

ENGLISH SESSION 5: THE GENDER DEBATE

Age range: 11–16 years

<p>Outline Learners will consider the impacts of gender on their own lives and then use written sources and video clips to explore the impacts of gender on the lives of young people living in poverty in Ethiopia and India. They will then debate the motion: “This house believes that life is more difficult for girls living in poverty than for boys”. Learners will be encouraged to support their opinions by using examples from written sources and video clips, the profiles of the featured young people (provided in <i>English sessions 1, 2 and 3</i>) and their learning from other English, maths and geography sessions.</p>		
<p>Learning objectives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To develop debating and discussion skills. To explore assumptions about gender. To use examples and counter-examples to justify a response. To identify some gender inequalities in the lives of young people living in poverty in Ethiopia and India. 	<p>Learning outcomes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Learners will consider the impacts they think gender has on their own lives. Learners will use video clips and written sources to explore the impact gender has on the lives of some young people living in poverty in Ethiopia and India. Learners will participate in a debate about whether or not life is more difficult for girls living in poverty than for boys. 	
<p>Key questions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What similarities and differences do you think there might be between the lives of boys and girls living in poverty in the UK? What similarities and differences are there between the lives of boys and girls living in poverty in Ethiopia and India? Do you think gender will have a similar effect on the lives of young people living in poverty in the other Young Lives countries (Peru and Viet Nam)? 	<p>Resources</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>English slideshow B</i> (slides 12 and 13) Resource sheets: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>The role of a chairperson</i> <i>Thinking about gender and poverty</i> <i>Background notes on gender inequality</i> Videos: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Voices from India</i> and <i>Voices from Ethiopia</i> 	
<p>Curriculum links</p>		
<p>England KS3 English <i>Pupils should be taught to:</i> Spoken language</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Speak confidently and effectively through participating in formal debates and structured discussions, summarising and/or building on what has been said. Understand and use the conventions for discussion and debate. Justify ideas with reasons and ask questions to check understanding. <p>Reading</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Make inferences and refer to evidence in a text. 	<p>Wales KS3 English Oracy: skills</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Listen and view attentively, responding to a wide range of communication. Identify key points and follow up ideas through probing question and comment in order to inform and moderate opinions, ideas and judgements and to learn through talk. <p>Oracy: range</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communicating for a range of purposes, e.g. argument, debate, analysis, formal presentation, exploration and consideration of ideas in literature and the media. <p>Reading: skills</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider what they read/view, responding orally and in writing to the ideas, vocabulary, style, presentation and organisation of image and language and be able to select evidence from text to support their views. 	<p>Scotland Literacy and English</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> I can independently select ideas and relevant information for different purposes, organise essential information or ideas and any supporting detail in a logical order, and use suitable vocabulary to communicate effectively with my audience. LIT 3-06a / LIT 4-06a I can communicate in a clear, expressive manner when engaging with others within and beyond my place of learning, and can independently select and organise appropriate resources as required. LIT 4-10a I can persuade, argue, evaluate, explore issues or express and justify opinions within a convincing line of thought, using relevant supporting detail and/or evidence. LIT 3 and 4-29a



Note:

- *These are suggested activities and resources to support your teaching rather than guide it. Additional teaching input may be required to develop learners' knowledge, skills and understanding of some of these concepts.*

Learners also explore gender inequalities, such as in education and young people's daily time use, in Geography session 4 and Maths sessions 3 and 4. They also explore the impact of poverty on children in the UK in Geography session 6.

- *As it is likely that some learners will be directly impacted by poverty or gender imbalance themselves, sensitivity may be needed with this session. Additional information about the link between gender and poverty is provided in the Background notes for teachers.*

Activity 5.1 (10 min)

Thinking about gender in the UK

- Organise learners into pairs and ask them to discuss the following questions with reference to their own contexts in the UK:
 - *Do you think there are any differences between the lives of boys and girls in the UK?*
 - *What differences and similarities do you think there are?*
 - *How might poverty affect the lives of girls and boys in the UK?*

Where necessary, point out where learners are making assumptions or generalising about boys or girls and why this might be an issue.

Activity 5.2 (20 min)

Poverty and gender in Young Lives

- Explain that there can be differences in the way girls and boys experience poverty and that learners are going to watch two short video clips which highlight some gender inequalities in the lives of young people in India and Ethiopia.
- Show the following video clips:
 - *Voices from India**
 - *Voices from Ethiopia (from 4 min 14 sec to 8 min 28 sec)*
- Discuss any similarities and differences for boys and girls living in poverty mentioned in the videos.

