

we are multicolored

This is an outline for a 45 minute workshop for 11-18 year olds.

It can be used in conjunction with the website: flags.tenement.org.

Please check you have Flash 9 player, 56k (or better) internet connection.

The site will work on any browser, and on both Apple Mac or PC computers.

1. Thinking about ourselves visually

Give each student paper and a pen. Ask them to think about shapes and colors and how they might use them to express themselves and their qualities in visual terms:

i. If you were a color, what color would you be? And why?

eg: "I'd be yellow because my star sign is Leo."

ii. If you were a shape, what shape would you be? And why?

eg: "I'd be a triangle because my life is full of ups and downs."

iii. If you were a line, what type of line would you be? And why?

eg: "I'd be a zig-zag because I'm always changing my mind."

It helps to give examples first. Try to avoid having them just pick their favorite color.

Once they have written/drawn their answers, compare them.

Perhaps two students chose the same color but their reasons may be different. Explore these. A color can mean different things to different people. Red, for example, means different things all over the world: Luck (in China), Beauty (in Russia), Islam (in Turkey).

2. A flag = A visual story

We can reveal something about ourselves in shapes and colors. Countries do it with flags.

Some flags tell a little history about the country (e.g. France)

Others flags talk about the different religions you can find there (e.g. India)

Others talk about geography and what the weather's like (e.g. Iceland)

What other meanings do you find in flags? What symbols do they use?

Where do you see flags? What are some of the reasons people hang them?

Introduce the website: You are each going to make a flag to represent who you are.

Guide them through the questions in order that they really consider their answers:

i. Where is your home? (The country they most relate to, not necessarily where they live.)

ii. What other country has affected you? (Ancestors, travel, music, food, friends, movies.)

iii. Where have you dreamed of going? (A plane ticket into their imagination!)

When they finish designing their flag, hit 'Finish', then have them try to write down the story their flag is telling about them: Why did they choose those colors? What do the shapes mean?

3. Wrap-up

What was it like to create your own flag?

Why did we do this exercise when we already have flags for each country?

What are some good things about having similar / different backgrounds?

Should we all have the same flag?

Is nationality important? Why?