



## Body Image Basics

### Teacher Summary

In this lesson, students will work together to develop an understanding of the term “body-image”. They will consider some of the influences that may affect the healthy development of their own body-image, including the pervasive influence of the media.

### Teacher Message

The term body-image describes a person’s inner sense of satisfaction or dissatisfaction with all aspects of their body. Your body-image affects how you feel about yourself. It is an important factor in self-esteem for women, men, adolescents, and children. In many media presentations, the perfect body is glorified. Manipulated images are used to promote certain products that, in turn, present a false image of physical appearance and unattainable appearance ideals. This hampers self-esteem and positive body-image development in students—it is difficult to be positive if you believe you do not meet society’s expectations. Building awareness and recognition of stereotypes in media is essential to managing the effects of media images on our self-esteem. Helping students to become media-savvy and aware of both overt and implicit media messages supports their development of a healthy body-image and positive self-esteem.

### Materials

Chart paper  
Markers  
Highlighters  
Internet access

### Media Clip

Dove® Real Beauty Sketches: You’re more beautiful than you think (Available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=litXW91UauE>)

### Supporting Curriculum Outcomes

[Alberta](#)  
[Atlantic Provinces](#)  
[British Columbia](#)  
[Manitoba](#)  
[Ontario](#)  
[Québec](#)  
[Saskatchewan](#)

### Learning Organizers

Learning Organizer 1-1 Body-Image and Media  
Learning Organizer 1-2 Reflecting Media Influence

### Assessment Tool

Assessment Tool Lesson 1 Self and Peer Assessment

## Lesson Outline

1. **Post the term “body-image” on the whiteboard or chart paper in front of the class.**
2. **Ask students to brainstorm ideas, images, and words that come to mind when they hear the term “body-image.”** Jot down, or have a student jot down, as many of the ideas as possible.

### Facilitation: How will students learn the concepts?

3. **Arrange students in groups of two, three, or four and provide each group with chart paper, markers, and highlighters.**
4. **Ask students to use the results of the brainstorming and their own ideas to create a mind map showing the variety of ideas, terms, and images linked to body-image.** Remind students that a mind map is a visual organization of key ideas related to a key term (in this case “body-image”). Major ideas are connected to the key term and then associated ideas branch out from the major ideas. Students may organize their thinking using key ideas such as developmental factors (for example, heredity and puberty) and social influences (for example, peers, media, and parents), or ideas of their own.
5. **Post the mind maps that groups create around the classroom and conduct a gallery walk for students to view each group’s mind map.** Ask students to note ideas that were new to them, ideas that resonated with them, and ideas that they may not agree with.
6. **Debrief as a whole class.** Lead a discussion about the mind maps. Ask students to consider the following questions:
  - *What were some similarities between the maps?*
  - *Were there any terms or ideas that were new to you?*
  - *What ideas did you see that really resonated with you?*
  - *Were there any ideas that you disagree with?*
  - *What would you like to know more about?*
7. **Have students read the article on Learning Organizer 1-1 Body-Image and Media silently to themselves.**

### Application: How will students demonstrate their learning?

8. Ask students to answer the questions on the second page of **Learning Organizer 1-1** after reading the article.

### Reflection: How will students reflect on their learning?

9. **Play Dove Real Beauty Sketches: You’re more beautiful than you think for students** (Available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=litXW91UauE>). You may wish to play it more than once to allow students to consider the nature of the differences between women’s perceptions of themselves and the way others see them. Invite volunteers to share some insights they gained from the video.
10. **Have students complete a self reflection by answering the questions on Learning Organizer 1-2 Reflecting on Media Influence.** Students may write a journal entry based on their answers to these questions and other key ideas they encountered in the lesson.

## Assessment

You may choose to have students use **Assessment Tool Lesson 1 How well did we ...** to reflect on peer and self engagement during this lesson.

## Related Resources to Extend Learning

### Best Bets for Teachers:

Dove Self Esteem Project: ([www.dove.com/ca/en/dove-self-esteem-project.html](http://www.dove.com/ca/en/dove-self-esteem-project.html))

This website was designed to provide education programs and fun interactive activities that help girls overcome beauty-related anxieties that can prevent them from developing confidence and positive self-esteem.

