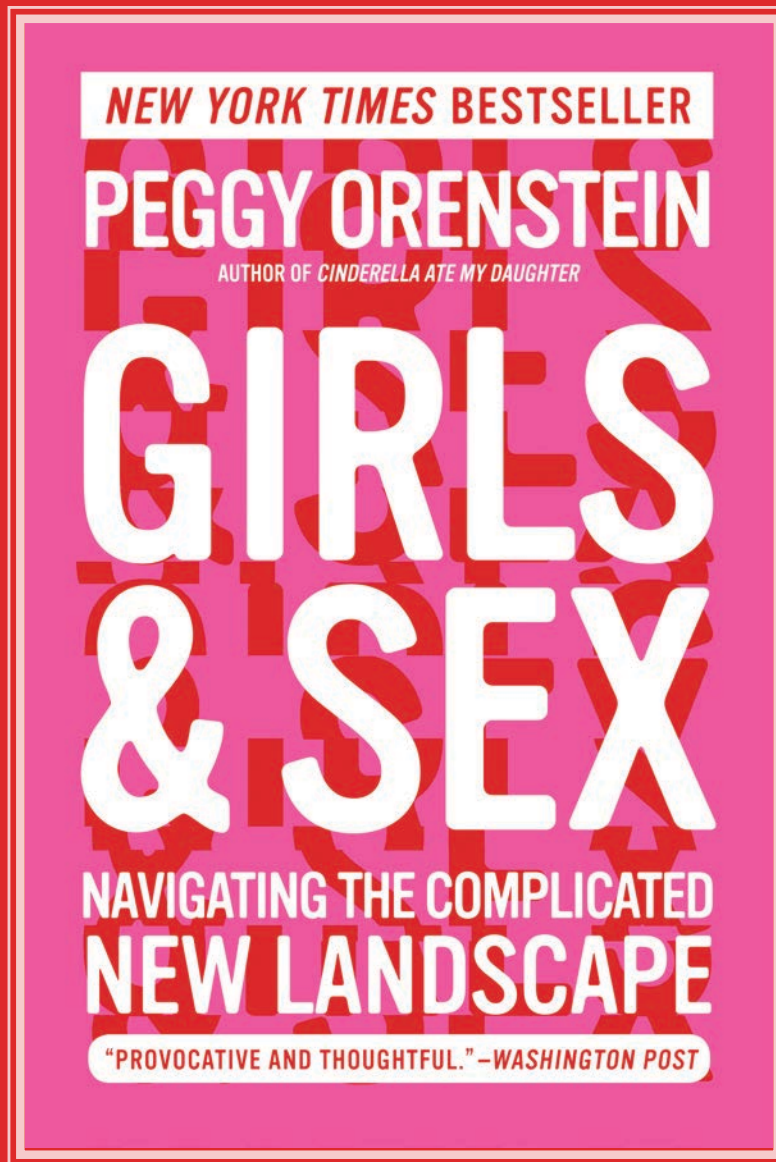


# A TEACHER'S GUIDE TO



“We’ve raised a generation of girls to have a voice, to expect egalitarian treatment in the home, in the classroom, in the workplace. Now it’s time to demand that ‘intimate justice’ in their personal lives as well.”

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## About the Book

Interviewing over seventy young women about their sexuality and consulting with dozens of psychologists, professors, and experts on porn, assault, desire and more, renowned journalist Peggy Orenstein pulls back the curtain on the reality of girls' sex lives in the modern world. In *Girls & Sex*, Peggy Orenstein examines the ways in which porn culture and all its sexual myths have seeped into young people's lives, what it means to be "the perfect slut" and why many girls scorn virginity, the reduction of female pleasure in sex and the complicated terrain of hookup culture, the unfortunate realities surrounding blurred lines and assault, and the internet's role as a sexual educator.

Importantly, *Girls & Sex* lets young women speak for themselves as it contextualizes their stories and experiences in Orenstein's well-rounded research. *Girls & Sex* is a vital and necessary read for both male and female high school and college students.

