



THEY JUDGE ME  
BEFORE THEY  
EVEN KNOW ME

## CATEGORIES

### INTRODUCTION

Shrek and Fiona have dreams. They sing about them in "Who I'd Be." But Shrek sees himself as an ugly ogre; Fiona is trapped in her lonely tower and every night turns into an ogress. Both at the end of their song say their dreams will never come true. "That's how it would be, in a big bright beautiful world. But not for me." They are ogres, and because of their appearance, will have nothing of what they want in life. The way we look, or perceive ourselves can have a great impact on how we live our lives and what we achieve. The trick is to realise that acceptance and success comes from who we are, not how we appear to others.

### THE RULES ARE VERY CLEAR

Throughout our lives, we are regularly 'categorised'. Schools do this all the time, whether it's dividing up boys and girls, or setting students based on their ability in certain subjects. Use the photocopyable worksheet to create a card-sort to use with your students. Ask them to arrange the cards into categories, but without telling them what the categories should be. This is something that they must decide for themselves. The categories do not have to be related to the story of **SHREK THE MUSICAL** itself, although they could be. Most obviously, they could divide the characters into 'male' or 'female', although they may have to create a third category for the likes of the Dragon and the Ugly Duckling. See how many different categories they can come up with by which to divide up the characters. These could include 'animals', 'children', 'human', 'two-legged', 'four-legged' or 'no-legged' just for Gingly! Ask them to consider whether it is fair to categorise the characters in this way. How might they feel to be put with other people in the same category? Does this mean that categorising is always wrong? In what ways do we categorise in real-life that are fair and reasonable? Can they think of any ways that aren't? Ask them to create a persuasive argument for or against this practice of pigeon-holing. In pairs or threes, ask them to develop these arguments into a television or radio debate, chaired by a host or presenter, that features two people with completely different opinions. Either perform these to the rest of the class, or record them on video, or as a podcast.

### I WILL HAVE ORDER! I WILL HAVE PERFECTION!

The idea of categorising people isn't new. In fact, history shows that groups of people have often been selected because of the category that they fit into. Ask your students to investigate historical examples of this sort of categorisation. How often has this been done to a group of people because of their race, or their religion? Ask students to create a timeline, going back as far as they can to discover the first possible example of people being divided up by category. Can they get back as far as the Egyptians, the Romans, the Aztecs? Is there anything in religious writing such as the Bible or the Koran to suggest that people were being divided up when they were being written? As they come more up-to-date, ask them to consider British history – Roundheads and Cavaliers, for instance. And in the 20th century, the Nazi's segregating people because they were Jewish, racial segregation in America or apartheid in South Africa. When they have completed their timeline, giving as many events as they can find, ask them to come to a conclusion. Is there a message in **SHREK THE MUSICAL** that could usefully be learned by history?

## RESOURCES

SEE RESOURCE SECTION ON PAGE 26