**Remind learners that the Young Lives study was carried out in communities in the states of Andhra Pradesh and Telangana only, not all over India. SSA refers to 'Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan', the government of India's programme to make free and compulsory education for children aged 6-14 a fundamental right.*

Activity 5.3 (1 hour)

Debating gender and poverty

- Show slide 13 and tell learners that they are going to formally debate the motion “This house believes that life is more difficult for girls living in poverty than for boys.”
- Select one learner to be the chairperson. A summary of their role is provided in *The role of a chairperson*. Make sure they understand what they need to do, as they will be running the debate. Explain that the chairperson is impartial.
- Choose three learners to be speakers for the motion and three learners to be speakers against the motion. Explain that the speakers will be called on at the start of the debate to give their reasons for or against the motion and persuade others in the class to take their view.
- Ask the rest of the class to write down on a blank card or piece of paper whether they are for or against the motion. They should then write as many reasons for their view as they can.
- Give learners copies of *Thinking about gender and poverty* and encourage them to use examples to support their arguments. They may wish to refer to the video clips in *Activity 5.2* and the profiles of the featured young people in *English sessions 1, 2 and 3*, as well as their learning from other English, maths and geography sessions, or other external learning and experiences. You may wish to support learners to consider consequences of some of the gender inequalities in Ethiopia and India, as well as of other aspects of living in poverty in these two countries that affect both girls and boys. For examples, see *Background notes on gender inequality* below. You may also wish to help learners to make connections and comparisons about any gender inequalities in the lives of young people living in poverty in the other Young Lives countries (Peru and Viet Nam) as well as in the UK.
- Once the speakers have prepared and all learners have decided whether they are for or against the motion, the chairperson should open the debate and run it as directed in *The role of a chairperson*.
- Encourage learners to provide counter-examples and ask if they can spot any assumptions in what is being said. For example, has the speaker assumed that what is true for one person is true for everyone?
- When the chairperson puts the motion to the vote, make it clear to learners that they are free to change their minds from their original position. Encourage them to make up their own minds and discourage learners from voting for or with friends.
- Afterwards, give learners a short time to reflect on what they have learned from the debate. Ask learners to say how their views have been either changed or reinforced.

Further ideas

- As a follow-up to the debate, ask learners to write some persuasive text either for or against the motion “Life is more difficult for girls living in poverty in India and Ethiopia than for boys.”
- Get learners to use their learning from previous English, maths and geography sessions to debate other motions such as:

This house believes that...

- *life is more difficult for young people living in poverty in rural areas than in urban areas.*
- *life is more difficult for young people living in poverty in Ethiopia than in the UK.*

Terms of use

Copyright © Oxfam GB / Young Lives

You may use these photographs and associated information for educational purposes at your educational institution. With each use, you must credit the photographer named for that image, and Oxfam and Young Lives. You may not use images and associated information for commercial purposes or outside your educational institution. All information associated with these images relates to the date and time that project work took place.

The role of a chairperson

- It is your job to run the debate and ensure that everyone speaks at the correct time. You also need to keep order, so that only one person speaks at a time. You may need to call “Order, order,” but beware of doing it so often that no one takes any notice!
- Open the debate by reading out the motion: “This house believes that life is more difficult for girls living in poverty in Ethiopia and India than for boys.”
- Then call the speakers in turn, as follows:
 - *First speaker for the motion*
 - *First speaker against the motion*
 - *Second speaker for the motion*
 - *Second speaker against the motion*
 - *Third speaker for the motion*
 - *Third speaker against the motion.*
- Next ask the other learners if they have any points or questions. Make sure that one speaker for the motion and one speaker against the motion are given a chance to answer any questions.
- Call the first speaker for the motion and then the first speaker against the motion to sum up briefly.
- Put the motion to the vote. Read out the motion again and ask everyone to vote ‘for’ or ‘against’. The six speakers should vote too. Ask if there is anyone who wishes to abstain (that is, to say they can’t make a decision).
- Count up the votes, and call out the results as follows:
 - *Those for the motion (give number)*
 - *Those against the motion (give number)*
 - *Abstentions (that is, those who can’t make a decision – give number).*
- Close the debate by saying whether or not the motion has been carried (that is, whether most of the group have voted for it or not).

Thinking about gender and poverty

I don't go to school but my sisters do. I look after the cattle instead.

Hadush, 13-year-old boy, Ethiopia

I dropped out of school in the first grade and now I work as a sales assistant in a shoe shop... My mother says that she can't afford to send us to school.

Salman, 12-year-old boy, India

I have to collect the water in pots from a street tap at the back of our house. I also clean the dishes and sweep the floor. I have to work hard to help my mother at home. I have a younger brother but he doesn't have to do any of the housework because he is a boy.

Harika, 12-year-old girl, India

Our research has found that in Ethiopia, India and Viet Nam, early marriage and childbearing are more common among girls from poorer households than boys.

Young Lives research officer

My brother goes to private school because he is the only son. As I am a girl, they say I can study only up to grade 10. I am sent to a government school; because he is a boy and has to go out to earn his education is more important.

Fathima, 13-year-old girl, India

In my area, parents care more about boys than girls. This has an impact on girls: for example, girls who do go to school don't have any time to sit and do their homework. Boys have time to do homework. But for a girl she has to do homework and do housework.

Megani, 13-year-old girl, Ethiopia

Even though girls are allowed to go to school now there's still a saying in this community: "Whether or not a girl is educated, in the end her destiny is marriage."

