

GENDER EQUITY

STORIES TO LIVE, STORIES TO THINK ABOUT



Stories to live, stories to think about



I'm Meriem, I'm Moroccan and I'm 9 years old. I love to play football and play with my friends in the park.

Now, let me introduce you to my school friends, Hannah, Chen and Gotzone. I've got lots of school friends, but they are the ones I usually play with.

Gotzone and I love to play football during recess. Now we play very often with our class-mates, but it was no easy task getting them to let us join in at the beginning because they said we didn't know how to play. So we had to show them that they were wrong. I still remember the small tournament we played on the school's playground... Gotzone hit the ball so hard into the goal that the goalkeeper fell down on his backside.



But now we have a problem during recess. The thing is that even though our playground is not small, there are so many of us and we all want to play so many different things that we don't seem to fit. Some of us want to play tag, others want to play football, or volleyball, or make up a choreography and dance...to put it simply, there seems to be no space for all of us and we often end up fighting. Can you help us solve our problem?



What do you think about what's happening on the playground? Do you have the same problem? Do you have other problems? In the classroom, talk about what happens on your playground during recess.

With the rest of your classmates, can you make a list of games which can be played on your school's playground during recess and think about how you imagine your ideal playground?

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You may also draw your ideal playground and later make a mural with all the drawings.

* You will find guidelines to develop all the activities in the Educational Guide.

Mom's strike

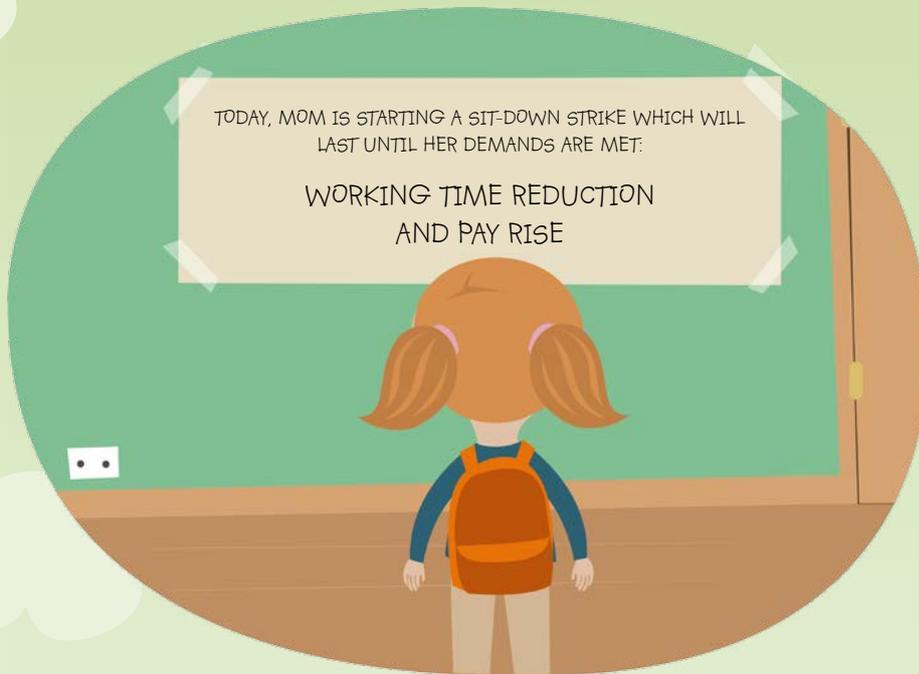


Hi! I'm Hannah, I'm ten and I'm Italian. I love to dance to rap music and read scary stories. I'm not really into studying and I have an elder brother who doesn't like studying much either and a little sister who still doesn't speak.

At home there is my mother, my brother, my little sister and I. My father died a few years ago. We had a hard time and it was terribly sad, but we have slowly started to get over his loss, although he is always on our minds...

The truth is that my brother and I are a little hopeless when it comes to tidying up. Our bedroom is a complete chaos, with clothes scattered everywhere, shoes out of the wardrobe and some of them covered in mud, notebooks piled on the chairs, the desk piled with comic books, lost pens, game pieces scattered all over the room... And my mother says that on top of all that, we're not a good example for our little sister nor are we good students!

