**THEME 1 – Male & Female stereotypes**

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| **Men are stuck in gender roles**  Adapted from http://articles.latimes.com/2013/dec/26/local/la-me-one-way-gender-revolution-20131227  Brent Kroeger pores over nasty online comments about stay-at-home dads, wondering if his friends think those things about him. The Rowland Heights father remembers high school classmates laughing when he said he wanted to be a "house husband." He avoids mentioning it on Facebook. "I don't want other men to look at me like less of a man," said Kroeger.  https://simonasforza.files.wordpress.com/2014/10/doing-gender.jpg  His fears are tied to a bigger phenomenon: The gender revolution has been lopsided. Even as American society has seen sweeping transformations — expanding roles for women, surging tolerance for homosexuality — popular ideas about masculinity seem to have stagnated.  While women have broken into fields once dominated by men, such as business, medicine and law, men have been slower to pursue nursing, teach preschool, or take jobs as administrative assistants. Census data and surveys show that men remain rare in stereotypically feminine positions. When it comes to gender progress, men are stuck.  The imbalance appears at work and at home: Working mothers have become ordinary, but stay-at-home fathers are rare. Most Americans believe that children were better off if their mother was at home.  Other research points to an enduring stigma for boys whose behaviour is seen as feminine. "If girls call themselves tomboys, it's with a sense of pride," said Professor Barbara Risman. "But boys make fun of other boys if they step just a little outside the rigid masculine stereotype."  Two years ago, for instance, a Global Toy Experts survey found that more than half of mothers wouldn't give a doll to someone else's son, while only 32% said the same about giving cars or trucks to a girl. Several studies have found that bending gender stereotypes in childhood is tied to worse anxiety for men than women in adulthood.  Beyond childhood, the gender imbalance remains stark when students choose college majors: Between 1971 and 2011, a growing share of degrees in biology, business and other historically male majors went to women. Yet fields like education and the arts remained heavily female, as few men moved the opposite way.  In the last 40 years, "women have said, 'Wait a minute, we are competent and assertive and ambitious,'" claiming a wider range of roles, said Michael Kimmel. But "men have not said, 'We're kind, gentle, compassionate and nurturing.'" |

**THEME 2 – Teenage Achievements**

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| **The Most Fearless Teens Of 2013**  Adapted from *http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/12/26/the-13-most-fearless-teens-of-2013\_n\_4482280.html*  1. Daisy Coleman. Daisy is the teenager at the center of the infamous Maryville rape controversy. If you have not yet read her incredibly brave first-person piece about the experience on XOJane.com, please take the time to. (We'll wait.) "I not only survived, I didn't give up," she wrote. "This is a victory, not just for me, but for every girl."  2. Cassidy Lynn Campbell. Cassidy Lynn Campbell is a transgender teen who documented her journey transitioning in videos on her YouTube channel. She decided to run for homecoming queen at her California high school this year to make a statement. To her shock, she won the title, and her story ended up inspiring teens across the country who are struggling with their own identities.  3. Malala Yousafzai. This Pakistani teen's life was changed forever when she was shot in the head by the Taliban last year -- all because she wanted to go to school. Instead of backing down, the now-16 year-old has become an international crusader of education rights for girls. In addition to giving a speech on Malala Day at the United Nations earlier this year, she has been honored as a Nobel Peace Prize nominee and Pakistan's' first National Peace Prize winner.  4. Jaylen Bledsoe. Jaylen started his own tech company when he was just 13 years old. Now, at 15 years old, it's worth 3.5 million dollars and he has over 150 contracted employees. The teen credits his school's gifted education program for his business idea, but admits it's taken a lot of hard work and courage, too. "  5. Zach Sobiech. Zach uploaded the song "Clouds" to his YouTube page in December 2012 as a good-bye letter for his friends and family after learning that he only had months to live. The 19-year-old passed away this year from osteosarcoma -- a cancerous bone tumor -- but not before inspiring thousands of people across the world by his music and message.  6. James Ward. Despite the fact that James was homeless for a period of his life, the high school senior was determined to be the first person in his family to go to college. He knew he could not afford the tuition, so he decided to crowdfund his way to his dream school. He called his campaign "Homeless to Howard," and its message -- that every teen should feel empowered to make a better life for themselves -- spread like wildfire across the media, and even included an appearance on "Ellen." Needless to say, the teen achieved his goal.  7. Lorde. You can call her queen bee -- or, you can just call her this year's most-talked about singing sensation. The 17 year-old New Zealand singer/songwriter had one of the most popular hits of 2013 and was the first woman to top the alternative charts in 17 years. She's also an outspoken feminist and constantly keeps her cool in the face of Internet hate.  8. Sara Volz. This 17-year-old scientist created her own unique work space for her research: her bedroom. More specifically, she created her own algae biofuel lab under her bed. Her at-home project led to groundbreaking advancements for the scientific community -- including proof that the natural oils produced by algae could be converted into biofuels used in diesel engines. Sara's discoveries beat out 1,700 other whiz kids nationwide to win the 2013 Intel Science Talent Search. She was awarded a $100,000 scholarship. |

