

Lesson 2

Perspectives and Pluralism



GUIDING QUESTIONS

- 1 Why do people perceive things in different ways?
- 2 Is pluralism important in a democracy?
- 3 What actions can I take to contribute to pluralism in society?

OVERVIEW

In democratic societies, people with different identities and perspectives must find ways to live together and work together for the common good.

In this lesson, students analyze how people may have different perceptions and perspectives of the same object, situation or issue. Next, students practice active listening while sharing their own perspectives about a particular topic and evaluate factors that influence their thinking. Afterwards, students discuss the concept of pluralism and the importance of diversity and inclusion in democratic society.

LEARNING INTENTIONS

By the end of this lesson, students will:

- explain how people can have different interpretations or perspectives about the same situation or issue;
- practice active listening while considering others' perspectives;
- evaluate the importance of pluralism in a democratic society; and,
- analyze the actions I can take to support diversity and inclusion.

Starter

What do you see? This hook activity uses optical illusions to show students that different people may have different perceptions of the same image, but it does not mean someone is right or wrong.

1. Explain to students that you are going to show them three images (Slide Deck 2) and they need to write down what they see first without discussing it with others.
2. Review the images again and invite students to share what they see. Informally poll the class on the options. Encourage students to see the opposite image compared to what they initially saw (Hint: By focusing on different elements of the image, you should be able to see different objects)
3. Debrief on the activity through a whole class discussion.

Key questions:

- Is there a “correct” way to see the images? Is someone right and someone else wrong?
- How did you feel towards people that saw the same image versus those who did not?
- Were you able to see the image differently once it was pointed it out?
- What is the main takeaway from this activity?

Activities

1. Review the meaning of perception and perspective. Suggested external resource: [“Perception vs Perspective”](#), *Genie Deez*.
 - **Perception** is our interpretation of something. It is the ability to see, hear or become aware of something using one of our senses. People perceive things differently. We choose to select different aspects of something to focus our attention based on what interests us, what is familiar to us, or what we consider important.
 - **Perspective** is the way we see something. It is our point of view. Our perspectives are shaped by who we are, as well as our environment and life experiences. For example, people living in different countries may have different priorities in life, based on their beliefs and perceptions of happiness.
2. Select a discussion topic from below and distribute copies of Activity 2.1. Provide students with a few minutes to write individual responses to the questions. The responses can be informal bullets.
 - Final exams should be abolished.
 - All Canadians should be required to vote.
 - Schools should eliminate dress codes.
 - It is important to spend money exploring space.

If this activity is being completed in a remote learning setting, consider using a tool such as Flipgrid, where students record video responses.

TEACHER NOTE

Flipgrid is a website that allows teachers to create “grids” to facilitate video discussions. Each grid is similar to a message board where teachers can pose questions, and their students can post video responses that appear in a tiled grid display.

3. Organize students into groups and have them share their responses to the discussion topic, as well as the influences on their thinking. Review tips for active listening prior to the group activity (Handout 2.2).
4. Debrief on the activity as a class.
 - Did listening to others’ perspectives influence your thinking about the topic?
 - Can you draw any connections between how people’s life influences and experiences have shaped their thinking on the topic? What are your thoughts on what lies beneath the surface?
5. Discuss the concept of pluralism. Is pluralism important in a democratic society?

Review:

- Pluralism is the idea that people of different beliefs, backgrounds, and lifestyles can coexist in the same society and participate equally in the political process.
- Disagreement can cause us to question our ideas and consider if our current way is the best way of thinking about a problem.
- Democratic societies strive to respect and engage with the voices of different groups. Those who are not in power must be allowed to organize and share their opinions.

Listen to young Canadians share their views on what pluralism means to them by watching the [“What is Pluralism?”](#) video by Inspirit Foundation. At minute 1:28, the speaker says, “I don’t think that tolerance and diversity are enough.”

Key questions:

- What did they mean? What does this mean to you?
- Organize students in groups for the activity. In the centre of chart paper, or on a digital platform such as Jamboard, write or type this statement in the centre. Give students 3 minutes to respond to the statement within their groups. Allow groups to share their key points with the class. Students will apply these ideas in the *Consolidation* activity.

Consolidation

Use a Circles of Action routine to close out the lesson. This routine is designed to foster students' feelings and motivations towards taking responsible action.

Based on what I learned about pluralism, what can I do to contribute...

- In my inner circle (of friends, family, the people I know)?
- In my community (my school, my neighborhood)?
- In the world (beyond my immediate environment)

ADAPTATIONS AND SUPPORTS

Language Learners	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provide students with terms and definitions in advance.• Share the lesson videos before class discussions and activities.• Ensure that subtitles are on during videos.
Culturally Responsive Pedagogy	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Students will come from different backgrounds and may have different opinions on democracy.• Ensuring a safe place for respectful discussion and diverse viewpoints is encouraged.• Discuss the systemic barriers to democratic participation faced by First Nations peoples, and other diverse cultural groups.
Accommodations & Accessibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• If working in pairs or small groups in the classroom is not possible, consider using Google Docs or Google Jamboard for collaborative activities and discussion.

