

Gender Stereotypes in Movies and TV Shows

Information for students

Images of men and women in the media and in the entertainment industry (movies, TV and radio shows, news, music, print media, etc.) are often based on stereotypical roles of men and women. By definition, a stereotype is “a set idea that people have about what someone . . . is like, especially an idea that is wrong.”¹

- Think about how realistically men and women are portrayed on TV and in movies. Compare the men and women you see as characters with people you know in real life.
- Make a list of characteristics portrayed in the entertainment industry that you find true and untrue to your reality. Think about their gender, race, age, culture, etc. Do you think stereotypes in TV shows and movies can limit how we see others or even how we see ourselves?
- Try to remember a show or movie you have watched, watch a new show or movie, or use the Internet to help you remember how some characters were portrayed. You could even call or video chat with classmate to exchange ideas and work together.

Materials required

- DVDs or device with Internet access
- Paper and writing materials

Information for parents

- Talk about the last movies and TV shows that you watched with your child or that your child, and point out non-traditional heroes or heroines.
- Look at how boys, girls, men and women are stereotyped in movies and TV shows. Talk about how these images can be limiting for people who may feel inadequate because they don't fit the mould.
- Familiarize your child with the concept of stereotyping (simple, one-dimensional portrayals of people based on generalizations of gender, race, age, culture, etc.) and help them understand the role gender stereotypes can play in the content they watch.

¹ *Cambridge Dictionary*, s.v. “stereotype (n.),” accessed April 15, 2020, <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/stereotype>