



English Lesson Plans

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Accepting the other – Part I:

Theme: Prejudice and stereotyping

Class: 10th, 11th, 12th, (4- or 5-point students studying for the literature matriculation exam)

Objectives of activity:

- 1) Teaching the terms “stereotypes,” “prejudice” and “discrimination”;
- 2) Placing the story *Mr. Know-All* in a deeper antiracist context through making the connection between stereotypes/ prejudices and atrocities/ genocides. This aims at teaching students the serious consequences that stereotypes may lead to other than simply misjudging people;
- 3) Teaching or spiraling the HOTS (higher order thinking skill) of “making connections”.

Materials:

- 1) The story *Mr. Know-All* by Somerset Maugham¹;
- 2) Defining the terms “stereotypes,” “prejudice” and “discrimination”. (Teachers may wish to present these definitions using an overhead projector.)

Background:

The story Mr. Know-All deals with the way people judge the “other” based on stereotypes and prejudices, and how these stereotypes may cause us to hate certain people even before we get to know them. The story takes place on a ship in the middle of the Pacific Ocean during the time of the colonizing empire of Great Britain, and is told from the British narrator’s perspective. The main character is Mr. Kelada

¹ Maugham, W. Somerset, “Mr. Know-All”, *Collected Short Stories: Volume One* (1951). London: William Heinemann Ltd.; pp. 317-322



(referred to as Mr. Know-All) who is presented in the story as a Middle Eastern Levantine, to whom the narrator responds with great resentment and hatred at the first hearing of his name. The narrator expresses his prejudiced feeling towards Mr. Kelada at the very beginning of the story: “I was prepared to dislike Max Kelada before I knew him”. The conflict of the story is resolved when the narrator realizes that he has misjudged Mr. Kelada, who turns out to be sensitive, goodhearted, and a “true gentleman”. The message to be derived from reading this story is that we should not judge people based on preconceived ideas, and “never judge a book by its cover”.

Procedure:

1) First discussion: 5-10 minutes

- What are stereotypes?
- What is discrimination?

→ Students may give correct or incorrect answers. No corrections should be provided at this stage. The teacher simply writes down all the students' answers under each heading on the board.

2) Writing task: 10-15 minutes

Have your students write their reactions to the following statement (use any way you choose to present it):

All teenagers are lazy and irresponsible. They can't discuss serious matters or be trusted with important tasks.



→ Teachers may of course come up with any other statement that is a gross generalization, but they should avoid those that could cause controversy at this point.

Desired objectives:

- discussing a form of discrimination;
- bringing students together (especially if there is disagreement in the class).

QUESTIONS:

- How do you feel when you hear people say that all teenagers are lazy, irresponsible or shallow?
- Do you think such attitudes limit you as a young person? Do they influence the way other people relate to you? in what way might it influence you ?

→ The teacher collects the written tasks.



3) Teaching the terms “stereotype” and “prejudice” (10-15 minutes)

→ The teacher facilitates a discussion by eliciting students' responses and then asking questions such as:

- Is this statement true?
- What causes some people to form these ideas? (Possible answers: the media, stories, movies, songs, knowing teenagers who are like that...)
- What do we call the idea or image people have of others before they get to know them?

Answer: **STEREOTYPE**.

Definition (according to the Oxford Dictionary): “a widely held but fixed and oversimplified image or idea of a particular type of person or thing”

Example: A stereotype of “a woman as a caregiver”.

→ Ask students to give other examples of stereotypes.

Answer: pre – judging OR PREJUDICE

→ The teacher sums up the lesson by reviewing what was discussed and gives the students the following task for the next lesson:

1) Describe a time when you felt **discriminated against**?

2) Describe a time when you held a **prejudice** against someone else?

→ If the students do not wish to answer the questions about themselves, they should be given the opportunity to describe the personal experiences of someone else they know.



Accepting the other – Part II:

1) Discussing students' personal stories and teaching the correct uses of the term "discriminate" (10-15 minutes)

- The teacher facilitates a discussion by having students read out their experiences in class. Students may use the terms "discriminate"/ "discriminated"/ "discriminate against" incorrectly.
- Teach the students how to use these forms correctly:
 - ✓ "We discriminate against other people" and NOT "discriminate other people".
 - ✓ "We experience discrimination (ourselves)" OR "We are discriminated against" (the passive form).

2) Follow-up discussion (10-15 minutes)

- Encourage more students to share their experiences and correct any mistakes concerning the use of the terms "discriminate against" and "experience discrimination".

In order to encourage students to share a personal experience, you may wish to do the same.

- For example:

→ I was driving my car the other day when suddenly the man driving behind me passed my car, opened the window and shouted: "Can't you drive any faster, lady!" followed by "Women should not drive!" What this man did not apparently notice was that I was driving behind a police car.



→ Explain this incident thus: “I experienced discrimination because I was a woman” OR “I was discriminated against because I was a woman”.

Summarize this example: Some men may have prejudices about women drivers, and that may violate women’s rights.

3) Towards making the connection (15 minutes [continued in the following lesson])

→ Introduce the HOTS of “making connections”. (You may wish to teach this HOTS according to the various methodological options offered in *The Teacher’s Handbook* — published by the Ministry of Education — for integrating HOTS into the teaching of literature).

→ Tell students that when we judge people and/or label them based on their gender, race, ethnicity, abilities, country of origin, sexual preference, or any other distinctive feature, then WE ARE DISCRIMINATING AGAINST THESE PEOPLE.

Assignment for the next lesson: Ask students to read the notes you presented about the story *Mr. Know-All*. Divide the class into groups and ask each one to present information on one of the following topics:

- discrimination against Afro-Americans during different periods of American history.
- the Holocaust and Nazi ideology
- the Armenian Genocide
- the Sabra and Shateela Massacre
- legal inequality against women throughout European history

→ Teachers may choose other atrocities that were committed against humanity throughout history based on discrimination. They should choose whatever topic they feel comfortable with.