

Guess Who: Introductory Activity for Lessons on Jews or Judaism

Overview

In this introductory activity students guess the identity of famous individuals based on short descriptions. They then try to identify what these individuals have in common (they are all Jewish). This document contains the instructional procedure and identity cards for the activity.

This resource includes:

- 1) A lesson plan
- 2) Identity cards that give a brief description of a famous Jew

Notes

- 1) This activity was designed to be used as an anticipatory set, but can be adapted for other purposes.
- 2) Other famous individuals can be found easily with internet searches. Local figures can be used as well. If adding a member of your school community (such as a teacher who is Jewish), it is important to check to ensure that they are comfortable with this first.
- 3) There are 40 role cards included in this activity. If there are fewer students in the class, the cards can be chosen randomly or the teacher may select the cards that would be most relevant to the students
- 4) The individuals in the list were chosen if they a) publically identified themselves as Jewish, (b) converted to Judaism, or (c) had a Jewish mother (in traditional Judaism, Jewish identity is determined matrilineally).

Goals

- 1) Challenge pre-existing stereotypes by demonstrating that Jews are a diverse group.
- 2) Increase the relevance of lessons on Jews and Judaism by highlighting Jews who will be familiar to students.

Materials

- 1) Cut-out identity cards.

Instructional Procedure

- 1) Distribute an identity card to each student and instruct students not to share them.
- 2) Instruct a student to read the description on his card without revealing the name of the person it describes (the name in parentheses at the bottom).
- 3) Have the other students guess the name of the individual that was described.
- 4) When the individual is identified, write their name on the board. If no one guesses correctly, have the student who read the description tell the class who it was.
- 5) Repeat steps 3 and 4 until all the cards have been read.



- 6) Have students guess what the people whose names are on the board have in common.
- 7) If a student identifies that they are all Jewish, inform them that they are correct. Otherwise, identify that they are all Jewish.
- 8) Use the fact that the diverse group of individuals identified in this activity are all connected by Jewish heritage to segue into a lesson on Judaism or Jewish history.

Alternate Procedure

Instead of distributing the identity cards, the teacher reads the descriptions and the class guesses the name of the individual being described.



Identity Cards

<p>I am widely considered the most influential American feminist after World War II. My 1963 book, <i>The Feminine Mystique</i>, attacked the notion that women could only find fulfillment through childbearing and homemaking. Who am I?</p> <p>(Betty Friedan)</p>	<p>I am possibly the most famous scientist of all time. My theory of relativity transformed the way people understand the universe. Even children know my famous equation: $E=MC^2$. Who am I?</p> <p>(Albert Einstein)</p>
<p>I am a writer, editor, and former chairman and president of Marvel Comics. I helped create many famous comic book characters including Spider Man, The Fantastic Four, X-Men, Iron Man, and the Hulk, and I have made cameo appearances in their Hollywood adaptations. Who am I?</p> <p>(Stan Lee)</p>	<p>I am the father of psychoanalysis and one of the most famous psychiatrists of all time. I am best known for my theories about the unconscious mind. Who am I?</p> <p>(Sigmund Freud)</p>
<p>I became famous as a multi-platinum selling, Grammy Award winning singer and dancer. I was the first female judge on <i>American Idol</i>. Now I am a judge with my former co-star Simon Cowell on <i>The X-Factor</i>. My father's family is from Syria. Who am I?</p> <p>(Paula Abdul)</p>	<p>I am a famous American poet who is best known for writing and illustrating children's literature. I wrote <i>The Giving Tree</i>, <i>A Light in the Attic</i>, <i>Where the Sidewalk Ends</i>, and <i>Falling Up</i>. Who am I?</p> <p>(Shel Silverstein)</p>
<p>I am a famous writer who is known for both my novels and comic books. I wrote the <i>Sandman</i> series, <i>American Gods</i>, <i>Neverwhere</i>, and <i>The Day I Swapped my Dad for Two Goldfish</i>. I won the Newbery Medal in 2009 for <i>The Graveyard Book</i>. The movies <i>Mirror Mask</i>, <i>Stardust</i>, and <i>Coraline</i> were based on my books. Who am I?</p> <p>(Neil Gaiman)</p>	<p>I created the first company to manufacture blue jeans after moving to San Francisco during the Gold Rush. My namesake company is still one of the most popular jeans companies in the world. Who am I?</p> <p>(Levi Strauss)</p>

