

# Social and Emotional Learning Resources: Teamwork

Here are several resources you can use to help practice teamwork. If you are a parent, you can help your child complete these activities at home. If you are a teacher, you can deliver these lessons to students in online classrooms. Remember that you can also take the time to complete these activities yourself.

- Differences in Perspectives Lesson
- Finding Common Ground: Positions vs. Interests Lesson
- Are All Oranges Alike? Lesson
- Service Project Lesson

We want to hear from you! If you use these lessons, we would like to know if you found them helpful and what else we can do to improve them for future use. To provide feedback, please visit the link below.

Link: [https://act.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV\\_0iczsfQOCwRE49n](https://act.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_0iczsfQOCwRE49n)

# Differences in Perspectives

**Objective:** To understand that people see the world differently.

**Background:** Perception is the ability to become aware of something through the use of our five senses. It is a way of seeing, understanding, and interpreting something to which we are exposed. Perspective is our point of view – our attitudes toward or thoughts about something. It can either be unique to us personally or shared by a group. Our perception of an object or event influences our perspective on it. Not everyone perceives things the same way, and therefore, people may develop different perspectives on the same objects, topics, or experiences.

Perspective taking is the act of viewing a situation from a point of view that is different from your own. It can entail understanding a concept from an opposing point of view. Perspective taking stems from Theory of Mind, which is an understanding of other people's mental states (their thoughts, feelings, motivations, and intentions). For more information on Theory of Mind, visit this site: <https://psychcentral.com/encyclopedia/theory-of-mind/>. Different people can see different things (in their sight of view, environment, resources available, etc.). Conversely, people can see the same exact things but view or experience them differently (as illustrated by the activity below).

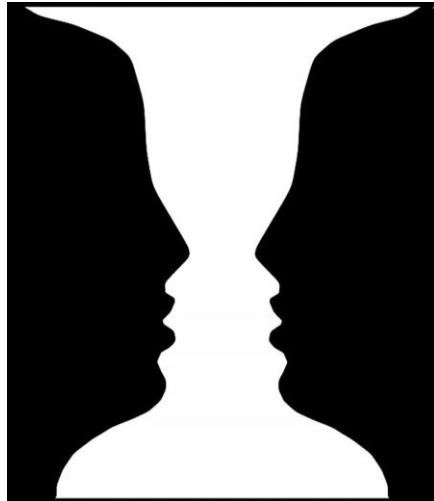
It is key to understand that an individual's knowledge about a topic is determined by his or her own observations and experiences of it. No two people have the exact same observations and experience; therefore, their perspectives may differ. People can adjust their knowledge and understanding of things based on new observations, information, or exposure.

## Activity:

### Part 1:

- Show the two images below to students and ask them what they see. In the first, do they see an old or a young woman? In the second, do they see two faces or a vase?
- Point out the two different ways to possibly perceive these images.
- Engage in a discussion about how students perceived the images and how someone else may have perceived them differently. Point out that although two people may have perceived the images differently, there is no right or wrong. Emphasize that people see

the world in different ways and therefore have different perspectives. Just because their perspective is different, does not mean they are wrong.



Part 2:

- Encourage students to think about the COVID-19 pandemic and how different people may perceive different aspects surrounding the pandemic differently and how individuals may be experiencing the pandemic differently. For example, if a close family member has the virus or if someone in the home has lost their job as a result, this may affect their perspective on it. Some example topics may include:
  - Some people think the federal, state, or local governments are handling the pandemic well, while others think they have failed.
  - Some people think the stay-at-home restrictions are too strict, while others think the current guidelines are too lenient.
  - Some people believe the pandemic is over-hyped, while others take the threat of the virus very seriously.

