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# 1

## Facing Each Other



Our faces are the windows from our inner worlds to the outer world; the face is the body part that represents us most. In our language we often use the word *face* to represent who we are. We are careful not to “lose face”, but strive to “save face” instead. We say that one has to “face the music” and if we are having difficulty in a relationship we say that we can “hardly face” the other person.

When we look at a person’s face we soon become aware of the feelings that are on the other side of the “window”. The mouth, forehead, eyebrows and other facial features tell the emotional story. Faces are a focus of identity and each face is as unique as each set of fingerprints. Faces also tell a cultural story and the history of each person’s lineage. We can see the shape of a nose or the curve of a chin that has been replicated for generations.

In this activity, students face each other as unique individuals by taking the time to observe and learn from faces.

### Activity

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Discuss with students how faces help define our identities through individuality, cultural representation and family traits. Then ask students to look into mirrors and notice their unique facial features. Next, have students write a paragraph describing their facial features and tell them not to put their names on the descriptions.



Collect all students' work and give each student another student's description. Then have all the students sit in a circle and give them about five minutes—with no talking—to look at each other's faces (giggles are sometimes hard to avoid).

When the five minutes are up, let the students know it is time to “face up” to their descriptions. Have each student read the facial description you gave him or her and say who he or she thinks owns the face. Then give students five minutes to talk with each other until they find the owners of their facial descriptions.

Instead of handing out the descriptions, you may choose instead to number the descriptions and display them on a bulletin board. Give students a day or two to write down who they think each facial description describes.

## Flying Further

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The following are related activities that you can use in biology, social studies, language arts and visual arts.

- Ask students to find partners and sit so they are facing one another. One of the partners displays an emotion using only facial expressions. The other partner becomes a “mirror” and reflects the expressions. For a more dynamic experience, ask students to express an emotion that is reflected in music you play in the background.
- Discuss the science of genetics and how physical traits are passed through generations. Ask students to bring in photographs of their relatives and ancestors. Have students share their photos with partners and see if the partners can identify facial features that have been genetically maintained in various family members.
- Take this opportunity to study facial anatomy.
- Have the class explore facial characteristics of various peoples using photographs from magazines or social studies textbooks. Make a list of the characteristics of different cultural groups' facial features. Display pictures of faces on a bulletin board and see if students can guess the cultural heritage of the different people in the pictures.
- Make face collages using pictures cut out of magazines. Have students write short poems or haikus about faces and glue their works on the collage. Display the collages in a “Gallery of Faces”.
- See how many sayings, metaphors and puns about faces students can find. Make a list and display it.
- Have students write a short character sketch of an imaginary or real person. The sketch should use facial descriptions to convey the character's identity.