

Staircase of Dehumanization

Step 1 – IDEA – STEREOTYPE

Definition: An overgeneralization based on race, class, gender, region or sexuality

Examples:

- All Jewish people are stingy
- All Aboriginals are alcoholics
- All Australians live in the outback
- All women are bad drivers
- All Asians excel at Maths
- All African Americans are from the ghetto

Step 2 – EMOTION or FEELING – PREJUDICE

Examples:

- Hatred, fear, jealousy, disdain, pity, animosity, superiority, anger, threatened

Step 3 – ACTION – DISCRIMINATION (RACISM, SEXISM)

Examples:

- Ignoring, Excluding, Including, Avoiding
- Graffiti, Racial Slurs, Teasing, Gossiping, Spreading Rumours, Slander
- Not hiring, firing, Not marrying, Not dating, Not socializing
- Harassing, bashing, bullying, lynching, raping, killing

Questions:

1. Why do people stereotype?
2. What is dehumanization?

Activity:

Choose a character from *To Kill a Mockingbird* and explain how they demonstrate each of these Steps.

Notes:

- One does not need to be in a position of POWER to demonstrate any of these steps. Step 3 gives power to the person discriminating.
- Humans cannot kill another human without dehumanizing them first.

Dehumanizing Slurs: wog, wop, dago, fag, bitch, nigger, spic, mick, kike, poof, oreo, sambo, coon, pickaninny, dot-head, bogun, red-neck

CLASS

The Southern **Gentlemen** and **Lady**

The term “class” is subjective, we all have different definitions. Brainstorm definitions amongst students:

What does it mean to have “class”? What makes someone “classy”?

Possible Answers Vary:

Wealth - big house, fancy car, expensive clothes and jewellery, sophisticated palette, dining out, private school education

Family – being born in to wealth, raised with manners and etiquette, lineage and breeding

Personal Demeanour - dress, neatness, cleanliness, mannerisms, vocabulary, accent, speaking “properly”, the way one “carries” oneself.

Morality – dignity, being kind, patience, understanding, maturity, self control

Discussion Questions:

- Does race affect one’s class? How?
- Are we born with class or is it socially constructed?
- Is Paris Hilton classy because she is wealthy?
- Is James Bond classy? Why?

Connecting with *To Kill a Mockingbird*

1. Does Atticus Finch have class? Why or why not? Explain using details from the text and the above notes.

Possible answers: well dressed, teaches children morality and etiquette, does not take advantage of the weak, moral integrity, chivalrous, not violent, patient, understanding, reserved, educated....

2. In small groups, explore whether these adult characters have “class” or not:

- Aunt Alexandra
- Calpurnia
- Reverend Sykes
- Robert Ewell
- Mayella Ewell
- Mr. Cunningham
- Tom Robinson

Explore racist stereotyping of the African American:

<http://www.ferris.edu/jimcrow/menu.htm>