

The Simpsons

“Girls Just Wanna Have Sums” (Season 17, episode 19)



*“No one is better than anyone else and everyone is the best at everything”
– Seymour Skinner.*

Elementary



Learner's File

I. Starter



Before the episode. Your teacher has split up the group in two: boys on the left and girls on the right. What do you think about the way of teaching? Should boys and girls be separated from each other? Yes? No? Why? Write down your pros and cons.

<i>I'm in favor of splitting the group according to gender</i>	<i>I'm against splitting the group according to gender</i>

During the episode. Write down the differences between boys and girls that are said or shown in the episode. It can be physical or psychological differences.

<i>Boys</i>	<i>Girls</i>

II. Reading



« Why women are poor at science? »

First published 18/01/2005 in *The Guardian* – Modified version

The president of Harvard University, Lawrence Summers, has provoked a furore by saying that men are better than women in maths and sciences because of biological difference. He made his remarks at a private conference on the position of women and minorities in science and engineering, organized by the National Bureau of Economic Research. Dr Summers offered two explanations: firstly, women don't want to work long hours because of childcare responsibilities. Secondly, he declared that boys outperform girls on high school science and maths scores because of genetic difference.

Half of his audience comprised women, several said they found the remarks offensive and one walked out. "It was really shocking to hear the president of Harvard make statements like that," said Denice Denton, future president of the University of California at Santa Cruz. Others said Dr Summers's comments were unfortunately familiar. "I have heard men make comments like this my entire life and quite honestly if I had listened to them I would never have done anything," said Donna Nelson, a chemistry professor at the University of Oklahoma.

Dr Summers's comments were intended to provoke debate, and some women over-reacted. "Some people took offence because they were very sensitive," said Dr Freeman, an economist at Harvard and the London School of Economics. "It does not seem to me insane to think that men and women have biological differences."

Suzanne Goldenberg

III. Characters



Match the following elements with the episode to the corresponding picture.

Mélanie Upfoot
(Frances McDormand)



Juliana Krellner
(Julie Taymor)



Tom Stoppard



Frida Khalo



Georgia O'Keefe



Cathy Guisewite



« Stab-A-Lot »
a parody of the film
« The Lion King »



IV. The story



Put the following images in order from 1 to 6 as they appeared in the episode.

Number : _____



Number : _____



Number : _____



Number : _____



Number : _____



Number : _____



V. Did you understand everything?



a. True or false?

	True	False
1. Tom Stoppard is the director of the Itchy & Scratchy Musical <i>Stab-A-Lot</i> .		
2. For Skinner, boys are always better at maths than girls.		
3. During the lesson, Lisa doesn't want to do maths because she thinks it is too difficult.		
4. Jake Boyman is nicknamed Toilet because Bart and Milhouse meet him at the school toilets		
5. For Bart, if Lisa succeeds in maths, it is because she learns to think as a boy		

