



## Combating Conflict with Character

# OVERCOMING PREJUDICE

### Introduction

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This guide provides information to help you get the most out of *Overcoming Prejudice*. The contents of this guide will help you get your students to think about the topic before viewing the video, while also providing follow-up discussion questions and activities to reinforce and expand upon the program's key learning points.

Prejudice isn't something we're born with — and if we learn it, we can unlearn it. The first step in that process is to study it objectively, as this video does through candid interviews, dramatizations, and expert commentary. Offering a practical definition of prejudice, the video explores its basis in ignorance and fear of outsiders, the qualities it most frequently targets (race, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, gender, physique, social class, and political beliefs) as well as its principal results — namely, discrimination, racism, and oppression. The program focuses in a teen-friendly way on prejudice in American society, with discussions of the “melting pot” concept; how such diversity, while unquestionably desirable, carries with it the potential for racial, ethnic, and cultural conflict; and how individuals, communities, and our nation can benefit from more dialog between cultures, religions, races, and other demographic groups.

### Learning Objectives

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After viewing the program, students will be able to:

- Describe various forms of prejudice, and how those forms manifest in actions and words.
- Explain how prejudice is learned and passed from generation to generation, person to person.
- Know how stereotypes and prejudice hurt people.
- Explain how prejudice is fed by fear, ignorance, and apathy.
- Practice strategies for respecting and appreciating differences and overcoming prejudice.

## Program Overview

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Where does prejudice come from? How does it affect us? How can you deal with it? Prejudices are born out of fear of the unfamiliar, or of people or groups who are not “like us.” The underlying theme of this program, “There are no sides in a round world” reminds us that learning about and respecting differences in others is the first step to fighting prejudice.

## Main Topics

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### Topic 1: What is Prejudice?

Prejudice is pre-judging someone without a valid reason. Opinions of people are often fed by judgments such as “This person is not like me” and “My group is better than any other.” This section takes a look at some common prejudices and why it is important to learn to accept differences.

### Topic 2: The Many Faces of Prejudice

This section talks about how prejudice hurts people using the acronym DISEASE to illustrate some of the common forms of prejudice. Prejudice is learned and grows through words, behaviors, and actions that reinforce biased views. But just as prejudice is learned, it can be unlearned.

### Topic 3: How and Why Prejudice Hurts

This section discusses implicit prejudice, illustrating how subtle words and nonverbal communication can exclude others and make the victims feel they don't matter. Examples of explicit prejudice, which is openly expressed and directly harmful, are also discussed. Strategies are provided for overcoming prejudices by suspending judgment and being open.

### Topic 4: What to Do If You're a Victim of Prejudice

This section talks about steps you can take if you feel others are unfairly or negatively pre-judging you. Handling prejudice can be uncomfortable, but talking about how you feel and discussing differences directly and openly can help change the situation and combat apathy.

### Topic 5: Changing the Game: Bridging the Gaps of Prejudice in Your School

Prejudice is fed by fear, ignorance and apathy. Stepping up and taking responsibility when something wrong is happening can help prevent prejudice from becoming ingrained in school culture. Strategies for creating positive change embracing differences are discussed in this section.

## Fast Facts

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- The victim of a hate crime may be an individual, a business, an institution, or an entire society.
- A National Institute of Child Health and Human Development study on teens and friendship revealed that a teen is twice as likely to choose a person of the same race as a friend over someone from a different racial group.
- The 2007 Indicators of School Crime and Safety Report conducted jointly by the U.S. Departments of Education and Justice found that 11% of students aged 12-18 reported hearing hate-related words, 38% saw hate-related graffiti, and 1% reported that the hate-related words were about a disability or sexual orientation.
- In a poll conducted in 2005 by Harris Interactive and the Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network (GLSEN), 60% of students aged 13-18 had been verbally or physically harassed or assaulted during the past school year because of their real or perceived ethnicity, disability, gender, sexual orientation, gender expression, or religion.
- Explicit prejudice manifests itself in direct behavior and action. For example, someone using an overt racial slur to verbally insult someone else is one way people demonstrate explicit prejudice.
- Implicit prejudice is implied behavior that is not necessarily obvious. Rather, it is a general attitude or opinion that affects behavior indirectly.
- It's illegal to exclude or treat people unfairly based on race, religion, gender, a disability, or sexual preference. This holds true for jobs, housing, bank loans, educational opportunities, social events, access to public facilities, places, and transportation, and even clubs and sports teams.
- According to the U.S Department of Justice Hate Crime Statistics, 48.5% of hate crimes committed in 2009 were motivated by racial bias. Almost 20% were motivated by religious bias.