Last Sunday, when we came back home from the park, to our surprise we found a banner hanging from the hall entrance which read:



TODAY, MOM IS STARTING A SIT-DOWN STRIKE WHICH WILL
LAST UNTIL HER DEMANDS ARE MET:

WORKING TIME REDUCTION
AND PAY RISE

My brother and I burst into laughter. I asked my brother what “demands” “strike” and “working time reduction” meant and finally understood that mom was playing a joke on us. If she didn’t do the housework, who would? And this thing about a pay rise! That was hilarious because mom didn’t earn a penny for cleaning, cooking, washing and ironing; those were her obligations and that’s just the way it was.

So we entered the living room and found mom lying on the sofa, reading a book and listening to music. She looked up and told us: “Your sister and I have already had lunch. You can prepare whatever you like for yourselves”.

So she was serious about the strike! There was no cooked meal waiting for us in the kitchen, so we made a sandwich.

We went to our rooms and they were just as we had left them - I mean, as we had left them in the morning! The beds were unmade, the clothes were scattered on the floor - an absolute mess! To make things worse, mom was speaking on the phone with her friends and making plans to go out to the cinema.

That was a terrible night, looking for spare food in the fridge, smelling the stench of our dirty clothes and of our sports shoes scattered around the room.

But the next morning was even worse! To avoid washing the dishes we had cold milk and biscuits. When we came home from school, my mom and my sister had already had lunch, so we made ourselves another sandwich. We were terrified to see how the mountain of dirty dishes had grown in the sink. In addition, the bread was hard and there was no fruit left.

At night we cooked some eggs and the dirty pan just increased the heap of dishes in the sink.

And I haven't told you about the bathroom - let me just tell you that it was disgusting. The dishes in the sink kept increasing, like the garbage in the bin, there was dust all around, the fridge was empty...

And there was mom, lying on the sofa, absolutely oblivious to what was going on! My brother and I held a meeting under the banner on the entrance and discussed the situation. We finally produced a smaller banner which read: WE WANT TO NEGOTIATE.

Shortly after, a message from mom appeared: THIS AFTERNOON AT SIX

This is the first chapter of what happened at home, can you imagine the situation?



Why don't you divide yourselves into small groups and talk about how you think this story ended and about how you get organized at home to carry out household chores?

Do all the members in your family collaborate equally? How do you get organized? Is this distribution fair?

And now, here's the end of the story:

After reading mom's message, the three of us met in the living room. My brother started the conversation:

"Mom, we want to put an end to this situation. Please, what do we have to do?"

"All right! To begin with, you must help me tidy up the house. Every day, before you go to school, you must make your beds and tidy up your room and the bathroom. You'll take turns buying the bread every day and setting the table for lunch and cleaning it afterwards. And at night, you'll take the rubbish out. On Saturdays you'll also help me bring in the week's shopping and prepare supper."

We were overwhelmed to hear the list of tasks! But we had no choice, so we accepted.

We were about to leave the room when mom added:

"We've talked about how we're going to distribute the work, but we haven't discussed my pay rise."

We just didn't get it... you earn a salary when you go out to work, but for working in your own home... how was that possible?

"But mom, what do you mean by a pay rise?" I asked.

"It's very easy. The pay I want to earn are your marks. If you're willing to study, I'll cancel the strike; if you're not, I'll go on an indefinite strike. It's up to you."

"Jeez, mom! We're going to have to think about it, because what you're asking for is not easy," I answered.

"No problem," mom replied.

So my brother and I went to our room to discuss the situation. We were truly frightened and concerned, and we were not sure that we would be capable of doing all the things that mom asked for. It certainly meant getting organized: household chores, school tasks, studying...and passing exams! What was mom up to?

We finally understood that she was only showing concern for us and decided to accept. And that is how mom's strike came to an end. Since that day we share household chores; and in addition, of course, we study and get good marks as mom's "pay".



Household chores, who does what?



I encourage you to carry out a survey to see how household chores are distributed among your family members. In the following table, count the total number of women, men, girls and boys who carry out each task and comment on the questionnaire's results in the classroom.

