

Adventures in learning, created
by Canadian dietitians



Students explore and critically analyze how gender can influence self-esteem and body image.

Learning Expectations:

1. Understand how gender can influence self-esteem and body image.
2. Appreciate that there is no one ideal body shape or size.
3. Identify positive attributes that are not gender or appearance related.

Subject Links: Health, Language, Personal Development, History, Art

Materials & Resources:

- ☆ Paper
- ☆ Library or Internet for research
- ☆ Art supplies

Class Discussion:

Divide the class into male and female students. Ask each group to make a list of things that influence their self-esteem. Have the girls present their findings to the boys and vice-versa. Use this as the basis for a discussion on gender biases

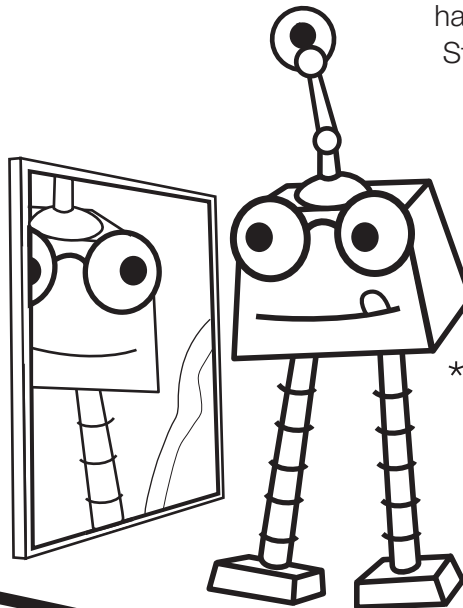
and encourage students to come up with more gender-neutral qualities. Draw attention to factors that influence self-esteem can be attributed to anyone, regardless of gender.

Teaching Tip:

Refer to the *MISSION NUTRITION** Teacher Notes for background on how gender influences self-esteem and body image during the transition to adolescence.

Activities:

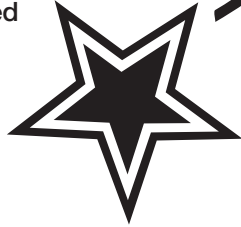
1. Ask students to work in groups to research how the portrayals of ideal body shapes and sizes for women have changed throughout history. Students may even go beyond the last century and look at the 1800s artists and their paintings. Assign one group to look at the body shapes and sizes that were popular for women during each of the following periods:



*MISSION NUTRITION**
resources for
Kindergarten to
Grade 8 are available in
English and French at
www.missionnutrition.ca
or by calling
1-888-876-3750.

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(continued)

- ☆ Figures that were fashionable at the turn of the century
- ☆ The “Flapper” period in the 1920s
- ☆ The Marilyn Monroe era of the 50s and 60s
- ☆ The Twiggy types of the 70s
- ☆ The tall, willowy toned, Cindy Crawford like figures of the 80s
- ☆ The waif-like, pre-pubescent look of the 90s

2. Have each group present their findings to the class with visuals to depict the portrayal of women during the period they examined. Then, ask students to reflect on and discuss the trends over time as well as the differences and similarities between the portrayals of women and men in the media.

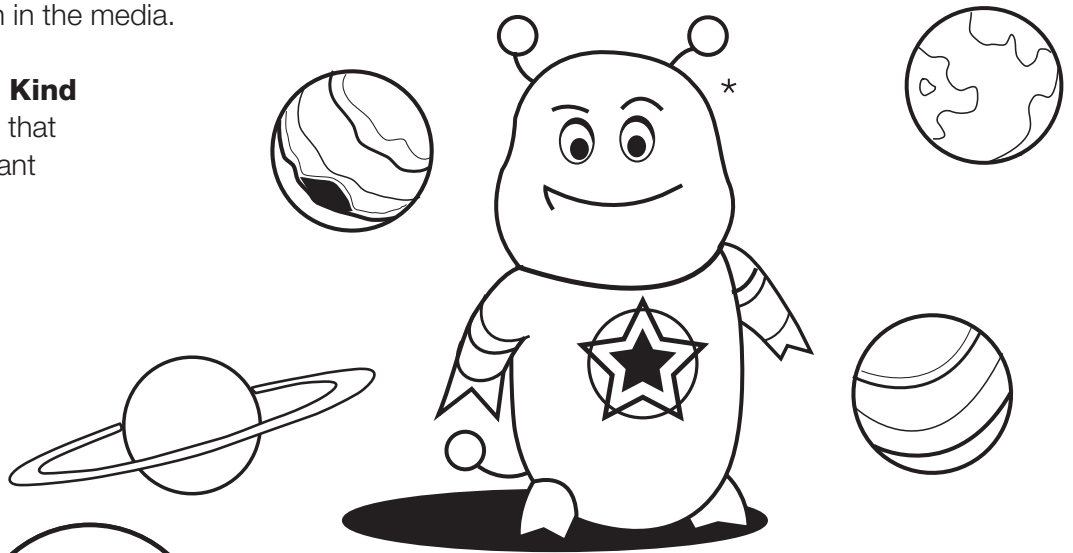
Home Connection: One of a Kind

Ask students to create a collage that represents the different and brilliant aspects of themselves (without

focusing on their appearance). They can use family photos, words, drawings, poetry and objects to create a unique collage that represents themselves. Encourage students to reflect on their many attributes to create a collage that celebrates who they are.

Assessment:

Base your assessment on students’ abilities to identify positive attributes that are not gender or appearance related in their collage.



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