Media Smarts: ([www.mediasmarts.ca](http://www.mediasmarts.ca))

MediaSmarts is a Canadian not-for-profit charitable organization for digital and media literacy. Their vision is that children and youth develop the critical thinking skills to engage with media as active and informed digital citizens.

### Best Bet for Students:

Collins-Donnelly, K., 2014. *Banish Your Body Image Thief: A Cognitive Therapy Behaviour Workbook on Building Positive Body Image for Young People*. ISBN 978-1849054638

Hohn, T. 2020. Illustrated by Grahlman, S. *Body Image: Deal With it Because all Bodies are Great Bodies*. Lorimer.

This book helps young adolescents explore cultural standards and assumptions – their own and others' – about bodies. The information, quizzes, comics and real-life examples encourages to readers think critically about body image, how it influences how others see them, and how they see themselves.

## Body-Image and Media

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### Unrealistic Standard of Beauty

It is no secret that we live in a weight and appearance obsessed culture. Kids today are inundated with images of Hollywood stars that project an unrealistic and unattainable standard of beauty. It doesn't help that advertisements touting diet fads and workouts promise young people that they can achieve the "perfect look," and perfect life, if they try.

### What Does the Research Say?

We know from the research that appearance-oriented media (like reality TV, celebrity magazines and websites) are immensely popular among young people and can produce and sustain body dissatisfaction in children. Upwards of 70% of adolescent girls say that images in fashion magazines influence their self-image and nearly half say those pictures make them want to diet. Young women's self-esteem drops dramatically after only a few minutes of reading these magazines.

Of course, body-image isn't just an issue for girls. Young men experience an increase in depression and body dissatisfaction after exposure to ads featuring a muscular male body ideal. In addition, video games increase a drive for muscularity among boys as young as 7.

### Media Literacy: an Antidote to Negative Body-Image

The good news is that parents and teachers do make a difference! Elementary school children reported a significant increase in body esteem two weeks after a single lesson explaining how media use technology and fantasy to construct unrealistic and unhealthy beauty images. Talk with your kids about the images, slogans, and messages they consume to help counteract unhealthy body images.

### Discussion Questions

1. Do you regularly compare your appearance, weight, or shape to what you see in media?
2. List all of the things that your body does for you. Are all of these qualities reflected in the media? Why or why not?
3. Can you think of people you admire who do *not* match our society's appearance ideals?
4. What sort of strategies do advertisers use to create the perfect look? (Hint: airbrush, photoshop etc...)
5. What are the costs of pursuing the perfect look?

## Reflecting on Media Influence

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Use this organizer to reflect on what you have learned about body-image and media influence. Consider the following questions:**

1. How well do the images I see in the media reflect me? Do they reflect my physical appearance? Do they reflect my interests and my experiences?

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2. How do I feel about the images I view on a daily basis? Do I feel represented?

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3. What is media telling me? What is it telling my friends and peers?

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4. How can my friends and I fight back against negative media messages?

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## Self and Peer Assessment

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### PART A: PEER ASSESSMENT

Write the name of each member of your group at the top of one column. Assess how well you worked together. Respond to each question on the left for each group member by circling E (Excellent), G (Good), S (Satisfactory), or N (Needs Improvement).

Names:				
1. How well did group members ask questions to clarify meaning and ensure understanding?	E	E	E	E
	G	G	G	G
	S	S	S	S
	N	N	N	N
2. How willingly did group members work with other group members?	E	E	E	E
	G	G	G	G
	S	S	S	S
	N	N	N	N
3. How well did group members listen, acknowledge, and consider differing opinions?	E	E	E	E
	G	G	G	G
	S	S	S	S
	N	N	N	N
4. How helpful were group members in developing and presenting the final idea to the class?	E	E	E	E
	G	G	G	G
	S	S	S	S
	N	N	N	N

### PART B: SELF ASSESSMENT

How did you show that you were on task and engaged in this lesson?

