters empathy and the adoption of multiple perspectives, and information is assimilated in a way that is less likely to elicit reactance. WAGES also uses game play to present knowledge in an engaging format. Importantly, the use of entertainment while educating is suggested to reduce reactance.

Beyond empathising with victims of gender discrimination, citizens can support actors that struggle against discrimination by participating to their actions and/ or broadcasting their information.

Moreover, being informed on legal context and its evolution is necessary to stand up for new rights.

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<sup>32</sup> Coke, J. S., Batson, C. D., & McDavis, K. (1978). Empathic mediation of helping: a two-stage model. *Journal of personality and social psychology*, 36(7), 752

## Annex 1: Game introduction and instructions

### Introduction

You are Maverick, a young alien, always exploring around with your spaceship. During one of your expeditions, you found the Pioneer Plaque that humans sent into space decades ago.

When you shared this discovery with your fellow-alien all became very curious. You were especially intrigued by the two distinct human bodies the Plaque displays. On your asteroid all aliens are similar at birth, and only their personal choices define someone's identity.

To know more about humans you and some fellow-alien are now travelling to Planet Earth. Your alien task force decides to send a scout to try and establish contact. You, Maverick, volunteer and manage to contact three humans.

In turn they agree to join your spaceship. They are offering you to join them on Earth for a small experiment about how gender works for humans in daily life.

You will follow each of the three humans during an everyday activity. In go seconds, you will encounter a number of 'situations and comments.' Depending on your character gender some might frustrate you, and others might cheer you up. It is up to you to choose wisely!

Depending on your choices your 'frustration-meter' will reflect how well you manage to keep your spirits up and your frustration down. Your FRUSTRATION METER will reflect your gameplay: towards GREEN (100) is good news, towards RED (0) the opposite.

### Menu

Here you choose one of three scenarios by clicking on one of the 3 gender symbols: female, male, or non-binary.

- Let's walk the street – female character scenario
- Time for sports! – male character scenario
- Welcome to our high-school – non-binary character scenario

### Instructions (in each scenario)

Your objective is to jump through the comments that you consider POSITIVE, while avoiding those that you find NEGATIVE.

Try to avoid all LASER BEAMS, and pick up extra energy on the way by jumping through HEARTS.

While playing the game you will jump to different heights when you tap the up-arrow key one, two or three times.

## Annex 2: Table of the comments

### Comments in female character scenario

Comments	Impact	Remarks
Hello, darling	-1	Too familiar
Nice boobs!	-1	Sexualisation
Give me your phone number, baby	-1	
No means no!	+1	
May I speak to you?	0	Polite but it can be disturbing
Girls walking here are hot	-1	Sexualisation
Babe looking sexy	-1	Sexualisation
Nice legs!	-1	
Yo!!	0	
I love bitches	-1	Sexualisation
My dress is not a yes!	+1	
Eh!! Babe!! 😊	-1	Too familiar
Let's have fun!	-1	Sexualisation
Hey sweetie, where are you going?	-1	Too familiar and intrusive
My body, my choice!	+1	
Safe streets for all	+1	
Wanna have sex?	-1	Sexualisation
A nice day to you	+1	
Come on, give me a smile	-1	
Look at that ass!	-1	Sexualisation
Hi sunshine	-1	Too familiar
I know you want it!	-1	Sexualisation
Hey hot stuff	-1	Sexualisation
Stop harassment!	+1	
Wao, wao!	-1	
Good morning, Madam'	+1	Polite and don't ask anything
Stop messing with her	+1	
Don't be shy	-1	Sexualisation

<b>You're ugly, you're worth nothing!</b>	-1	
<b>Ow-ow!</b>	-1	
<b>I like the way you move, sexy lady!</b>	-1	sexualisation
<b>Psst!</b>	-1	Too familiar
<b>Hey, good looking!</b>	-1	
<b>Leave her alone</b>	+1	
<b>May I ask your name?</b>	0	Polite but can be disturbing
<b>Smile for me!</b>	-1	

