

# The Social Construction of Sex

## Goals and Assessments

1. Identify assumptions about sex embedded in their terminology.  
**Assessment:** Assess students' ability to identify assumptions contained within terminology through their written analysis of the terms collected and through discussion with the class as a whole.
2. Identify particular sexual behaviors normalized in our use of language.  
**Assessment:** Assess students' ability to see taken for granted sexual behaviors through their written analysis of the terms, small group, and classroom discussions.
3. Articulate alternative discourses on sex.  
**Assessment:** Assess students' ability to imagine alternative ways to think about and understand sex through the discussion with the whole class.

## Uses

- Demonstrate how we use language to construct and normalize views of sex
- Illustrate the construction of gendered sexual roles.

## Usage Notes

- Courses on sex, gender, and sexualities, sociological theory, qualitative research methods, or for any discussion on normalization and discursive construction.
- Focuses on the discursive construction of sex

## Basic Steps:

1. Tell students that they are going to engage in research.
2. Ask a student to volunteer to document the data gathered.
3. Document the data in the order they are presented.
4. Students to respond to a prompt that that I give them without asking any clarifying questions.

**Prompt:** Tell me all of the different terms and expressions you know for having sex.

- Since this can catch students off guard, sometimes it is necessary for the instructor to offer the first response.
- After collecting the different terms and expressions, I break students up into small groups and ask them to analyze the data on the board.
- After 10-12 minutes, I bring the class back together to discuss what they found in the terms and expressions for sex.