

# Girls, Body Image, and Self-Esteem

Grades  
4-6

by | Diane Findlay

## Webquest

You're fresh out of college and it's your first day on your first professional job. Welcome to *Tween Life* magazine! As a tween lifestyle columnist, you will learn about what girls from ages nine to fourteen are thinking about, and advise them about living well and being their best selves.

Eventually, you and your coworkers will work together to create an actual column for the magazine on the important issue of body image and self-esteem in twenty-first century American girls. Then you will identify a girl you know whom you think might benefit from reading the article (What tween girl wouldn't?) and decide how to approach her with it. But before we get you together to write the column, we want you to do your own research. And we want you to do it from the viewpoint of a typical reader.

So imagine yourself as the girl you were in grade four, five, or six (That should be easy!), and get to work exploring this topic.



## Task

Start by completing the worksheet below, using the Web links to find the information you need. Once you've done your research, you will meet with other *Tween Life* writers to share your notes and ideas and prepare a column for the magazine.

To review, you will:

- Approach the material through the eyes of your "tweenage" self.
- Research the topic by completing the worksheet.
- Create a summary and outline for the proposed article.
- Share your work with other *Tween Life* columnists.
- Work together to write the column you will submit to the magazine.
- Write a short informal speech you would give to a tween introducing the article and encouraging her to read it and share it with her friends.



### Step-by-Step Process

1. Gather your supplies—paper and pencil for taking notes—and claim a computer workstation.
2. Complete the Research Worksheet on pages 3–7, taking additional notes that might help in writing the column.

Be sure to read the text between the web links so you know exactly what you're looking for on each site. (Remember, not all Web sites you'll visit are written for kids. You might need a dictionary.) Print it when you've finished all sections.
3. Use your completed worksheet and notes to prepare a summary and outline for the column as you imagine it. Focus on the ways girls think about their bodies as part of their overall sense of self-esteem, and what they need to know and do to keep their bodies, and their attitudes toward them, healthy.
4. Meet with your coworkers and share your thoughts, summaries, and outlines.
5. Work together to co-author a column that explains the realities you discovered. Give girls advice for understanding, using, and caring for their bodies in ways that boost their self-esteem and overall wellbeing. Use ideas from each columnist's outline.
6. Illustrate the column with clip-art or images you discovered online, to support your points and create an appealing design.
7. Make copies of the illustrated column for each columnist and one for your teacher, with extras to give away.
8. Write your informal speech for introducing the column to a girl you think would benefit from reading it. Remember, any tween could benefit from this information and, when you were that age, you might have felt funny about having someone suggest you "needed" to know this stuff. So focus on describing the article and suggesting that she read it for pleasure and general interest, and share it with her friends. Recite your speech for your teacher if asked.
9. Take what you've learned and share it with someone—give your informal speech and a copy of the column to the girl you thought could use it!





# Research Worksheet



Be sure to read the text between the web links so you know exactly what you're looking for on each site.

## Self-Esteem, Body Image, and You

- Start by reading the article at this Web site:  
[www.kidshealth.org/kid/feeling/emotion/feel\\_better\\_about\\_body.html](http://www.kidshealth.org/kid/feeling/emotion/feel_better_about_body.html)
- Take the “How Do You Really Feel about Yourself” quiz at [www.campaignforrealbeauty.com/dsef07/t5.aspx?id=7376](http://www.campaignforrealbeauty.com/dsef07/t5.aspx?id=7376). Write the one-sentence summary of the results here.
- Take “The Body Image Assessment” survey you’ll find at:  
[www.healthybodyimage.com/image.htm](http://www.healthybodyimage.com/image.htm). Keep track of question numbers and answers on your notepaper. Write your score and what it suggests here.
- Your body is one part of what makes you YOU and makes you “beautiful.” What are some other parts of your overall uniqueness and attractiveness? [www.withjess.com/innerstyle.htm](http://www.withjess.com/innerstyle.htm).
- Go to the list of “10 things you can do” at [www.about-face.org/mc/empower](http://www.about-face.org/mc/empower), and follow the instructions for #2 on the list. Write your responses here.
- Write a short paragraph about what it means to have a negative body image. Write another about what it means to have a positive body image.  
[www.nationaleatingdisorders.org/p.asp?WebPage\\_ID=316&Profile\\_ID=41157](http://www.nationaleatingdisorders.org/p.asp?WebPage_ID=316&Profile_ID=41157)



## Weight, Size, and Eating Disorders

- What is Taylor unhappy about in her “Ask Dr. M” letter? What advice do Dr. M and Liz give her? [www.gogirlsonly.org/girltalk/askdrm/body/body\\_06.asp](http://www.gogirlsonly.org/girltalk/askdrm/body/body_06.asp).

- What percent of nine year olds may have already tried dieting to lose weight? [www.mirror-mirror.org/child.htm](http://www.mirror-mirror.org/child.htm)

- If a child’s parents constantly diet and complain about their bodies, children might get the idea that

[www.mirror-mirror.org/child.htm](http://www.mirror-mirror.org/child.htm).

