

THE FEMALE LEAD

Introduction

These classroom resources are designed to be used alongside 'The Female Lead: Women who Shape our World'. The activities contained will help your students to begin exploring the stories of our Female Leads in greater depth, and thinking about the larger issues to which these stories connect.

This pack is divided into three sections, each with a number of tasks. Students can use the pack either independently or in a more directed lesson – further guidance can be found in these notes. Individual tasks can also be used as stand-alone activities, although we believe that the tasks work best when used as part of a whole section.

Below, you will find an overview of each section, including a summary of its learning objectives and specific guidance on the activities. Attached to the resource pack is an appendix containing copies of all worksheets, images and resources necessary for completing these activities. These can be photocopied as necessary.

Section One: Obstacle Course

This section is designed to introduce students to the broader context in which the stories of our Female Leads are situated. They will learn about women's position in the workforce, including issues such as equal pay, female representation at senior level in industry, and the intersecting kinds of discrimination experienced by disabled women and women of colour. They will learn about the influence of gender stereotypes on the way in which women are treated both inside and outside the workplace. The learning objectives for this section are as follows:

- To understand the broad context of women's position in the workforce
- To reflect on gender stereotypes – how they are created and enforced from childhood onwards, and how they affect women's access to, and treatment within, the workplace
- To begin to understand the way in which gender stereotypes and sexist attitudes towards women create structural obstacles to their success which overlap with, and reinforce, personal obstacles

Guide to the tasks

Task 1 – Discussion Opener

Activity length: 5 minutes

The purpose of this activity is to gauge to what extent students have thought about this issue before, determine what their current opinions are, and generate some discussion. You can either ask students to carry out this activity in pairs or groups, or have a whole-class discussion. Try to prompt students if their discussions become overly one-sided to ensure a breadth of opinion is heard.

Task 2 - Quiz

Activity length: 15 minutes

This task is designed to introduce students to the broad context of women's position in the workforce. There is an answer sheet in the Appendix to the resource pack. You could ask students to complete the quiz independently and then peer-mark each other's responses using the answer sheet. Alternatively, you can undertake this activity as a whole class, reading out the questions for students to answer and giving them the answers either after each question or at the end of the quiz.

Discussion Question

Activity length: 5-10 minutes

Students can either undertake this activity in pairs or small groups; or as a whole class, with the discussion directed by you. If the former, allow some time for discussion, then ask students to feed back to the class so that a breadth of ideas are shared. Some extension questions have also been included for students who wish to extend their thinking on this topic.

Quick Fire Activities

Activity length: 15 minutes in total

This activity will give students some applied examples of how gender stereotypes and sexist attitudes operate in the workplace. Students should do this activity in pairs or small groups. They should spend no more than 5 minutes on each activity. Once they have completed all three, you may wish to ask some groups to feed back before asking students to read the Thought Box on gender stereotypes.

Full-colour images for these activities can be found in the Appendix, and can be photocopied for students.

Thought Box

Activity length: 5-10 minutes

Through this activity, students will explore some of our Female Lead interviews in greater depth, focusing initially on the obstacles that these women have overcome in order to achieve success. Students should work on this activity in pairs or small groups. In the Appendix, you'll find a list of interviews for this activity: you can photocopy these interviews and distribute amongst pairs or groups of students so that each group has a different interview to work from.

Section Two: Breaking down the Barriers – Women who buck the trend

Having explored obstacles and barriers in the previous section, students will now focus on women who have been successful in achieving their ambitions. This section will explore the importance of celebrating women's success, and will stress the positive influence of female role models on both girls and boys. Students will have opportunities to identify women they already admire, before spending some time exploring the stories of some of our Female Leads.

The learning objectives of this section are as follows:

- To develop an awareness of the importance of positive female role models in building confidence and aspiration amongst girls and boys, counteracting gender stereotypes, and encouraging positive and respectful relationships between men and women
- To diversify the range of students' female role models

Task 1

Activity length: 7 minutes

Students should complete the profile independently before feeding back to a partner. Alternatively, ask students to volunteer to feed back to the whole class about the women they have chosen to profile.

Task 2

Activity length: 10 minutes

In the Appendix, you'll find a list of interviews to look at for this activity – you can photocopy these interviews and give a different interview to each pair or group of students. Students should complete their profiles in their pairs or small groups before feeding back to the rest of the class. You may wish to ask students to write down the profiles other groups share during feedback.

