**Gender and the Sexual Division of Labor in Our Workplaces**

**Subject area/course:** Social Sciences, Introduction to Sociology

**Grade level/band**: 11–12

**STUDENT PROMPT SECTION**

1. **Task context**:

Gender roles influence everything in the social world, from the color of paint on walls in new baby rooms, to clothing choices, to laws and public policies. Gender also influences the world of work. We see it in the disparity between the number of women and men in positions of power in our workplaces. Gender can also be blamed for differences in the pay and benefits that men and women receive.

For this task, you are asked to read bell hooks’ *From Margin to Center* and identify the key concepts and theories in her book. You will then apply those theories and concepts to an analysis of the sexual division of labor in workplaces. To do this, you will need to complete field observations on the sexual division of labor in workplaces of a particular industry (e.g., fast food, big box retail, government office, etc.). You may record these field notes on a mobile device or with pen and paper. You will likely want to observe multiple sites within your chosen industry, and then classify the different dimensions of what you found.

1. **The task**:

After researching sexual division of labor in the workplace by reading *From Margin to Center* and using your field observations, write a 5- to 6-page paper that discusses a problem related to gender roles in the workplace. Argue for a solution. To develop this paper, you will want to identify and discuss 3-4 themes that intersect from bell hooks’ book and your own field observations. That is, apply the concepts and theories in hooks to the data from your observations.

Your paper should:

* Be organized and address the appropriate audience and purpose of your research.
* Have a short methods section where you describe the workplaces you selected and why.
* Connect your paper’s points to the larger themes and issues raised in the course.

Support your position with evidence from your research.

* Provide an accurate summary of the main ideas.
* Use discipline-specific vocabulary.
* Include your field notes as an additional document.
* Cite your sources correctly in the text of your paper and create a Works Cited page using MLA format or another style that your instructor selects.

1. **Materials/resources**:

To complete this task, you need:

* Your field notes (see information below)
* The bell hooks book *From Margin to Center*

**Information on completing field notes**

We are all observers of people, their interactions, places, and events; however, your responsibility when writing a field report is to create a research study based on data generated by the act of observation, a synthesis of key findings, and an interpretation of their meaning.

**When writing a field report you need to:**

* Systematically observe and accurately record the varying aspects of a situation. Always approach your field study with a detailed plan about what you will observe, where you should conduct your observations, and the method by which you will collect and record your data.
* Continuously analyze your observations. Always look for the meaning underlying the actions you observe. Ask yourself: What's going on here? What does this observed activity mean? What else does this relate to? Note that this is an on-going process of reflection and analysis taking place for the duration of your field research.
* Keep the report’s aims in mind while you are observing. Recording what you observe should not be done randomly or haphazardly; you must be focused and pay attention to details. Enter the field with a clear plan about what you are intending to observe and record while, at the same time, be prepared to adapt to changing circumstances as they may arise.
* Consciously observe, record, and analyze what you hear and see in the context of a theoretical framework. This is what separates data gatherings from simple reporting. The theoretical framework guiding your field research should determine what, when, and how you observe and act as the foundation from which you interpret your findings.

1. **Time requirements:**

Depending on your class schedule, you may have three or four weeks to work on this task. Follow your teacher’s directions about deadlines and pace yourself so that you don’t have to do all of the work in a short amount of time.