**STREET HASSLE**

**1a Work in small groups. Read the extract from a radio interview below. Then discuss what you think *catcalling* is – and how big a problem it is in your home country.**

*When I was introduced to catcalling, it was like a game, just trying to be funny or look cool. We'd shout … out to the girls passing by. Hollering [shouting] at women on the street was what guys were supposed to do, or so I thought.*

**1b Change partners. Discuss the questions below.**

1. Why do you think some men catcall?
2. How do you think it makes women feel? Why?
3. Do any particular groups of men in your country (professions, age groups, etc.) have a reputation for being catcallers?
4. What do you understand by the ‘objectification’ of women? Can you give examples?

**2a Listen to the first part of a radio show on this topic.**

**Find out why these numbers and things were mentioned.**

1 85%

2 cats and dogs

3 14

4 a sweater

5 a hypocrite

6 a response

7 my peers

8 our moms

**2b Work in pairs. Discuss what you think Professor Kimmel means when he says catcalling is “homosocial” behavior. Do you agree? Why? / Why not?**

**3a Now listen to the second part of the radio show.**

**Decide if these sentences are true or false.**

1 Catcalling is always intended to make women feel uncomfortable on the street.

2 Shawn doesn’t accept that catcalling is disrespectful to women.

3 Hajaar is sympathetic towards Shawn’s point of view.

4 She has had to change the way she acts on the street to avoid street harassment.

5 Jared failed a test about gender equality.

**3b Compare your ideas with a partner. Explain how you made your choices.**

**4 Work in groups. Discuss these questions.**

1 How do you feel about Jared? Why?

2 Has the radio show changed your mind about catcalling in any way?

3 Why do you think men in low-status jobs may be more likely to catcall?

4 What other forms of institutionalized sexism can you think of?

5 What other issues that don’t directly affect you have you learned about? Why?

**Vocabulary**

1. **Complete the sentences using the words from the radio show below.**

compliment inappropriate players take

harassment norm rage top dog

1 It’s normal for people to sometimes get into a ………… when they’re at work.

2 I’ve never had anybody say anything ……….…….. to me at work or in the street.

3 Most men can’t handle having a woman as a boss. They always want to be …………. .

4 Most guys with money just want to be ………… and have loads of woman in their lives.

5 For most women, getting unwanted attention from male colleagues is the ……….. .

6 There’s nothing wrong with paying a …………… to someone you work with.

7 Thankfully, we’re finally starting to take sexual ……………. more seriously.

8 Women get asked for their ………. on things far less often than men.

**6 Work in groups. Discuss how true you think each sentence in Exercise 5 is.**

**Explain why.**

**ANSWER KEY & TEACHER’S NOTES**

As a lead-in, you could ask the class if they know what **street hassle** means – or what it means if you **get hassled on the street** – and ask for some different kinds of examples.

**Exercise 1a**

Tell the class they’re going to hear a radio show about street hassle. Give them a minute or two to read the extract from the show and then put them in small groups to discuss what they think catcalling is – and how much of a problem they feel it is. You could give any experiences of catcalling you have first as a model. As students are talking, monitor and help out with new language, where necessary.

You could round up by asking the group as a whole if anyone’s had any experience of catcalling – or else simply re-tell (in better English!) one or stories you heard as you were monitoring.

**Exercise 1b**

Put students in different groups. You could just do this by getting everyone to stand up and find a new partner. They then sit down and discuss questions 1-4. Give them a few minutes to discuss these questions. Stress that there are no fixed correct answers.

As students are talking, monitor and help out with new language, where necessary. You may want to get some better versions of things students are trying to say up on the board so you can come back to this as part of your round-up. It’s always good to gap the odd word here and there and then see if you can elicit the missing words from the group. You can include the first letter of the missing words if you want to make it easier. For example:

*I think some men just like i……………. women and enjoy seeing them get scared.*  (intimidating)

*Women must get really s………… of being hassled all the time* (sick)

You could also ask the whole group for their ideas about question 4. Try to get examples of the different ways advertising, TV, the mass media, politicians and so on are guilty of objectifying women.

**Exercise 2a**

Tell the class they’re going to hear the first part of an American radio show about street hassle. Give students a few minutes to read through 1-8 so they know what they’re listening for.

Then play the first part of the audio.

