

LESSON PLAN

Learn how people form biases, how they can overcome them, and how they can help others do the same.

Youth explore how they internalize and form biases and how they can work to overcome such biases. Through activities, media resources, and authentic global youth stories, youth learn to reflect on their own assumptions, explore the biases they encounter in their communities and in the media, and create an action plan for addressing such biases in themselves and others.



About Global Nomads Group

For over 25 years, Global Nomads Group has leveraged technology to host digital safe spaces for young people around the world to share their stories, challenge assumptions, engage with and learn from each other, and, by doing so, foster a more just world.

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Objectives

By the end of this module, students will be able to:

1. Consider the aspects they pay attention to when they meet a new person.
2. Learn the differences between selection bias and confirmation bias.
3. Learn about the Ladder of Inference and explore the ways they go up the Ladder of Inference.
4. Tell a story about a time when they made an assumption about someone based on the information they chose to focus on, that they later realized was wrong.

Introduction

- Begin the module by asking students to reflect on the saying, “Don’t judge a book by its cover.” Discuss why it’s challenging to follow this advice and why we often judge people based on their outward appearance.
- Share the images and descriptions provided in the lesson plan, asking students what they notice about the people in the images. Encourage them to consider what information they focus on and why.

Biases and Selection Bias

- Discuss the concept of biases and their influence on how we perceive and judge others.
- Ask students to reflect on what they pay attention to when meeting a new person, such as clothing, skin color, facial features, body type, hairstyle, etc. Discuss why they think their focus goes where it does.
- Prompt a discussion on what meanings they give to these external features and what they have been taught about them.
- Let students highlight that biases are often learned from society and can lead to unfair or uninformed judgments.

Selection Bias and Information Processing

- Explain the concept of selection bias, which refers to the biased selection of certain information over others when meeting new people.
- Share the statistic that the human brain receives 11 million pieces of information per second but can only process about 50 at a time.

Confirmation Bias

- Introduce the concept of confirmation bias, which refers to our tendency to seek information that confirms our existing beliefs.
- Discuss how confirmation bias works and how it can limit our understanding of the world by filtering out conflicting or challenging information.
- Emphasize the importance of being aware of confirmation bias and its potential impact on our judgments and decision-making processes.

The Ladder of Inference

- Introduce the Ladder of Inference as an analytical tool for understanding how we form beliefs and take action based on biases.
- Display the graphic of the Ladder of Inference and explain each rung, starting from the “Pool of Available Data” at the bottom to “Select Data”, “Assumptions”, “Conclusions”, “Beliefs”, and, finally, “Action” at the top.
- Show the suggested video that discusses the Ladder of Inference and its application to understanding biases.
- Encourage students to reflect on how biases can shape their thinking and actions.

Reflection and Discussion

- Ask students to share a personal story of a time when they made an assumption about someone based on the information they chose to focus on according to the Ladder of Inference, but later realized it was wrong.

- Prompt them to explain how they went up the Ladder of Inference, starting from selecting data, making assumptions, drawing conclusions, forming beliefs, and taking action.
- Encourage them to reflect on what they were taught that influenced their thinking and how they came to realize their thinking was wrong.
- Facilitate a discussion where students can share their stories and insights.
- Emphasize the importance of challenging biases, seeking diverse perspectives, and being open to reconsidering assumptions.

Conclusion

- Summarize the key points discussed in the module, including biases, selection bias, confirmation bias, and the Ladder of Inference.
- Encourage students to reflect on how they can become more aware of their biases, challenge them, and strive for fair and informed judgments when interacting with others.
- Conclude the module by emphasizing the importance of empathy, understanding, and open-mindedness in building positive relationships and a more inclusive society.

Explore

Show the students the map, and explore the stories, articles, and videos that have been provided by their global peers. Ask the youth to pick their top three stories, and share them with their peers.

Share

Students will answer the following prompts:

1. Think of a time when you made an assumption about someone based on the information you chose to focus on, that you later realized was wrong.

