Hi team! I’m sorry I can’t be here today. Please complete the following work – we’ll take it up on Monday; have a great weekend!

First, define the word **stereotype** in the space below:

Please read the following introduction to **sex** vs. **gender**:

**What Is Gender?**

When you see an infant, how do you determine visually if the baby is a boy or a girl? You might look for a bow or dress for a girl or note the pink clothing. For elementary school children, you would notice the style of a child's hair and way of dressing to help you determine his or her sex. By middle and high school, you would start to see physical characteristics and differences including facial hair and voice changes for young men, breast development in young women and differences in the two genders' average heights.

The physical characteristics you start to see more prominently in teenagers are determined primarily by our genes and the resulting reproductive systems and hormones produced. These genes determine our **biological sex**. Biological sex is whether we are born male, female or in rarer cases, with biological characteristics of both sexes.

If physical characteristics emerge from our biology, what about other characteristics that are not biological, such as the way we dress ourselves? The baby in the photo below might look like a girl to you based on today's norms, but during the time period the photo was taken, babies of either sex were often dressed in this way. To our modern eyes, we usually look at the picture and see a baby girl. This is because we associate wearing a dress with girl children only. In reality, we really don't know if the baby in the photo is a boy or girl.

Antique photo of a baby boy or girl

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Our belief that 'girls wear dresses but boys do not' is an idea that has not always been true in every culture and timeframe. The same can be said for other beliefs we hold about the two sexes. These ideas and beliefs make up a concept called **gender**. Gender goes beyond biological sex and focuses on characteristics such as our social identity, behaviors and preferences, including what we wear and how we act.

In your own words, define **sex** and **gender**:

**Gender Roles**

Since these beliefs about gender change over time, we may look back to other eras and find views that may surprise us today. For instance, if you lived in the mid-20th century and opened the newspaper to the classified section, you would find listings for jobs appropriate for men separated from the jobs appropriate for women, rather than one listing. This separation of jobs by gender is an example of **gender roles**. Gender roles include the different behaviors expected of males or females by a particular culture. They are based on **cultural norms**, or expectations for how we should behave.

Poster showing expectations of British women during World War II

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Consider what stereotypes exist for your own gender. Some of these ideas about your gender may hold true for you, while others may not. For instance, imagine a man that loves hunting, an activity often associated with being 'masculine.' However, when it comes to caring for his elderly father, he finds himself much more nurturing than his sister. Although his sister is expected by society to be the more sensitive and caring (or more 'feminine') one, he takes on a role of caregiver more willingly and naturally. If someone says to him, 'Women are not interested in hunting,' he might agree with that gender role, but if someone says, 'Women are much better caregivers than men,' he might beg to differ based on his own experience.

Make a list of those stereotypes, as many as you can. Let’s say, at least 15 for each gender. I would like you to do this with a partner.

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| --- | --- |
| Males | Females |
|  |  |

Even within a person's own family, individual members can hold differing beliefs about gender roles. Our unique ethnic, economic and religious backgrounds may also affect our beliefs.

Then, please read the following two articles:

<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2010/aug/15/girls-boys-think-same-way>

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/femail/article-2518327/Mens-womens-brains-truth-As-research-proves-sexes-brains-ARE-wired-differently-womens-cleverer-ounce-ounce--men-read-female-feelings.html>

Complete the following questions – you can do them with the same partner as before if you like, but defend your own opinion!

1. Where and how do the articles contradict each other?

2. Which seems like the more authoritative source? Why?

3. Give some examples from both articles about differences between the sexes. Now, how about some more gender-specific differences. Are they the same thing? Explain.

4. Which article gives a more compelling argument, in your opinion? Why?

Be ready to share your responses on Monday! ☺