What are Stereotypes

Fast Facts

Curriculum Area: Social Studies
Grade Level: Grade 3
Suggested Duration: 1 – 2 hours

Stage 1 Desired Results

Established Goals

(4) The history content standards for third grade are that each student will:
(b) explain how perspective impacts the telling of historical events.

Understandings

- Stereotypes are generalization, assumptions, or ideas held by one group about another.
- Stereotypes are ideas, assumptions, and generalizations that people make about the characteristics of all members of a group.
- Stereotypes often lead to misperceptions about a group or individual (cookie cutter misperception).
- Everyone has a culture. It helps to shape how we see the world, our selves, and others.
- You need to understand your own culture to begin to understand someone else's culture.
- We can also differ from one another in other ways – for example, our abilities and our personality. These all need to be taken into consideration when we look at another person's culture and point of view.

Essential Questions

- What does the word "stereotype" mean?
- How are culture and stereotype related?
- How does my culture influence my interpretation of a stereotype?
- Is our classroom an example of a stereotype? What are our common characteristics?
- Why is it important to understand culture, groups, and stereotypes?

Students will be able to…

- tell why we could have a misconception about someone's culture or group; this misconception can cause us to stereotype that person and said person's culture.
- tell why beliefs and ideas can vary from person to person. Sometimes we misunderstand someone because we don't know that person's ideas and we know little about that person's culture.
- tell why it helps to know about your own culture when you are attempting to understand another person's culture.

Students will know…

- negative impacts of stereotyping regarding different types of people, including American Indian people.

Stage 2 Assessment Evidence

Performance Tasks

1. Take an active part in all learning activities and the discussion of the Essential Questions.
2. Define stereotypes and give an example appropriate to the lesson.
3. Know what to do to prevent stereotyping someone.

Stage 3 Learning Plan

Learning Activities

Cookie-Cutter and Stereotypes

Begin by sharing a story from your life in which an untrue assumption was made about you in the way that someone talked to you or treated you based upon some aspect of your identity. Be sure to also explain how it made you feel.

Then invite students to share a similar experience they can recall. Prompts might be an assumption of their interest based upon their gender, an assumption of their limitations based upon age, how someone treated them different from others in some way, or a situation in which they observed someone else being treated differently or badly based upon an untrue assumption made about them. As students share their experiences, ask them to think about the following questions:

- What did someone not understand about them or someone else?
- How did this experience make them feel?
- What might have been different if someone had tried to learn more about them or a person they knew instead of making an assumption?

Where possible, use their responses to illustrate the concept of how someone's "cookie cutter" mentality impacted their actions toward them or someone they know/knew.

After this introductory discussion, ask students why they think that "cookie cutter" is one of their vocabulary concepts in this lesson?

What is your first thought when you hear the word cookie cutter? What are cookie cutters most often used for? When are they used? Have you used a cookie cutter? What happens when you use a cookie cutter? Why do you use a cookie cutter?

Share the following definition of Cookie Cutter:

- ✓ Cookie-Cutter: marked by lack of originality or distinction
  - Example: cookie-cutter shopping malls – Meriam-Webster Dictionary

Students will understand a cookie cutter is used to make something alike over and over.

Share the following definitions of stereotype:

- ✓ Stereotype: an often unfair and untrue belief many people have about all people or things with a particular characteristic - The Britannica Dictionary
- ✓ Stereotype: a set idea that people have about what someone or something is like, especially an idea that is wrong – Cambridge Dictionary
- ✓ Stereotype: something conforming to a fixed or general pattern
  a. especially: a standardized mental picture held in common by members of a group and that represents an oversimplified opinion, prejudiced attitude, or uncritical judgment – Meriam-Webster Dictionary

Share some examples of common stereotypes that might be relevant for your class. These might include:

- All girls like to play with dolls
- Boys are only interested in sports
- Old people just like to sit and watch TV
- Rich people always wear fancy clothes
- Nurses and secretaries are always women

After sharing your examples, ask students to think about people they know or have known that would not fit these stereotypes. They might include themselves. Explain there are stereotypes about all groups, but people of different races and cultures are often stereotyped the most. Go back to the examples students shared about how being stereotyped made them feel to remind them why stereotypes can be harmful. Explain it's wrong to make assumptions about people of other races and cultures and we should instead try to learn more about them and their culture.

Facilitate a classroom discussion regarding what the words cookie cutter and stereotype have in common? Ask students if there are "cookie cutter" people? Can they think of people or groups of people that have like characteristics to the degree that they could be considered "cookie cutter" people or those who seem to be cut from the same mold?

Are all characteristics of "cookie cutter" people alike? Bring about the understanding that even though people are alike in many ways, they still have their own unique differences. People who are grouped by likeness but still have their unique differences are often stereotyped by that which makes them alike.

Once you as certain students understand "stereotype," close by reconnecting to cookies made with a cookie cutter. Even though they are cut from the same mold, no two cookies are exactly alike.

Can they think of people who are stereotyped (e.g., teachers, Italian cooks, doctors)? What are the stereotype characteristics for those groups?

Grouping By Shoes Activity

This "Grouping By Shoe" activity reinforces new vocabulary/concepts; remind students that although they will be moving around, their movement needs to be purposeful and silent (no speaking).

For this activity all students need to be standing initially in ONE LARGE GROUP.

Students should be instructed not to talk or use any cue.

ASK STUDENTS TO GROUP themselves BY A VISUAL SIMILARITY, simplify by telling them "by something you can see." You may need to give one example – grouping by color of shoes. Tell students they should mentally record the visual similarity by which they grouped themselves, keeping it in mind to write down when they are back at their seats.

Observe how students move about to find where they fit. Give students a set time of about three minutes. There is no limit to the number of groups a student may join. After the three-minute period has lapsed, have students sit and write down the groups they joined (by the visual similarity they were using). Allow two minutes or so.

The teacher should lead the following discussion with students.

- ✓ How and why did they group themselves in the way(s) they did?
- ✓ What visual similarities were used?
- ✓ What differences were there, even when many students grouped by the same visual
- ✓ similarities?
- ✓ How and why did this happen?
- ✓ Allow discussion to proceed until you know that students understand we group ourselves by likenesses but within our groups we still have differences.

Emphasize and integrate definitions as stereotypes as the discussion progresses. Throughout the activity the teacher should be recording types of groups on roll paper or board – this helps with reaffirming main ideas.

Examples of Stereotypes and Native Americans

Display a stereotypical image of Native Americans. Utilize the resources from the Background Information as there are several stereotypical images of Native Americans included in the resources. Another option is to do an internet search of the words "American Indian/Native American stereotypes" and display the various types of images that come up.

Facilitate a class discussion regarding the displayed images. What do you see? How does it portray Native Americans? Is this an accurate representation? Do you see stereotypical examples?

Next, display posters from the Making Montana Proud Poster Series. Ask the same questions again and discuss the various tribal members and their contributions to their tribal nation and to Montana. Other questions to ask: Do they all look the same? What kinds of jobs do they have? What tribe(s) are they from? Why do you think they were featured on this poster?

Stereotypes can be good and bad, but it is the negative stereotypes that lead to discrimination and prejudice. It is important to understand that people of all groups are individuals and are not all exactly the same. We need to remember this about people and treat them with respect

Background Information for the Teacher

Probing the Paradoxes of Native Americans in Pop Culture

Native American Stereotypes in Early Films

I is for Ignoble: Stereotyping Native Americans

Teaching & Learning about Native Americans