2. Consider how you went up the Ladder of Inference, selected data, made assumptions, drew conclusions, formed beliefs, and took action regarding this person.
3. Reflect on the things you were taught that influenced your thinking.

At the end of their stories, students should mention 2-4 stories and resources they've explored and would recommend to their global peers.

Objectives

By the end of this module, students will be able to:

1. Consider who they frequently come into contact with in their local communities and who they've been taught to trust and fear.
2. Complete the "How Diverse is Your Universe?" activity.
3. Learn about implicit biases.
4. Write a story about a specific moment where something they learned challenged their bias about someone who is different from them.

Introduction

- Start the module by discussing the concept of trust and fear.
- Ask students to reflect on their childhood experiences and the lessons they were taught about who to fear and who to trust.
- Show the GIF of people walking on a sidewalk and ask students to observe the diversity in the image.
- Prompt a brief discussion on the differences they notice, such as clothing, hairstyles, gender identity, age, eye color, and skin color.

Local Community Reflection

- Guide students to think about their own local community and how their trust and fear connect to it.
- Pose questions about personal connections to the groups they were taught to fear and trust.
- Ask students to consider how knowing or not knowing people from these groups shapes their beliefs and interactions.
- Use the provided examples of various situations (getting lost, crowded bus, broken wrist, studying in a cafe, phone mishap) to explore the personal attributes they would look for in someone from different groups.

Diversity and Biases

- Introduce the video of Antonella and Ezgi reflecting on the diversity of their communities. Watch the video together as a class or let students watch it individually or in pairs, whatever works best for the class environment
- Lead a discussion on who Antonella and Ezgi had contact with and who they had no contact with in their communities. Explore how the diversity of their communities affects their biases and perceptions of different groups.
- Prompt students to consider if biases about groups they haven't had contact with would be fair or accurate.
- Discuss how the diversity of their community shapes their understanding of the world.

Activity: How Diverse is Your Universe?

- Explain the “How Diverse in Your Universe?” activity to students, where they will use colored items to represent their race/ethnicity and the race/ethnicity of various people in their lives.
- Provide the color chart or project it onto the board and guide students through each question, allowing them to select the corresponding colored items and put them in a jar
- Encourage students to take a photo of their completed jar, as they will need it for later reflection.

Students can also complete this activity using this link: [Fill up your jar activity link](https://gng.org/how-diverse-is-your-universe/) (<https://gng.org/how-diverse-is-your-universe/>)

Reflection on Community and Biases

- Use the provided reflection questions to guide students in analyzing their local community and the biases they may have learned.
- Ask students if their visual representations matched their expectations and what their jar reveals about their biases.

- Prompt students to reflect on how their biases might be shaped by what they see and how they can make an effort to have contact with people who are different from them.

Implicit Bias and Unlearning

- Introduce the concept of implicit bias and explain that these biases are learned involuntarily and at a subconscious level.
- Discuss the importance of recognizing implicit biases and their impact on our understanding of reality and fair representations of people.
- Explain that biases can be unlearned through active efforts, such as getting to know people who are different from us.
- Discuss the Intergroup Contact Theory and how connecting with people from different groups can help unlearn biases by replacing them with new understandings.
- Emphasize the significance of having open minds, actively seeking information that challenges biases, and avoiding reliance on information that confirms existing beliefs.

Conclusion

- Summarize the key points discussed in the module, including the influence of biases on trust and fear, the impact of community diversity on biases, and the significance of recognizing and unlearning implicit biases.
- Encourage students to reflect on their own readiness to unlearn biases and consider strategies for seeking new perspectives and initiating meaningful contact with diverse individuals.
- Conclude the module by highlighting the importance of empathy, respect, and open-mindedness in creating a more inclusive and unbiased society.

Explore

Show the students the map, and explore the stories, articles, and videos that have been provided by their global peers. Ask the youth to pick their top three stories, and share them with their peers.