## Vocabulary Terms

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**apathy:** A state where people see something they disagree with or they think is wrong, but they don't do anything about it because they have the attitude that "it really doesn't matter anyway."

**character:** Moral or ethical strength.

**clique:** A narrow exclusive circle or group of people.

**defamation:** Saying or writing false, negative things about a person or people.

**discrimination:** Making judgments or taking action based on perceived traits or differences, such as race, social class, gender, ethnicity, religion, political beliefs, or sexual orientation.

**ethnocentrism:** Viewing one's own group as the definition of normal.

**exclusion:** Denying someone membership in a group, or keeping someone out of an activity, club, or event.

**prejudice:** A form of judgment without a valid reason; usually a negative attitude toward an individual or members of a distinct group.

**scapegoating:** Laying false blame on an easy target, especially when that target is of a different class, race, religion, etc.

**self-esteem:** A confidence and satisfaction in oneself.

**stereotype:** A standardized mental picture that is held in common by members of a group and that represents an oversimplified opinion, prejudiced attitude, or uncritical judgment.

**tolerance:** A fair, objective, and permissive attitude toward opinions and practices that differ from one's own.

## **Pre-Program Discussion Questions**

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1. Where do stereotypes come from?
2. What role do stereotypes play in prejudice?
3. What kinds of prejudice are you aware of?
4. What are some of the reasons people form prejudices?
5. In what ways does prejudice impact victims, the actor, and society as a whole?

## **Post Program Discussion Questions**

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1. What effect do you think the media has on stereotypes, prejudice, and how we act toward other people?
2. In what ways does prejudice exist in your school community?
3. How might someone unknowingly form or contribute to prejudice?
4. As a bystander, what can you do to overcome prejudice?
5. What can you do to prepare yourself to deal with and overcome prejudice?

## Group Activities

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- **No Sides in a Round World:** Work in small groups to create a public service announcement or commercial that illustrates the value of seeing each person as a unique individual. Use at least two visual aids. Perform the commercial for the larger group.
- **Zero Tolerance for Intolerance:** Create an action plan to help your fellow students develop more empathy and tolerance toward one another. Begin by developing a list describing what the worst school environment would be like. Then, create a second list for the ideal, tolerant school environment. What ground rules can you agree upon? What activities could you do to encourage this? What strategies can help achieve this goal?

## Individual Student Projects

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- **Get the Picture:** Design a poster that symbolizes prejudice and reminds your classmates to show understanding and embrace individual differences. What images and words best convey what this means to you?
- **A Mile in My Shoes:** Imagine that you are a completely different person (racially, socioeconomically, physically, etc). Write a series of fictitious journal entries from this alternative view point. As this “new” person, what is a day in your life like? What challenges do you face? What are you doing to contribute to or overcome prejudice? As you write the entries, consider how your own prejudices or stereotypes might influence what you write in this journal. What are the sources of these prejudices and what can you do to overcome them?

## Internet Activities

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- **Interpreting Impact:** Use the internet to find a poem, song, or scene in a story and summarize how it portrays prejudice.
- **Little Rock Nine:** Research the “Little Rock Nine” and how this small group of students withstood fierce opposition to pursue their education. Write a short essay explaining the events of this turning point in American history.

