

New world

New skills

Teacher Notes: Stereotypes in the workplace

PwC Primary School Toolkit



Teacher Notes

Overview and Purpose

This session is designed to give students an insight into what stereotypes are and how they might influence their career aspirations. It is designed to break down their perceptions of what a job “should” look like according to societal norms.

It helps the students start to think about the types of jobs they would like to pursue when they are older regardless of what is stereotypically correct.

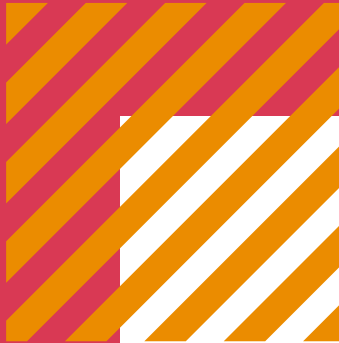
Objectives

By the end of the session, students will:

- Know what a stereotype is and where they might come from
- Begin to understand how stereotypes can affect the workplace
- Think about ways they can overcome stereotypes
- Realise that whilst stereotypes exist does not mean they have to conform to them

Key Vocabulary

Stereotype - a belief that a large group has over people or things with a certain characteristic



Preparation / Materials Needed

- ☐ Chart Paper
- ☐ Marker pens
- ☐ A whiteboard/blackboard/smartboard
- ☐ Download the session PowerPoint

Lesson structure

Getting Started (5 minutes)

- Introduction to the session
- Run through of the objectives

Understanding Stereotypes (30 mins)

- What is a stereotype?
- Examples of stereotypes
- Drawing exercise

Overcoming Stereotypes (10 mins)

- Think about career aspirations and stereotypes associated with it
- Consider what stereotypes are associated with the things the students enjoy doing

Wrap up and reflection (5 mins)

- Reflection
- Time for questions

Teacher Notes

Introduction (5 mins)

- Share **slide 1** with the students and introduce the session (**1 minute**). Explain that this session is about understanding stereotypes in the workplace. Ask for a show of hands - does anyone know what a “stereotype” is? Through this session, explain that we will be exploring what they are and how they relate to our career choices.
- Move to **slide 2** and share the session objectives (**3 mins**).
- If students hear about something they don’t understand, that’s okay! There is no such thing as a silly question, so don’t be afraid to ask.

Understanding Stereotypes (25 mins)

- Move to **slide 4** and ask the students to think about what a stereotype is. Give students **one minute** to discuss in pairs or small groups.
- Ask students to share answers with the class. (**2 mins**)
- Move to **slide 5** to share the definition of a stereotype (**2 mins**)
- Stereotypes are beliefs or assumptions that large groups hold over people or things with certain characteristics. Explain that whilst we usually think of stereotypes as **negative sometimes they can be positive**. For example, women being stereotypically caring is not a negative stereotype. Or Northerners are friendly!
- There are lots of examples of stereotypes in society. If you feel the need to share more examples, or to have a deeper conversation to ensure understanding, here are some more common stereotypes:
 - Older people don’t understand technology or know how to use it.
 - Women are bad drivers.
 - All little girls want to be princesses (and boys don’t).
 - Domestic chores are only for girls.
 - Football is a sport only for boys.
 - Pink is a girl’s colour.
- Move to **slide 6** and ask students to think about further examples of stereotypes and if they have any of their own. Give students **two minutes** to discuss in pairs or small groups, before sharing ideas with the class.

Activity (20 mins)

- Move to **slide 7** and share the first exercise with the students. They need to draw what they think of when they see the words given on the following slide.
- Move to **slide 8** to reveal the words. If the students are struggling, ask them to think about what gender the person might be, their age, ethnicity, what clothes they are wearing etc. (**10-15 minutes**)
- Move to **slide 9** and share some images of the job roles seen on slide 8. Note that images are not what we stereotypically may think of eg. female engineer, male nurse and business woman in a wheelchair. Ask the students if the images surprise them; why / why not? How do they compare with what they have drawn?
- Move to **slide 10** and ask the students questions on the slides to help them reflect on what they have drawn. Explain that drawing a male fighter pilot and female nurse are examples of stereotypes. Students may have subconscious stereotypes - they drew a fighter pilot as a male without even realising.
- Make it clear to students that if they have drawn stereotypical pictures, that this is not wrong or a bad thing to do. The purpose of the exercise was to illustrate how we may already have ideas of what people in certain jobs “should” look like.
- This is example of how stereotypes can be harmful. They can limit the way we see the world and prevent us from doing things we want to do. It can be difficult to imagine yourself in a role if you don’t see yourself reflected in representation of that role. For example, based on your gender, your ethnicity, whether you have a disability etc.

Overcoming stereotypes (10 mins)

- In the next section, we're going to think about where stereotypes come from and how we can think about overcoming them. **(slide 11)**
- Move to **slide 12** and ask the students to think about where stereotypes come from. Ask the students to think about this in pairs or small groups, before getting some ideas from the class. **(2 minutes)**
- **Slide 13** lists where stereotypes might come from. They often come from sources such as news, social media, books, TV, peers, parents/carers. For example:
 - In action films or fairy tales, the female characters often need a man to save them or give their life meaning. This feeds the stereotype that men are the strong ones and women are fragile.
 - In TV and film, scientists or smart characters are often depicted as socially awkward and not the "pretty ones". Equally, the "pretty ones" are portrayed as being dumb. Again, this plays to stereotypes.
- Share these with the students and ask them to have a think about where their stereotypes might have come from. Get some ideas from the class before moving on. A lot of the time stereotyping happens unconsciously, i.e. we're not aware that we're doing it. If students struggle to think about this, continue the conversation around where stereotypes might come from more broadly, and think about some examples. **(5 mins)**
- Move to **slide 14** and ask the students to think, individually, about the jobs they might like to do in the future. Are there any stereotypes attached to these jobs? If so, what are they? Ask them to feedback and share with the class. You may need to provide some examples of what we mean here; there are lots of stereotypes around jobs based on gender, for example:
 - "Boy" jobs might include firefighters, race car drivers and the army
 - "Girl" jobs might include hairdressers, cleaners and dancers.
 - All of these jobs (and many more) can be done by either boys or girls.
- If students are unsure or struggling to think about what they would like to do career wise ask them to think about what they are good at. They might be good at maths, sports, science, English, communicating with others or art. They might enjoy baking, playing video games, playing sports etc. Do they enjoy helping people or showing others how to do things?
- Are there stereotypes associated with any of these? Ask them to think where these beliefs might have come from. **(5 mins)**
- Thinking back to the earlier discussion, stereotypes can come from family members, from films/TV shows, from the internet, and so on. The world around us plays a huge role in continuing stereotypes. Equally, if you can't see yourself reflected in the world, you might struggle to overcome stereotypes, but that shouldn't stop you aspiring to be / do whatever you want.

Wrap up and reflection (10 mins)

- This part of the session is important for the students to think about.
- **(Slide 15)** Explain that although we have come a long way from beliefs about traditional job roles, stereotypes still exist in the world and workplace. Students may not see people that look like them or see people that they resonate with in the jobs they would like to pursue, but this does not mean it is not possible. It is important students have the awareness. **(5 mins)**
- Ask the students to think about **one thing** they will take away from the session. This might be learning about what a stereotype means, or understanding where they come from. It might have changed their own perceptions about what they can achieve when they are older and their own career aspirations.
- If you wish to evidence the learning from today's session, you could ask students to document some examples of common stereotypes to demonstrate their understanding. Students could also write down their key takeaways.
- Move to **slide 16**, ask if the students have any questions. **(5 mins)**

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