**THEME 3 – Celebrity Culture**

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| **Children can learn lessons from celebrities, says academic**  Adapted from *http://www.telegraph.co.uk/education/educationnews/10906111/Children-can-learn-lessons-from-celebrities-says-academic.html*  Teenagers should take a greater interest in celebrity culture to boost their understanding of politics, morality and the economy, according to leading academic.  Schoolchildren who regularly read about the lives of pop stars and actors are more likely to develop a “well-rounded knowledge” of modern life, it was claimed.  http://top10hm.net/wp-content/uploads/2012/04/Angelina-Jolie-Kung-Fu-Panda.jpgJames Bennett, a reader in television and digital culture at Royal Holloway, University of London, cited Angelina Jolie’s breast cancer surgery and Madonna adopting children from Malawi as examples of how celebrities can introduce children to important issues. He also suggested that closer analysis of the celebrity world could boost young people’s understanding of the media and the public relations industry. In further comments, Dr Bennett said it was “patronising” to assume that teenagers taking an interest in celebrities were being “sucked into” a lifestyle that promotes a shallow desire for instant gratification.  He was speaking before the international “Celebrity Studies Journal” conference at the university on Thursday which will debate the role of celebrity in modern society. Topics being discussed include the impact of Hollywood, the role of celebrity animals and the influence of TV chefs.  Head teachers have repeatedly been critical of the impact of celebrity culture on young people, with figures such as Miley Cyrus being attacked for promoting overly sexualised behaviour. One head claimed that the model Kim Kardashian encapsulated "almost everything that is wrong with Western society”.  But Dr Bennett, from Royal Holloway’s department of media arts, said teenagers interested in celebrity culture were more likely to have a deep knowledge of modern life and awareness of issues relating to politics, economics and the media.  He said: “From Angelina Jolie’s breast cancer surgery, to Madonna adopting children from Malawi, celebrities are constantly used to tell stories that spark important conversations and debates about moral, political, economic and cultural issues.  “Today’s teenagers benefit from discussing these topics with their peers. Indeed, we shouldn’t patronise young people by assuming they are sucked into celebrity culture.  “They understand the difference between reality TV stars and politicians – but more importantly, they understand how both can use PR machines and the trappings of celebrity to boost their popularity.”  Dr Bennett insisted that celebrities could teach young people how to be role models and how not to behave in society.  He added: "They also learn to be quite critical readers of media as they realise that celebrities are constructed. From social media to newspapers they see celebrity images are constructed and become quite smart readers of them." |

**THEME 4 – A bad press for teenagers?**

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| **Teens: We’re not all bad**  Adapted from *http://www.stuff.co.nz/stuff-nation/assignments/share-your-news-and-views/10018677/Teens-We-re-not-all-bad*  When you think of teenagers, what comes to mind? Rowdy parties? Lazy students? Ungrateful members of society?  http://www.quickmeme.com/img/b6/b6fc00080547d1d76a9fde291a38bbea8258362db75a987c0fae475fc4085e02.jpgThis negative stereotyping of teenagers has existed for years, but it didn't catch my attention until just a few weeks ago, when I was leaving a local fun-park with some mates. We thanked the lady operating the ride we had been on, and then we were on our way. As we left, another lady sitting nearby said she'd seen us thank the ride operator, and said we gave teenagers a good image, and that we should be proud of that.  It wasn't until later that her words really sunk in. A good image? We didn't save anyone's life. We didn't stop a bank robbery. All we offered was a smile and a 'thank you'. Has the teenager's image become so embarrassingly low that people congratulate us for showing common manners?  If this lady was so impressed, how do other people view us? How did our image even get this way?  There's no doubt: some teenagers are morons. But it's when people take that minority and instantly associate it with anyone between the ages of 13 and 19 that it becomes a problem.  And because the media likes to trumpet the idea that all teenagers are airheads, people actually start believing it. All it takes is one bad report involving a teenager (the fact that the offender is a teenager is always mentioned numerous times) and suddenly all teenagers are crazy, according to the rest of society.  I've always believed that if you tell a certain group something, eventually they'll start to believe it. And since that humans often only achieve what's expected of them, some of the bad-behaved teenagers may only be acting like that because that's how society expects them to be.  So, basically, don't stereotype. You wouldn't say that a woman belongs in the kitchen, or that all men are paedophiles, so why stereotype us?  Take it easy, and try to remember what being a teenager was like. That way, more teens will start to improve themselves once they realise that society doesn't hate them after all.  What do you think about the stereotyping of teens in society? |

