

INTERED

Lesson Plan

Teaching Procedure

Lesson Topic

The evolution of women's roles and gender inequalities

Phenomenon

The gender gap is the phenomenon that describes the persistent inequalities between men and women in multiple areas of social, economic, political and cultural life. It is a gap that affects not only formal opportunities, but also the actual conditions of access, recognition and participation in the different sectors of society.

This imbalance manifests itself in many forms: differences in salaries for equal roles and skills (gender pay gap), lower presence of women in positions of leadership and decision-making power, limited access to still strongly stereotyped professional fields (such as STEM), under-representation in the media or sports, unequal distribution of domestic and care work, up to more subtle forms of discrimination linked to stereotypes and cultural expectations.

Despite regulatory and social advances in recent decades, the gender gap remains a structural and transversal phenomenon, fuelled by a combination of cultural, educational, economic and legal factors. Precisely because of its pervasive nature, addressing it requires systemic change: not only fair laws and policies, but also equality education, deconstruction of stereotypes and active promotion of inclusive citizenship.

Working on the gender gap in the classroom means offering students tools to critically observe reality, understand the complexity of social roles and contribute, in their own daily context, to building a more just and equal society.

Grade Level

Students aged 13-18

Learning Objectives

- Understand what is meant by the gender gap and recognise its different forms in the various contexts of everyday life.
- Identify the main areas where the gender gap still persists today (e.g. work, politics, education, media, sport) also through the analysis of data and testimonies.
- Reflect critically on gender stereotypes and prejudices, grasping their cultural origins and social impact.
- Stimulate an active and conscious attitude towards gender equality, promoting respect, empathy and participation.
- Develop effective communication and collaboration skills to deal constructively with gender equality issues.

Learning Outcomes

- Define the concept of gender gap and related key terms.
- Recognise its causes and manifestations across different social spheres, supported by data.
- Critically analyse and deconstruct stereotypes, expressing reasoned opinions.
- Propose solutions and foster inclusive, responsible attitudes and choices.

- History: evolution of gender roles over time, feminist movements, historical legislation and women's access to education and employment.
- English: comprehension and production of language texts on gender equality issues, analysis of international campaigns or articles, specific vocabulary on equality and rights.
- Italian: critical analysis of journalistic and literary texts on the gender gap, production of argumentative and reflective texts on stereotypes and social roles.
- Mathematics: reading, interpretation and representation of statistical data on gender inequality (e.g. pay gap, access to STEAM, percentages in management roles).
- Science: study of the under-representation of women in scientific disciplines, reflection on the impact of gender diversity in research and innovation.
- Law and Economics: analysis of national and international regulations on gender equality, study of rights, public policies and conventions on women's rights.

Subjects Integrated

Printed materials:

- Stereotype analysis guide cards (with stimulus questions);
- Observer grids (with indicators for participation and group dynamics);
- Post-its, white sheets and coloured cards for brainstorming;
- Cards with summary statistics (wages, STEM, political representation, etc.);
- Copies of newspaper articles, short texts or thematic extracts.

Digital materials:

- Introductory slides on the gender gap and common stereotypes;
- Short videos or commercials to be analysed in class;
- Access to reliable sources (ISTAT, UN, Eurostat, WeWorld, UN Women);
- Apps or digital presentation tools (Canva, Padlet, Genially, PowerPoint);
- Access to platforms for producing and sharing podcasts or videos.

Physical materials:

- Flipchart and markers for group work;
- Markers, scissors, glue, magazines to cut out (for creative elaborations or collages);
- Display boards to set up an exhibition or visual campaign in the classroom or corridors.

Technology:

- Projector, audio speakers and computer connected to the internet;
- Smartphone or tablet (for recording podcasts, taking photos, creating social content);
- Possible microphone or media for audio/video recording.

Reference materials:

- Glossary with key terms (gender gap, stereotype, equality, bias, etc.);
- Short biographies of significant female figures in history or science;
- Graphic templates for creating posters and infographics.