ACTIVITIES	GIRLS	BOYS	WOMEN	MEN
 Wash the clothes				
 Make the beds				
 Sew				
 Hang a painting or carry out small improvements at home (assemble a piece of furniture, hang a lamp, etc.)				
 Take care of the bills and other important papers (apply for a passport, for a grant, etc.)				
 Fix small damages (a faucet, a plug, etc.)				
 Take the garbage out				
 Take you to the doctor				
 Attend school meetings				
 Phone other relatives				

ACTIVITIES	GIRLS	BOYS	WOMEN	MEN
 Tidy up				
 Remember birthdays				
 Clean up the bathroom(s)				
 Sweep the house				
 Mop the floor				
 Clean the windows				
 Do the shopping				
 Think about preparing meals				
 Stay at home when someone's ill				
 Cook				
 Set the table				
 Iron the clothes				
 Prepare breakfast				
 Hang out and collect the clothes				



What have you discovered about the distribution of household chores at home? You can comment on the questionnaire's results in the classroom.

Making decisions

I'm Chen, I'm 9 years old and I'm from Nicaragua, a lovely country in Central America. I love reading, watching films and writing stories. I really haaate football – to watch it and to play it!

Meriem, Gotzone, Hannah and I are very close friends, but we don't play together very often during recess because Meriem and Gotzone love to play football, and if there's a tournament on the playground, then we don't see hide nor hair of them!

But Hannah and I do spend many of our recesses together. I write a lot of stories and she loves listening to them. However, Hannah is very demanding and she doesn't want to hear anything about princesses or princes. She says she's fed up of princesses being saved by handsome princes. She makes me laugh a lot!



That's why I wrote several stories for her, such as the one in which the princess wanted to be a firefighter, or the one about a lion that wanted to be vegetarian, or the prince who was always crying. Hannah loves those!

Although I love telling and making up these stories, I always do it secretly. I'm frightened that my friends will make fun of me and tell me that it is girlish if they ever found out.



ACTIVITY

What do you think I should do? Hide myself because I like writing? Or tell my friends, even when they might make fun of me? Do you think that writing is girlish? Have you been through a similar situation?

Discuss about it in the classroom and write down your thoughts and conclusions here:

I finally decided to tell my friends that I wouldn't play football anymore because I don't like it. That what I really liked was going to the library during recess to read or write stories.

At first I got some odd looks, but then they told me that they already knew that I didn't like football and that it was fine...they also told me that I was an awful player - and they all laughed! And this is how I discovered that other class-mates felt the same way I did.

We asked our teacher if we could go to the library during recess once a week and he agreed! So now I go to the library every Tuesday and there are more and more boys and girls who also go, so we've decided to devote this day to telling each other the stories that we've read or written. And we're also preparing them so that we can play them in class!

Our story



Why don't you write a collaborative story together and then represent it?

When choosing the *subject*, bear in mind the stories that we've seen and the things that we've discussed these days. I suggest the following three *subjects*:

- ✓ A story about football, recess and fostering the idea that there aren't games for boys and games for girls.
- ✓ A story about how household chores are a family responsibility.
- ✓ A story about princes and princesses which differs from those we are familiar with. Here is a video that will help you reflect on the stories of **princesses and princes: PRINCES AND PRINCESSES**, <https://vimeo.com/12673939>.

To create the characters divide yourselves into groups and start by creating several characters, depending on the story that you want to tell. Think about it thoroughly, draw a picture and define their personality: what things do they like and what things do they dislike? Where are they from? How old are they? Etc.

Now that you've selected the characters and the subject for your story, there's only one last thing to do: start writing it.



Character card

#01

Name:

.....

Sex:

Age:

Where s/he is from:

.....

What s/he does (go to school? work?):

.....

What s/he likes:

.....

.....

What s/he doesn't like:

.....

.....

Other ideas about the character:

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Farewell!



Meriem and I have managed to organize recess time in a way that we can all share the space in turns. So now we play football on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays. It was much better when we could play every day, but this is the way in which we can all have space to play our games. And besides, on Tuesdays I can go with Chen to the library... I love listening to his stories!

Hannah is applying herself to her studies and helps with the housework also. She sometimes finds it hard, but then she remembers her mother's strike and collaborates and tidies up without hesitating... and so does her brother.

Meriem, Chen, Hannah and I hope that we've helped you understand and learn many things. It is important that we can share all the things that we've learned with other people. Would you like to do that?

FAREWELL MY FRIENDS!

You can share your story with the other class-groups, with your family, etc. and you can also upload it onto the school's blog or include it in the school's newsletter -wherever you think is the best place to let people know about all the things you have discovered. Thanks to the many people who have fought for their right to do what they want, things have changed. The more people there are who know that men and women must have the same rights and opportunities, the faster things will change.

