

Key stage 2

Lesson 4: Understanding racial socialisation and stereotypes

Key Questions	Learning Outcomes	Activities and Content	Resources
<p>What are stereotypes?</p> <p>Where do stereotypes come from?</p> <p>How can stereotypes be harmful?</p> <p>Do we all hold stereotypes?</p> <p>Is it possible to not hold a stereotype? (discuss how this is difficult due to conditioning).</p>	<p>By the end of the lesson we want pupils to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understand that some of my views and opinions may be a result of racial socialisation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduce learning outcomes Recap the ground rules by asking children to take turns to explain them to their partner. Recap: What is systemic racism? Remind children to look at the root word in 'systemic.' Children to use a selection of keywords (word bank) to help them define it. Share a story title and basic story plot with the children without pictures. Ask children to conjure up an image of what they think the characters might look like. One character to be described as heroic and the other described as the villain (princesses are often represented as white people in fairy tales). Provide children with a range of illustrations of people (different 'racialised' features) and ask children to decide which character will play which role. Discuss their similarities and differences. Why might they have so many similarities? Are children drawing upon their knowledge of films they have seen and stories they have read? Introduce a fictional child's response. Ask children if Tony's suggestions are similar to theirs. Present children with the word 'stereotypes'. Invite children to explain the meaning. Share the definition. Ask children if they know any examples. Go further and ask them what they think racial stereotypes are. Now, consider the fictional child's responses again. Could they be influenced by racial stereotypes? Explore why we have stereotypes. Introduce racial socialisation. Ask children to think of any examples of racial socialisation they have experienced. Present children with the words 'hero' and the word 'villain'. Provide children with a list of words and phrases. Ask children to choose a selection of words/phrases from the bank that best describe a typical 'hero' or 'villain'. Explore the idea that we are socialised to associate certain physical features/behaviours with certain character traits. Is this evident in our ideas about what a hero/villain is like? Ask children to think about movie plots and explore what groups of people are usually the villain and who is the hero (hero usually white/cis-gender. Discussion about other forms of stereotyping/lack of representation is welcome). Children to share any other racial stereotyping examples/ experiences they think they have come across, using talk stems to help them articulate their examples. 	<p>Teaching resources</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> PowerPoint Story plot to read aloud <p>Pupils' resources</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Illustrations of characters List of adjectives Hero and Villains sheet

Slide 2 - Share the learning outcomes with the pupils.

Slide 3 - Warm up: Talk partners - Ask the children if they can recall the lesson ground rules in pairs.

Slide 4 - Recap previously taught vocabulary. Recap: What is systemic racism? Remind children to look at the root word in 'systemic.' Children to use a selection of keywords (word bank) to help them define it.

Slide 5 - Tell the children you are going to tell them a basic story plot/blurb. Tell them to use their imaginations to bring the story to life in their minds. Tell them to think about what the characters might look like. Read the basic story plot/blurb to the class. Encourage children to share their ideas. Try to encourage them to describe their physical characteristics. *In a faraway land, centuries ago, a murderous, shadowy beast stalks the night. Only one brave and courageous man has the strength and determination to defeat him, the great Prince of Har. The Prince of Har's long and dangerous quest to defeat the unnamed beast will fill you with wonder and excitement. But will he succeed in saving the beautiful Queen of Elwood?*

Slide 6 - Now present children with a set of illustrated characters. Ask children to decide which of these illustrations would be best suited to play each character in the story. Now, compare children's choices. Ask:

- Are there any similarities or differences between your choices?
- Why might we have so many similarities?

Probe children to make observations and share possible reasons for them. They might refer to Disney princes/princesses, fairy tales or films.

Slide 7 - Introduce Tony's response. Ask children: Are any of Tony suggestions the same as yours?

Explain, in a sensitive manner, that this might be down to us stereotyping. Explain that this is something many people do which is why we are discussing it today. It is important that we learn about stereotyping because it can be harmful and damaging.

How many people suggested that the blonde characters should play the royal characters? Is this a stereotype? Where do you think this comes from? Students might refer to Disney, fairytales and films. Do we see enough Black and Asian princes, princesses and heroes in the films that we see? Do we see enough Black and Asian main characters in the books that we read? Why does this need to change?

Some children will automatically select illustrations that represent a diverse range of people. Their own experience or previous education may make them very aware of issues involving representation. Extend their thinking by asking them to include characteristics that they haven't already or asking them why they think we are doing this activity today.

Slide 8 - Ask children if they know what stereotypes are. Listen to some suggestions. Share the definition with the children and ask them if they know of any examples of stereotypes relating to boys and girls e.g. all girls like pink, etc. Reassure children who have made choices that may be considered stereotypical by explaining that many people stereotype others without even realising it, and by talking about it today it will help us to question our thoughts when this happens. It is important that we learn about stereotyping because it can be harmful and damaging.

Slide 9 - Ask children if they think they know what racial stereotypes might be? Share the definition. Racial stereotyping is very harmful and damaging. Now, consider Tony's responses again. Could he have been influenced by racial stereotypes? E.g. Princes and princesses are white. Why might the examples provided in the definition be harmful? How could these stereotypes affect people's behaviour/how people are treated?

More examples of racial stereotypes: In fairy tales, princes and princesses are white. Princesses have blonde hair. Villains have dark hair.

