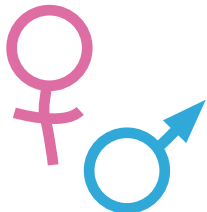


Being a teenager

1 First thoughts

- a) *Brainstorming: What do you think it means to be a teenage boy or a girl?*
Write a statement on a card, using one of the following patterns:



<p>teenage girls</p> <p>»Girls always worry more than boys about how they look.«</p>	<p>teenage boys</p> <p>»Boys never show their feelings.«</p>
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- b) *Discussion: Get someone to read the statements out and someone else to write them on the board.*
Discuss whether they are true or simply clichés.

Teenage voices



Annabel, 16 To me, being a girl means spending a lot of time in a group and talking about things. Girls seem to be more able to sort out situations by being supportive and sharing things with each other. I think they are able to sort out situations that arise amongst their friends better than boys do. Mind you, there is still a lot of bitchiness amongst girls. They might compliment each other but not really mean it because they really just want a compliment in return. I don't think boys judge as much. They find it much easier to just start up a conversation, whereas a girl would judge someone's personality by what they're wearing and then decide whether to talk to them or not.



Bethany¹, 16 I'd rather be a girl than a boy. I'm generalising a bit but I think boys mask over who they really are just to impress friends, whereas girls are more individual and don't just follow the crowd to please others. Girls don't have a problem with comforting their friends but if a boy was seen doing this, other boys would jump to conclusions and tease him for being gay. But being a girl is not easy because there's a lot of pressure on us to look good. Girls judge each other more on appearance. Boys appear to be a lot more confident than girls. They get into fights a lot more than girls. I've never been in a fight. I'm far too timid and afraid to confront people. I run away from conflict.

¹Bethany ['beθni]



Gabriella, 17 Being a girl means that you have to work harder for everything. Girls are often seen as vulnerable and less able than boys, so you have to prove yourself. I find it unfair that I have to stay inside at night while boys are allowed to go out. I feel like I have to prove that I'm strong enough to be able to go out and look after myself. I think people often think of women who want to do well at work in a bad light but that is unfair because all they're trying to do is succeed in what still seems like a man's world. I feel like there's quite a bit of pressure on me to be able to balance still being seen as a "girl" but also being strong without acting masculine.

■ **Adrian², 15** Boys commit suicide more because they don't tell people when they're ticked off, "big boys don't cry" kind of thing.



²Adrian [ˈeɪdriən]

■ **Nick, 16** The girls in our class all seem to work harder and learn more, and they usually get better results. And they don't mess around as much as the boys. The boys get bored more easily. They tend to want to look cool. Some mess around to impress the girls, but there are some who do it if anyone's there, not just girls. The girls are all interested in older boys so none of them have boyfriends in our class. In the breaks we go around in a gang, but we don't talk about the girls, mainly about music and games and stuff like that. Some boys are obsessed with their appearance. They're always rushing off to put gel in their hair.



■ **Tony, 15** I think boys and girls want the first time to mean something and not just be nothing. But after that, all boys seem to want is good sex. They talk about how good it was. Girls normally talk about the emotional side. There is pressure on boys to grow up quickly, especially on the sex side. Some boys want it because it makes them a man. Some girls, too, think it makes them grown-up.



2 Information and discussion

a) Collect information from the texts and put it in a grid.

	Girls	Boys
Positive qualities	supportive, ...	confident, ...
Negative qualities	bitchiness,
Pressures

b) *Discussion:* Compare notes and discuss the views and the facts.

3 Listening: Family life

You will hear some scenes from the life of an English family with three teenage children – Roddy (17), Anne (15 ½) and Nick (14). Listen to the three parts separately.

a) *Part 1:* Decide whether these statements are true or not.

- Nick wants to have half a dozen friends to stay on Friday.
- Nick's parents have nothing against sleepovers.
- Roddy is going to spend three nights away from home.
- When Nick hears that Roddy's room will be free, his problems are over.

b) *Part 2:* Explain the situation and list the things the children complain about. Then say what you think of the way Anne and Nick behave. What about the way the parents treat them?

c) *Part 3:* Continue the dialogue. How will Nick and Roddy solve their problems?

WORD BANK

Part 1: to doss down • mattress • to sleep over

Part 2: to unload a car • to rent DVDs • to catch a train • swearword • to deduct • allowance • torch

Part 3: to pop out • supper • fridge (= refrigerator) • 20 quid