

Have you ever been judged unfairly because of how you look, the way you speak or the type of name you have? How does it feel? Is it fair or unfair? Has anyone ever made assumptions about you because of your age, your ethnicity or your gender? Write your responses to these questions and share in small groups. Discuss and define the term “stereotype.”

The Lesson

Part I: Examining The Stereotype

Prompt: “Who are Latinos? In this activity you will study a recent poll that examines attitudes about Latinos, particularly through the media. Next, you’ll examine actual data on the Latino population of the United States. Your job: to sort out the myths and the stereotypes from the realities. Latinos, like many other groups, face stereotypes (assumptions, generalizations and judgments). While we are often aware of stereotypes in an informal way, social scientists document such attitudes and what fuels them.”

Read pages 1 – 6 of [The Impact of Media Stereotypes on Opinions and Attitudes Towards Latinos](#). Discuss the following questions in small groups. Choose a recorder to chart your responses to share with the whole class.

- In reviewing the study, describe three to four of the key findings identified by the researchers.
- What types of methods did the researchers use to measure attitudes about Latinos?
- List some of the positive and negative stereotypes associated with Latinos, according to the study.
- What type of assumptions do some non-Hispanics make about Latino Americans when it comes to the legality of their residence in the United States? Cite examples.
- What are the TV and film roles most associated with Latinos? What type of affect does this have on perceptions of Latinos, according to the researchers?
- How does language make a difference when it comes to terms like “illegal alien” versus “undocumented immigrant”?
- Does your personal experience of Latino stereotypes and media roles reflect or challenge the findings of the study? Explain.

Part II: Statistics vs Stereotypes

Now that you have explored research on stereotypes, contrast this information with actual statistics by reviewing the Pew Center infographic, [Hispanics in the U.S.](#) and its reports, [The 10 Largest Hispanic Origin Groups](#) and [Hispanic High School Graduates](#). You’ll work in smaller groups (five groups) to examine these reports. Each small group will elect a presenter to share your findings with the rest of the group.

Group 1: Overview Review the infographic, Hispanics in the U.S. and pp. 3-4 of The 10 Largest Hispanic Origin Groups.

- How can we better understand the details of the umbrella terms, “Hispanic” or “Latino”?
- Are the majority of this group foreign-born immigrants or native-born citizens?
- “Latino” and “Hispanic” can be catch-all terms for Americans who trace their ancestry to many different countries and cultures. What are some of the largest subgroups? Where do they trace their ancestry?
- What regions of the United States are home to significant Hispanic populations? (Note that regions with the highest numbers may not be the regions with the highest population growth. For more info see Latinos By Geography.

Group 2: Changes since 2000 Read pp. 5-6 of The 10 Largest Hispanic Origin Groups.

- How has this population changed between 2000 and 2010?
- Which are on the rise: Hispanic immigrants or native-born Hispanics?
- How is the economic downturn of the late 2000s reflected in the data?
- What is the current trend with regard to education?

Group 3: Age, Nativity and Education Review pp. 7-8 of The 10 Largest Hispanic Origin Groups and pp. 4-5 of Hispanic High School Graduates.

- Latinos have a larger percentage of foreign-born compared to the overall population, but what percentage of Latinos is native-born?
- Of Hispanic subgroups, there are two where the majority are native-born U.S. citizens. What are those two groups?
- In terms of age, how does the Hispanic population compare with the overall population of the U.S.? What does this mean for the future?
- Though inequities still present challenges for Latinos in the area of education, what good news can be found in the graphs from Hispanic High School Graduates?

Group 4: English Proficiency & Citizenship Review pp. 9-10 of The 10 Largest Hispanic Origin Groups

- What percentage of U.S. Latinos is proficient in English?
- Use this graph to see English proficiency levels for Latino youth (majority of the population) versus older adults. How and why might these numbers differ?
- While there are stereotypes of Latinos as foreigners, what are the actual numbers with regard to Hispanic citizenship?
- Why is the percentage of Puerto Ricans who are citizens so much higher than other Hispanic groups?

Group 5: Economics and Healthcare Review pp. 11-12 of The 10 Largest Hispanic Origin Groups

- How does the average income of Latinos compare to that of the average for U.S. residents overall?
- Are Hispanics more or less likely to live in poverty compared to the population overall?
- What would you describe as the greatest economic challenge for Hispanics?
- Why might the question of healthcare be a lively topic for this population?

Part III: Putting the Pieces Together

Use the Stereotypes Vs. Statistics Organizer (one per student) to compare and contrast the myths and realities. How do the demographics line up against the stereotypes? Here are some common stereotypes. You may wish to address others.

- “Latinos are mostly foreign-born and often lack legal residence status in the U.S.”
- “Hispanics are less educated.”
- “Latinos are more likely to be on welfare.”
- “They don’t want to learn English.”

Document to turn in for this assignment:

<http://www.pbs.org/latino-americans/media/docs/classroom/en-organizer-stereotypes-vs-statistics.pdf>