- What three eating disorders are now being reported in children under twelve? [www.mirror-mirror.org/child.htm](http://www.mirror-mirror.org/child.htm)

- Some children develop eating disorders as a way to \_\_\_\_\_ or

[www.mirror-mirror.org/child.htm](http://www.mirror-mirror.org/child.htm)

- Briefly describe the most common eating disorders: anorexia nervosa, bulimia, and binge (or compulsive) eating. [www.southcoastmedcenter.com/content/services/behavioral/stats.asp](http://www.southcoastmedcenter.com/content/services/behavioral/stats.asp)

- What good things does your body do for you? Make a list of at least ten great things your body lets you do. Get ideas from the “Positive Body Image” section of the “Self-Esteem” page on this site: <http://parenting.kaboose.com/behavior/bodyimage>.



## Other Factors

- What things besides weight and size can make you self-conscious about your body as you grow and change?

[www.campaignforrealbeauty.com/dsef07/t5.aspx?id=7384](http://www.campaignforrealbeauty.com/dsef07/t5.aspx?id=7384), [health.discovery.com/centers/teen/mentalhealth/esteem.html](http://health.discovery.com/centers/teen/mentalhealth/esteem.html)

- From the fourth paragraph, about self-esteem, on the Web page below, what things can hurt your body image or make you feel you aren't good enough the way you are?

[www.studio2b.org/life/uniqueleme](http://www.studio2b.org/life/uniqueleme)

- Read the first paragraph; the first and third paragraphs of "What is Peer Pressure?", and the fourth, sixth, and last paragraphs of "How Does Peer Pressure Affect Behavior?" on this Web page: [www.faqs.org/health/topics/76/Peer-pressure.html](http://www.faqs.org/health/topics/76/Peer-pressure.html). From your own experience, list five examples of "unsafe, unhealthy, or unkind" things that kids might do, or try to get you to do, that can damage your or another girl's body image or self-esteem.

## Media Images

- Quickly click through the quiz and watch the video at the end of the quiz on this Web page: [www.campaignforrealbeauty.com/dsef07/t5.aspx?id=7380](http://www.campaignforrealbeauty.com/dsef07/t5.aspx?id=7380).
- Do boys have problems with poor body image? What are their most common concerns about their bodies?

[www.connectwithkids.com/tipsheet/2000/40\\_mar29/boyimage.html](http://www.connectwithkids.com/tipsheet/2000/40_mar29/boyimage.html)



- Check out #3 on the Web page below. What are businesses trying to do when they present unrealistic, super-glamorous, touched-up images of how we should look in the media?

What are they NOT trying to do? [www.about-face.org/mc/empower](http://www.about-face.org/mc/empower)

- List at least three things should you keep in mind when you look at the way girls' and women's bodies are shown in magazines, on TV, in the movies, etc? [www.cwhn.ca/resources/faq/biMedia.html](http://www.cwhn.ca/resources/faq/biMedia.html) (Check out first two paragraphs.)
- The last Web site you visited mentions many different types of bodies, which are not always represented in the media. Draw on your note paper the basic shapes associated with several normal body types in women, as shown on this Web page: [www.thefashionablehousewife.com/?p=734](http://www.thefashionablehousewife.com/?p=734).
- What common girls' toy do many people think gives girls unrealistic expectations about their bodies?

Which body type, from the previous prompt, does this toy represent?

Can you think of another toy that does the same thing?

[www.mirror-mirror.org/child.htm](http://www.mirror-mirror.org/child.htm)

### Fitness, Sports, and Body Image

- How can participating in sports help a girl improve her body image?

[www.yourchildshealth.com/family/girlsport.html](http://www.yourchildshealth.com/family/girlsport.html)?

- Fill in the blank from the third paragraph of this article about Dr. Sarah Murnen's research. "Perhaps sports give them a way of defining themselves that doesn't involve

."

[www.webmd.com/parenting/features/helping-girls-with-body-image?page=2](http://www.webmd.com/parenting/features/helping-girls-with-body-image?page=2)



- Read the article about Seilala Sua at: [www.gogirlworld.org/cgi-bin/iowa/ggw/sch/gde/index.html](http://www.gogirlworld.org/cgi-bin/iowa/ggw/sch/gde/index.html), click on The Skinny Struggle: Seilala Sua on Body Image. Answer these questions: How did Seilala feel about her body growing up?

How did her mother help her keep a positive body image?

What did Seilala discover her body was “built to do?”

How did sports help Seilala see her body differently?

How does she feel about her body now?

What are some ideas girls have about which sports are “girly” or unfeminine?





## Positive Attitude, Positive Action

- Rewrite the list of “10 things you can do,” at [www.about-face.org/mc/empower](http://www.about-face.org/mc/empower), in your own words, with just enough detail to remember each idea.

What six rights does Girls Incorporated claim all girls have? List them here.

