



Diversity

Materials:

- Worksheet

Brainstorm

Ask students: What's the definition of "diversity"? You cannot use the words "race" or "color". Accept students' responses.

Discuss

Oftentimes when we think about the word "diversity" we think of racial and cultural differences. But **diversity** really means being different, and there are many ways that people are different. These differences include race and culture, but also gender, age, family structure, education, religion, sexual orientation, life experiences, and socioeconomic differences. Diversity can also include differences in the ways that we think about things—our opinions, values, and interests. Every person can find ways that they are similar to and different from others. Sometimes we tend to look for people who are similar to us, but recognizing our own uniqueness and appreciating diversity is important for creating inclusive environments to live, go to school, and work in. Inclusion means to bring people into a group, and feeling like part of a group is important for the well-being of all of us. Have you ever felt excluded? How did it feel? Allow students ample time to respond to the question and continue the discussion as long as it's productive and remains on topic.

Dive in!

Continue: Being different is an asset. Can you think of a time when you learned something from someone who was different from you? Accept students' responses. There are many benefits to being around people that are different from you. In addition to being able to learn something different, it prepares you for life after you graduate from high school. Let's take a look at some quotes about the benefits of diversity.

- Diversity is about all of us and about us having to figure out how to walk through this world together. ~ Jacqueline Woodson, author
- When we listen and celebrate what is both common and different, we become a wiser, more inclusive, and better organization. ~ Pat Wadors, business executive



High School

- Inclusivity means not ‘just we’re allowed to be there,’ but we are valued. I’ve always said: smart teams will do amazing things, but truly diverse teams will do impossible things.
~ Claudia Brind-Woody, business executive

Activity

For this activity, you should try to pair students that don’t know each other together. Explain: Today, I am going to create student pairs. You’ll each take turns interviewing each other. As you get to know each other, I’m going to ask you to take the inclusion challenge. First, find three new facts about your partner. Next, find 2 areas in which you have similarities. This can be a shared belief or the number of siblings you both have. Then, find one area in which you are different. Investigate how that difference is an asset. Take the time to get to know your partner because you’ll have to introduce them to the class using the information you’ve learned. As students work through this activity, circulate around the room assisting as needed. Make sure to leave time for students to complete their presentations at the end.

Extend and Enrich

Students can write newspaper stories about their partner or create video/multimedia presentations.

Reflect

Ask students to respond to the Reflect question verbally: What are the benefits of collaborating with a group of diverse people or living in a diverse community?

Optional Home Connection → Encourage students to interview other diverse people in the community to discover their assets.

Professional Development

Take 5 minutes and reflect on how you embrace and welcome diversity in your classroom community. In this an area in which you’d like to improve? How?



High School

For Further Study

- Common Sense Media: Diversity, Equity, and Inclusivity Resources for the Classroom
<https://www.commonsense.org/education/top-picks/diversity-equity-and-inclusivity-resources-for-classrooms>
- Learning for Justice: Lesson Plans for Exploring Identity and Diversity
<https://www.learningforjustice.org/topics>
- 52 Essential Questions to Inspire Children for Life: Podcast topics include talking to students about inclusion, race, gender, and more.
<https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/52-essential-conversations-to-inspire-children/id1418151997>