Section Two: Breaking down the barriers - Toolkit for success

In the course of completing the activities for this section, students will think in depth about the resources our Female Leads have drawn upon in order to achieve success – both external resources such as networks and mentors, and internal resources such as strength of character and attitude toward learning. Students will begin by exploring their own attitudes toward success and what constitutes a successful person, before moving on to reflect on the definition of success offered up by our Female Leads. Students will work with our concept of 'the 5 pillars of success', the 5 key drivers of success that run through all of our interviews as constant themes, applying their understanding by identifying the 5 pillars in action in some of our Female Leads' stories. Extension

activities provide opportunities for students to go deeper with their thinking, using the knowledge and understanding they have developed to begin to map out their own ideas for solutions to gender inequality.

The learning objectives for this section are as follows:

- To reflect on conventional definitions of success, and consider the value of alternative definitions
- To identify key drivers of success in our Female Leads, and develop an ability to spot these '5 pillars' in action
- To begin to use students' own knowledge, understanding and opinions to map out solutions to the obstacles that prevent women from achieving success

Task 1

Activity length: 2 minutes

Students should work on this activity in pairs or small groups. The idea is to uncover students' underlying attitudes toward, and preconceptions about, success – so students should follow their instincts for tasks 1-3 rather than spending too much time thinking about what the 'right' answer might be.

Task 2

Activity length: 10 minutes

Students should complete this activity in pairs or small groups – to broaden the discussion, it would be helpful to allow some time for students to compare their work with another pair or group. This could also work as a whole-class activity.

Task 3

Activity length: 10 minutes

Students should complete this activity independently before swapping their work with a partner to discuss similarities and differences.

Task 4

Activity length: 7 minutes

You may wish to have a whole-class discussion about the Thought Box on the 5 pillars of success. Students should complete the table activity independently. Copies of the quotations and the table can be found in the Appendix.

Task 5

Activity length: 5 minutes

Students should complete this activity independently.

Task 6

Activity length: 5 minutes

Students should complete this activity independently.

Task 7 – Extension Task

Activity length: 15 minutes

This activity is designed to extend students' thinking and encourage them to apply their accumulated knowledge and understanding creatively. Students can work on this activity independently, but working in pairs or small groups may generate deeper and more creative discussions.

Task 8 – Extension Questions

Activity length: 10 minutes

Students who are particularly interested in this section of the lesson pack may wish to spend some time working in pairs or small groups on these discussion questions. There are no definitive right or wrong answers – the questions are designed to bring out some of the larger themes behind this section, encouraging students to think in particular about gendered approaches to success and the value of rethinking these attitudes. This activity could also work as a whole-class discussion.

Section Three: Pathways to Success

This fourth and final section provides students with practical resources for clarifying their own ambitions, and putting plans in place to work towards their goals. Students will think about the personal characteristics they have which can help them to achieve success, and will spend time identifying and analysing their support networks. Through setting carefully structured goals, students will be empowered and enabled to take the first step towards achieving their ambitions.

The learning objectives of this section are as follows:

- To identify key ambitions and reflect on their importance to students' lives
- To identify and analyse students' own resources for achieving success – both personal resources and external resources
- To learn how to use a structured framework for setting goals
- To identify and plan a goal that will act as a first step towards achieving an important ambition

Task 1

Activity length: 7 minutes

Students should work independently on this task, and should be encouraged to spend time choosing an ambition carefully. It is important that they choose something that really matters to them, because this will make the process of setting goals easier.

Task 2

Activity length: 3 minutes

Students should complete this activity independently. They should be encouraged to think beyond simply writing something like 'I would feel happy if I achieved this goal' – the more clearly they can imagine their feelings upon achieving success, and the more detailed their imagining, the more motivated they will feel.

Task 3

Activity length: 5-7 minutes

Students should work independently. It may be a good idea to look back at the section 1 activities on obstacles if they are struggling to come up with ideas.

Task 4

Activity length: 2 minutes

There is no need to write anything or discuss anything for this exercise – students may simply wish to review their earlier work, although it may be worth leaving some time for discussion in case they have questions or require clarification.

Task 5

Activity length: 10 minutes

Students should spend some time working on this task independently before asking others to contribute. Especially under-confident students may need particular support with this aspect of the task.

Task 6

Activity length: 15 minutes

Students should complete this activity independently, but may need some support in identifying appropriate choices for their networks.

Task 7

Activity length: 15 – 20 minutes

Students should work on this task independently, although they may need some support in reading through the SMART framework before they begin setting and planning their goals. Once they have completed their tables, you may wish to draw the session to a close by inviting students to share

their goals, and reading the conclusion together. If time allows, it may be worthwhile to periodically return to students' goals and invite them to share the progress they have made – and, of course, to celebrate when they achieve their goal.