Share

Students will answer the following prompts:

1. Think about the picture you took from the “How Diverse is Your Universe” activity.
2. Consider your community’s diversity and the biases that may result from that.
3. Share your own story about a specific moment where something you learned challenged your bias about someone who is different than you.
4. Be sure to make a connection between your community’s diversity and the story you are telling.
5. Don’t forget to upload a picture of your jar.

At the end of their stories, students should mention 2-4 stories and resources they’ve explored and would recommend to their global peers.

Objectives

By the end of this module, students will be able to:

1. Consider media representation and the media's influences on their everyday lives.
2. Examine media bias and the ways that it can influence their perceptions of others.
3. Find a news article or other piece of media about another country.
4. Write a script of an imagined conversation between them and someone from another country.

Introduction

- Begin the module by asking students to close their eyes and imagine a person living in a different part of the world. Prompt them with questions about the person's appearance, behavior, similarities, and differences.
- Show the GIF of the world map and discuss how our ideas about people from faraway places are often influenced by the media.

Media Influences

- Define media and explain that it includes various forms of communication, such as newspapers, magazines, social media, movies, etc.
- Show images of different media sources and ask students to identify the media they encounter in their everyday lives.
- Facilitate a discussion on the diversity of media sources and how they shape our beliefs and understanding of the world.

Understanding Media Bias

- Introduce the concept of media bias and its influence on our perspectives.
- Show the images of newspaper headlines about a pitbull and discuss how the same photo can be presented with different headlines to shape readers' opinions.

- Explain that media outlets often cater to specific audiences and promote certain beliefs, leading to biased representations of events and people.

Tools of Media Bias

- Discuss the tools media outlets use to influence biases, such as agenda setting, framing, and cultivation.
- Show images representing each tool (agenda setting, framing, cultivation) and explain their impact on shaping our understanding of the world.
- Engage students in a conversation about the purpose and agenda behind sharing specific stories and how framing affects our perception of different individuals or groups.

Video Discussion: Antonella and Ezgi

- Show the video of Antonella and Ezgi discussing biases based on media influences.
- Facilitate a class discussion based on the questions raised in the video, emphasizing the importance of reaching out to people who are different from us and being open to information that challenges our prior beliefs.

Overcoming Media Bias

- Emphasize the importance of actively seeking evidence to disconfirm biases and walking backwards down the Ladder of Inference.
- Discuss the significance of seeking multiple sources of information and making contact with real people to gain diverse perspectives.
- Encourage students to question media bias and develop critical thinking skills when engaging with media content.

Media Bias in Global Perspective

- Discuss how media in one country may portray other countries in biased ways, influenced by global political relationships.

- Show images representing biased media portrayals and explain the real-world consequences of such representations.
- Engage students in a reflection on media bias in their own country and its impact on their perception of other countries and cultures.

Conclusion

- Summarize the key points discussed in the module, including the influence of media bias, the tools media outlets use to shape biases, and strategies for overcoming biases through contact with diverse perspectives.
- Encourage students to be critical thinkers.

Explore

Show the students the map, and explore the stories, articles, and videos that have been provided by their global peers. Ask the youth to pick their top three stories, and share them with their peers.

Share

Students will answer the following prompts:

1. Look for an article, video, picture, or other story about your home country.
2. After you read or watch it, imagine you have the chance to talk to someone from another country.
3. Think about what questions they would have about your home country based on what they've seen in the media:
 1. What kinds of stories might they have heard?
 2. What questions might they ask about where you live?
 3. How would you answer these questions?
4. Imagine a conversation in which you and someone from another country could talk about these questions together.

At the end of their stories, students should mention 2-4 stories and resources they've explored and would recommend to their global peers.



Objectives

By the end of this module, students will be able to:

1. Learn how to interrupt and confront bias in themselves and others
2. Commit to taking action by designing a SMARTIE Goal to interrupt bias in themselves or others
3. Read other students' SMARTIE Goals for inspiration
4. Share the actions they intend to take with other students.

Introduction

Begin the module by asking students the following questions:

1. Have you ever found yourself in a situation where someone said or did something biased that made you uncomfortable?
2. How did you react?
3. Did you say something or stay quiet?
4. Did you question them or let it slide?