Note that you should only play the audio up until the point that Jared says “Wow! I’ve never thought of it that way”. This means stopping at 3:30.

Give students a few minutes to compare their notes / answers in pairs.

Then round up by getting ideas from the whole group.

**Answers:**

**The parts in brackets are additional info that you can try to elicit – or just give.**

1 85 per cent of women in the U.S. experience street harassment **before** the age of 17!

2 Jared grew up hearing girls are cats and boys are dogs (but he eventually realised that most cats don’t like dogs, and most women don’t like catcalls!)

3 Jared’s sister (Aleah) was around 14 when she first got catcalls on the street.

4 She remembers what she was wearing – a sweater, zipper up all the way (with snowflakes on it. In other words, she wasn’t wearing anything that could be consider ‘sexy’).

5 Jared realized he was a hypocrite when he found himself shouting at other guys for doing to his sister what he’d often done to women,

6 Jared says he didn’t use to catcall because he expected a response. It was more just ‘a game’ he played with his male buddies.

7 he thinks it was mostly about seeking validation from his peers – getting his friends to think he was OK, that he was cool that he was part of the gang.

8 The sociologist Professor Kimmel says catcalling isn’t learned from anyone’s mom! (Instead, it’s learned from other young guys out on the street)

**Exercise 2b**

Put students in pairs. Give them a few minutes or two to discuss the questions.

As they’re talking, monitor and help out with new language, where necessary.

It’s probably best to round up by just explaining what **homosocial** means here – that it’s social interaction between men. You could point out that gyms, for instance, have traditionally been **homosocial** spaces. You could also comment on the degree to which you agree with Professor Kimmel.

**Exercise 3a**

Tell the class they’re going to hear the next part of the radio show. Give students a few minutes to read through 1-5 so they know what they’re listening for. Play the audio.

**Exercise 3b**

Give students a few minutes to compare their notes / answers in pairs.

Then round up by getting ideas from the whole group.

**Answers:**

1 F Sometimes it is, but some guys do it because they really want the girl’s attention. They’re *on the pull* – trying to *pick* the girls *up*.

2 T He’s convinced that it’s a way of paying women compliments and that it’s a sign of respect. He’s also convinced women secretly all love it.

3 F She says girls find his mentality annoying.

4 T Sometimes she crosses the street to avoid groups of guys or she wears headphones, which make it harder for people to start talking to her.

5 F He’s taught himself not to look at women just as objects. He’s found it hard to reprogram himself. It’s been a kind of test!

**Exercise 4**

These questions allow for a personal response to the text and again, there are no fixed answers expected. Put students in small groups of 3 or 4 to discuss the questions. You could begin by asking the class to choose one question for you to answer – and then give your own answer response. This serves as a model of sorts.

Once students are chatting, monitor and help out with new language, where necessary. Get some better versions of things students are trying to say up on the board so you can come back to this as part of your round-up. Gap some words and try to elicit the missing words from the group.

**Exercise 5**

Tell the class you’re going to look at some of the more useful vocabulary from the radio show. They should try to complete 1-8 using the words given. Set a time limit of, say, five minutes and tell students to ask you or ask dictionaries if there are any words they’re not sure of. Once 60%-70% of the group seem to have finished, stop the whole class and put them in pairs to check their ideas. Then elicit answers from the whole class.

As you’re getting answers, write them up on the board and add extra clarification / information. You can also ask questions about the items as you’re doing so. Here are some things you might want to add / ask.

**Answers**

1. rage

If you **get into a rage**, you suddenly get really angry. Maybe you start screaming and shouting, and throwing things around.

Can you think of any reasons why someone might **get into a rage**?

2 inappropriate

If someone says something **inappropriate**, it’s unsuitable for the time or the situation, so asking if you plan to have kids during a job interview is inappropriate – in the UK.

What other kinds of comments or questions might be seen as **inappropriate**?

3 top dog

If you’re **top dog**, you’ve achieved a position of power and authority. You’re the best or most powerful or most important person in a group.

4 players

If you describe someone as being **a bit of a player** – or **a real player** – you mean they **play the field** – they fool around with lots of women and don’t want to marry them or be in a long-term relationship with them.

What other kinds of things might **players** sometimes do?

5 norm

If you say a situation or a certain type of behaviour is **the norm**, it means it’s expected and considered to be typical.

What other kinds of things might be **the norm for most women**?