[www.girlsinc.org/ic/page.php?id=1.7](http://www.girlsinc.org/ic/page.php?id=1.7)

- Use a dictionary to look up “gender” and “stereotypes.” Write here what you think the term “gender stereotypes” means.
- Based on all you’ve learned, make your own list of ten positive, healthy things you can do to care for and feel good about your body.
- Create and print your own Self-Esteem Bubble at [www.campaignforrealbeauty.com/dsef07/t5.aspx?id=7382](http://www.campaignforrealbeauty.com/dsef07/t5.aspx?id=7382) OR your Uniquely Me Collage, <http://www.gogirlsonly.org/games> (click on “Uniquely Me”).



**Now, return to page 2 and continue with the Step 3 in the Step-by-Step Process.**





# Evaluation Rubric

Your performance on this webquest will be evaluated based on your online research, article summary and outline, group participation, quality of the finished column, and your informal speech.

	<b>Incomplete 1</b>	<b>Acceptable 2</b>	<b>Good 3</b>	<b>Excellent 4</b>
<b>Following directions</b>	Needed much help beyond written directions	Needed some help beyond written directions	Needed little help beyond written directions	Needed no help beyond written directions
<b>Online research</b>	Worksheet incomplete, shows little effort	Worksheet complete, shows acceptable effort	Worksheet complete, shows good effort and interest	Worksheet complete, shows excellent effort and interest
<b>Written article summary and outline: Form</b>	Work was not neat, summary unclear, outline format not followed	Work was fairly neat, summary fairly clear, outline format mostly followed	Work was neat, summary was clear, outline format followed	Work was neat, summary was very clear and interesting, outline format followed
<b>Written article summary and outline: Content</b>	Work shows little understanding of or interest in subject	Work shows some understanding of or interest in subject	Work shows good understanding of and interest in subject	Work shows excellent understanding of and interest in subject
<b>Group participation</b>	Little participation in discussion, no obvious contribution to finished column	Some participation in discussion, some obvious contribution to finished column	Good participation in discussion, obvious contribution to finished column	Excellent participation in discussion, obvious, meaningful contribution to finished column
<b>Respect for group members</b>	Disregarded feelings or made fun of peers regarding subject matter	Showed little sensitivity to peers regarding subject matter	Showed good sensitivity to peers regarding subject matter	Showed high level of respect and sensitivity to peers regarding subject matter
<b>Finished magazine column</b>	Shows little understanding, interest, or creativity	Shows basic understanding and some interest and creativity	Shows good understanding, interest, and creativity	Shows excellent understanding, involvement, and creativity
<b>Informal speech</b>	Invites little interest or receptivity to subject	Invites some interest or receptivity to subject	Invites genuine interest in subject	Invites eagerness to explore subject

# Conclusion

**Congratulations! Your first column for Tween Life magazine is ready for publication! Your editor is pleased. She hopes you will share the column with “tween” girls who need this important information.**

**These resources will help you explore this topic further:**

- *Blubber* by Judy Blume. Yearling, 1986. ISBN 0440407079. 4–6.
- *Body Talk: The Straight Facts on Fitness, Nutrition & Feeling Great about Yourself!* by Ann Douglas and Julie Douglas. Maple Tree Press, 2006. ISBN 1897066627. 4–6.
- *Girl Power in the Mirror: A Book about Girls, Their Bodies, and Themselves* by Helen Cordes. Series from Lerner Publications, 1999. ISBN 0822526913. 4–6.
- *It's Hot and Cold in Miami* by Nicole Rubel. Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2006. ISBN 0374336113. 4–6.
- *Makeovers by Marcia* by Claudia Mills. Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2005. ISBN 0374346542. 4–6.
- *Perfect* by Natasha Friend. Milkweed Editions, 2004. ISBN 1571316515. 5+.
- *The Right Moves: To Getting Fit and Feeling Great* by Tina Schwager and Michele Schuerger. Free Spirit Publishing, 1998. ISBN 157542035X. 5+.
- *There's a Girl in My Hammerlock* by Jerry Spinelli. Aladdin, 2007. ISBN 1416939377. 4–7.
- *When the Circus Came to Town* by Laurence Yep. HarperCollins, 2004. ISBN 0064409651. 4–6.

**Some Parting Thoughts and Challenges**

Whether you're nine or seventy nine, the best way to boost your self-esteem is to do something great for someone else—something that makes you feel proud of what you've done, not just how you look! So do yourself a favor. Make a list of ten things you can do that will make you feel like a million bucks, and DO them! Here are some ideas to get you started:

- Walk your neighbor's dog for him when he's sick.
- Make a surprise gift for your mom, just to thank her for all she does for you.
- Invite a new student to eat lunch with you.

If you want to celebrate your fabulous inner self with a little token on the outside, that's great, too! Make another list of ten things you can do, that cost little or nothing, to show yourself off. Who knows? You might start a trend. Again, some ideas to spark your own:

- Have an adult friend who's good with hair give you a fresh new “do.”
- Wear an item of clothing or an accessory in your favorite color every day for a week.
- Figure out a signature accent symbol that's absolutely YOU to wear once a week or every day, like a little angel pin or a braided bracelet.

