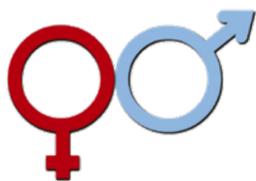


# DIALOGUE MAT 1: DANCE

**1** For centuries, society has assigned symbols, images and attributes of character to our gender.

The symbols we use to assign gender in science are associated with Venus – a looking glass – and Mars – a shield and spear.

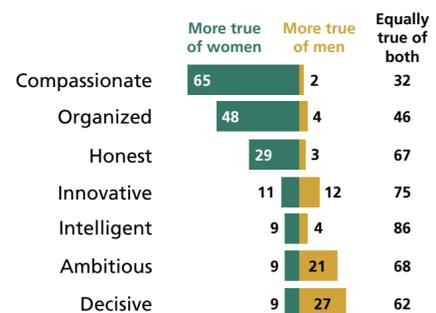
**Vanity and war. What are your reflections on the use of these symbols for gender assignment?**



**2** Research in the past has divided behaviours into gender-specific categories. A recent survey of business leadership attributed certain characteristics to people's leadership differently according to their gender. Do you agree with the findings?

## Women Seen as More Compassionate, Men More Decisive

% saying each characteristic is ...



Note: "No answer" not shown.  
Source: Pew Research Center survey, Nov. 12-21, 2014 (N=1,835)  
PEW RESEARCH CENTER Q7a-g

Trump's presidential campaign took traditional gender assumptions about leadership and used them effectively to draw support for himself and to undermine Clinton. In one tweet, he used her husband's previous actions, her age, sexual attraction and gender to plant questions about her fitness to govern America.



**Donald J. Trump** @realDonaldTrump [Follow](#)

If Hillary Clinton can't satisfy her husband, what makes her think she can satisfy America?

Many men and women find Trump's sexism abhorrent – yet, he was elected despite this. How far do you think this reflects a truthful picture of our society's position on gender and leadership? Do you think there can be change?

**3** Choreography is the art of creating dances, putting steps and movements into patterns that use the body to express meaning through music. Examine the dance imagery here and in the card-sort activity that is in the resource pack. Think about the film dance montage we have just seen.



Look at the card-sort activity and think about the way women and men moved in the dances you saw. Was there a leader? How were the dancers dressed? Were their movements powerful, vulnerable or delicate? Record your thoughts below. How often were men and women choreographed differently to reflect the gender characteristics listed in Task 2 and in the images you are viewing?

Using the cards in the resource pack, match the images with the correct dance genre and description of the choreography.



**4** Read the quotations below. Reflect on the social structures that we live within that both influence and are influenced by politics, arts and culture. Is change necessary? What is the recipe for change, if it is?

"You can't easily fit women into a structure that is already coded as male; you have to change the structure."  
**Mary Beard, Women & Power – A Manifesto, 2017.**



"In many, many cases, women make different choices in life to the ones that men make simply for biological reasons ... A woman who has a client base, has a child and takes two or three years off - she is worth far less to her employer when she comes back than when she went away because that client base won't be stuck as rigidly to her portfolio."  
**Nigel Farage, Politician**



"The problem with gender is that it prescribes how we should be rather than recognizing how we are. Imagine how much happier we would be, how much freer to be our true individual selves, if we didn't have the weight of gender expectations."  
**Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, We Should All Be Feminists**



"Men are so accustomed to various privileges such as automatically being taken more seriously – that they are not even aware they exist. That's why it is so crucial that men listen to women and their experiences, and learn."  
**Owen Jones, Columnist**



"If a woman finds a sexist joke offensive, that says more about her inability to deal with challenging situations."  
**Katie Hopkins, Media Personality**



"The tragically high male suicide rate, for example, cannot be divorced from the fact that men are far less likely than women to seek support for mental health problems. When we bring men up in a world that teaches them it's not manly to talk about their feelings, we damage them terribly. And gender stereotypes don't exist in a vacuum."  
**Laura Bates, Founder of Everyday Sexism**



Where do you place yourself on this spectrum?

Change

No Change

Some people say that there is real need to change the status quo. Others say that "it's all gone too far." What are your views? Give reasons for your answer.

## DIALOGUE MAT 2: SHAKESPEARE

**1** Shakespeare has always had thoroughly developed male characters.



Ian McKellen as King Lear

Paapa Essiedu as Hamlet

Please refer to the cards in the resource pack to read descriptions of some Shakespearean characters and their roles and complex personalities.

Shakespeare's male characters are very often written with full and complex personalities- their gender does not define them, with some characters exhibiting what we might term more 'masculine' traits, and others more 'feminine'. Romeo, for example is allowed to be both a hopeless romantic and also a violent gang member. When one of Shakespeare's female characters, however, exhibits strength or does not conform to an ideal of femininity, it is almost always remarked upon and seen as a negative sign (for example, Kate in *The Taming of the Shrew*).

What does Shakespeare's composition of male characters tell us about social attitudes towards men and how they have changed over time?

**2** In theatre, sometimes female actresses will play male characters and vice versa. Critics claimed that the following two actresses gave some of the best performances they'd seen. Why do you think more male characters are not played by female actresses that often?



Glenda Jackson as King Lear

Maxine Peake as Hamlet

**King Lear review - Glenda Jackson is magnificent**  
★★★★☆  
Old Vic, London  
Less is more as Glenda Jackson exudes command in Deborah Warner's fitfully brilliant production

**Hamlet review - Maxine Peake is a delicately ferocious Prince of Denmark**  
★★★★☆  
Royal Exchange, Manchester  
The gender switches in Sarah Frankcom's Hamlet may unsettle for a moment but they do not distort the play  
● At her Peake: a stage career in pictures

Glenda Jackson is tremendous as King Lear. No ifs, no buts. In returning to the stage at the age of 80, 25 years after her last performance (as the Clytemnestra-like Christine in Eugene O'Neill's Mourning Becomes Electra at the Glasgow Citizens), she has pulled off one of those 11th-hour feats of human endeavour that will surely be talked about for years to come by those who see it.

After taking on the sackcloth and ashes role of MP for Hampstead and Kilburn, a seat she held for Labour from 1992 (stepping down at the last election), it looked as though she had foresworn the comparative frivolities of the thespian life for good. But instead, the two times Oscar-winner has made the mother of all comebacks in this production by Deborah Warner, braving the prime ministerial zenith of the Shakespearean portfolio.

**Our Bottom Line:**  
This version [of Hamlet] was around three and a half hours. But it really didn't feel long. I would happily have skipped back to the beginning and watched it all again straight away. It feels thrilling and fast-paced, despite Hamlet's famous inaction; every second was exciting and brought new surprises and revelations.

**Our Review (\*\*\*\*\*)**  
It's beginning to feel rather like this play is taking over my life at the moment. After watching and reviewing the BBC Shakespeare Collection production recently, spending weeks in rehearsal for a local production, and buying DVDs of every other version I can find, last Thursday night I headed to a local cinema to watch a screening of the Manchester Royal Exchange theatre's 2014 production, starring Maxine Peake. Of course, the most immediately intriguing thing about this production was the casting of a woman as the famous Prince of Denmark.

Should an actor's gender determine whether they play a character or not? Why/Why not?

**3** Costumes and casting are used by directors to allow for a greater understanding of who a character is. They allow directors to have a creative tool to explore characterisation. They also allow directors to influence the world and how we see it. Look at the pictures below. What is the director saying about the society s/he is presenting through the casting, costume and characterisation?



David Tennant as Doctor Who

Jodie Whittaker as Doctor Who

Baywatch released in 2017

Hidden Figures released in 2016



Casino Royale released in 2006



Black Panther broke box office records, with strong, black, female lead characters.

**J.K. Rowling** @jk\_rowling  
Canon: brown eyes, frizzy hair and very clever. White skin was never specified. Rowling loves black Hermione

**Fans accuse Disney of whitewashing Pocahontas in Wreck-It Ralph 2 trailer**



What do these tweets and review excerpts tell you about casting choices that are made by directors? How does this make you feel about the films you have seen and the assumptions or decisions made by the director?

**4** Shakespeare said that all plays should reflect the reality of life. 'Hold a mirror up to nature'.

Would Shakespeare's plays stay the same in the modern day? Would he have the same characters and development? If Shakespeare were alive today what do you think his plays would look like? What characters would he have?

