



Should single-gender education be an option for families or should all public schools be co-ed?

GETTING ORIENTED

The weekly passage introduces issues related to single-gender classrooms. Here is some information that might be helpful to students less familiar with the topic.

Single-Gender Classrooms

The idea of single-gender classrooms is not new. Single-gender classes—classes made up of all boys or all girls—were normal in many public schools across America before the 1960s. Boys and girls were separated into different classes based on the kind of jobs people thought they would have when they graduated. For example, girls took home economics classes where they learned to sew and cook. Boys took classes where they learned to farm and work with wood. This separation resulted in girls being excluded from or left out of many occupations or jobs.



Title IX Law

In 1972, the U.S. government passed laws that protected every student's right to have an equal education. This led to an increase in co-educational classes—or mixed classes with girls and boys—and programs. However, some research studies have suggested that sex discrimination continues in less obvious ways. For example, boys are more encouraged to pursue math and science while girls are more encouraged to take English and social science classes. These studies indicate or show that when boys and girls are separated into single-gender classrooms, they do better in school. This difference in performance is especially true for girls, who are more likely to excel or do well in math, science, and engineering in single-gender settings. These findings have renewed interest in promoting single-gender classes and schools in our society today.



Public, Charter and Private Schools

Most public schools in the United States are run by local governments who hire superintendents, principals, teachers and others who work in the schools. These schools are funded with money from taxes and are free for students. These are public schools because they are free for students. These schools need to follow certain rules that can make it difficult to try new things. Sometimes a school gets special permission to try something new, like requiring students to go to school on Saturdays or during the summer. With special permission, they don't have to follow all of the rules and policies that public schools have to follow. Sometimes these schools are very successful and many students want to attend them. These schools are called charter schools but are still free for students. Other schools do not use taxpayer money and parents pay to send their kids to these schools. They are called private schools.





Should single-gender education be an option for families or should all public schools be co-ed?

EVIDENCE AND PERSPECTIVES

	<i>Some may have this view:</i>	<i>But others may think:</i>
Teachers	Teachers can create activities that girls like and activities that boys like.	Boys and girls won't learn how to work together. Separation may limit job opportunities and direct male teachers to all-boy classrooms and female teachers to all-girl classrooms.
Students	Students can concentrate or think more in the classroom and not be distracted as easily. Boys can be more active in class. Girls will not feel scared to speak up in math and science classes. Everyone does better in school.	Friends will be limited to same gender. Social activities at school might be boring. Students may not feel confident or prepared to talk to members of the opposite sex. Students might feel too sheltered and held back in their social development.
Parents	Parents want students to be more focused on school and not on the drama that comes with boy-girl relationships. Parents of girls will want daughters to have more opportunities to gain confidence in science and math classes. Parents of boys will want sons to have more interactive educational experiences so that they find school more relevant or meaningful.	Parents may worry that students are not prepared for today's workplace. Parents may think that children will develop an unrealistic view of how the world works. Some may worry that they are sheltering their children too much, and that children will not have opportunities to learn to speak up for themselves or learn to listen to others' opinions.
Administrators and Policy Makers	Administrators want to increase academic success of all students, especially those in the minority. Test scores will increase, promoting pride in the minority community.	Administrators will say it's difficult to establish single sex classrooms in public school setting, and there's not enough money to create enough classrooms. They may also say school it will be difficult to find enough teachers to teach in this setting.
Employers	Men and women will be more equally represented in science and math jobs. Employers will have larger groups of job applicants that include women and people in the minority.	Workers may not know how to communicate effectively with everyone. Workers may not have the ability to adapt to various groups.

- ☒ Percentage of students scoring proficient on a 2008 Florida state subject test:

	Boys	Girls
Coed	55%	59%
Single-sex	85%	75%

Source: National Association for Single Sex Public Education
<http://www.singlesexschools.org/evidence.html>

- ☒ In 1950, men comprised 70.4 percent of the labor force in the United States. Women comprised 29.6 percent.
- ☒ In 2000, men comprised 53.4 percent of the labor force in the United States. Women comprised 46.6 percent.
- ☒ The U.S. Department of Labor predicts that in 2050, men will comprise 52.3 percent of the labor force in the United States, and women will comprise 47.7 percent.

Additional Reading for Teachers

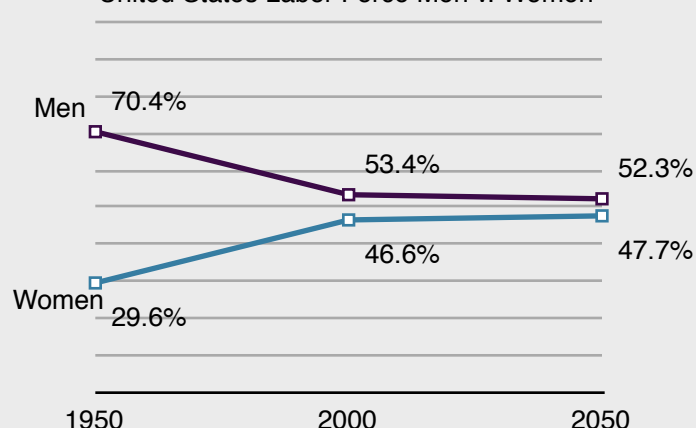
Single-Sex Schools: Separate but Equal?