### Comments in male character scenario

Comments	Impact	Remarks
<b>Be a man!</b>	-1	
<b>Are you ok?</b>	+1	
<b>Girls only like muscular boys</b>	-1	Gender stereotype
<b>You jump like a little boy!</b>	-1	
<b>Loser!</b>	-1	
<b>Never give up!</b>	+1	
<b>Just do your best</b>	+1	
<b>You are such a pussy!</b>	-1	
<b>Don't be a sissy!</b>	-1	
<b>Be careful</b>	+1	
<b>Girls don't like weak men</b>	-1	Gender stereotype
<b>Boys have to be strong</b>	-1	Gender stereotype
<b>You run like a girl!</b>	-1	
<b>Why can't you run faster?</b>	-1	
<b>Mama's boy</b>	-1	
<b>Take care!</b>	+1	
<b>Haha, she's faster than you!</b>	-1	
<b>Weaky weaky</b>	-1	
<b>It's OK to cry</b>	+1	
<b>You are such a failure!</b>	-1	
<b>How do you feel?</b>	+1	
<b>You'll never be strong enough</b>	-1	
<b>You're so weak</b>	-1	
<b>Man up!</b>	-1	
<b>Come on, be strong!</b>	0	Can be supporting but still meet society expectations about men
<b>You can do it</b>	0	Can be supporting but still meet society expectations about men
<b>All boys like football</b>	-1	Gender stereotype

Are you disabled?	-1	
Cry baby	-1	
Do you want to play with us?	+1	
You're too emotional	-1	
You are a drip!	-1	
Do it if you're a man!	-1	
Take some rest if you want	+1	
Don't hurt yourself	+1	
Have you lost your balls?	-1	

### Comments in non-binary character scenario

Comments	Impact	Remarks
Welcome anomaly!	-1	Implies that being non-binary is not normal.
Are you a girl or a boy?	-1	
Sorry, I can't help you.	-1	
What name do you prefer?	+1	
This is not a circus!	-1	Implies that being non-binary is not normal.
Feel free to ask any question.	0	
I don't understand you	-1	
I like your selfconfidence.	+1	
You shouldn't exist!	-1	Implies that being non-binary is not normal.
Shut up Alien !	-1	Implies that being non-binary is not normal.
Do you prefer he or she?	+1	
What's your opinion?	0	
Being non binary is the new trend.	-1	Implies that being non-binary is not normal.
We're not at a festival.	-1	Implies that being non-binary is not normal.
You're not normal!	-1	Implies that being non-binary is not normal.
What's up ?	0	
I understand you.	+1	
Can you do the vogue dance please?	-1	Gender stereotype
No one will date you	-1	
Always love yourself.	+1	
Choose the bathroom you prefer	+1	
Are you mentally sick?	-1	Implies that being non-binary is not normal.
My body, my choice.	+1	
This isn't your bathroom.	-1	
No monster in our school!	-1	Implies that being non-binary is not normal.
Come and eat with us.	+1	
No "body shaming" allowed!	+1	

<b>Oh no, look who's coming!</b>	-1	
<b>Freak!</b>	-1	Implies that being non-binary is not normal.
<b>Stop harassment!</b>	+1	
<b>Weirdo!</b>	-1	Implies that being non-binary is not normal.
<b>Do you want to study with us?</b>	+1	
<b>You only have to be yourself</b>	+1	
<b>Do you want fashion design books for you?</b>	-1	Gender stereotype
<b>Can I help you find something?</b>	+1	
<b>What's this look?</b>	-1	

## Annex 3: Additional resources

### General resources

- [Sexist insults](#)
- [Gendered Insults in the Semantics-Pragmatics Interface](#)
- [Gender: definitions](#)
- [The Genderbread Person](#)
- [The Top 10 Toxic Masculinity Behaviours](#)

### International days<sup>33</sup>

11th February: International Day of Girls and Women in Science

1st March: Zero discrimination Day

8th March: International Women's Day

17th May: International Day against Homophobia, Biphobia and Transphobia<sup>34</sup>

14th July, International Non-binary People's Day

11th October: International Day of Girl Child

15th October: International Day of Rural women

25th November: International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women

10th December: Human Rights Day

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<sup>33</sup> <https://www.un.org/en/observances/list-days-weeks> - 7/06/2022

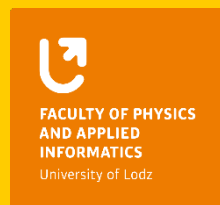
<sup>34</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/International\\_Day\\_Against\\_Homophobia,\\_Transphobia\\_and\\_Biphobia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/International_Day_Against_Homophobia,_Transphobia_and_Biphobia) – 7/06/2022

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