6 compliment

If you **pay someone a compliment** – or **compliment** them – you say something nice to praise them in some way.

What kind of **compliments** do you think are OK?

And what kind can sometimes be a little bit odd or creepy?

7 harassment

**Harassment** is behaviour that annoys or upsets you. **Sexual harassment** is unwanted or offensive sexual attention, suggestions or talk, especially from an employer or someone in a position of power.

Can you think of any examples of **sexual harassment**?

8 take

If someone asks for **your take on** something, they want to know what you think about it.

So you might ask, for instance, “What’s your take on the financial crisis?”

Can you think of any other similar questions? *What’s your take on …….?*

**Exercise 6**

This exercise encourages students to use the new vocabulary and to respond to the sentences – mostly about work – from a personal point of view. Again, there are no fixed answers expected.

You could begin by giving your own answers to one or two sentences – to model what you expect of them.

Once students are chatting, monitor and help out with new language, where necessary. As always, try to get some better versions of things students are trying to say up on the board so you can come back to this as part of your round-up. Gap some words and try to elicit the missing words from the group.

**Homework**

Go home and find out about a case of sexual harassment in your country that made the news for some reason. You can read about it in English or your own first language. At the start of the next class, share what you learned in small groups.

**Here’s the audioscript, should you need it**

**Part One:**

ROBERT SIEGEL, HOST:

Growing up, Jared Marcelle watched as older men catcalled women in his Brooklyn neighborhood. He saw and heard it so much he thought it was the norm. His assessment was right, and it remains so. A study last year by Cornell University shows that 85 percent of women in the U.S. experience street harassment before the age of 17. Well, Jared set out to understand why that is and admits that when he was a teenager, he was one of those guys.

JARED MARCELLE, BYLINE: All my life I heard girls are cats and boys are dogs...

UNIDENTIFIED MAN #1: Hey, gorgeous.

J. MARCELLE: ...Except that most cats don't like dogs.

UNIDENTIFIED MAN #1: How you doing, beautiful?

J. MARCELLE: And most women don't like catcalls.

UNIDENTIFIED MAN #2: Hey, beautiful, how you doing?

J. MARCELLE: But that didn't stop me and my friends. Yo, Ma, psst (ph). We'd shout that out to the girls passing by. Hollering at women on the street was what guys were supposed to do, or so I thought.

What's the youngest age you've experienced this that you could remember?

ALEAH MARCELLE: I think the youngest - maybe I was 14.

J. MARCELLE: That's my younger sister Aleah. Some local construction workers said something inappropriate to her.

A. MARCELLE: I remember what I was wearing that day. I was wearing a sweater, and it was zipped up all the way. It had snowflakes on it.

J. MARCELLE: She came home flustered, and the look on her face sent me into a rage. I rushed outside ready to put hands on these fools. I made her come along with me to show her that I was top dog and she was completely safe. Then I made the group of men apologize, but when I turned around to see if she'd accepted it, she was gone. That's when I realized I was a hypocrite.

A. MARCELLE: It's kind of ruined all men for me because obviously not all men are bad, but because any interaction I've had with a man on the street who I don't know has been a negative one, I tend to avoid every man that I see now on the street because of that.

J. MARCELLE: When I was introduced to catcalling, it was like a game, just trying to be funny or look cool. We saw older guys doing it, then started in ourselves around 13, 14. It was as easy as saying hi to your neighbor. If she looked developed, there was a comment for her. If a girl frowned across the street, it amused us. We weren't necessarily looking for a response.

MICHAEL KIMMEL: Hello.

J. MARCELLE: Hi, Mr. Kimmel.

I reached out to Michael Kimmel, a sociologist at Stony Brook University and an expert on gender studies to get his take on catcalling.

KIMMEL: It really has very little to do with the woman. It has to do with your relationship with the other guys. It's about, you know, doing it in front of other guys. You know what I mean?

J. MARCELLE: Absolutely, absolutely, and that was definitely it for me. You know, I - it never worked for me at all.

KIMMEL: Right.

J. MARCELLE: It was just about me seeking validation from my peers, which is odd when you think about it...

KIMMEL: Right.

J. MARCELLE: ...Because wouldn't you want to, you know, impress the woman, you know?

KIMMEL: Right, but the answer's no, and partly it's because we've always thought that the street is not a woman's place. It's a man's place. So it's not about making women feel good or wanted or desired. It's about making them feel, you know - feeling uncomfortable being in our space.

