

## Mini-lesson

# What is a Stereotype?



grades 4-8



30 minutes

### Objectives

- Teach what a stereotype is.
- Teach some ways stereotypes can be disrupted.

### Essential Questions

- What is a stereotype?
- What are the impacts of stereotypes?
- How can we work towards moving beyond stereotypes?



### MATERIALS

Post-its (optional)  
Chart paper  
Markers

### THEMES

Empathy  
Inclusion  
Social responsibility

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### Vocabulary

**STEREOTYPE:** noun; a widely held but fixed and oversimplified image or idea of a particular type of person or thing

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### Before you Begin

In the Think.Give section, students will generate a list of stereotypes. Consider if you'd like them to generate their own list or if you'd like to brainstorm the list as a class. Some students might feel uncomfortable listing stereotypes they have seen or experienced.

If students will generate their own lists, designate several areas of the room for small groups to collaboratively ideate on chart paper. Place marker and chart paper in the area or hang it up, if you would like.

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### Program Connections

This activity has been modified from a lesson in our Middle School Program. Visit [OUR PROGRAMS](#) page to learn more.

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# THINK • GIVE

**Watch:** [The Problem with Apu Trailer \(2:06\)](#). A film about how the Indian character Apu is portrayed in The Simpsons. It highlights the danger of stereotypes and how they can impact people.

**Discuss:**

- What are your thoughts about the video?
- Where did you notice a lack of empathy?
- How could empathy have helped?
- How did the people in the video seem impacted by the stereotypes?
- In some clips, the Indian actors are laughing about how Indians are portrayed (min 0:35–0:41). Does this make a stereotype okay? Why do you think they were laughing?

**Activity: Station Rotation**

Students (in pairs/small groups) receive a sheet of chart paper and markers. Assign each group a different topic (pull from the following list or create your own).

**TOPICS:** Boys, girls, people experiencing homelessness, blind people, teenagers, elderly, athletes, models, immigrants.

Invite students to write any stereotypes that come to mind about their topic. Remind them that statements starting with “All...” usually indicate a stereotype because this makes a generalization or assumption about everyone in a group. For example, “All boys like sports.” After 1–2 minutes (keep time), signal for students to stop and rotate to the next group’s chart paper. Students read the new topic and list of stereotypes, adding a star or a check next to those that resonate with them and/or adding additional stereotypes of their own. Continue rotations until groups have visited all topics. Hang the chart papers around the room. Students do a silent gallery walk to read the responses.

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## CONNECT + CLOSE

**Discuss as a class:**

- Which stereotypes stood out to you? Why?
- Which stereotypes surprised you? Why?
- Why do you think stereotypes exist?
- How are stereotypes harmful?
- How do certain stereotypes hold people back?
- How do certain stereotypes put unfair expectations on people?

## ACTION

In the coming days/week, students identify when they or others are stereotyping. If that happens, remind them to be compassionate with themselves and others—we’re all learning. Invite them to ask themselves or others, “Is that always true?” so as to think beyond the stereotype.

## REFLECTION

Lead a discussion or invite students to journal, using the following questions as a guide:

- Why is it important to notice and/or challenge stereotypes?
- How would the world be different if we didn’t have stereotypes?