



INSTITUTE FOR
HUMANE EDUCATION

WHERE ARE THE PEOPLE LIKE ME?

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PURPOSE

Students assess examples of media (catalogs, magazines, books, etc.) to consider who is (and isn't represented) and explore the impact of lack of diversity in media and their own rich experiences with diversity.

GRADES

4-10

TIME

45-60 minutes

MATERIALS

- catalogs, children's books, and/or magazines
- recycled paper; paper clips

SUBJECT AREAS

Language Arts, Psychology and Social Studies/History

COMMON CORE STANDARDS

Forthcoming

PREPARATION

1. Gather a collection of catalogs for children's toys, clothing, play equipment, bedding, accessories, etc.
Alternative: You may prefer to use children's books or general interest magazines instead.
2. Create a few dozen slips with statements about people revealing one of their characteristics (see examples below).



Image courtesy of Rodimuspower/Flickr.

PROCEDURE

1. Let students know they're going to be conducting an investigation to look for people with different kinds of characteristics.
2. Distribute the catalogs of children's toys, clothing, bedding, accessories, play equipment, etc. Then hand out three slips of paper to each student.

The slips of paper will each have statement from someone identifying something about themselves. Here are several possible examples:

- I am a girl who enjoys trucks and trains.
- I have braces.
- I use crutches.
- I am a different ethnicity than my parents.
- I am a male of Asian descent.
- I live in a shelter.
- I wear hearing aids.
- I am a female of Native American descent.

- I am a girl who loves to play outside.
 - I use American Sign Language.
 - I live in an apartment or condo.
 - My parents are the same gender.
 - I am a boy who enjoys dressing up and doing theater.
 - I read Braille.
 - I eat a vegan diet.
 - I am significantly overweight.
 - I am an African American female.
 - I am a mother who enjoys playing soccer.
 - I wear an eye patch.
 - I am a father who likes to cook and bake.
 - I am a female fire fighter.
 - I am a male who cares for children.
 - I am a young female scientist.
 - I am a girl who does not like pink and purple.
 - I am missing a limb.
3. Have students spend about 10 minutes searching the catalogs (or other media) for matches or close matches to their slips. When they find matches/near-matches, have them tear out those pages (if it's from a catalog or magazine) and paperclip the slip to the example. (If it's in a book, have them paperclip the slip to the book page.

Once they've found their three matches (or if they've been struggling for awhile to find a match), give them three more slips with people to search for. Repeat as many times as you wish, being sure to leave time for discussion (at least 20 minutes).

4. Lead students in a discussion (you may want to give them time to reflect and record their observations first), asking questions such as:
- What characteristics were the most difficult to locate?
 - What messages are sent to people who don't see themselves reflected in ads/articles/stories?
 - What messages are sent to adults and children in general who view these ads/articles/stories?
 - What groups do you belong to (or special characteristics do you have) that aren't represented?
 - What can we do to encourage more visibility of diversity in media?
5. Have students list ways in which diversity has influenced and enriched

their lives.

EXTENSION

Either individually or in small groups, have students create a scene (not necessarily for an advertisement) that represents a diverse population. This can be an artist's sketch, a video clip, a diorama, etc., and share it with their class.