

# Stereotypes

## Tasks

1. Introduce this activity by explaining that over-generalisations sometimes become fixed in our minds and even though we may discover facts to support the contrary, we still hold on to them. Explain that these fixed over-generalisations, typically when they are applied to people, are called "stereotypes".
2. Ask students to complete [Handout 14: Stereotype/fact test \[PDF\]](#) and identify which of the statements they think might be stereotypes. This may be done as a whole class, small group or individual activity.
3. Ask students to form small groups of three or four. Distribute pictures of different people to groups giving each group a different picture. Ask students to write a brief description about what they think the people in the picture are like in real life. Then ask each group to report to the class what they think about the people in their picture.
4. When all groups have reported to the class, lead a class discussion on how we can decide what a person is like before we know them. Examples for discussion starters include:
  - Is a tough looking person always tough underneath?
  - Is a person who looks kind and good always so?
  - Are people who wear glasses always intelligent? etc.Conclude by discussing how stereotypes can lead us to pre-judge and even misjudge others.

## Teacher notes

1. Where this activity is used in isolation, teachers will need to spend more time introducing the terms "over-generalisation" and "stereotype".
2. Note that by their very nature, the stereotypes in [Handout 14: Stereotype/fact test \[PDF\]](#) may be offensive to some groups. Teachers may modify this handout as required.
3. Ensure that students use appropriate language when describing pictures of different groups of people.
4. This activity is based on the activity *Stereotype and Fact* in SHIMAN, David A. *The Prejudice Book: Activities for the Classroom*, Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith, 1988

## Handout 14: Stereotype/fact test

Read the questions below and mark with an 'S' for **STEREOTYPE** if you think the statement is a stereotype or mark with an 'F' for **FACT** if you think the statement is a fact.

1. All Australians play sport.
2. Most people over 65 years of age are no longer working.
3. Politicians are dishonest and can't be trusted.
4. Americans are rich.
5. People are poor because they are lazy and don't want to work.
6. The Australian Government is run mainly by men.
7. Chinese students are smarter than other students.
8. People in wheelchairs can't play sports like basketball.
9. Australia is a very wealthy country with a lot of natural resources.
10. Vietnamese people most commonly work in bread shops.
11. Fat people are jolly.
12. Boys are braver than girls.
13. Africa is a continent of jungles and rain forests.
14. Greeks most commonly work in milk bars and fish shops.
15. All Aboriginal people are good at art.