All materials must be prepared in advance and adapted to the number of students and groups envisaged.

Materials

Prerequisite Skills

No specific in-depth skills are required: the activity is accessible to all students and offers a guided, participatory introduction to the gender gap. A basic familiarity with informative/argumentative texts, principles of equality and human rights, and small-group cooperation is helpful.

Seating Arrangements

During the introductory phase, students are arranged in a semicircle or at front desks to encourage active listening, shared viewing of projected materials and initial interaction with the teacher.

During the workshop phase, they reorganise themselves into collaborative groups around workstations (with flipcharts or equipped tables) to stimulate discussion, confrontation and content production.

Finally, during the return phase, each group stands up and presents its work orally in front of the class, promoting sharing, public expression and mutual respect.

Time

60-80 Minutes

Assessment

- Exit ticket with an answer phrase;
- Mini quiz (2-3 questions);
- Peer review

Lesson Steps

Introduction 15 minutes

The lesson opens with a simulation conducted by the teacher, who proposes a normal frontal activity (such as a brief explanation or correction of exercises) by intentionally but unspokenly adopting attitudes influenced by gender bias.

For example, the lecturer might interrupt female students more frequently, give more value to the answers of males, or address them with different language according to gender.

Students are not informed of the experimental nature of the activity. At the end, the teacher reveals the intent of the simulation and leads a critical discussion on the reactions elicited, stimulating questions such as:

Did you notice anything unusual?

How did you feel?

Do you think this could happen in reality?

This provocative but controlled introduction activates prior knowledge, generates genuine emotional and cognitive involvement, and effectively initiates reflection on the topic of the gender gap and stereotypes.

Unmasking the stereotype - Analysis of the assigned gender stereotype

Objective: to activate critical thinking about the stereotype received, understanding its origin, spread and impact.

The class is divided into gender heterogeneous groups. Each group is assigned a specific gender stereotype (e.g. "men don't cry", "women can't park", "STEM is for males", "care work is for women").

Activity 1 20 Minutes

Students analyse the stereotype through three guiding questions:

Where does it originate?

How does it manifest itself in everyday life, in the media or in language?

What consequences can it have on people and society?

The teacher provides supporting materials (sources, articles, data, testimonies) and facilitates discussion within groups. The students elaborate on their answers by preparing a concept map or a short written summary.

Awareness-raising campaign design

Objective: stimulate creativity and effective communication to deconstruct the stereotype through a multimedia or performance product.

Each group designs a mini awareness-raising campaign on the stereotype analysed.

Students choose the most suitable communication format from:

a video or podcast of maximum 2 minutes;

a poster or infographic (digital or printed);

a social media post with a slogan and hashtag;

a symbolic event to be proposed at school (e.g. living library, flash mob).

During this phase, each group works independently, organising roles and tasks. The teacher supervises the work, paying attention to the effectiveness of the message, inclusive language and consistency with the objective.

NOTE: it is possible to assign one student per group the role of external observer, with the task of observing and noting the relational dynamics between the group members, particularly with regard to participation, taking the floor, distribution of roles and the possible emergence of gender stereotypes.

Observations can be shared during the concluding phase, in order to encourage informed reflection not only on the content, but also on the way in which peers work and interact.

Activity 2
20 Minutes

Presentation and group discussion

Objective: to share and promote the ideas generated, encouraging peer discussion and metacognitive reflection.

Each group presents its campaign to the rest of the class, illustrating the content created and the key message chosen.

After each presentation, there will be a brief open discussion in which other students can ask questions, suggest improvements, or express their appreciation.

The teacher concludes the activity with a group discussion on how stereotypes work in society and what concrete actions can be taken, including at school, to promote gender equality.

NOTE: if the role of external observer was assigned during Activity 2, at this stage each observer will have the opportunity to share their observations with the class, constructively highlighting any relevant group dynamics that emerged during the work:

For example, differences in participation between girls and boys, ways of listening to each other, distribution of tasks, or implicit leadership tendencies.