**THEME 5 – Caring for the planet**

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| **Steve Irwin's ark: Australia Zoo legacy**  Adapted from *http://www.australiangeographic.com.au/topics/science-environment/2014/08/stever-irwins-ark-australia-zoo-legacy/*  Eight years after the death of The Crocodile Hunter, his legacy is nurtured by his family and a crew of 400 at Australia Zoo – a conservation hub for all manner of wildlife.  It isn't yet 5am, but vet Amber Gillett is already in theatre, desperately trying to save the life of an 18-month-old koala, who has two broken arms, a broken leg, punctures to her abdomen and a shredded right ear. It’s touch-and-go, heart-in-your-mouth stuff. Nurses hurry in and out of the theatre while the tiny creature’s chest rises and falls in rhythm with the beep of the heart-rate monitor. A clear plastic mask covers her nose and mouth, feeding vital oxygen into the limp body. After hours on the table, she’s moved to the ICU, and propped on her less damaged side on a cushion, with a hot water bladder for comfort. Now, it’s a matter of wait and see, says Amber. “She’s gotten this far, so she’s a tough little girl.”  http://nambourtown.com.au/assets/images/sid-logo.jpgIn 2012 Amber and the team at the Australia Zoo Wildlife Hospital treated about 900 koalas, such as this one, which had been attacked by domestic dogs. It’s an alarming figure, and one that’s on the increase. “When the hospital opened in 2004, we treated 64 native animals. Today, with the stampede of urbanisation in this area, that number has increased to more than 7500,” says Amber. “There are echidnas, turtles, birds, snakes, lizards…we deal exclusively in native wildlife. And our reach is wide; we’ve taken animals from... NSW, north Queensland and SA.” Designed to treat a maximum of 10,000 animals a year, the 24/7 wildlife hospital is our nation’s busiest. It’s the silent partner in the big business of bustling Australia Zoo and is funded by it (and also public donations) to the tune of $2 million annually.  In 1996 The Crocodile Hunter documentaries were launched on US television, and became a worldwide phenomenon watched by millions. Steve’s ‘boots-and-all’ enthusiasm for animals great and small, not to mention his croc-wrestling skills, attracted the attention of US celebrities such as Barbara Walters and Justin Timberlake. They were so enamoured by his commitment to conserving wildlife that they took up the call of “Khaki isn’t just a colour, it’s an attitude!” Justin was so impressed after a visit to Australia Zoo that, in 2007, he donated $100,000 towards its conservation work.  Terri tells me that Steve’s “passion was contagious” and very genuine, which was perhaps why people liked him so much. In between filming, she and Steve transformed the zoo into a world-renowned attraction, featuring daily croc shows that Steve called the “greatest wildlife event in history”.  “People flocked to the park to see Steve working with the loves of his life,” says Kelsey Engle, a long-time zoo curator. “It was plain to see that he admired these amazing apex predators – highlighting their strength, power and survival skills to the world. He made wildlife conservation matter to people who previously would never have given it a second thought. That was his gift; he grabbed your attention and ran away with it.” |

**THEME 6 – SURFACE AREA AND VOLUME OF BODIES**

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| **How were the Egyptian pyramids built?**  Adapted from *http://news.psu.edu/story/141300/2008/03/24/research/probing-question-how-were-egyptian-pyramids-built*  The Aztecs, Mayans and ancient Egyptians were three very different civilizations with one very large similarity: pyramids. However, of these three ancient cultures, the Egyptians set the standard for what most people recognize as classic pyramid design: massive monuments with a square base and four smooth-sided triangular sides, rising to a point.  The ancient Egyptians probably chose that distinctive form for their pharaohs' tombs because of their solar religion, explains Donald Redford, professor of classics and ancient Mediterranean studies at Penn State. The Egyptian sun god Ra, considered the father of all pharaohs, was said to have sat upon a pyramid-shaped mound of earth which had emerged from the primordial sea. The pyramid's shape is thought to have symbolized the sun's rays.  But the process of building pyramids, while complicated, was not as colossal an undertaking as many of us believe, Redford says. Estimates suggest that between 20,000 and 30,000 laborers were needed to build the Great Pyramid at Giza in less than 23 years. By comparison, Notre Dame Cathedral in Paris took almost two hundred years to complete.  The cores of the pyramids were often composed of local limestone, says Redford. Finer quality limestone composed the outer layer of the pyramids, giving them a white sheen that could be seen from miles away. The capstone was usually made of granite, basalt, or another very hard stone and could be plated with gold, silver, or electrum (an alloy of gold and silver) and would also be highly reflective in the bright sun.  The image most people have of slaves being forced to build the pyramids against their will is incorrect, Redford says. "The concept of slavery is a very complicated problem in ancient Egypt," he points out, "because the legal aspects of indentured servitude and slavery were very complicated." The peasants who worked on the pyramids were given tax breaks and were taken to 'pyramid cities' where they were given shelter, food and clothing.  According to Redford, ancient Egyptian quarrying methods—the processes for cutting and removing stone—are still being studied. Once the stones were at the construction site, ramps were built to get them into place on the pyramid. These ramps were made of mud brick and coated with chips of plaster to harden the surface. They were "wrap-around" style, rather than straight, Redford says, "because in laying the upper layers of a great pyramid, the gradient necessary for a straight ramp would be impossible."  "If they consistently raised the ramp course by course as the teams dragged their blocks up, they could have gotten them into place fairly easily," Redford explains, adding that at least one such ramp still exists today.  When answering to skepticism about how such heavy stones could have been moved without machinery, Redford says, "I usually show the skeptic a picture of 20 of my workers at an archaeological dig site pulling up a two-and-a-half ton granite block. I know it's possible because I was on the ropes, too.". |