# Finding Common Ground: Positions vs. Interests

**Objective:** To think of ways to effectively resolve interpersonal conflict.

**Background:** We may sometimes find ourselves in conflict with others, such as parents, siblings, classmates, or friends. Conflicts may occur due to disagreeing with another person's position. A position is a particular answer to a question, a particular method of doing something, or a particular idea of the best solution to a problem. Typically, our positions are based on protecting our own interests. For example, if a student doesn't have a lot of extra money, her financial interests may lead her to taking the position that instead of the usual expensive prom venue, the school should hold an event somewhere more cost effective like the school gym. If a student wants to increase the likelihood of getting a starting position on the team (his interest), he may be in favor of limiting the team roster (his position). There are plenty of examples related to the COVID-19 pandemic as well. For example, some government officials may suggest keeping social distancing restrictions in place for much longer, while others may suggest reopening the economy immediately. These are different positions. However, both are driven by a common interest, which is to make Americans' lives as good as possible.

Having conflicting positions can prevent people from working together towards a common goal or interest. Clarifying another person's position and interest is a first step towards conflict resolution and reconciliation. Finding a way to honor both parties' interests is the ideal outcome.

**Activity:**

Have students read and complete the worksheet below.

Example 1: The Library

This is example from a well-known book called *Getting to Yes*. Imagine two students quarreling in a library. One wants the window open, but the other wants it closed. They bicker back and forth about how much to leave it open: a crack, halfway, three quarters of the way, etc. No solution satisfies them both. Enter the librarian. She asks one why he wants the window open, and he says, "To get some fresh air." She asks the other why he wants it closed, and he says, "To avoid the draft." After thinking a minute, she opens wide a window in the next room, bringing in fresh air without a draft.

1) What were the two students' *positions* during the argument?

Student 1:

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Student 2:

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2) What were the two students' *interests* during the argument?

Student 1: \_\_\_\_\_

Student 2: \_\_\_\_\_

3) How did the librarian resolve the conflict?

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Example 2: The Date

Let's take another example from the book *Negotiating Rationally*. Imagine that two students are going on a date. They are going to dinner and a movie. The boy wants to go to an Italian restaurant, but the girl wants to go to a Chinese restaurant. Also, the boy wants to see an action movie, but the girl wants to see a comedy.

1) What were the two students' *positions* during the argument?

Boy: \_\_\_\_\_

Girl: \_\_\_\_\_

2) Using what you've learned so far about positions versus interests, what are some possible ways to solve the conflict?

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Now let's imagine that you ask the boy and girl about their interests. Let's say that the boy says he's very interested in which restaurant they go to and doesn't care too much about the movie. Also, the girl says she's very interested in which movie they go to and doesn't care too much about the restaurant. Both of them value their relationship and want to have a good time together. They also both want to feel respected and want to feel that their position matters.

3) What were the two students' *interests* during the argument?

Boy: \_\_\_\_\_

Girl: \_\_\_\_\_

4) Now that you know this new information, what do you think is a good way to resolve the conflict? How can they use their common interest to find common ground?

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Example 3: Your Life

Think back to a conflict you have recently had with someone, and answer the following questions.

1) What was the conflict about? How did you resolve the conflict?

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2) What were your *positions* during the conflict?

You: \_\_\_\_\_

The other person: \_\_\_\_\_

3) What were your *interests* during the conflict?

You: \_\_\_\_\_

The other person: \_\_\_\_\_

4) Did you two have any common interests?

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5) Looking back, do you think you resolved the conflict well? Explain. If you did not, what could you have done differently to better resolve the conflict?

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# Are All Oranges Alike?

**Objective:** To become aware of how easily stereotyping can occur, despite the vast amount of diversity within cultural and racial groups.

**Materials:** This activity will require a bunch of oranges – as few as two will suffice if that is all that is available. If oranges are not available, use a different fruit or vegetable or something entirely different you can find in your house.

**Background:** A stereotype is an overgeneralized belief about a particular category of people. Stereotypes lead us to common expectations about everyone in a particular group. The categories of people vary widely and may be based on things like race or religion or on things like interests (e.g., “jocks” who are interested in sports vs. “nerds” who are interested in schoolwork). Moreover, stereotypes can be negative or positive. Assuming all members of a certain group are smart, for example, is a positive stereotype.

