

## 2017-18 Contest Topic:

**How can we stand up to sexism? What can individuals and organizations such as AAUW do to break down stereotypes and biases in school, at work, in the military, and in our communities?**

According to Britannica.com, sexism is defined as “**prejudice** or **discrimination** based on **sex** or **gender**, especially against women and girls. Although its origin is unclear, the term sexism emerged from the so-called “second-wave” feminism of the 1960s through the ’80s and was most likely modeled on the **civil rights** movement’s term racism (prejudice or **discrimination** based on race). Sexism can be a **belief** that one sex is superior to or more valuable than another sex. It imposes limits on what men and boys can and should do and what women and girls can and should do. The concept of sexism was originally formulated to raise **consciousness** about the oppression of girls and women, although by the early 21st century it had sometimes been expanded to include the oppression of any sex, including men and boys, intersexual people, and **transgender** people.”

We have all seen it, and most women and girls have experienced it -- gender bias. It is so common that unfortunately it has become part of our landscape, and that very ordinariness is what makes it so pernicious. When we encounter bias, we often do not know how to respond. Or worse, we worry about the possible consequences of calling it what it is: sexism, harassment, gender discrimination, or rape culture. And let’s not forget that women of color, women with disabilities, LGBT women, and others struggle with an ‘intersectionality’ that adds even more complexity to this issue. Since every situation is different, there is no perfect response. Only you can decide whether you want to confront it head-on.

**Directions: Answer the questions above, in an original speech, 5-6 minutes in length, delivered extemporaneously.**

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