

Equity 8™

The gender-equity rating

Clifford the Big Red Dog (picture book)

Written and illustrated by Normal Bridwell, Copyright 1963

Rating: 2 out of 8 stars



Met criterion = 1

Did not meet criterion = 0

Egregiously did not meet criterion = - 1

What to look for	Example(s)	Rating	Explanation of rating and recommendations
<p>Did the author tell the entire story without mentioning gender? (Just by mentioning gender we communicate that it's someone's most important quality and activate stereotypes.)</p>	<p>No gendered words, such as she, he, girl, boy, mommy, daddy, etc.</p>	0	<p>"He" and "his" are used.</p> <p>He: 14 times His: 2 times Him: 1 time She, hers, her: zero (0)</p> <p>Good that the author says, "other kids" rather than "other boys and girls."</p> <p>The book would be better if the author said, "the kids who said mean things yesterday" or "the kids who pushed other kids around last week," rather than the "bad boys."</p> <p>This criterion rated a zero (and not a negative one) because Emily Elizabeth is a prominent character.</p>
<p>Did the artist illustrate the entire story without</p>	<p>No pink, bows, or exaggerated eyelashes, etc. on</p>	-1	<p>Every single adult with a job in this book is male: police officer, shoe repair store</p>

<p>contributing to gender stereotypes?</p>	<p><i>girls. No blue, ball caps, etc. on boys, (Length of hair alone is not enough to exclude a book from this criterion. Authors often want/need to differentiate between characters. Hair is one way to do so that is less loaded with negative stereotyping.)</i></p>		<p><i>worker/owner, and zoo keeper. The driver of a car is also male.</i></p> <p><i>Emily Elizabeth wears a skirt. Thankfully it is not pink and her legs are not bare.</i></p>
<p>Is there counterstereotyping? (Note: not mentioning gender counters stereotypes as it puts gender in the background.)</p>	<p>Are stereotypes challenged by showing the opposite? <i>Examples are showing a boy happily cuddling a baby or a girl swinging a bat with expert skill.</i></p>	<p>0</p>	<p><i>Emily Elizabeth does simple activities that don't counter any stereotypes.</i></p> <p><i>The book is not called Emily Elizabeth and Her Dog, so the male character is clearly the star.</i></p>
<p>Are characters with different gender representations interacting with mutual respect, skill, and admiration? (Or are the characters neutrally drawn so we can create the above dynamic ourselves?)</p>	<p>Are girls and boys both shown using tools while building something? Do they smile at each other? Do they treat each other like a peer (and not an/a inferior or superior)?</p>	<p>0</p>	<p><i>While Clifford is a male, Emily Elizabeth doesn't interact with the other kids (or even the adults).</i></p>
<p>Does the girl character have agency?</p>	<p>Is her body shown in motion? Is she</p>	<p>1</p>	<p><i>Some. She rides a push-cart/scooter, throws a stick, gives Clifford a bath,</i></p>

	<i>making something happen through her efforts? Can you see her straining her muscles in active movement?</i>		<i>and combs his fur. The book would be better if she had more agency (took more action) in the scenes when Clifford “misbehaves” in the book.</i>
<i>Does the book’s story represent any of the Guiding Principles?</i>		1	Gratitude
<i>Are girls the main characters or do they share the spotlight equally with boy characters?</i>		1	<i>Barely, as almost every other character besides Emily Elizabeth is male, and the book is titled Clifford (not Emily Elizabeth or Clifford & Emily Elizabeth).</i>
<i>Is the writer and/or illustrator a woman?</i>		0	



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