<http://www.nytimes.com/roomfordebate/2011/10/17/single-sex-schools-separate-but-equal>

Podcast

<http://www.npr.org/2011/10/25/141692830/are-single-sex-classrooms-better-for-kids>

United States Labor Force Men v. Women





Should single-gender education be an option for families or should all public schools be co-ed?

ANNOTATIONS FOR TEACHERS

Features of Academic Text: *Many words for “say”*

When explaining what people say, think or believe, writers of academic texts will vary the words they use.

*Students might be confused by the use of the word “**argue**” in nearly every Word Generation article. They might think that we only “**argue**” when we are mad at someone because we disagree. Sometimes people will say they are having an argument with someone when they stop talking to them!*

*This kind of argument is different than the school use of the word **argue**. Authors or experts argue by saying what they believe about a topic and then giving reasons and evidence to support their belief, or claim. We can argue without getting mad or angry. We just have to be informed.*

Jenny lives with her mother, grandmother, and little sister. She is a junior at an all-girls high school where she is an excellent student. Jenny has applied to the University of Massachusetts. She is concerned about living in a co-ed dorm. She has not spent a lot of time interacting with boys her own age. Has Jenny’s high-school experience prepared her for the real world?

For years, many private schools have separated boys and girls. A new law has made single-**gender** education available to students who cannot afford to get into private schools.

Supporters of this law **say that** children can learn better in single-gender settings. Teachers of single-gender classes **report that** girls participate more and boys are able to pay attention better when they are separated. Teachers are able to plan activities specifically to address boys’ and girls’ needs. For example, lessons for boys include more movement and competition. Lessons for girls include more group work and start with a story that makes the lesson relevant to real life. Some scientists **think** these differences could help more boys enjoy languages and art and more girls enjoy math and science.

However, schools also help students learn about how to behave socially. Men and women **comprise** the work

force. If children grow up without the experience of working together, they may have trouble **adapting** to mixed-gender situations. To prepare students to succeed as adults, they must learn how to **conduct** themselves around the opposite sex.

Some single-gender schools are having great academic success. The Bright Choice Charter School of Albany, New York has been open since 2005. They offer a boys’ school and a girls’ school. In 2005, these schools ranked first and second on New York state tests. Some **argue** that other factors besides single-gender education affected the children’s success, but teachers and parents at Bright Choice believe in the single-gender **paradigm**. Are the academic advantages of single-gender education more important than the social learning opportunities provided in regular schools?

Another example of a more academic way of saying “say”:

Teachers of single-gender classes **report** that girls participate more and boys are able to pay attention better when they are separated.

We can use report when people had a real experience and can tell what happened.



Should single-gender education be an option for families or should all public schools be co-ed?

GENERATING WORDS

Cognates

Cognates are words that have similar spellings in English and Spanish or other languages and are related in meaning. For example what do you think *teléfono* means in English? Or *océano*?



English

Spanish

teléfono



English

Spanish

océano

Three of our focus words this week have Spanish cognates.

adapt | adaptar

conduct | conducta

paradigm | paradigma

With a partner, write a sentence using each of these English words. If you speak Spanish, write the sentence in Spanish.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Directions:

Many of the other words from this week's passage are also cognates. Below are a few of the Spanish translations of these words. Try to find the English word in the passage. Some may not be very obvious.

Spanish

excelente
actividades
opuesto
científicos
participar
aplicar
privado
Nueva York

English



Should single-gender education be an option for families or should all public schools be co-ed?

DEVELOPING DISCUSSIONS

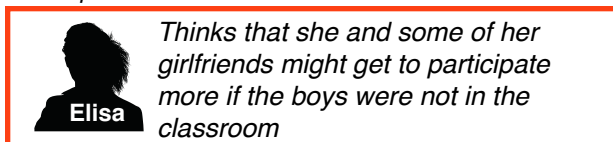
Opinion Continuum

Procedure:

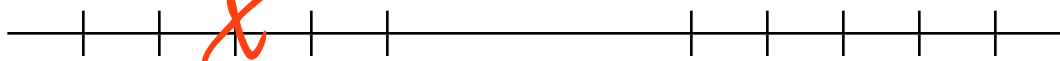
1. Ask 3-4 of your classmates to place their name on the opinion continuum. Ask them to place an "X" on the continuum to represent where they stand on the issue and then write their name below the "X." Do not allow anyone to choose the middle.
2. Ask your classmates to explain why they placed their name where they did. You can ask them to elaborate if you don't understand. You might want to take a few notes under their names to remember the important reasons and evidence they use.
3. Be prepared to give your opinion to several of your classmates as well.



Example:



Make single-gender schools an option



All public schools should be coed.



Class or small group discussion:

With a large or small group, share what you learned from talking to a few classmates.

Phrases you might use in today's discussion:

- Why do you believe this?
- Can you give me an example?
- Can you paraphrase that?
- If I'm hearing you right, you are saying that ____.
- ____ believes that _____. According to her, _____.

Notes: