

Gender Detective Activities

TV detective – adverts

Aim: To investigate the use of sexist or gendered language in adverts and the extent to which gender stereotypes appear in TV adverts

Suggested time: 10 minutes at the start to introduce the activity and talk about gendered language and gender stereotypes. The activity itself can then be done over a week. Children could have a simple ‘Gender Detectives Notebook’ or a piece of paper and write down any examples at the point of seeing them.

Notes for parents: this activity can be done at the same time as the TV detectives activity, but it’s also worth doing just with adverts. Did you know that since June 2019, harmful gender stereotypes in adverts have been banned? **Advertisements “must not include gender stereotypes that are likely to cause harm, or serious or widespread offence.”** <https://www.asa.org.uk/news/harmful-gender-stereotypes-in-ads-to-be-banned.html>

Activity:

Over a week, whenever you see adverts, whether on TV or online write down any gendered language you hear or any gender stereotypes you see. You might want to look out for:

- Dads appearing a bit hopeless, or only able to do DIY and not childcare or cleaning
- Mums doing most of the childcare, or doing all the domestic tasks at home, like cleaning and cooking
- Girls being emotional and allowed to cry; boys having to be strong and brave
- The music, voice over and colours used in some toy adverts

Discuss with your child:

How do you feel when you watch the adverts? What about adverts that show a toy only being played with by a boy, when you might like to play with it as a girl? Or only girls doing an activity that you might like to do as a boy? Talk about how and why harmful gender stereotypes in adverts have been banned in the UK since 2019.

In 2015, the campaign group Let Toys Be Toys looked at TV toy ads across children’s TV, and you could compare your findings with theirs. What has changed in 5 years?
<http://lettoysbetoys.org.uk/tvads/>