This feedback provides an important opportunity to reflect collectively on real behaviors related to the same stereotypes and gender roles discussed in class.

Activity 3
20 Minutes

Summary of key concepts

Objective: to close the circle between experience, learning, and real-world context, reinforcing an interdisciplinary and inclusive perspective.

The teacher guides students in recognizing how, throughout the lesson, they have analyzed stereotypes, reflected on social roles, and observed gender dynamics, both in the content and in peer interactions.

Through the activities carried out, students had the opportunity to confront manifestations of the gender gap, discuss its causes, and propose creative communication solutions to combat it.

The link between gender stereotypes, social participation, and active citizenship is emphasized, showing how overcoming prejudice is an integral part of individual well-being, inclusion, and sustainable development.

As a final formative assessment, an exit ticket is provided in which students are asked to write: "A stereotype that I questioned today and why."

Alternatively, the teacher can propose a question for reflection:

"What is a small gesture we can do at school to promote gender equality?"

Closing
10 Minutes

Follow-up project: propose a collaborative project in which students create a school campaign for gender equality, to be developed over several weeks. They can divide into groups with specific roles (graphic designers, researchers, writers, speakers) and produce content to inform, raise awareness, or engage the school community: videos, posters, podcasts, articles for the school website, meetings open to families or other classes.

Alternatively, you could conduct historical and social research on female figures who have brought about change in various fields (science, politics, art, education) and present the results in the form of a biographical exhibition or digital storytelling.

Real-world application: Invite students to reflect on professions related to gender equality and the promotion of rights: educators, lawyers, journalists, activists, social researchers, diversity management experts.

An observation activity can be proposed for everyday life: identify and document (with photos or brief notes) episodes, images, or content that convey gender stereotypes, or positive examples of inclusion (advertisements, articles, games, books, commercials).

Interdisciplinary links

This topic is naturally linked to:

History: evolution of women's rights, feminist movements, legislative changes.

Languages and literature (Italian and English): critical analysis of texts, genre fiction, essays, and articles on the role of women.

Science: promoting women in scientific research, discussion on access to STEM subjects.

Mathematics: reading and analyzing data on wage inequality, access to education, and political representation.

Civics and law: study of laws on equality, the Italian Constitution, Agenda 2030 (Goal 5).

Activities to propose

- Creation of a map of forgotten female figures in city place names (streets, squares, school buildings);
- Guided reading of a story, graphic novel, or film focused on gender equality (e.g., Persepolis).
- Proposal for a creative challenge at home: design a personal social media campaign to dismantle a gender stereotype, documenting it with images, phrases, and hashtags.
- Structured classroom debate: organize a debate in which students, divided into teams, defend opposing positions on a controversial issue related to the gender gap (e.g., "Are gender quotas useful or discriminatory?"; "Is sport still an unequal space for men and women?").
- The activity promotes critical thinking, respect for opinions, and argumentation based on data and sources.
- Inclusive writing workshop: propose a language review activity on school texts, articles, announcements, or school communications, with the aim of making them more gender-inclusive.
- Students reflect on the use of sexist or stereotypical language and propose respectful and effective alternatives;
- Interviews with real or imaginary witnesses: students prepare and stage short interviews with real people (e.g., a scientist, a stay-at-home dad, a school principal) or imaginary characters who have had first-hand experiences related to the gender gap. They can record them in audio or video format, or present them live as short monologues;
- Critical analysis of advertising: bring a selection of commercials (current or historical) to class and guide students in an analysis of the implicit messages related to gender: roles attributed, colors, voiceover, target audience. The activity can culminate in the rewriting or creative reworking of a commercial to make it more equitable and inclusive.
- Class theme day: organize a school day on the theme of "Gender Equality," in which each subject offers an activity related to the theme (e.g., in math, analyze data on the gender gap; in science, study female scientists; in art, reinterpret iconic works from a gender perspective). The entire day becomes an interdisciplinary and engaging journey.

