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Timing

45 minutes

Materials

- **Media and Celebrities** video (https://youtu.be/eNYnkWtOVHA)

- **Socratic Seminar Discussion Questions**—one for teacher

- **Other Questions That Lead to Discussion** student handout—one per student or one displayed electronically

- **Socratic Seminar Note-taking** student handout—one half sheet per student

- **Socratic Seminar Reflection** student handout—one half sheet per student

Note: *There are facilitation options below if the students are in a virtual situation. Handouts can be provided electronically to be printed at home or as an editable Microsoft Word template to be submitted via email, learning management systems, or a live/shared document.*

GRADES 4–5

Tools to Build Body Confidence

APPEARANCE IDEALS IN THE MEDIA

Overview

Content for the *Amazing Me* program was created in partnership with Dr. Marisol Perez, a clinical psychologist and researcher at Arizona State University and The Institute for Research and Education Advancing Children's Health (REACH). Dr. Perez has dedicated her career to assisting future generations be less focused on appearance and more focused on respecting, liking, and appreciating their bodies.

In this activity, students will investigate how advertisements use appeal strategies and "appearance ideals" to influence the decisions they make. After viewing the video **Media and Celebrities** (https://youtu.be/eNYnkWtOVHA), the teacher will guide a class discussion. This discussion will focus on:

1. the potential harm caused by appearance ideals

2. how appearance ideals can lead to unhealthy behaviors, and

3. how students can change their own habits to reduce these negative effects.

Each activity is part of a five-lesson series that focuses on confronting comparisons and building body confidence. Lessons 1–3 include core content and should be completed in sequence. Lessons 4–5 are supplementary and provide students with an opportunity to extend their learning of core concepts.

Background

Body image is defined as the thoughts, feelings, and behaviors towards one's own body.[1] Research shows that body dissatisfaction contributes to the development of unhealthy behaviors in kids and adults. People are more

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[1] Cash & Prunzinsky, 1990

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likely to do unhealthy things to control their weight and body shape when they focus more on appearance than body functionality.[2]
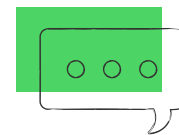
There are many factors that can cause body dissatisfaction in kids. Some of these factors are media and celebrity body images, pressures from family and friends to look a certain way, and teasing and bullying from peers. Any talk about body or body type (even positive statements) can result in negative feelings about one's body.[3]

The concept of "appearance ideals" is the idea that people are influenced by what society tells us is attractive and use these ideals to set goals for their own appearance. People from different cultures can have different appearance ideals. For example, in the United States, the dominant appearance ideal is for girls to be unrealistically thin.[4] Research shows that appearance ideals lead to unhealthy behaviors in kids and adults. This means that when a girl consumes media (including television, magazines, and social media), she is likely to set unrealistic goals for her own body. This will make her dislike her body, feel shame and guilt, and is more likely to engage in unhealthy behaviors. For boys and men, the appearance ideals are leanness and muscularity. When a boy consumes media, he is likely to set unrealistic goals for his own body. This will make him experience shame about his body, and at risk for unhealthy behaviors to try to meet the ideals from popular culture.

Research shows that parents and educators have the ability to increase the body confidence of young people. Adults can help kids become aware of the factors that negatively affect their self-image. Adults can also encourage healthy behaviors that have been proven to increase body confidence. Kids can be healthier when they are aware of emotional and physical changes that occur during development. They have more body confidence when kids can accept their changing bodies. Adults can help by avoiding making comments about weight and shape, and appearance.

Research suggests that body confidence increases with more supportive relationships rather than those based on competition or comparison. Regular conversations on these topics will encourage students to identify and connect with their peers instead of comparing themselves to each other.

This lesson will focus on the influence of media and celebrities on youths' body image.

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[2] Thompson & Stice, 2001

[3] DSEP Content Development Framework, University of West England's Center for Appearance Research, 2012

[4] Thompson & Stice, 2001

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Objectives

Students will:

- Analyze how television and streaming programming, magazines, movies, and advertisements use appeal strategies and "appearance ideals" to influence the decisions they make.

- Understand how media influence can negatively affect self-image.

- Brainstorm ways to lessen the negative effects of appearance ideals in their own lives.

Essential Question

How does the media perpetuate appearance ideals, and what can I do to lessen the negative effects of appearance ideals?
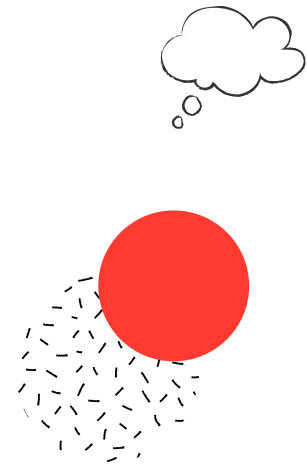
Teacher Preparation

- Arrange the desks or chairs into two circles, one inner and one outer. Create a seating chart that mixes more introverted and extroverted students between the inner and outer circles.

  - If facilitating this lesson virtually, assign students to "inside circle" and "outside circle" discussion groups. During the seminar, make sure that the "outside circle" group is always muted.
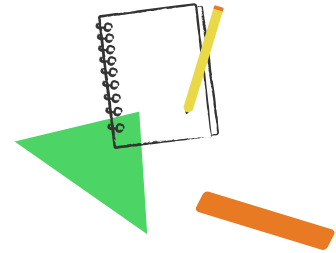
Sensitivity Note

Due to the nature of today's discussion, be aware of student feelings. There can be a diversity of emotions and reactions to these topics. Teachers should feel free to paraphrase/edit the language to suit their classes learning abilities.

