

# Body image

Year 9 Learning Activity

## Time to complete

50 minutes

## Description

Students analyse how beauty is represented in the media through music and magazines and the impact this, and the perceptions of others, have on personal identities.

## Learning focus

Our identities are influenced by how beauty is represented in the media and how other people perceive us.

## Key understandings

- Beauty can be stereotyped in the media for both males and females.
- Media, and other people's perceptions, can influence personal identities.

## Materials

1. Butcher's paper [6 pieces]
2. Old magazines and/or newspapers
3. A5 coloured paper
4. Internet access

## Before you get started

- With so many physical and emotional changes occurring during puberty, it is normal for young people to be more self-aware during this time. In [Mission Australia's Youth Survey 2018](#)<sup>1</sup> 30.4% of young people are concerned about body image, and research suggests that less than a quarter of Australian girls and a third of Australian boys are satisfied with their weight<sup>2</sup>. See the Guide: [Body image](#) for more information.
- It is important to highlight the differences between beauty represented in the media and real life. This activity provides an opportunity to discuss and support students' confidence and self-esteem. [Establish ground rules](#) so students feel safe and respected during classroom activities.

## Learning activities

### Whole Class

Students explore their own perspectives and the perspectives of other students regarding beauty and concepts that relate to beauty.

1. Attach 6 pieces of butcher's paper to the walls of the classroom. Label each piece of butcher's paper with one of the following titles: beautiful, sexy, ugly, handsome, creative, helpful.
2. Allocate a small group of students to each piece of paper.

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3. Give students 2 minutes to write things that come to mind when they think of the word that is on their piece of butcher's paper. It might be other adjectives or it might be celebrities. Ensure they do not write names of people they know personally (e.g. other people at school).
4. Move the groups to the next [gallery walk](#) to the right and repeat the process until each group has written on each of the pieces of butcher's paper.
5. As a whole group discuss what the class has written for each concept.
  - Discuss similarities and differences.

### Independent or Small Group

Students develop an understanding of natural beauty and use music and magazines to assist them. Students also explore the impact of the media on own perspectives of beauty.

1. Watch 'Try' by Colbie Caillat on YouTube (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GXoZLPSw8U8>) [3:51min]
2. Ask students what their thoughts and feelings were after seeing the clip.
  - *What is the key message of the song?*
3. Give students old magazines/newspapers.
  - Students are to explore the magazines/newspapers for what they perceive to be natural beauty.
4. Discuss with the students as a whole group what they perceive natural beauty to be and what assumptions do we make from how someone looks. What impact does the media have on our perceptions of what beauty is and how we perceive ourselves?
5. Ask students to reflect independently and silently for two minutes.
  - *How do they perceive themselves physically?*
  - *Do they see themselves differently after seeing the clip?*

### Reflection

1. Give each person in a small group a piece of the same coloured paper. Make sure each small group has a different colour.
2. Each person writes their name on their piece of paper then scrunches it up to resemble a snowball.
3. Teacher says 'snowball' and everyone throws their snowball to the group to the right of them.
4. Each person then picks up or catches a snowball from the group to the left of them.
5. The snowballs are unravelled and one positive affirmation is written about the person whose name is on the piece of paper (e.g. thank you for being caring).
  - Ensure the positive affirmations are not about their physical characteristics.

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6. The snowballs are then scrunched up and thrown to the right again and the process continues until each person has received their snowball back.
7. Give the students 2 minutes to read and reflect on the positive affirmations other people have written about them.
8. Discuss as a whole group how it feels to receive positive comments about yourself. Do people agree with the comments other people have written about them? What other comments would you write about yourself? Why?
9. Give students 1 minute to add to their own snowball.
10. Discuss as a whole group how the comments from others can impact on our identities positively and negatively.

### References:

1. Mission Australia. *Youth Survey 2018*. Sydney: Mission Australia, 2018.
2. Paxton, S. *Research Review of Body Image Programs: An Overview of Body Image Dissatisfaction Prevention Interventions*. Melbourne: Department of Human Services, 2002.

### Related assets (links to sections within GDHR site)

#### Teaching Note

[Establishing a group agreement](#)

#### Background Note

[Body image](#)

### Date printed

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