## Assessment Questions

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- Q1:** The most effective way for a bystander to stop prejudicial behavior is to \_\_\_\_\_.
- a) walk away from the situation
  - b) go along with it so that they don't become victims themselves
  - c) let the perpetrators know their behavior isn't tolerated
  - d) hang around with friends who don't do that kind of thing
- Q2:** True or False: Bullying stems from seeing someone as different — and using those differences to hurt that person.
- a) True
  - b) False
- Q3:** Which of the following is an example of prejudice?
- a) Forcing someone to do something dangerous in order to join a club
  - b) Excluding someone because of a perceived sexual preference
  - c) Giving someone the “silent treatment”
  - d) Assuming someone's online identity and embarrassing them
- Q4:** True or False: Girls are more likely to be the victim of prejudice than boys.
- a) True
  - b) False
- Q5:** Respecting differences includes tolerance of which of the following? (Choose all that apply)
- a) Race
  - b) Religion
  - c) Body type
  - d) a and c
  - e) All of the above
- Q6:** The best way to deal with prejudice is to \_\_\_\_\_.
- a) know how and when to say how you feel, and then walk away
  - b) try harder to convince the person to include you in her group
  - c) teach the person a lesson
  - d) become aggressive so that the person doesn't think you are weak
- Q7:** Which of the following is NOT an effective way to handle prejudice?
- a) Learn about differences
  - b) Convey confidence and stand up for yourself
  - c) Communicate openly to understand perceptions
  - d) Isolate yourself until it stops

**Q8:** \_\_\_\_\_ is when people see something they disagree with or that they think is wrong, but they don't do anything about it.

- a) Unity
- b) Apathy
- c) Cooperation
- d) Prejudice

**Q9:** Calling someone a liar and a cheater because you don't like their race is called \_\_\_\_\_.

- a) conflict resolution
- b) justice
- c) character
- d) defamation

**Q10:** True or False: "All Irish people drink too much alcohol" is an example of a stereotype.

- a) True
- b) False

## Assessment Questions Answer Key

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**Q1:** The most effective way for a bystander to stop prejudicial behavior is to \_\_\_\_\_.

- a) walk away from the situation
- b) go along with it so that they don't become victims themselves
- c) let the perpetrators know their behavior isn't tolerated
- d) hang around with friends who don't do that kind of thing

**A1:** c)

**Feedback:** When bystanders do nothing, it allows the behavior to continue and may influence others to adopt the same attitudes and behaviors.

**Q2:** True or False: Bullying stems from seeing someone as different — and using those differences to hurt that person.

- a) True
- b) False

**A2:** a)

**Feedback:** It's often called prejudice, and prejudice is a result of ignorance — not understanding or fearing something or someone that's unfamiliar.

**Q3:** Which of the following is an example of prejudice?

- a) Forcing someone to do something dangerous in order to join a club
- b) Excluding someone because of a perceived sexual preference
- c) Giving someone the "silent treatment"
- d) Assuming someone's online identity and embarrassing them

**A3:** b)

**Feedback:** Prejudice involves forming a judgment without a valid reason — usually a negative attitude toward an individual or members of a distinct group.

**Q4:** True or False: Girls are more likely to be the victim of prejudice than boys.

- a) True
- b) False

**A4:** b)

**Feedback:** Anyone can be the target of prejudice. Prejudice occurs when a person doesn't accept someone who they perceive to be different.

**Q5:** Respecting differences includes tolerance of which of the following? (Choose all that apply)

- a) Race
- b) Religion
- c) Body type
- d) a and c
- e) All of the above

**A5:** e)



**Feedback:** Tolerance means respecting differences of any kind, whatever they may be.

**Q6:** The best way to deal with prejudice is to \_\_\_\_\_.

- a) know how and when to say how you feel, and then walk away
- b) try harder to convince the person to include you in her group
- c) teach the person a lesson
- d) become aggressive so that the person doesn't think you are weak

**A6:** a)

**Feedback:** To handle prejudice, stay cool, be confident, stand up straight, say what you have to say, and then walk away.

**Q7:** Which of the following is NOT an effective way to handle prejudice?

- a) Learn about differences
- b) Convey confidence and stand up for yourself
- c) Communicate openly to understand perceptions
- d) Isolate yourself until it stops

**A7:** d)

**Feedback:** When the victim gives in or tries to ignore the situation, the perpetrator(s) often increase the level of abuse in order to gain more power and control.

**Q8:** \_\_\_\_\_ is when people see something they disagree with or that they think is wrong, but they don't do anything about it.

