

# Developing the Young Workforce: Embedding equality in resources for learning

**Guiding principles for developing and  
selecting resources that promote  
equality and diversity**

This guide is for anyone developing and selecting resources for use in educational settings. It provides prompts, advice and reflective questions for addressing gender imbalances and equalities issues.

*This guide aims to support practitioners to provide a learning environment that recognises and promotes diversity and that supports children and young people to understand that it is everyone's responsibility to challenge discrimination (as set out in the Career Education Standard 3-18).*

## Contexts

- Choose contexts with broad appeal to a whole group (rather than specific students).
  - e.g. *focusing a reading activity on computer games to engage boys – not all boys will be interested, and it won't necessarily broaden the experience of the boys who are interested.*
- Choose examples that are easily relatable by all genders, cultures and that promote atypical male or female hobbies or interests
  - e.g. *'a football is kicked across a pitch at an angle  $\theta$   $30^\circ$  at  $7.4\text{ms}^{-1}$ ' could become 'a ball is thrown up into the air at an angle ...'*
- Factor in awareness of a variety of economic circumstances - keep monetary values low in contexts involving money, present a broad spectrum of profession and living environments.
- Ensure the thread of the story, scenario or question is engaging for repeated reads and is fit for purpose as well as having a focus on addressing stereotypes. (i.e. subvert stereotypes or avoid using them)

## Characters, skills and ambitions

- Ensure that characters or role models portrayed:
  - challenge stereotypes in relation to representation of the workforce (e.g. *diverse range of role models that subvert gender stereotypes are shown, a range of ethnicities are represented, and visible and invisible disabilities are referenced*).
  - are realistic and attainable (i.e. *not solely focused on exceptional cases such as Einstein, Christopher Columbus and Leonardo Da Vinci, as these are not easily relatable or diverse. Instead think about basing them on previous students, locally employed parents and other partners*).
- When depicting jobs that are less easy to identify by a uniform (or other obvious features), focus on the actual strengths, skills and interests possessed by the person doing that job (rather than the skills that are *assumed to be* required for that job)
  - see SDS [my World of Work](#) for a list of jobs, how best to represent them and a list of related careers.
- Reference a range of jobs including those less heard of and those that reflect current labour market information for your area (see SDS [regional skills assessments](#)).
  - e.g. *jobs in the field of architecture but not limited to [architect](#) such as: [architectural technician](#), [architectural technologist](#), [building surveyor](#), [stone mason](#) etc.*

- Ensure that a variety of learner pathways are represented and that one pathway is not depicted as more favourable than another.
  - e.g. Apprenticeships (Foundation, Modern and Graduate), college, university, training, employment, self-employment, voluntary work etc.
- Ensure that the skills, interests and hobbies of characters are diverse and non-gender-stereotypical
  - i.e. try to avoid things like 'Hannah budgets her money to shop for make-up whilst John saves his for a football strip'. Instead consider 'Samin budgets her money for tickets to a gig whilst Marcel saves his for the cinema'
- Try to use real life examples to ensure the narrative of the resource does not appear contrived.

## Images

- Audit images used across a whole resource.
  - Try a simple tally to establish whether a good range of genders, ethnicities, disabilities are represented.
- Check for diversity in terms of family make up.
  - Do images depict the diversity of family structures present in modern Scotland?
- Ensure images positively promote non-gender-stereotypical colours and activities.

## Reflective questions:

- Are all genders, ethnicities, disabilities and other protected characteristics represented proportionally?
- Have you gathered feedback from young people on whether they feel represented?
- Have you depicted all types of job in a way that subverts stereotypes *and* broadens perceptions of available learner pathways?
- Are there sufficient and regular opportunities within resources and across the whole curriculum for learners to consider gender stereotypes?
- Are there sufficient and regular opportunities to consider the effects of gender stereotypes on representation of a workforce?
- Are there a range of characters/role models to allow all readers to relate to at least one? Readers might include learners from minority groups, care experienced backgrounds (such as foster care and residential care) and with diverse family make up.
- Can the examples be read, accessed and enjoyed by both adults and young people?

