

ACTIVITY 2: CELEBRITY LINE-UP

What you will need to complete this activity:

- Handout 1 (i) and (ii): one copy of each
- A list of celebrities
- Handout 3: one per group

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES



Place Handout 1(i) and 1(ii) on a wall on opposite sides of the room.

Prepare a list of celebrities with different body shapes.

Get the class to line up in the middle of the room.

Ask the students to think of the body shape of the person you read out.

Students then move to either side of the room depending on whether they feel the body shape is a “thumbs up” or “thumbs down” one.

After each value judgment, ask students to give reasons for their selection.

Explore the following questions:

- Where do you get the idea that some body shapes are better than others?
- Who tells you that a body shape is an “up or a down?”
- Is it a realistic way of looking at people?
- Does a body shape tell you anything about the person?



Dolly did it!

Choose a popular female or male doll such as Barbie and Ken.

Ask the students to draw and describe the doll selected.

- How do these dolls reinforce popular stereotypes about body shapes?
- If these dolls were enlarged to life size, how realistic would their body shapes be? Explain.

Ask the students to reflect on what they have done.

TEACHER NOTES

Celebrities could include:

- Elle Macpherson
- Roseanne
- Santa Claus
- Jean-Claude Van Damme
- Tom Cruise
- Kate Moss
- Kieren Perkins
- Cathy Freeman

Ensure that you use celebrities that your class will recognise and relate to. Also make sure you include a wide range of body shapes.

You may find that students will start to bring in other aspects such as personality, fame, athletic skills, or the fact that the person is a “good” person. The focus will not be solely on the shape of the body. Highlight this important point in your debriefing.

This activity reinforces the everyday stereotypical images that students are exposed to. The messages they subtly receive through toys, gifts and the media impact significantly on their perceptions of ideal body images and shapes.

An interesting extension activity is to take the actual measurements of a Ken and Barbie doll and then work out what their measurements would be if the dolls were life size.

THINGS TO CONSIDER

Girls are more likely to show acceptance of what represents a stereotypical body shape. However, they are also more likely to support the idea that personality is more important than looks.

Because girls tend to emphasise personality over looks, boys can get away with a wider range of physical variation from an ideal male body shape.