

DS n°4 BCPST 1

- I- Lisez les textes ci-dessous et répondez en anglais à la question qui suit en 220 mots + ou – 10%, indiquez clairement le nombre de mots.

Why are muscles exhibited today? Compare the analysis given by the two articles.

Exhiber ses muscles, cette nouvelle façon de faire de la politique

Par Juliette Guéron-Gabrielle, *Le Monde*, 12 octobre 2025

Emmanuel Macron aime jouer des muscles. En mars, les Français découvraient leur président pratiquant la boxe, biceps tendu, poil hérissé et veines saillantes, sur le compte Instagram de la photographe de l'Elysée. Cet été, ce même compte le montre en train de courir au pied des Rocheuses, en amont du G7, puis se tenir l'épaule, pensif, dans l'avion du retour. Une photo centrée sur son biceps droit. [...]

Ces mises en scène, en France, font écho au lien historiquement étroit entre sport et politique aux Etats-Unis. De Theodore Roosevelt à Barack Obama, en passant par Bush père et fils, les présidents ont presque tous médiatisé leur pratique sportive. Des manières de faire valoir leur vitalité, leur position de leader du monde libre pendant la guerre froide ou de compenser le fait de n'avoir pas servi dans l'armée.

Mais il faudra attendre le mouvement MAGA (Make America Great Again) du président Trump, et sa branche « bien-être », MAHA (Make America Healthy Again), menée par Robert Kennedy Jr, pour voir une glorification décomplexée du muscle au pouvoir. Le secrétaire d'Etat à la santé s'est montré enchaînant pompes et tractions au cœur du Pentagone, dans le cadre du « Pete and Bobby Challenge » qu'il a inventé avec son homologue de la défense, Pete Hegseth.

« Mettre l'accent sur la force physique montre aussi sa défiance de tout ce qui est institutionnel ou médical », souligne Marie-Christine Bonzom, politologue spécialiste des Etats-Unis. [...]

« “Backlash” contre le féminisme »

Ces heures à la salle de sport sont un moyen d'améliorer sa position dans la sphère politique, pensée comme un « combat » et une « arène » : en politique, les métaphores se révèlent agissantes et transforment les corps. [...]

Avec quelles conséquences pour la place des femmes en politique, alors que la parité recule à l'Assemblée nationale et au sein des derniers gouvernements ? « Ces mises en scène renforcent la binarité homme-femme, en réintroduisant le physique, voire le sexuel, en politique », regrette Marlène Coulomb-Gully. La chercheuse y voit un symptôme du « backlash en cours contre le féminisme, qui remet en cause le paradigme

égalitaire ». Mais ces postures ne sont pas l'apanage des hommes. Ainsi, Valérie Pécresse et Rachida Dati se sont-elles montrées sur des rings de boxe. La ministre de la culture, célèbre pour les invectives et les menaces qu'elle adresse à ses adversaires politiques, pratique également la musculation.

402 words

How Toned Arms Became a Status Symbol—And an Impossible Standard

By Anne Marie Chaker, *Time*, Sep 20, 2025

This summer, toned arms became the new status symbol—and a near-impossible to achieve beauty standard.

From Lauren Sánchez Bezos waving from a balcony in Venice to the sculpted biceps of an HR director seen canoodling at a Coldplay concert, toned arms have gone viral. Red carpets, Instagram feeds, and even Times Square billboards echo the theme: deltoids and triceps, proudly displayed. Serena Williams recently posted swimsuit photos showing off striated arms after promoting her more than 30-pound GLP-1 weight loss.

Between Hollywood's decades-long obsession with thinness and the recent swings of the body-positivity movement, GLP-1s have ushered in a new era of lessness. Now comes the next layer: muscle.

It's not just a vibe—it's in the numbers. Women's participation in weight training rose to 14% in 2024, up from 11% in 2019, according to new research from the Health and Fitness Association. (...)

For most of the past century, arms were portrayed to be thin—whether in the waifish 1990s or the booty-obsessed 2010s shaped by Hollywood. But social media has shifted the lens. A new wave of fitfluencers and gymfluencers who aren't actors or singers now dominate millions of feeds, redefining beauty ideals through lifting weights, while promoting supplements and matching sets on the side.

