

## Lesson ~ Identity and The Danger of a Single Story

### Big Ideas:

Exploring stories and other texts helps us understand ourselves and make connections to others and to the world.

A positive personal and cultural identity is the awareness, understanding, and appreciation of all the facets that contribute to a healthy sense of oneself.

### Core Competencies:

**C** I recognize that there are different points of view and can disagree respectfully.

**T** I can analyze my own assumptions and beliefs and consider views that do not fit with them.



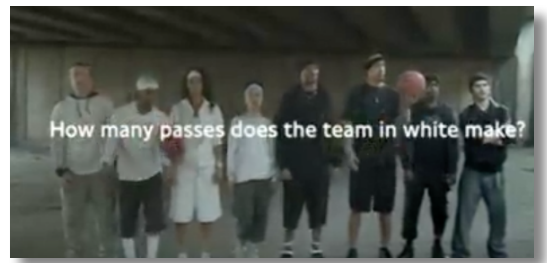
### Learning Targets:

- Engaging with others to share and develop ideas.
- Understanding that identity is made up of many interconnected aspects (such as life experiences, family history, heritage, peer groups).
- Exploring and describing different aspects of identity.

**Establishing a Need to know:** Share the YouTube clip *the Awareness Test: How many passes does the team in white make?* (1:08)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ahg6qcgoay4>

What can we learn from this clip? We find what we look for, but risk not noticing other things. “Watch out for the dancing bear.”



**Driving Questions:** What makes you, *you*? How would you describe your personality?



**Establishing a Need to know:** Share the YouTube clip *Ed Sheeran: Embrace Who You Are* (1:35)

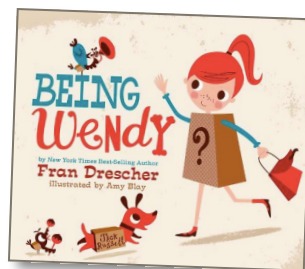
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CTufwCG8Xeg&t=1s>

**Partner Turn and Listen:** *What did you notice in this short clip? What do you think? What do you wonder? What is something you learned from Ed Sheeran about his identity; his personality?* Invite a **whole group share**...

**Shared Read:** *Being Wendy* by Fran Drescher

**Before reading:** Establish a purpose for listening/viewing: investigating the story for its connection to the theme of Identity. **If you had to choose just one word to describe your personality, what would it be?**

*In this delightful picture book, we meet Wendy, a girl who lives in an odd town where everyone has to wear a box. These boxes are labeled with what each person does. The teacher wears a TEACHER box. The baker wears a BAKER box. Even the doctor wears a DOCTOR box! These boxes are worn for life and Wendy has to choose hers soon. How will she ever decide on just one box? She's interested in so many things! Wendy's moxie makes her break out of her box . . . And she sets the whole town on end when she does!*



**After reading ~independent self-reflection:** If you had to define yourself, your identity, your interests with just one word, one idea, would that be difficult for you? Why or why not?

The author stated, “Wendy tried to take her dad’s advice, but the more she thought about it, the more she hated thinking inside the box.” *Have you ever heard the expression, “thinking outside the box”?* What does it mean? How does it apply here?

**Zooming in:** *What shape is your personality?* Source: <http://listening2leaders.com/shape-quiz-learn-colleagues/>

Invite students to draw one of the following four shapes on a sticky note: a square, a circle, a triangle, or a squiggly line. Then, sort students by the shape they selected. and give them a list of personality descriptors to consider and share in their small group.

Groups explore and discuss if they agree with how the shape they've selected describes them! Invite students to discuss things such as: *In what ways does your personality match the description? How is it different? What other shapes have descriptors that match who you are/ your personality? Is it possible to be a triangle AND a square, for example? How did it make you feel being ‘put in a box’?; being sorted into personality trait groups without knowing?*



**Closure:** Share the YouTube clip *Chiamanda Adichie, The Danger of a Single Story* (3:36)  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ODzwb90b5qE>

*African writer Chimamanda Adichie explains how we often assign identity to others: we tell single stories that create stereotypes, which then become the only stories that are told and believed to be true.*

After viewing the clip, invite students to turn and talk in response to the question, “**What is the danger of a single story?**” *What can we learn from Chiamanda Adichie about identity?*

**Whole Group conversation:** Why might how others see you affect your identity? Why isn’t your identity only how you see yourself?