I. Gender, Sex, Gender Norms…

Imagine that you are speaking to a group of people who have heard vaguely about gender studies but know little about them. They think that gender is something like sex; perhaps it is just a newer term for the same thing. They also believe that biological sex differences are very important, the foundation of all differences men and women, something fixed forever. Write 7 - 9 lines in which you tell these people about gender, including two points: (A) describe this concept and (B) convince your audience that while gender is an important distinction between people, it is an unstable, changeable category (think what factors does gender depend on).
II. Qualities and Stereotypes*

In contemporary society Russia as well as in the contemporary U.S., it would seem, there is near-equal equality* of the sexes. Are there some qualities, however, that people believe pertain to only one sex? If so, what character traits characterize the stereotypes of men and women? What are the attitudes among Russians towards such stereotypes?

Assignment A. Russia: A Boy’s Qualities, a Girl’s Qualities

You already know that many parents teach their children sex roles. Certain qualities comprise these roles. So what qualities do people ascribe to be comprising the qualities of a little boy, and which are the qualities of a little girl?

Go online and visit the website for the Russian store of children’s clothing, Matushka Gusynya ["Mother Goose"]: specifically, the section of the store designated as the catalogue of clothing for kids over the age two, located at http://www.matushka.ru/index.php?op=cat&sec=4. Read the descriptions of clothing for boys and girls, then respond to the following questions:

- What qualities of a little boy can we infer from these descriptions? Transcribe these qualities using the adjectives from the descriptions.

- What qualities of a little girl can we infer from these descriptions? Transcribe these qualities using the adjectives from the descriptions.

- Are there differences in how boys' and girls' items are described? What are these differences?

- Despite the fact that the clothes are intended for very small children, who don’t have very distinct character traits, the marketing department of the Mother Goose clothing company insists on sex differences in its advertising, which will be read by the parents. Why do you
think they write their materials in this way for the parents? Your response must consist of at least three sentences.

Assignment B. You can see that some popular conceptions of character traits of children in Russia are marked by the sex differences. Is this true of the U.S.?

Visit google.com and type in, first, “boys’ clothing.” Look at a few websites for stores that sell clothing for boys. Then go back to google.com and type in, “girls’ clothing”; visit several sites for stores that sell clothing for girls. Answer the following questions:

- What differences do you see between the descriptions of clothing for boys and for girls?
- Are they the same differences as the ones that you saw on the Matushka Gusynya website? Explain your response.
Assignment C. Here are some character traits, which are sometimes linked to gender stereotypes. Read through the list; some words will be familiar, while others are new. Underline the words that you do not know. Please memorize them gradually.

Черты характера
*F = feminine  M = masculine  N = neuter (grammatical gender)

Сила и слабость/ Power and Weakness
сила (F), adj сильный
слабость (F), adj слабый
смелость (F), adj смелый

Качества ума / The Qualities of the Mind
ум (M), умный
глупость (F), глупый
хитрость (F), хитрый

Качества характера / Qualities of Character
способность приспосабливаться/ the ability to adapt to circumstances
приспособиться к обстоятельствам
независимость (F) independence
авторитетность (F) assertiveness

Качества внешности и поведения… / Qualities of Appearance and Behavior…
кокетливость flirtatiousness
кокетничать с представителями противоположного пола – to flirt with [the representatives of] the opposite sex
авторитетность (F), авторитетный authoritiveness
отстаивать/отстоять свой авторитет – to defend one’s authority
галантность (F), adj галантный gallantry
привлекательность (F), привлекательный attractive
ухоженность (F), ухоженный well-tended physique
внимание к внешности attention to one’s physique
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<thead>
<tr>
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<th>English</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>заботиться о своей внешности – to take care of one’s physique</td>
<td>соблазнительный, соблазнительность</td>
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<tr>
<td>сдержанность (F), сдержанный</td>
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<tr>
<td>общительность (F), общительный</td>
<td>общительность</td>
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<tr>
<td>болтливость (F), болтливый</td>
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