Gender specific vocabulary

Warmer
Tell your partner about your weekend or the weekend of someone you know without saying who you are speaking about, e.g. “They went to a craft fair”. They will try to guess the gender of the person you are talking about.

Are any of the things you mentioned more common with one gender or the other? Are any exclusive to one or the other?

How do you think your weekend might have been different if you had been a woman/ if you had been a man?

Vocabulary
Before and/or after the activities below, work together with someone and try to write words or expressions which are specific to just one gender like “hostess” in the boxes below

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Words and expressions only used to talk about men</th>
<th>Words and expressions only used to talk about women</th>
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Gender specific language

Which words or expressions below are used to talk just or mainly about men (M) and which are used just or mainly to talk about women (W)?

1. bikini/ swimming trunks
2. purse/ wallet
3. boobs / moobs
4. cleavage/ hairy chest
5. stepfather/ stepmother
6. father in law/ mother in law
7. master/ mistress
8. trophy wife/ toy boy
9. fiancé/ fiancée
10. her indoors – my trouble and strife/ my old man
11. widow/ widower
12. a player – a womaniser - a ladykiller – playboy/ a slapper – loose – easy
13. bachelor/ spinster – bachelorette
14. butler/ chambermaid
15. witch / wizard
16. Mr / Mrs
17. Madam / Sir
18. male chauvinist/ man hater
19. gentlemanly/ ladylike
20. a hen night/ a stag night
21. butch/ macho
22. effeminate – camp/ feminine
23. lad – laddish/ lass – ladette

Which one of the phrases below can be used to talk about both men and women (B)? Is the other used just or mainly to talk about men (M) or about women (W)?

1. bra/ vest
2. a dress/ clothes
3. blouse/ shirt
4. high heels/ Cuban heels
5. kilt/ skirt
6. shorts/ showing some leg – hot pants
7. nightdress/ pyjamas
8. knickers/ pants
9. leggings/ tights – stockings
10. lingerie / underwear
11. suit/ trouser suit
12. low cut top/ V necked top
13. accessories/ jewellery
14. handbag/ shoulder bag
15. chain/ necklace
16. bunches/ ponytail
17. a (dizzy) blonde/ fair haired
18. lipstick/ lip salve
19. beer belly/ chubby
20. pear shaped/ spare tyre
21. pecs/ chest
22. bare-chested/ topless
23. facial hair/ moustache
24. curvy/ muscular
25. ugly/ unglamorous
26. elegant/ glamorous
27. good looking/ stunning
28. chiselled good looks/ pretty
29. ordinary looking/ plain – mousy
30. gold digger/ social climber
31. spouse/ wife
32. husband/ partner
33. brothers/ siblings
34. blue collar / pink collar
35. homemaker / housewife
36. actor/ actress
37. air stewardess/ flight attendant
38. maid/ servant
39. police officer/ WPC
40. host/ hostess
41. male nurse/ nurse
42. manager/ manageress
43. governor/ governess
44. headmistress/ head teacher
45. server/ waitress
46. a Filipina/ Filipino
47. a guy – chap – fella/ guys
48. a tomboy/ girly
49. chicks/ guys
50. he/ (s)he
51. hero/ heroine
52. lesbian/ LGBT
53. mankind/ men
54. moody/ PMT
55. menopausal/ late middle-aged
56. cologne/ perfume
57. aftershave/ deodorant

**Discussion**

- Do the differences above reflect any differences in society?
- Are any of the words negative? Does that show anything about attitudes to gender?
- The words in italics have different connotations. Pick a few and discuss the differences in connotation until you can make general points about men and women in society.
- Are there any similar gender distinctions in your language to any of the above? What does that tell us about the position of men and women in your country?
Suggested answers
1. bikini – women/ swimming trunks – men
2. purse – women/ wallet – men
3. boobs – women/ moobs - men
4. cleavage – women/ hairy chest – men
5. stepfather – men/ stepmother – women
6. father in law – men/ mother in law – women
7. master – men/ mistress – women
8. trophy wife/ toy boy – men
9. fiancé - men/ fiancée – women
10. her indoors – my trouble and strife – women/ my old man - men
11. widow – women/ widower – men
13. bachelor – men/ spinster – bachelorette – women
14. butler – men/ chambermaid – women
15. witch – women/ wizard – men
16. Mr - men/ Mrs – women
17. Madam – women/ Sir – men
18. male chauvinist - men/ man hater – women
19. gentlemanly – men/ ladylike – women
20. a hen night – women/ a stag night – men
21. butch – women/ macho – men
22. effeminate – camp – men/ feminine – women
23. lad – laddish – men/ lass – ladette – women

1. bra – women/ vest – both
2. a dress – women/ clothes – both
3. blouse – women/ shirt – both
4. high heels – women/ Cuban heels – both
5. kilt – both/ skirt – women
6. shorts – both/ showing some leg – hot pants – women
7. nightdress – women/ pyjamas – both
8. knickers – women/ pants – both
9. leggings – both/ tights – stockings – women
10. lingerie – women/ underwear – both
11. suit – both/ trouser suit – women
12. low cut top – women/ V necked top – men
13. accessories – women/ jewellery – both
14. handbag – women/ shoulder bag – both
15. chain – both/ necklace – women
16. bunches – women/ ponytail – both
17. a (dizzy) blonde – women/ fair haired – both
18. lipstick – women/ lip salve – both
19. beer belly – men/ chubby – both
20. pear shaped – women/ spare tyre – both
21. pecs – men/ chest – both
22. bare chested – both/ topless - women  
23. facial hair – both/ moustache – men  
24. curvy - women/ muscular – both  
25. ugly – both/ unglamorous – women  
26. elegant – both/ glamorous – women  
27. good looking – both/ stunning - women  
28. chiselled good looks – men/ pretty – both  
29. ordinary looking – both/ plain – mousy – women  
30. gold digger - women/ social climber – both  
31. spouse – both/ wife – women  
32. husband – men/ partner – both  
33. brothers – men/ siblings - both  
34. blue collar -both/ pink collar – women  
35. homemaker – both/ housewife – women  
36. actor – both/ actress – women  
37. air stewardess – women/ flight attendant – both  
38. maid – women/ servant – both  
39. police officer – both/ WPC – women  
40. host – both/ hostess – women  
41. male nurse – men/ nurse – both  
42. manager – both/ manageress - women  
43. governor – both/ governess – women  
44. headmistress – women/ head teacher – men  
45. server – both/ waitress – women  
46. a Filipina - women/ Filipino – both  
47. a guy – chap – fella – men/ guys – both  
48. a tomboy – women/ girly – both  
49. chicks - women/ guys – both  
50. he - men/ (s)he - both  
51. hero – both/ heroine – women  
52. lesbian – women/ LGBT – both  
53. mankind – both/ men – men  
54. moody – both/ PMT – women  
55. menopausal - women/ late middle-aged – both  
56. cologne – both/ perfume – women  
57. aftershave - men/ deodorant – both