## About the Author

Peggy Orenstein is *The New York Times* bestselling author of *Cinderella Ate My Daughter*, *Waiting for Daisy*, and *Schoolgirls*. A contributing writer to the *New York Times Magazine*, she has been published in *USA Today*, *Parenting*, *Salon*, *The New Yorker* and other publications, and contributes commentaries to NPR's *All Things Considered*.

For more information, visit: <http://peggyorenstein.com/>

## Guided Reading Questions

### CHAPTER 1: MATILDA OH IS NOT AN OBJECT—EXCEPT WHEN SHE WANTS TO BE

- How has objectification, depending on circumstances and person, evolved from something to protest against to personal choice and something celebrated?
- In what ways has the self become a brand?
- How does social media encourage self-branding?
- How do performers like Beyoncé or Kim Kardashian send conflicting messages about female objectification?
- What is scripting theory? What are some examples of it?

### CHAPTER 2: ARE WE HAVING FUN YET?

- What are the forces that encourage girls to feel an expectation or obligation to perform sex acts?
- How does negative self-image affect sexuality and consequently sexual experience?
- What forces create a lack of agency for girls with regard to their own pleasure? How do they learn that it is not an integral part of their sexual experience?

### CHAPTER 3: LIKE A VIRGIN, WHATEVER THAT IS

- What are some of the myths romanticizing virginity loss? What is the purpose of these stories and how does lived experience conflict with them?
- Do perceptions surrounding virginity put pressure on girls?
- Do you think boys experience similar anxieties over virginity? Or about the number of sexual partners they have? Why or why not?

### CHAPTER 4: HOOKUPS AND HANG-UPS

- Describe the persistent double standard that seems to occur in casual relationships? Why do both girls and boys tolerate it?
- On page 140, Orenstein asks a series of questions about alleviating the double standard discussed above. She wonders what it would be like if girls adopted similar expectations that boys have regarding sexual experiences and refused to settle for anything less. Do you think such a dynamic is possible? Why or why not?
- How do girls construct any agency in hookup culture?
- We learn in this chapter that some girls see rape as only a violent attack that occurs in a darkened alleyway. What is the impact of such a limited definition?
- In Megan's story, she says that she had to hold back and not apologize to Tyler even though he sexually assaulted her. Are you surprised at Megan's desire to apologize? Why would she feel that way?

## CHAPTER 5: OUT: ONLINE AND IRL

- In what ways does the internet create safe spaces for girls questioning their sexuality? How can it help them in the coming out process?
- How did girls in relationships with other girls speak differently about sex than those in relationships with boys? Why do you think there is such a difference?
- Is it surprising to you that there is no discussion in this chapter of sexual coercion in same-sex relationships?

## CHAPTER 6: BLURRED LINES, TAKE TWO

- Are we teaching boys not to rape? Are there any parallels between what we teach a girl about her self-presentation and what we teach boys?
- How did the term “date rape” evolve?
- What event prompted mandatory campus crime statistics reporting? And what event then tightened colleges and universities adherence to Title IX? Why is such crime reporting necessary for campus environments?
- This chapter talks a lot about consent: what counts, what doesn't, people's understanding of consent versus their expectation of consent, how alcohol affects consent. Why has consent been contextualized as a slippery slope?

## CHAPTER 7: WHAT IF WE TOLD THEM THE TRUTH?

- How would you describe the work of Charis Denison?
- Does Denison's method of teaching sexuality seem revolutionary? Why or why not?
- Do you think the students she teaches are better prepared for thinking and talking about, and ultimately perhaps acting on, their sexual experience and sexuality? Why or why not?

## Writing Prompts

- Throughout *Girls & Sex*, Orenstein talks to a number of girls that describe double standards that exist in their relationships with boys. What are some of these double standards? Do you notice any kind of pattern about them? Why do the girls tolerate them?
- What kinds of pressures are placed on girls when it comes to sex, sexual experiences, and sexual identity?
- Why are there such drastic differences between how we teach girls and how we teach boys about sex?
- How can we improve education about consent and sexual assault on college and university campuses?
- Why is it that girls seem to bear the burden of responsibility when it comes to sexual relationships? Culturally, why does it fall to them? How can we make it more equitable?

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