Key stage 1
Lesson 5: Unconscious Bias

Key Questions	Learning Outcomes
Can we tell what someone is like from looking at them? What do we assume about people?	By the end of the lesson we want pupils to: • Understand that they might judge people, based on their appearance. • Understand that they should challenge their assumptions. • Understand that we can't tell what someone's like from superficial characteristics. Key words: • Bias • Trait

Activities and Content - TN: Teacher notes in blue	Resources
Big question Can we tell what someone is like from looking at them? **Matching activity 1 - Animals** • Match animals to traits (represented by adjectives or objects) • A trait is something that makes someone special – hair colour, hobbies, family, attitudes etc. • Can the children guess what animal goes with each trait? • For example, you might assume that a cheetah would match with the trait of being fast TN: In this exercise, the animals in question do not match the stereotypes that are normally associated with them. This lesson sets out to help children to recognise that they have assumptions (or biases) and that these assumptions are not always accurate. Examples of animals: Pig, bear, rabbit, cat. Examples of traits: Clean (represented by picture of soap); kind (represented by picture of flowers); scary (represented by picture of sharp teeth); dirty (represented by picture of a big pile of mud). TN: We would expect children to match the animals to the obvious choices (pig = dirty, bear = scary etc.) Once children have completed their task, reveal the answers and associated pictures: Answers: • Pig – washing with soap and shampoo (clean) • Bear - giving someone a flower with a big smile (kind) • Rabbit - showing teeth and looking scary (scary) • Cat - covered in mud (dirty) **Thinking time** Were the children surprised? Encourage discussion around the following ideas: • We often judge people by how they look. • You can't judge what someone's personality will be like by looking at them. • This can be unfair. • Judging someone by how they look is called bias. • Today we are learning about bias and why it can be a problem. **Vocabulary** Bias - Means guessing something about someone else for no good reason. Bias - Means making assumptions about someone's traits.	**Matching activity 1** • Pictures of animals • Pictures of items/ adjectives (traits) • Pictures of animals with correct trait

Activities and Content (cont'd)	Resources
Matching activity 2 - People	**Matching activity 2**
• Look at pictures of a range of children and activities.	• Pictures of a diverse range of children
• Children match pictures of children with the activities that they might like.	• Pictures of a range of activities, such as:
• Can children guess which child goes with which activity?	• Football

TN: Some children will guess the reasoning behind this activity – that you cannot know what someone's personality is like from a picture of them. Many of the correct matches will challenge stereotypes that the children may already have internalised. Hopefully, this lesson will encourage them to question some of these biases.	• Video games
	   • Toy cars
	   • Gardening
	   • Running
	   • Lego

Discussion	
Once the children have completed the matching activity, ask some of these questions:	
• How did you decide who liked what?	
• Did you feel sure of your decisions?	
• Will the other children in the room have made the same choices?	
Reveal the answers	
• Were you correct?	
• Why did you get it wrong?	
• What word might we use to explain why you made certain choices? (bias)	

Key Points

- Sometimes we assume things about people because of how they look.
- However, it's very hard to guess, especially by things like skin, hair and eye colour.
- We often are biased because of:
  - The stories we read.
  - The people we see in films, on shows and online.
  - The things that we hear adults say.
- It is important that we notice when we are being biased.
- It is important that we treat everyone fairly and kindly, no matter what they look like (particularly things like skin, hair and eye colour).
- How someone looks is not as important as who they are on the inside – their personality.

Key Questions

- How would you feel if someone treated you unkindly because of the way you look?
- For example, if someone said that you couldn't play a game because of the way you look?

Conclusion

You can't tell what someone's personality will be like by looking at them.

Glossary for teachers

Bias - Prejudice in favour of or against a person or group of people.

Links to other lessons

- Representation lesson explains the reasons why we may have bias and how to improve this situation.