Key questions: Racial stereotyping is very harmful and damaging. Why?

Could Tony's choices be down to racial stereotypes? Why?

Further notes: Research shows that children's stories (along with other forms of media e.g. television, magazine images and film) provide visual images to children that give them information about themselves and others, for example, *what 'good' and 'evil' looks like, what 'successful' looks like and what 'dangerous' looks like.* Self-image in children is shaped to some extent by exposure to images found in written texts, illustrations and films. If children of colour are to develop a positive self-image, need to 'see' themselves or their images in texts. We need to ask critical questions of the stories we read and ensure that they are not reinforcing racial stereotypes.

Slide 10 - Explain that racial stereotyping is harmful and damaging.

Explore why racial stereotypes exist. Introduce racial socialisation. Racial socialisation refers to the dominant beliefs, messages and ideologies we have been exposed to in society (e.g. from the news, the fiction we read, television, film industry, the education system, etc.) that have, consciously or not, shaped the way we see racialised groups. For example, the news media sometimes - falsely - leads us believe that knife crime is a problem that exists within the Black community. The way that some news stories are presented can make it sound like Black teenagers are more likely to join gangs or commit crimes than white teenagers. These are harmful racial stereotypes. Ask children if they can think of any examples of racial socialisation.

Teacher notes (cont'd)

Research (Hurley, 2005) shows that children's stories (along with other forms of media e.g. television, magazine images and film) provide visual images to children that give them information about themselves and others, for example, what 'good' and 'evil' looks like, what 'successful' looks like and what 'dangerous' looks like. This shapes our way of seeing the world. We experience racial socialisation from a very young age.

Slide 11 - Present children with the words 'hero' and the word 'villain'. Provide children with bank of words and phrases. Ask children to work down the list in pairs, selecting words and phrases that they think best describe a typical 'hero' or 'villain'. Try your best not to influence children's choices. Ask children to share their choices. Ask: Are there any similarities in our responses? Why?

Slide 12 - Share Tony's responses to the hero/villain activity. Ask children to consider: Have Tony's choices been influenced by racial stereotypes and racial socialisation? Encourage children to share their ideas and their reasoning.

Note: In fairy tales and children's stories, we often see problematic colour symbolism that associates white with goodness and black with evil. Research shows that this can reinforce racial stereotypes.

Can students think of any examples of positive representation? Can students think of any Disney films or superhero movies that present Black people or People of Colour as the main characters, princes/princesses or superheroes?

Slide 13 - Ask children to picture a princess - what colour hair does she have? Explain that our answers will be influenced by what we have seen and read.

Explain that we are socialised to associate certain physical features and behaviours with certain character traits- and we need to change this. Ask: Is this evident in our ideas about what a hero/villain is like?

Slide 14 - Ask children to take a moment to think about films they have seen and what types of people are usually the villain and the hero. Can you think of any examples that reinforce racial/racist stereotypes? Go on to ask: Do you think we all hold stereotypes? Explain even the kindest and most open-minded people all stereotype people without realising. From the moment we're born we are taking in messages from people/film/television etc. and these make associations/links in our brains.

Are they harmful? Yes, they are harmful because they can affect people's behaviour. We need to make sure we question and challenge our thoughts.

Slide 15- Why are racial stereotypes harmful? Who can they harm? How/why?

Racial stereotypes are harmful to the people who are being stereotyped. How would it feel to be told that someone who looks like you could never be the prince or the princess? How would it feel to always be labelled the villain? How would it feel to be told that you can't be the one to solve the mystery, or locate the treasure or work out the problem because somebody who looks like you wouldn't do those things?

Racial stereotypes are harmful to the people who are saying them, hearing them and believing them. If we believe stereotypes without challenging them then we are stopping ourselves from really listening to and learning from the people around us. We could be harming people without realising it- and nobody wants to do that.

If possible, go further. How might these stereotypes play out in the wider world? Could the stereotypes we are being fed through fairy stories and the media about what 'good people' look like and what 'bad people' look like lead to people being treated in unfair and racist ways in the wider world? E.g. The police assuming- unfairly- that a group of Black teenagers or teenagers of colour standing together in the park must be up to no good?

Slide 16 - Ask children: Have you had any other experiences involving racial stereotyping? Encourage children to use the talk stems provided to help them share their experiences, if they want to. Thank students for sharing their experiences. Do not force students to share their experiences.

Slide 17 - The film industry has been trying harder in recent years not to play to racial stereotypes. Is this a good thing? Why? How might this affect how young people see themselves and others around them?

Slide 18 - Teacher to model how to use the sentence stems on the reflection slide e.g. Children have a go at sharing a reflection with their partner or with the class.

Glossary for teachers

Stereotypes - A stereotype is an idea or belief people have about a thing or group that is based upon how they look on the outside, which is harmful and untrue. This idea or belief is often based on an observation of a person or a few people from that group at some point.

Racial socialisation - This refers to the dominant beliefs, messages and ideologies we have been exposed to in society (e.g. from the news, the fiction we read, television, film industry, the education system, etc.) that have, consciously or not, shaped the way we see racialised groups.

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

References for teachers:

Seeing White: Children of Color and the Disney Fairy Tale Princess Author(s): Dorothy L. Hurley (2005).