Desta, 13-year-old girl, Ethiopia

In Ethiopia, our research has found that girls are mainly engaged in domestic activities such as collecting water and firewood, preparing food and washing clothes. Boys are more involved in non-domestic activities such as cattle herding, weeding and harvesting.

Young Lives research officer

When I go home from school I go directly to doing domestic chores so I don't have time to study and this has had an impact on my performance at school.

Chaltu, 10-year-old girl, Ethiopia

Most people in the village are not interested in girls staying on at school, but will make sure the boys attend because their sons will look after them when they are old, while girls leave for their husband's family.

Young Lives parent, India

In Ethiopia, Peru and Viet Nam, poor boys are more likely than poor girls to have dropped out of school by the age of 15. This may be because boys often have greater opportunities to earn more by working than girls.

Young Lives research officer

Background notes on gender inequality

Activity 5.3

Examples of consequences of gender inequalities

- Dropping out of school to work may expose young people to health and safety issues such as pesticides and dangerous machinery.
- Girls who marry or have children early are exposed to a number of risks, such as an increased risk of dying during pregnancy and childbirth. They are also more likely to be less well nourished, less educated and more at risk of abuse.

Examples of aspects of living in poverty shared by girls and boys in Ethiopia and India

- Both boys and girls living in poverty will be more vulnerable to diseases such as malaria and water-borne illnesses.
- Both boys and girls will be more likely to live in poor housing and have an unhealthy diet.
- Both boys and girls may suffer some kind of stigma within the wider community as a result of being poor.

Gender and poverty

The majority of people living in poverty around the world are women. Women often have fewer resources, fewer rights and fewer opportunities to participate in decision-making processes than men. There are many, often complex, reasons why women are more at risk, such as domestic violence, discrimination and lack of education.

In 2009, it was calculated that women account for two-thirds of the people living in extreme poverty and 60% of the working poor people in the world.ⁱ Women frequently own fewer assets than men, earn less money and do the vast majority of unpaid care work. There are also fewer women represented in politics and women are often legally discriminated against too. Women are still given a lower legal status than men in 128 countries around the world.ⁱⁱ

Find out more about Oxfam's work on women's rights:

www.oxfam.org.uk/what-we-do/issues-we-work-on/womens-rights

ⁱ *Global Employment Trends for Women*, International Labour Organisation, 2009.

www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---dcomm/documents/publication/wcms_103456.pdf

ⁱⁱ *Women, men and poverty: an introduction to gender justice*, Oxfam, 2015

policy-practice.oxfam.org.uk/blog/2015/09/women-men-and-poverty-an-introduction-to-gender-justice

Gender inequality and poverty in Young Lives

Gender differences become greater during adolescence, as gender identities become stronger. Gender-based inequalities also open up during this period, but patterns are complex and it is not always young women who are disadvantaged. Both boys and girls are affected at different ages and in different ways, influenced by a range of factors such as household dynamics, socio-cultural context and economic pressures.

In most countries adolescence is a time when young people are expected to have completed primary school and moved into secondary school. However, in many countries this is also a time when the percentage of young people enrolled in school falls significantly. Young people may have to drop out of school to find work. Others may marry and become parents themselves.

In the Young Lives communities, gender differences are already apparent in education by age 12. As adolescence progresses, gaps between girls' and boys' school enrolment increase but there are different patterns in different countries. In Ethiopia, Peru and Viet Nam, poor boys are more likely than poor girls to have dropped out of school by 15, possibly because boys often have the potential to earn more from working than girls. In Ethiopia, the most common reason for girls dropping out of school is to care for siblings. The second most common reason is that families cannot afford the costs of schooling. This second reason is much more commonly given for girls than for boys.

In India, however, girls are less likely than boys to be enrolled in school, whatever the wealth of their household. The socio-cultural context and care responsibilities increase the chance of young women dropping out of school early. Secondary school also often poses more risks to girls than primary school. For example, a longer journey to and from school can lead to an increased risk of sexual assault. Parents often place more emphasis on boys' education because they expect their sons to look after them when they are old, while girls often leave to live with their husband's family.

In all four countries, the percentage of young people married or cohabiting by age 19 is higher among girls than among boys. In Ethiopia, India and Viet Nam, early marriage and childbearing are most common among girls from poorer households and rural areas. Early marriage and childbirth bring with them a number of risks, including higher infant and maternal mortality, health risks such as sexually transmitted infections. Adolescent mothers tend to be less well nourished, less educated and more at risk of abuse. They also commonly have lower access to economic opportunities and less involvement in decision-making.

Further reading

- *How Gender Shapes Adolescence: Diverging Paths and Opportunities*, Young Lives Policy Brief 22, Emma Feeny and Gina Crivello, 2015. www.younglives.org.uk/publications/PP/how-gender-shapes-adolescence
- *From Infancy to Adolescence: Preliminary Findings from Round 4*, Young Lives Policy Paper 7, Paul Dornan and Kirrily Pells, 2014. www.younglives.org.uk/publications/PP/from-infancy-to-adolescence