



Gender issues

A.5 Gender in English – Factors affecting boys’ performance

Reason	Exemplar Responses
Boys’ language development is slower than that of girls, especially those with Summer birthdays	<ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ Activities designed to extend vocabulary and range of sentence structures◆ Encourage discussion in which language is explicitly modelled/explored◆ Use age- sensitive diagnostic tests
Boys’ reading of fiction can tail off at adolescence/prefer non-fiction	<ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ Explore and invest in library texts likely to appeal◆ Give non-fiction texts time and status in class◆ Explore conventions of sophisticated graphic novels – esp. literary adaptations◆ Show film adaptations up to a key tension point – study/make predictions, then give the book. Withhold rest of film until book read◆ Use audiobooks with readers to draw them in
Boys’ musculature and patterns of hormonal surges make it difficult for them to sit still and sustain concentration	<ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ Work in opportunities for movement/kinaesthetic learning◆ Range of activities in lessons
Long term deadlines in coursework favour girls’ organisation/ motivation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ Set work in series of shorter chunks◆ Learning mentors to help with organisation
Masculine culture can make boys uncomfortable discussing feelings of selves and others	<ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ Give opportunities for analytic rather than empathetic approaches to texts◆ Focus on author’s technique in conveying rather than feelings themselves
Peer group culture discourages effort/praise seeking	<ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ Praise discreetly◆ Discuss preferred method of praise with boys◆ Exploit competitiveness– make activities into contests◆ Older male student mentoring



Underperformance of Able Girls

Reason	Exemplar response
Reads avidly but not challenging texts, e.g. Horror/romance	<ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ Discuss reading preferences and set alternatives◆ Girls to create own challenging reading lists◆ Use reading pathways [see section C]
Narrow experience of non-fiction texts limits recognition and own stylistic range	<ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ Exposure to a greater range through:◆ Varying whole class texts◆ Reading targets◆ Book boxes including e.g. Female journalists, travel writers; war correspondents; historians; auto/biographies
Writes at length but imprecise focus	<ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ Activities concentrating on convergent thinking/planning stages
Lacks confidence in discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ Assign clear roles in activities◆ Select appropriate pairings/groupings
Time spent on presentation at the expense of content/quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ Focus on purpose of initial drafting◆ Encourage self-annotation of work◆ Encourage co-operative work production using sugar paper/markers – reward quality/imagination in ideas for this◆ Display less attractive but more engaging work◆ Timed activities◆ Refrain from praising presentation◆ Articulate learning targets in terms of the issue
Writes too much for short answer questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ Teach précis as a specific skill
Stories focus on dialogue; lack pace	<ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ Consider function of dialogue/description/action etc. in planning activities◆ Plan activities around modelling of effective writing