



# STEREOTYPES

- ✓ Students engage in stereotyping each other and then talk through the causes and effects of stereotypes.
- ✓ The goal is to define *stereotypes* and identify their origins. Also, to understand the effects stereotypes have on our perceptions of the relationships with others.
- ✓ Teacher asks the class what a stereotype is. Responses get written down on a board. It is important that the students understand the meaning of stereotype before going on.
- ✓ Variation: teacher might want to use a picture depicting a stereotype. After the students have studied it, the teacher asks: What do you see in the picture? What does the picture say?
- ✓ Teacher asks students what stereotypes of Americans they might have. Students are often reluctant to begin, fearing they might offend the teacher. So, it might be helpful to offer a few examples. Once the responses are written in a visible place, there is a list of stereotypical statements that can be used as a conclusion. Students can also draw pictures instead.
- ✓ Teacher posts a large piece of paper for each country represented in the class. Students are to write or draw stereotypes for each other's countries. At this point, the students usually begin to *feel* what it is like to be stereotyped, if they hadn't prior to. They should their feelings

through laughter and astonishment that others could think such things about their cultures. Hardly ever does anyone get angry, probably because everyone is a *victim*.

- ✓ If the students are all from the same country, teacher asks them to identify stereotypes that exist within their own culture.
- ✓ The teacher leads a discussion based on these questions:
  - What do you think about what others wrote or drew about your country?
  - How did you feel when you saw these comments about your country?
  - Why do you think stereotypes exist?
  - How are stereotypes destroyed?

(Teacher should be clear on a distinction between *think* and *feel* in the above questions.)

- ✓ Some stereotypes about Americans might be:
  - Wear cowboy boots and eat hotdogs and hamburgers
  - Drive big cars
  - Are very aggressive
  - Have superficial relationships
  - Do not care about old people
  - Lack discipline
  - Always think everything American is best
  - Are disrespectful of age and status
  - Talk a lot but say little
  - Think only about money
  - Do not know anything about the rest of the world
  - Worry more about their possessions than their children