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## Supporting Curriculum Outcomes

### Alberta

#### Language Arts

Acknowledge the value of the ideas and opinions of others in exploring and extending personal interpretations and perspectives.

Exchange ideas and opinions to clarify understanding and to broaden personal perspectives.

Explain connections between own interpretation and information in texts and infer how texts will influence others.

Create oral, print and other media texts related to issues encountered in texts and in own life.

Organize ideas and information to establish an overall impression or point of view in oral, print and other media texts.

Clarify and broaden perspectives and opinions, by examining the ideas of others.

Evaluate the quality of own contributions to group process, and offer constructive feedback to others; propose suggestions for improvement.

### Atlantic Provinces

#### Language Arts

Consider and reflect upon the contribution of others' ideas during discussions.

State a point of view in a convincing manner, offering relevant information to support that viewpoint.

Contribute to small-group conversation and whole-group discussion, choosing appropriate strategies that contribute to effective talk.

Elaborate personal reactions to what is read and viewed by providing some extended explanations, examples, and supporting arguments.

State personal points of view about what is read and viewed and justify views with increasing regularity.

Recognize that texts need to be assessed for bias, and broaden their understanding and awareness of the ways in which print and media texts can be biased; begin to question and think critically about the relevance and reliability of information when answering questions and inquiries.

### British Columbia

#### Language Arts

Interact and collaborate in pairs and groups to support the learning of self and others and explore experiences, ideas, and information.

Read, both collaboratively and independently, to comprehend a variety of information and persuasive texts with some complexity of ideas and form, such as articles and reports.

View, both collaboratively and independently, to comprehend a variety of visual texts, such as film and video.

After reading and viewing, select and use a range of strategies to extend and confirm meaning, including responding to text.

Explain and support personal responses to texts, by making connections with prior knowledge and experiences, describing reactions and emotions, and developing opinions using evidence.

Synthesize and extend thinking about texts, by personalizing ideas and information.

Write meaningful personal texts that explore ideas and information to express self, make connections, and reflect and respond.

Write and represent to synthesize and extend thinking, by personalizing ideas and information and explaining relationships among ideas and information.

### Manitoba

#### Language Arts

Integrate new understanding with previous viewpoints and interpretations.

Articulate, represent, and explain personal viewpoints clearly.

Reconsider initial understanding in light of new information, and ask clarifying questions; listen to diverse opinions and recognize ambiguity.

Express personal reactions to a variety of experiences and texts and compare them with the reactions of others.

Evaluate the quality of own contributions to group process and set goals and plans for development of personal skills; evaluate group process and plan for growth.

## **Ontario**

### **Language Arts**

Demonstrate an understanding of appropriate listening behaviour by adapting active listening strategies to suit a wide variety of situations, including work in groups.

Demonstrate an understanding of the information and ideas in increasingly complex and difficult oral texts in a variety of ways.

Demonstrate an understanding of appropriate speaking behaviour in most situations, using a variety of speaking strategies and adapting them to suit the purpose and audience.

Develop and explain interpretations of increasingly complex or difficult texts using stated and implied ideas from the texts to support their interpretations.

Extend understanding of texts, including increasingly complex or difficult texts, by connecting the ideas in them to their own knowledge, experience and insights, to other texts, and to the world around them.

Evaluate the effectiveness of a text based on evidence taken from that text.

## **Québec**

### **Language Arts**

Use teamwork effectively and contribute to team efforts.

Use collaborative talk purposively in order to seek multiple perspectives on the issue and extend understanding of the issue or topic by building on the ideas of others.

## **Saskatchewan**

### **Language Arts**

View, listen to, read, comprehend, and respond to a variety of texts that address identity, social responsibility, and efficacy.

View critically and demonstrate comprehension of a variety of visual and multimedia texts including videos, television broadcasts, informational presentations, dramatic presentations, websites, and news programs to locate and interpret key messages and details, to develop conclusions, opinions, and understanding, and to evaluate the effectiveness of the text.

Use oral language to interact purposefully, confidently, and respectfully in a variety of situations including one-to-one, small group, and large group discussions.