

Comments in the schoolyard

Activity sheet

#	Is this an example of sexual harassment?	Yes	No	Don't know
1.	"What they'd do was get a ruler and try to stick it up your skirt. They'd do it all the time. It was so bad that I was begging the teachers to let me go to another class."	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2.	"I was sitting in the classroom and this boy walked behind me and shouted right in my ear: 'UGLY'. Then he kept on walking. I was so shocked. I left the room, I couldn't cope. At that age you're going through a vulnerable period – so that just crushed me."	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3.	A girl approaches a group of girls. They turn away and ignore her, and exclude her from their group, saying "We don't want a lezzo like you with us".	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4.	A boy calls a girl over to his locker. He shows her a picture of a naked woman. The girl looks and then walks quickly away.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5.	A boy and a girl are hugging each other. She laughs and tells him that he's only after one thing. He laughs, pulls her closer and kisses her. It is clear that they like each other.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6.	A boy bumps into a girl and then brushes against her front, but it seems to be deliberate because he's done it to her before. She reacts sharply and pushes him away. He laughs and says, "It was only an accident"!	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7.	"Look, we have this teacher and he doesn't really do anything, it's just the way he always comes up behind us girls, and looks over our shoulders while we are working. Sometimes he seems to look down the front of our dresses. It's really creepy."	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8.	"I usually get a hard time about hanging out with the girls in class and at lunchtime. Because I spend time with girls, I get called a faggot – which makes me feel pretty bad, like I'm not a real guy."	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9.	"As a young female teacher in a boys' school, they often try to provoke me by asking if I was out last night, did I get home, do I have a boyfriend. It's juvenile and I ignore it."	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10.	"Look at Jenny – the way she wears those short skirts and tight tops. She's just asking for comments – right Tim? Well, if she's advertising, I may as well take a visit to the shop. See ya later."	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

#	Is this an example of sexual harassment?	Yes	No	Don't know
11.	"I was new at the school. Now I'm not a big sports jock or anything, so on the very first day these feral girls grabbed me, started calling me 'gay' and 'queer'. They dacked me in the schoolyard and then ran away. Kids everywhere were laughing at me."	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
12.	A group of students graffiti comments in the boys' toilet about another girl and her sexual experiences.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

How did you go with these comments and situations?

You have probably decided that some were definitely sexual harassment, some were more general bullying and some you could not be sure about.

To decide if your answers to the previous pages are accurate, you need to know the definition of sexual harassment.

The Sex Discrimination Act gives the following definition:

Sexual harassment is any unwelcome sexual behaviour which makes a person feel offended, humiliated or intimidated and that this reaction could reasonably have been expected in the circumstances. It has nothing to do with mutual attraction or friendship.

Unwanted or unwelcome sexual behaviour can include:

- unwelcome touching
- staring or leering
- suggestive comments or jokes
- sexually explicit pictures, posters, screensavers, calendars
- unwanted invitations to go out on a date
- requests for sex
- intrusive questions about a person's private life or body
- insults, name-calling or taunts based on your sex
- derogatory graffiti
- sexually explicit e-mails, text messages, etc.

Discuss your answers with your classmates.

Make some notes about your conclusions for future reference below.

Your notes:

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Comments in the schoolyard (Answers)

Activity sheet

How do your answers compare?

You can check your answers with those of the Australian Human Rights Commission.

#	Answers to 'Comments in the schoolyard...'
1.	Yes – this is sexual harassment. The overtly sexual nature of what the boys were doing and saying wasn't welcomed by the girl and made her feel very hurt and upset.
2.	This probably isn't sexual harassment – but it is certainly a pretty nasty form of bullying. Shouting something insulting like 'ugly' is done to deliberately hurt and humiliate someone else.
3.	It's not clear if this is sexual harassment – but it is a form of bullying and homophobia. There are laws to protect people from homophobic behaviour in every Australian state and territory.
4.	This could be sexual harassment – it depends on how the girl feels about seeing the pictures. It would be harassment if she didn't want to look at those sort pictures or she felt offended by them.
5.	This would not be sexual harassment. Sexual harassment is not about friendships, mutual attraction or consensual relationships like boyfriend-girlfriend.
6.	This is likely to be sexual harassment as it doesn't seem like it was an accident. Being too familiar with someone, such as brushing up against them, is harassment when it's unwelcome behaviour.
7.	This could be sexual harassment. Staring or leering can make someone feel just as uncomfortable as unwelcome touching or explicit jokes.
8.	This may be a form of sexual harassment covered by a state law. There are laws to protect people from homophobic behaviour in every Australian state and territory.
9.	This is sexual harassment. It's not acceptable to ask people lots of questions about their personal life if it makes them feel awkward and uncomfortable.
10.	This could be sexual harassment – it depends on who was saying it, who was listening and how they felt when they heard those comments.
11.	This looks like sexual harassment that could be covered by state laws. Girls can sexually harass boys just as boys can harass girls. In this case, they embarrassed and humiliated him in front of the other students.
12.	Writing explicit comments that are offensive or humiliating can be sexual harassment, even if the girl doesn't see the graffiti.