Suggestions for Implementing Virtual Meetings

- **Lighting:** Backlighting prevents your audience from seeing you clearly. Make sure that you have lighting in front of you to ensure that you are seen.

- **Camera Placement:** Try to make sure that your camera is placed at eye level. This helps to create eye contact and engagement with your audience. You can use books or other items to lift your computer (if using a laptop).

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- **Sound:** Make sure that you do a quick sound check before beginning your session. Ensure that you can be heard and that participants will not hear an echo effect. Consider the usage of headphones equipped with a speaker.

- **Make Connections:** Remember to try to connect with your audience, which can be challenging, virtually. Connect with them using quick stories or humor. Some suggestions have been included.

- **Troubleshooting:** It is okay to make mistakes or have technology issues. If you have a technology hiccup or things don't go as planned, do your best to reconnect and move forward with your lesson. The best thing you can do is be prepared by testing your internet connection and sound and video settings prior to your session!

Procedure

Discuss

- Write the following vocabulary words on the board or display them electronically: media, celebrity/influencer, appearance ideals, negative impact.

- Ask students to meet with a partner and discuss each of the words and try to create a definition in their own words.

- Call on pairs to share their thoughts about the definition of each word. Record student suggestions on the board next to each word. Use the glossary as a reference and address any misconceptions as they arise.

- Explain that today the class will be engaging in a Socratic Seminar to examine each of these terms, how they relate to each other, and how they can affect adolescents. Explain to students that in a Socratic Seminar, the inner circle has a discussion first while the outer circle observes the conversation, then the two circles switch.

- Distribute or display **Other Questions That Lead to Discussion** for student reference during the seminar. Review with students ways to participate in an active discussion.

VIRTUAL FACILITATION OPTIONS

- Allow them to share their answers out loud or encourage students to write their definitions down to reference later, add to a live/shared document, or comment in a chat box.

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Do

- Read off the students' names and ask them to have a seat in the inner or outer circle as indicated on the seating chart.

- Distribute on **Socratic Seminar Note Taking Sheet** to each student. Explain that while they are sitting in the outer circle, they will take notes about what they observe in the inner circle's discussion.

- Show the video **Media and Celebrities** (https://youtu.be/eNYnkWtOVHA).

- Begin the discussion using the Socratic Seminar Discussion Questions as a guide.

- Allow students to respond to each other with teacher support and guidance. Remind them to reference the **Other Questions** list if they have trouble maintaining an active discussion.

- After 7–10 minutes, ask the inner and outer circle to switch positions. Then continue the discussion.
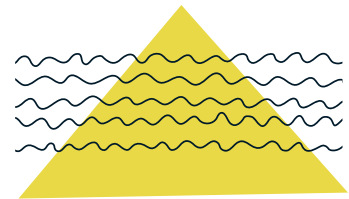
Reflect

Following the discussion, distribute one **Socratic Seminar Reflection Form** to each student. If time allows, invite volunteers to share their reactions to the activity.

Possible Extension

Ask students to choose one of the ideas the class brainstormed to help lessen the effects of appearance ideals and implement the strategy for one week, recording notes in their journal each day. Then ask students to share how they felt after implementing the strategy.

VIRTUAL FACILITATION OPTIONS

- Ask everyone assigned to the "outer circle" to mute themselves while the "inner circle" discusses.

VIRTUAL FACILITATION OPTIONS

- This can be facilitated as a group discussion or on a live/shared document.

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Glossary

Media	Means of mass communication; ways to give information to lots of people
Celebrity/influencer	A famous person; A famous person that tells people to buy something.
Society	People living together in a community
Appearance Ideal	What our culture tells us the ideal way to look.
Negative Impact	An emotionally, physically, or psychologically negative effect; something that is bad for you.

Socratic Seminar Discussion Questions

1. How did you connect to the video? What particular parts of the video did you connect with?

   Answers will vary.

2. What problem does Peridot have in the video?

   Possible answer: She loves her tablet but realizes it makes her feel bad about the way she looks because the internet features unrealistic expectations for people.

3. According to the media, what does the "ideal" girl or woman look like? What is the "ideal" appearance of a boy or man?

   Possible answers for girls/women: thin, large eyes, straight teeth, smooth skin/no wrinkles.

   Possible answers for boys/men: lean, muscular, tall, nice smile, smooth skin.

4. How does the media tell us what we should look like?

   Answers will vary, but possible answers include: female models featured in the media are usually very tall and thin; male models tend to be tall and muscular. Models for both genders are usually able-bodied.

5. Why do people use filters or change how they look in pictures? Why is this a problem and make people feel bad about how they look?

   Answers will vary.

6. How can we change so appearance ideals don't hurt us?

   Possible answers: limit time on the internet and social media, research positive role models, talk with others about feelings regarding appearance ideals.

Other Questions that Lead to Discussion[5]

What do you mean by that?

How does the text support your answer?

Can you tell us more?

What do you think about _____?

How do you think _____ would be viewed by _____?

How does this idea connect to _____?

What is puzzling you?

What did your classmate just say? Can you paraphrase his/her idea?

How does this idea connect to _____?

What would happen if _____?

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[5] Socratic Seminars International

Socratic Seminar Note-Taking Sheet

Use this organizer to record your thoughts as you listen to the discussion in the inner circle.

Something That Interested Me	Something That Surprised Me	One Connection I Made	Something I Disagreed With

Other Notes:

✂ --

Socratic Seminar Reflection Form

Answer the following questions regarding today's discussion:

1. Did you participate in today's seminar? Why or why not?

2. How did your thinking change today? What new ideas do you have based on what we talked about?

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Socratic Seminar Reflection Form

Answer the following questions regarding today's discussion:

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