There may be some advantages to stereotyping. For example, if we find ourselves in a familiar situation, stereotypes enable us to respond or make decisions quickly, which may be beneficial. Simplifying our surroundings can help us process all the information we are confronted with at any given time. However, there are a multitude of disadvantages to stereotyping. They make us ignore individual differences and therefore may be incorrect. They can lead to social categorization, which can spur prejudiced attitudes.

An example of this has emerged due to COVID-19. The title of this article says it all: “For Asian Americans, there are two pandemics: COVID-19 and daily bigotry” ([https://www.huffpost.com/entry/asian-american-racism-coronavirus\\_1\\_5e790a71c5b63c3b64954eb4](https://www.huffpost.com/entry/asian-american-racism-coronavirus_1_5e790a71c5b63c3b64954eb4)). Since COVID-19 has spread throughout the world, many Chinese and Asian Americans are facing a great deal of scrutiny and racism. It is important for us to realize how easily stereotyping can occur and understand how we stereotype others even if we do so subconsciously.

## Activity:

If you have more than one student and are all together:

- Hand out one orange to each student. Give them a few moments to observe the orange and record as many unique characteristics as they can.
- Once students have observed and recorded notes about their oranges, collect the oranges back from your students and mix them up.
- Tell students that their task is to try to find their original orange. You can do this by passing around the oranges. This may be difficult, but give them a moment to try.



- When each student has an orange, begin a discussion that will allow them to process the activity. Some questions for discussion:
  - Was it hard to find your original orange? Why or why not?
  - Are all oranges alike?
  - Even though the oranges are all the same color and shape, are there distinguishing characteristics on individual oranges?
  - What about the inside of the oranges? Do you think that beneath their skin, each of the oranges is the same color, texture, or ripeness?
  - Have you ever made comments about a certain race, faith, gender, ability level, sexual preference, or culture, using a statement like, “All \_\_\_\_\_ look or act this way?”
  - What have you learned about making generalizations about people based on a single unifying characteristic?

If you have only one student or if you are meeting virtually with your students:

- Have the students gather at least two oranges. Give them a few moments to observe the orange and record as many unique characteristics as they can.
- Have the students close their eyes and mix up the oranges. Once they open their eyes, they should try to identify which orange is which.
- After the students have attempted to identify their oranges, begin a discussion that will allow them to process the activity. Some questions for discussion:
  - Was it hard to identify your oranges? Why or why not?
  - Are all oranges alike?
  - Even though the oranges are all the same color and shape, are there distinguishing characteristics on individual oranges?
  - What about the inside of the oranges? Do you think that beneath their skin, each of the oranges is the same color, texture, or ripeness?
  - Have you ever made comments about a certain race, faith, gender, ability level, sexual preference, or culture, using a statement like, “All \_\_\_\_\_ look or act this way?”
  - What have you learned about making generalizations about people based on a single unifying characteristic?

# Service Project

**Objective:** To engage in a service project to engage with others and build skills of perspective taking and empathy.

**Background:** Giving students the opportunity to engage hands-on with others in different contexts is a great way to build perspective taking and empathy. Students can complete a service project and then reflect on their experiences. Given the COVID-19 pandemic, now is an opportune time to try this.

**Activity:**

Brainstorm with students about ways you can help your community. Some ideas may be:

- Write letters to residents of a local nursing home
- Ask friends to drive by the outside of a hospital during a shift change to thank the hospital workers
- Make homemade masks and donate them to a local hospital
- Organize a social media movement to honor graduating seniors who will be missing prom, graduation, etc.

Afterwards, have students discuss how service contributes to the good of society. Have them answer the following questions:

- How was your experience?
- What did you think you knew before about the population you worked with, and then what did you learn after completing the service project?
- Did you enjoy your time spent working with these people? Do you think they felt the same way?
- How has this activity contributed to your own personal development of empathy? Sympathy?
- Analyze how different factors in your own life have influenced your perspective on the setting and activity.
- Consider the population(s) you worked with: has empathizing their perspective changed your own perspective of them?