- a) Unity
- b) Apathy
- c) Cooperation
- d) Prejudice

**A8:** b)

**Feedback:** When a situation is ignored even though observers know it is wrong, this is called apathy.

**Q9:** Calling someone a liar and a cheater because you don't like their race is a called \_\_\_\_\_.

- a) conflict resolution
- b) justice
- c) character
- d) defamation

**A9:** d)

**Feedback:** Defamation is saying or writing false, negative things about a person or people.

**Q10:** True or False: "All Irish people drink too much alcohol" is an example of a stereotype.

**A10:** a) True

**Feedback:** A stereotype is a standardized mental picture that is held in common by members of a group and that represents an oversimplified opinion, prejudiced attitude, or uncritical judgment.

## **Additional Resources**

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**American Psychological Association (APA)**

[www.apa.org](http://www.apa.org)

**Do Something.org**

[www.dosomething.org](http://www.dosomething.org)

**National Crime Prevention Council**

[www.ncpc.org](http://www.ncpc.org)

**Nemours Foundation TeensHealth.org**

[www.kidshealth.org](http://www.kidshealth.org)

**Jane Elliott's Blue Eyes/Brown Eyes Exercise**

[www.janeelliott.com](http://www.janeelliott.com)

**Teaching Tolerance: a Project of the Southern Poverty Law Center**

[www.tolerance.org](http://www.tolerance.org)

**Little Rock Nine Foundation**

[www.littlerock9.com](http://www.littlerock9.com)

## **Order from [www.CambridgeEducational.com](http://www.CambridgeEducational.com) • 1-800-257-5126**

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**Anatomy of Prejudice: Jane Elliott's Seminar on Race**

She may be an overzealous crusader. She may be on a power trip. Then again, maybe Jane Elliott has pioneered a truly honest and viable way to talk about racial prejudice — a way in which white people and people of color can explore the subject together. This program documents one of Elliott's diversity training seminars, modeled on an experiment she first conducted as a third-grade teacher in 1968. In the film, British citizens of varied racial and cultural backgrounds are separated into brown-eyed "superiors" and blue-eyed "inferiors." Before the day is over, a handful will have stormed out and the remaining group will face painful truths and equally painful opinions about race in the 21st century. (48 minutes) © 2009

**Confronting Discrimination and Prejudice**

Encourage students to explore biases and stereotypes with this group of ABC News segments. Each scenario puts actors into exchanges with unwitting bystanders, generating a wide range of responses — from overt hostility towards other races and cultures to acts of genuine compassion. Scenes include a bakery clerk's refusal to serve a Muslim woman wearing a headscarf; cruelty towards an overweight woman seated on a boardwalk; a very public argument that threatens to become violent;

and a purse-snatching in a crowded square, after which witnesses are asked to view a suspect lineup. Repeating the two latter situations, producers achieve varying reactions among onlookers by switching the races of the actors. (37 minutes) © 2008

**Prom Night in Taylor County, Georgia: Separate and Equal?**

Breaking with the tacit practice of separate, student-sponsored proms, teens at a racially diverse high school in Georgia recently tried having only one dance, for all students. One year later they scrapped the idea. Is this a black-and-white case of racism, or is it somehow grayer than that? In this ABC News program, anchor Chris Bury and correspondent Jim Wooten give a balanced report on attitudes toward race in Taylor County as they play out in the halls of learning. How do parallel proms, class presidents, and cheerleading squads reconcile with an otherwise multiracial student body and consolidated, title-winning sports teams? (22 minutes) © 2003

**Prejudice: More Than Black and White**

Muslims, blacks, gays, people with disabilities, and immigrants of every ethnicity and color: they and many other groups have stood in the spotlight glare of intolerance, easy targets for every sort of discrimination and violence. What makes people prone to irrational hate, and what steps can individuals and society take to eradicate it? In this program, psychology professors Susan Fiske, of Princeton University, and Mahzarin Banaji, of Harvard University; representatives of the Council on American-Islamic Relations and other pro-tolerance groups; and victims of prejudice share their insights and experiences. A pro-gay Baptist minister who formerly took a biblical stance against homosexuality and an ex-Imperial Wizard of the Ku Klux Klan who now speaks out for tolerance also offer their views. Contains inflammatory language and images. Recommended for grades 9-college. A Films for the Humanities & Sciences Production. (35 minutes) ©2008