



## WE EACH SEE THE WORLD A LITTLE DIFFERENTLY

### PROCEDURE:

1. Write the word OCEAN on the board. Ask students to close their eyes for a minute and let their senses take over as they imagine OCEAN -- see it, hear it, feel it, smell it. Then ask students to share their thoughts and word pictures of OCEAN. Write down the words and phrases you hear. How are the images different? Some students probably have very detailed pictures of ocean while others may have never seen an ocean except on a map. Some images may be cloudy and stormy while others may convey a stillness filled with heat. Discuss how personal experiences filter what we see, hear, and imagine - all of us have slightly different filters which help us to make meaning of the world. Our perceptions are never exactly like anyone else's.

One example: Jamake Highwater, a Native American, who is now an art historian and writer in New York City, recalls his confusion when he first encountered the English idea of "wilderness" -- an untamed land, a wild and unpredictable place beyond the reach of civilization. As a Blackfoot Indian, he understood "wilderness" to be ordered and balanced, a natural state of the world as the seasons moved predictably from one cycle of life to another. For Mr. Highwater's mother, her first visit to New York City seemed to match the English definition of the idea of "wilderness"!

2. Divide students into groups of five. Each student will need a pencil and a sheet of scrap paper. Make enough copies of "Perception Cards" so that each group of five students receives five or six different cards. Cut the cards apart beforehand.

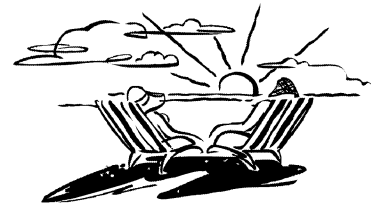
3. Explain that groups will select a card and students will write down what the word on the card means to them. Then each student in the group will read their definitions in a "go-round" (no

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### OBJECTIVES:

Students will play a perception game that reveals how individuals perceive and interpret words and ideas differently.

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### MATERIALS:

- "Perception Cards"
  - Scissors
  - Scrap paper
  - Pencils
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**PROCEDURE:**

(Continued)

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interruptions or questions during this phase). Remind students that the purpose here is to see how perceptions vary, not to determine a correct definition. This is also an opportunity to monitor for active listening skills. Each group will choose only three words to use in the exercise. Take about ten minutes for each round.

**NOTES:**

## Round #1

- a. The group picks the first word they want to define (for example, Family).
- b. Each student in the group takes a minute or so to jot down a few words and phrases which give the word meaning.
- c. When everyone is finished writing down their ideas, the group does a "go-around," each student taking turns sharing what they wrote.
- d. If there is time left in Round #1, students can ask each other clarifying questions to further explore the meanings each person shared.
- e. After about 10 minutes, tell students to move to Round #2, choosing the next word.

4. In closing the exercise, check out whether students' understanding of these words changed after they were discussed in their groups.

**Perception Cards**

tolerance	prejudice	morality
community	sexism	injustice
friend	family	freedom
democracy	police	racism
human rights	love	success

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