

## Stereotypes Lesson Plan

**Learning Objectives:** To develop and practise academic reading skills: skimming, guessing meaning from context, inferring

**Preparation Time:** 10 minutes

**Completion Time:** 45 minutes

**Skill/Grammar:** Reading, Vocabulary, Speaking

**Age/Level:** Tertiary/Upper Intermediate

**Resources:** Stereotypes Worksheet, Stereotypes Answer Key, pictures of a range of different people from magazines

### Warm-Up (10 minutes)

- Show students pictures of a range of different people from magazines and ask them to write down the first adjectives that come into their minds to describe these people's personalities. Ask them to predict what jobs they do, whether they are married, have children, etc.
  - Students compare their impressions with each other. Ask them how they were able to do this. Elicit whether or not there is a danger in making judgements about people based on their appearance. Elicit/teach the word stereotype.
- 1 Ask students to identify the stereotypes on which the jokes are based. Elicit that both positive and negative stereotypes are untrue and unfair because they are overgeneralisations. Ask students why some people find jokes like this funny.

### Reading (25 minutes)

- Ask students to read the text and underline evidence that allows us to infer that the man:
    - a is tall
    - b isn't good at basketball
    - c is not well paid
    - d doesn't think we should rely on stereotypes
- 2 The words in activity 2 are all from the academic wordlist. The students will meet more such words as they read through the main text. Rather than consulting their dictionaries they can make good guesses by looking at the part of speech and the context. Ask students to explain how the context helped them find the answer.

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Key:

2

Word	Part of speech	Definition
1 <b>assume</b>	<b>verb</b>	<b>e</b>
2 <b>neutral</b>	<b>adjective</b>	<b>c</b>
3 <b>perceive</b>	<b>verb</b>	<b>h</b>
4 <b>positive</b>	<b>adjective</b>	<b>b</b>
5 <b>discriminate</b>	<b>verb</b>	<b>g</b>
6 <b>attribute</b>	<b>verb</b>	<b>f</b>
7 <b>characteristic</b>	<b>noun</b>	<b>a</b>
8 <b>gender</b>	<b>noun</b>	<b>d</b>

3 Elicit that it is sometimes necessary to look at the meaning of a phrase as a whole rather than focusing on the individual words that make up that phrase.

4 Review the fact that topic sentences normally give you the whole idea of a paragraph and are usually found in the first or second sentence of the paragraph. Elicit that we can understand a lot about a text simply by looking at the topic sentences. They can help us understand the gist of a text as well as helping us to predict where we are likely to find a certain piece of information.

Key:

a **People often come up to me and ask me if I play basketball. But this is not the only stereotype people have about tall people.**

b **Even my PE teacher at school assumed I was a good player despite all evidence to the contrary ... I have to say that the rest of my school basketball team wouldn't agree ...**

c **I must be the exception that proves the rule ... I cannot deny that I do hope to benefit from this one day ...**

d **Just as my height doesn't affect my ability to do my job, neither does the fact that I am white, young and male.**

Topic sentences: 1 – d, 2 – b, 3 – e, 4 – a, 5 – f, 6 – c

5 Encourage students to skim to complete this activity. Set a time limit of five minutes if students have a tendency to only read in detail rather than employing a range of reading sub-skills and strategies.

Key:

5

Topic sentences: 1 – F, 2 – E, 3 – C, 4 – A, 5 – B, 6 – D

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- 6 Students read more carefully to find parts of the text which show the opinions of the writer.

**Key:**

6

- 1 This is the way that our brains are wired. (Paragraph B)
- 2 These may be positive, negative or neutral. They may or may not be different from characteristics that we believe we ourselves possess. (Paragraph A)
- 3 Categorising, classifying and generalising are skills which can prove useful in helping us perceive and understand our complex world. (Paragraph B)
- 4 When our ancestors saw someone running towards them they needed to be able to quickly decide if they were friend or foe. (Paragraph C)
- 5 We may even ignore evidence to the contrary, believing these are exceptions which prove the rule. (Paragraph D)
- 6 We may find ourselves in trouble if we rely on stereotypes and assume, for example, that old people are always wise, women are never aggressive, and all people with glasses are intelligent and hardworking. (Paragraph E)
- 7 Repeated exposure to members of a particular group will, by necessity, force us re-examine our stereotypes as they will not all share the characteristics of the group. (Paragraph F)

### **Closure (10 minutes)**

- 7 Students discuss the opinions given in activity 6. Encourage students to provide explanations and justifications for their opinions.
- 8 Allow students to give personal examples but do not insist upon this.