

# Demographic Guessing Game

Developed by John Sheeran

**Grade Level:**  
4-12

**Objectives:**

1. Students will attempt to guess things about a person by his/her appearance.
2. Students will work in cooperative groups.
3. Students will observe that judgment about a person based on their appearance is most often speculative and untrue.

**Materials:**

1 chart labeled A-E & 1-7 per 4 students (see illustration)  
Easel  
Index cards  
Pencils  
Bell  
5 chairs  
5 sheets of paper labeled "A"-“E” for panelist to hold  
Flip chart with 7 questions (see Student Activities)

	A	B	C	D	E
1					
2					
3					
4					
5					
6					
7					

**Teaching Suggestions:**

1. Five panelists will sit in the front of the room before the lesson begins. Each will hold a sign labeled A, B, C, D, etc. In advance of the lesson a diverse mixture of panelists should be selected. Differences can include ability, age, race, nationality, sexual orientation, occupation, etc. Panelists should be instructed to answer questions honestly and succinctly.
2. In order for this lesson to be most effective students should not be prepped. In this way, they will not be able to form any preconceived ideas before the lesson.
3. This is not a lesson about sexuality. It is about cultural diversity and difference. Since sexual content is never discussed in this lesson it is not necessary to receive parental consent.
4. It is important that staff is aware of the contents of the lesson before the presentation so that everyone will be on the same page about the lesson's objective.

5. The lesson can be done in groups as large as 70. All lessons should be timed as close together as possible so there is no cross talk in between lessons.
6. It is best that the lesson be presented to entire grade levels instead of individual classes.
7. To facilitate easy management, the location of each group should be determined before the lesson begins. As students enter the room they can count off into groups and go to the designated spaces around the room. One person in each group will be handed a crayon/marker. He/she will be the designated recorder.

### **Opener:**

1. Review group rules for cooperative learning (i.e. respect, listen, work together, give everyone a turn).
2. Ask: "What can you tell about a person by looking at them? Do you sometimes assume things about people because of the way they look?"

### **Student Activities:**

1. Directions to the students: "There are 4-5 people sitting on this panel. You will need to work with your group to guess 7 things about the people here. You will have two minutes to answer each question. There are no right answers. Work together to answer the questions. At the end of two minutes a bell will ring. By that time the recorder should have all answers written down." Present the questions one at a time. They are as follows:

How old is the panelist?

What is the panelist's favorite signer or musical group?

What is the panelist's occupation?

What is the panelist's race?

What is the panelist's nationality?

What is the panelist's sexual orientation?

What is the panelist's favorite hobby/recreational activity?

2. Have students share their impressions about panelist A. Panelist A will then tell about him/herself. Repeat for the rest of the panelists. Post guessing boards around the room as the lesson proceeds.
3. Sat: "Some of your answers or some of the questions may have surprised you. This is because often you can not guess things about people just by the way they look. You can ask panelists questions about themselves. Write a question on an index card."
4. Collect index cards. Facilitate the asking of questions. Screen inappropriate questions. Try and vary the questions between panelists.

**Closure:**

1. It is important to have closure with the panelists without the students present. Schedule a 15-30 minute block of time for debriefing.
2. Encourage students to continue talking in their classes.
3. Revisit the lesson in a week or two. See if there are any questions/comments.

**Feedback:**

Have students write a 1-2 paragraph assessment of the lesson. What did you learn? Did anything surprise you? Make you uncomfortable?

**Modifications:**

Large group discussion

- Were you surprised about any of your answers?
- How did you make your guess?
- Were your judgments fair?