Strength was once straightforward: You lifted weight, you got strong. "The thing about strength is it's democratic," says Dany Garcia, a former pro bodybuilder who serves as chief executive of the The Garcia Companies, a portfolio that includes fitness, sports and entertainment. But today, what's being sold to women isn't strength itself, she argues, but the illusion of it—muscle as a visual accessory, achieved by lowering body fat. "If you're lean, of course your muscles will show," Garcia says. "But that's not the same thing as being strong."

Nowhere is this contradiction more visible than in the arm, which has become a cultural billboard. Once ignored, it is suddenly freighted with meaning. Women's sports are surging. Abortion rights have been stripped away. "When you recognize rights are taken away, something in us wants to kick ass," says Garcia, who just launched a media company focused on female strength. Arms have become shorthand for discipline, control, and a woman's capacity to fight back.

But some say the new ideal is less about power, and more about chasing perfection. “The key to beauty ideals is that if they’re too easily reached, they’re no longer ideals,” says Renee Engeln, a psychology professor at Northwestern University. “It’s not enough to be thin. Now you have to be thin and visibly muscular.” This isn’t empowerment, she argues. It’s the opposite: another way to ensure women never see their bodies as good enough.

Research by Missouri State University psychologist Brooke Whisenhunt found that Miss USA contestants from 1999 to 2013 became both thinner and more muscular, a combination that young women who were surveyed increasingly rated as most attractive. In experiments, when participants were forced to choose between a thin model and a thin model with added muscle, the muscular version won.

The appeal of muscularity comes with rules. Arms must be sculpted but not too large, powerful but still “feminine.” The line is policed by culture and reinforced by class. Achieving the perfect balance of muscle and thinness requires money, personal trainers, nutritionists, and time. “Never forget the most essential ingredient to achieving the ideal body, beyond genetics, is wealth,” Engeln says. “Wealth buys you access to healthy foods, the time and resources to make working out an unpaid part-time job.”

The muscular arm, then, is not just a marker of strength. It is a marker of privilege. And in that way, even as it signals power, it reinscribes control—defining women’s bodies by standards that only the few can ever meet.

Celebrity trainer Gunnar Peterson, who has worked with the Los Angeles Lakers and the Kardashians, says, “I don’t have women coming in saying ‘I want big arms.’ It’s ‘I want more definition in my arms.’” He charges roughly \$350 an hour and recommends hiring a nutritionist.

“The common denominator of the women coming through my gym has always been ass, abs, arms,” says Peterson. “These days, it’s an arm thing.” 680

II- Rédigez en anglais un essai (au choix) en 220 mots, + ou – 10%. Indiquez le sujet choisi et le nombre de mots.

- a) To what extent does our physical appearance determine our social status, opportunities, and power?
- b) During his keynote speech at the opening session of the COP21 climate change conference in Paris on November 30, 2015, King Charles III said: “On an increasingly crowded planet, humanity faces many threats – but none is greater than climate change. It magnifies every hazard and tension of our existence.” How relevant is this exhortation in view of the recent global context? Use examples to support your answer.

Both articles highlight the growing trend of exhibiting muscles, but they explain it through different lenses: politics and social status. In *Le Monde*, muscles are presented as a tool of political power. Leaders like Macron and Trump use physical strength to project authority, vitality, and defiance against institutions. This trend is rooted in American political tradition but has intensified with movements like MAGA, where muscles symbolize a return to traditional masculinity and a rejection of feminist progress. Women in politics, such as Valérie Pécresse, also adopt this strategy, reinforcing gender stereotypes and the idea of politics as a combative arena.

In *Time*, muscles are framed as a new social status symbol, especially for women. The rise of “fitfluencers” and GLP-1 weight loss drugs has shifted beauty standards from thinness to toned, muscular bodies. However, this ideal is unattainable for most, as it requires wealth, time, and access to personal trainers. The article argues that while muscles may symbolize strength and discipline, they also reflect privilege and reinforce impossible beauty norms, ultimately disempowering women by setting new standards of perfection.

Both articles agree that muscle exhibition is a reaction to broader societal changes—political crises or the erosion of women’s rights—but they differ in focus: one on power, the other on social pressure and inequality.