J. MARCELLE: Do you think that this behavior is learned, and if so, where?

KIMMEL: Well, we don't - we probably don't learn it from our moms.

J. MARCELLE: Definitely not.

KIMMEL: You learn it by standing around on a street corner with other guys, and one of them makes a comment and everyone goes, oh, you're such a player. And you say to yourself, you know, at age 6 or whatever, I want to be a player, too.

J. MARCELLE: His next comment caught me off guard.

KIMMEL: Although we think of street harassment as heterosexual, it is really what I call homosocial, which is it's done and performed for other guys.

J. MARCELLE: Wow, I've never thought of it that way.

**Part Two:**

But that's not the case for everybody. Sometimes guys actually want a girl's attention, so they have to change the dynamic and approach her by themselves. That's a different kind of catcaller.

SHAWN: Hey, beautiful. Damn, gorgeous, I love your hair.

J. MARCELLE: And they can be brazen about it.

SHAWN: You've got to actually approach as many females as you want until you find out which one is the one for you.

J. MARCELLE: I was talking to my friend Shawn outside my house. He's a handyman. Shawn can fix anything. He's also known for having a slick tongue, and sometimes it even works for him.

SHAWN: I still do it. I call to a girl and tell her hi, how you doing, beautiful? I don't mean no disrespect by it.

J. MARCELLE: Have you ever stopped and thought about how women feel about it? Because apparently not every woman likes it.

SHAWN: And that's the thing. It's not that some of them don't like it. They all actually really do like it.

J. MARCELLE: All right, bro. But, you know, not all women want to be spoken to. Sometimes they just want to walk down the block and have, you know, a moment to themselves. They don't always want to talk.

SHAWN: You know, it's respect. Sometimes the guy, he's just giving you a compliment. That's all it is. Like, for example - hey, beautiful. See? I was just calling to her just to call to her. No...

J. MARCELLE: ...Just to keep your sword sharp.

SHAWN: That's it. If she says no, I'm OK with that. I can move on because guess what? There's three more girls behind her lined up.

HAAJAR: See? That mentality is what's annoying to us girls.

J. MARCELLE: That's Haajar. We've known her since she was a kid. She was passing by, and the conversation caught her ear.

This is perfect because she grew up in our neighborhood, and she has opinions as well.

Shawn tried to explain his approach to her.

SHAWN: You're walking down the street, right? A guy say hi to you, what do you say?

HAAJAR: I probably just don't answer them.

SHAWN: All right, now you answer, right? A guy say hey, beautiful, how you doing, you turned around, oh, fine. All right, let me see where else this could go. Can I walk with you for a second?

HAAJAR: I usually say no thank you.

SHAWN: All right, now you say no thank you. The guy, he's going to look at it like, let me give it one more try. You understand?

HAAJAR: But why? Why do you need to give it one more try if I already said no thank you? Like, you couldn't take the hello, good day and my name is such and such and keep it going?

SHAWN: Yeah, but you got to understand, a female like confident dudes, period.

J. MARCELLE: So what is your response to what he just said, Haajar?

HAAJAR: I mean, I feel like we as females, or me personally, feel like I can't even be nice and say hello back to you as a courteous person because then you want to take it farther. Like, I'm sure my body language shows that I'm not interested.

J. MARCELLE: OK, so what are some things you do when you're walking down the street?

HAAJAR: If it's a group of guys, I don't feel like being annoyed, so I cross the street. I might look at my phone if I stay on that side of the street. I might have headphones in my ears with nothing playing, nothing on. I'm not listening to anything. Just when they speak to me, I can have a reason to not answer them.

J. MARCELLE: Hearing how this impacts people like Haajar and my sister allowed me to see it from a woman's perspective. As a man, I've never had to think about what women go through. I made myself think about it. I've taught myself certain things. Basically, I wrote on the chalkboard inside my mind a thousand times, women are not objects placed here for my pleasure. It was like studying for a test. And that's the hardest part. I had to write the test myself because as a guy, this doesn't really affect me, but as a human being it does. For NPR News, this is Jared Marcelle.

(SOUNDBITE OF MUSIC)

SIEGEL: Jared's story was produced by Radio Rookies from WNYC.