Explain that biased comments and behaviors are common and can occur unintentionally or intentionally. These biases may come from classmates, family members, teachers, the media, or other sources.

Exploring Bias

- Discuss different forms of bias, such as verbal communication, rules, policies, behaviors, images, and facial expressions.
- Use the provided image descriptions to illustrate the concept of “book covers” and how people's biases can be influenced by appearances.
- Emphasize that individuals' identities are multifaceted and intersecting, which may lead to experiencing different biases in different contexts.

Reflecting on Personal Identities

Ask students to take a moment and reflect on their own identities by considering the following questions:

1. What does your “book cover” look like?
2. What do people notice about it?
3. Does the perception of your “book cover” differ when you are in different contexts?
4. How so?

Allow students to share their reflections, encouraging open and respectful discussion.

Preparing to Confront Bias

- Use the example of Ezgi and Antonella to highlight the importance of questioning biased perspectives rather than attacking the person responsible.
- Explain how open-mindedness and exposure to diverse perspectives can help challenge implicit biases.
- Facilitate a class discussion on strategies for interrupting bias and engaging in difficult conversations without shaming others.

Setting SMARTIE Goals

Introduce the concept of SMARTIE goals, explaining each component.

S - Specific: Reflects a concrete, definable goal that you seek to accomplish, connected to a broader values-based purpose. Guiding Questions: What specifically do you want to do? Is the purpose of your goal clear? What is your desired result?

M - Measurable: Includes clear measures that show whether the goal has been reached (in numbers or a measurable change). Guiding Questions: How will you measure your progress? How will you know when you have achieved your goal?

A - Ambitious: Challenging enough that reaching the goal will make a difference in people's lives. Guiding Questions: Is your goal aligned with the issue? Is your goal challenging enough? Is your goal meaningful and relevant? Why does your goal matter? What makes attaining this goal important?

R - Realistic: Something you can actually accomplish. Guiding Questions: Is this goal within your power to accomplish? Do you have the resources you need to accomplish your goal? Do you have access to the contacts, support, training, facilities, education, skills that your goal requires?

T - Time-bound: Includes clear deadlines. Guiding Questions: When exactly do you want to accomplish this goal? What time frame do you need to reach your goal? When will your goal be achieved and at what pace?

I - Inclusive: The goal brings people who are directly affected, particularly those most impacted, into reaching the goal. Guiding Questions: Are all the people affected accounted for in your goal? Does it bring in traditionally marginalized people? How can you make your goal be inclusive towards/positively impact people from marginalized groups? Is your goal taking a diverse universe into consideration?

E - Equitable: Seeks to address injustice, inequity, and oppression. Guiding Questions: Does it seek to address systemic injustice, inequity, or oppression? How can you adapt your goal so that it actively and intentionally seeks to promote equity and limit the disparity of access to resources? How can you make your goal purposefully seek to share power amongst groups?

Provide SMARTIE goal examples related to interrupting bias in oneself and others.

- Emphasize that taking action to overcome bias has a broader impact in challenging and ending injustice.

Conclusion

- Summarize the key points covered in the module, highlighting the importance of recognizing bias, reflecting on personal identities, preparing to confront bias, and setting SMARTIE goals.
- Reinforce the idea that everyone has a role to play in overcoming bias, and their actions can make a difference.

Explore

Show the students the map, and explore the stories, articles, and videos that have been provided by their global peers. Ask the youth to pick their top three stories, and share them with their peers.

Share

Students will answer the following prompts:

1. Reflect on what you learned from the module and what you specifically explored about yourself and your community.
2. Then choose an action you want to take to help yourself and/or others overcome bias.
3. Please use the SMARTIE goal examples provided in the platform to make sure your goal is Specific, Measurable, Ambitious, Realistic, Timely, Inclusive and Equitable.

At the end of their stories, students should mention 2-4 stories and resources they've explored and would recommend to their global peers.