b. Choose the right answer

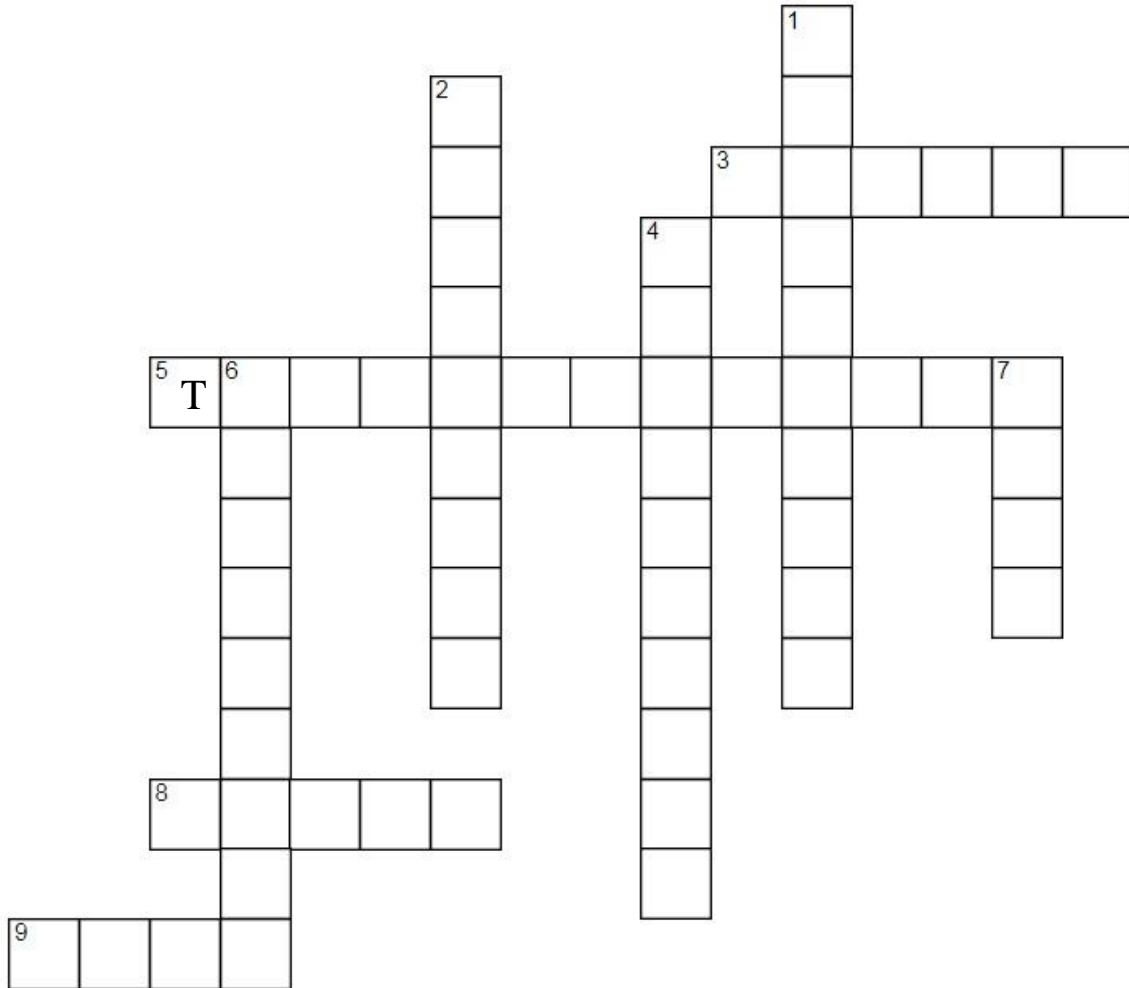
- Who is going to pretend to agree with women?
 - Skinner
 - Bart
 - Homer
- What is the educational expert Melanie Upfoot's idea to improve the school?
 - To add new dance lessons at school.
 - To separate boys and girls at school.
 - To cancel mathematics lessons.
- During the lesson, Melanie Upfoot tells Lisa that maths are...
 - too easy.
 - too difficult for girls.
 - problems for men.
- To become a real man, Lisa must...
 - change sex forever.
 - change her name in Toilet forever.
 - beat up another boy.
- At the end, Lisa realizes that boys' world is...
 - cruel but realistic.
 - real and sadistic.
 - cruel and sadistic.

VI. Vocabulary



Replace the following words in the crossword.

Hoo-ha – Bias – Prejudice – Obnoxious – Razz – Clingy
Tongue-twister – Jawbreaker – Self-esteem



Find a suitable translation in your language for these words. Ask your teacher to help you.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____

VII. Writing skills



Look at this image taken from the episode and create a short story. What does Marge do? Why? What are her plans?



VIII. Speaking



Who says what?

What can you answer if someone tells you the following sentences? Discuss it.

1. "No one is better than anyone else, and everyone is the best at everything"

2. "I insist on seeing the director!"

3. "The only math you need is you and me equals forever"

4. "You're a boy, nothing is sweet"

5. "Confidence building can't replace real learning"

6. "You just beat up the most harmless kid in school"

7. "Are you saying that men and women are identical?"

8. "Sounds like you're trying to derail our self-esteem engine"

9. "For too long, there has been an anti-woman bias in math"

10. "All this hoo-ha about girls and math is silly"



Bart Simpson



Seymour Skinner



Lisa Simpson



M lanie Upfoot –
Teacher



Edna Krabappel



Homer Simpson



Jimbo Jones



M lanie Upfoot –
School principal



Marge Simpson



Tahiti Mel