



Mental Health

Activity 3: First Impressions

Overview

In this activity students will focus on and discuss about first impression. They will observe how first impressions are lasting and difficult to change. *Suggested length: 60 minutes*

Materials

- Student activity sheet
- Answer sheet for mentors
- Pencils
- Posters and markers

Instructions

1. Give one activity sheet to each student.
2. Ask the students to look at the five images, answer the questions that follow each image, and record their responses on the activity sheet.

Discussion

Students form groups of up to eight. Moderated by a mentor or teacher, they discuss the following questions:

- Did the titles of the images influence what you saw? Can you think of how people make a stereotype about a person based on his/her name?
- Do you think it was challenging to see a different image after you had already seen the first one? How does this apply to humans and the relationships we build with each other?
- Can you relate the experience you just had to your interactions with other people?
- What helped you see the image in a different way? Can you use those same tactics in changing your opinion about people?

Assessment

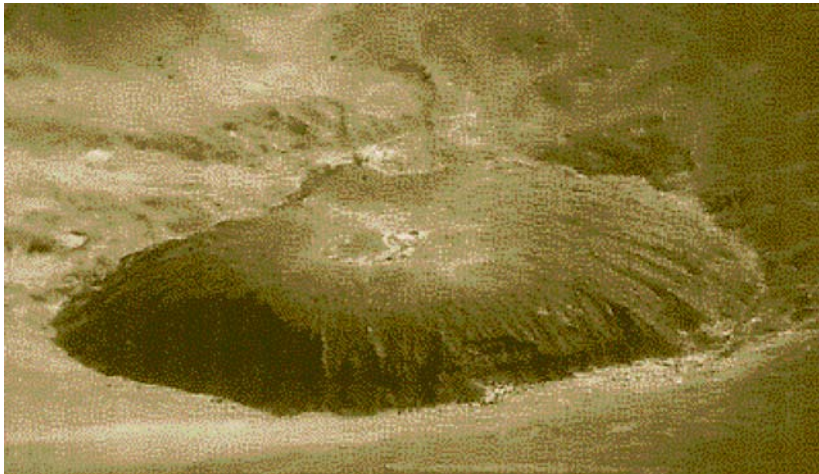
Ask the students to create an informative story on the topic and to present it to the class in the form of a short skit or a song.



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Activity 3: First Impressions – Student activity sheet

1. Crater or Mountain?



- What do you see here – crater or mountain?

- Can you see both?



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Activity 3: First Impressions - Student activity sheet

2. Camouflage



- What do you see in this picture?
If you see 'nothing', keep looking.

- If you see 'something', then try to see 'nothing'. Can you do this?



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Activity 3: First Impressions - Student activity sheet

3. What do you see?



- What do you see?

- Can see anything else? If not, there's a clue over the page!



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Activity 3: First Impressions - Student activity sheet

4. Old and young man



- Can you see the old man?

- Can you see young man?

- Can you see them both at the same time?



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Activity 3: First Impressions - Student activity sheet

5. Sign



- What does this sign say?

- Are you sure? Read it carefully.

- Why did you misread the sign initially?

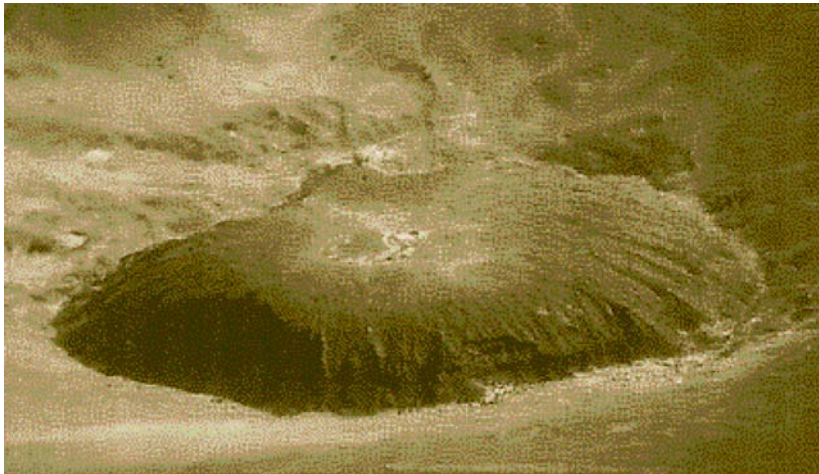
These activities were adapted from the web site: <http://www.wilderdom.com/games/PsychologicalExercises.html>



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Activity 3: First Impressions - Answer sheet

1. Crater or Mountain?



Seeing the crater or the mountain in this image is just a matter of trying, practicing, getting someone else to show you, etc. The key point is that once our mind chooses to adopt a particular perspective, it can be difficult to remove its cognitive trace and “refresh” the slate so we can try interpreting in a different way. It can help to rotate the image. Note that even for people who can learn to see a crater and a mountain, this is never simultaneous. We have great difficulty perceiving multiple realities simultaneous. In this sense, the mind is quite unitary and is only in rare and extreme cases that the mind becomes structured otherwise. It is probably one of the reasons we are so stricken with black-white views despite the world being a myriad of shades.



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Activity 3: First Impressions - Answer sheet

2. Camouflage



A Dalmatian. Once we construct 'order' from 'chaos', we find it incredibly difficult, if not impossible to 'unsee' order. ('Unseeing' the Dalmatian is nigh impossible).



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Activity 3: First Impressions - Answer sheet

3. What do you see?



A face.

The word 'Liar'.

As with the images above, you can't see both at once.



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Activity 3: First Impressions - Answer sheet

4. Old and young man



Most people are used to seeing the old woman and young woman. This is a variation. As with several other exercises, once we see one, its difficult to see the other, we can only see one, and once we've seen one pattern, we can't 'unsee' back to chaos, we can only replace it with a new pattern.



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Activity 3: First Impressions - Answer sheet

5. Sign



So simple, so deceptive. People can stare and stare at this sign and see nothing wrong. Why? Because we skip over the most common word in the English language – “the”. Once we recognize a “the”, we automatically skip to the beginning of the next different word, missing the second “the”.

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