Identity Cards

<p>I am best known for my role as Carrie Bradshaw on the HBO television series <i>Sex and the City</i>, for which I won four Golden Globe Awards, two Screen Actors Guild Awards, and two Emmy Awards. Who am I?</p> <p>(Sarah Jessica Parker)</p>	<p>I played Captain Kirk in the original <i>Star Trek</i> and Denny Crane in <i>Boston Legal</i>. I am also the spokesman for priceline.com. Who am I?</p> <p>(William Shatner)</p>
<p>I am a famous American fashion designer. I also gave my name to a range of perfumes including CK One. Who am I?</p> <p>(Calvin Klein)</p>	<p>I am a magician known for "Street Magic." I am also well known for my endurance stunts such as being entombed in a coffin for seven days, being frozen in a block of ice in Times Square, setting the world record for being fully submerged in water, and setting the world record for holding breath. Who am I?</p> <p>(David Blaine)</p>
<p>I am a comedian, singer, and actor who has starred in many films including <i>Billy Madison</i>, <i>Happy Gilmore</i>, and <i>The Wedding Singer</i>. Who am I?</p> <p>(Adam Sandler)</p>	<p>I was the US secretary of State between 1973 and 1977 and won the 1973 Nobel Peace Prize. I lessened tensions between the U.S. and the Soviet Union and negotiated both the SALT I Treaty and the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty. Who am I?</p> <p>(Henry Kissinger)</p>
<p>I am an American fashion designer whose label is best known for polo shirts. The logo of my company has a polo player riding horse. Who am I?</p> <p>(Ralph Lauren)</p>	<p>I am possibly the most famous advice column writer in America. My name is actually a pen name and has been used by two people: a mother and daughter. Who am I?</p> <p>(Dear Abby)</p>

Identity Cards

<p>I am one of the greatest magicians of all time and am most famous as an escape artist. I am also known for revealing how many psychics and others who claimed to have supernatural powers were tricking people. Who am I?</p> <p>(Harry Houdini)</p>	<p>I am the medical researcher who developed the vaccine for Polio. Before this vaccine, there were hundreds of thousands of cases of this paralysis causing disease per year. When I was asked who owned the vaccine's patent, I answered "The people . . . Could you patent the sun?" Who am I?</p> <p>(Jonas Salk)</p>
<p>I am a famous American singer/songwriter who is a two-time inductee into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame. I was inducted for my act with Art Garfunkel in 1990 and as a solo artist in 2001. I was the first recipient of the Library of Congress Gershwin Prize for Popular Song. Who am I?</p> <p>(Paul Simon)</p>	<p>I am known as the father of the atomic bomb because I was the scientific director of the Manhattan Project which built the first bomb. Who am I?</p> <p>(Robert Oppenheimer)</p>
<p>I am one of the most famous heavy metal rock stars in the world. In 1971, I founded the band KISS with Paul Stanley. Who am I?</p> <p>(Gene Simmons)</p>	<p>I am a female comedian who addresses controversial topics such as racism and sexism. Comedy Central gave me my own show in 2007. I dated Jimmy Kimmel. Who am I?</p> <p>(Sarah Silverman)</p>
<p>I wrote <i>The New Colossus</i>, the poem that is quoted at the base of the Statue of Liberty. Who am I?</p> <p>(Emma Lazarus)</p>	<p>I am one of the most successful actors in Hollywood. I have starred in <i>Meet the Parents</i>, <i>Zoolander</i>, <i>Night at the Museum</i>, and <i>Dodgeball: A True Underdog Story</i>. Who am I?</p> <p>(Ben Stiller)</p>

Identity Cards

<p>I am a standup comedian whose popular “show about nothing” lasted 9 seasons. I played a semi-fictional version of myself in the sitcom and the title was my last name. Who am I?</p> <p>(Jerry Seinfeld)</p>	<p>I was Al Gore’s vice presidential running mate in 2000. In 2006, I was reelected to a fourth term in the U.S. Senate, but I ran as an Independent because I had lost the Democratic primaries. Who am I?</p> <p>(Joe Lieberman)</p>
<p>I was an African-American musician and comedian. I was a member of the Rat Pack, which was led by my friend Frank Sinatra. I refused to work at racially segregated venues, which helped lead to integration at nightclubs in Miami Beach and casinos in Las Vegas. Who am I?</p> <p>(Sammy Davis Jr.)</p>	<p>My parents moved to the U.S. from the Soviet Union in 1979 to escape persecution. In 1998, I co-founded Google with Larry Page. Who am I?</p> <p>(Sergey Brin)</p>
<p>I am a Canadian-American actor and film producer. Many people know me as the lead in the movie <i>Knocked Up</i>. I was also a writer and actor in <i>Pineapple Express</i> and <i>Superbad</i>. Who am I?</p> <p>(Seth Rogen)</p>	<p>I am one of the most famous movie directors of all time. The films I have directed include <i>E.T.</i>, <i>Jaws</i>, the <i>Indiana Jones</i> movies. Who am I?</p> <p>(Steven Spielberg)</p>
<p>My nickname was “The Man of a Thousand Voices.” I was the original voice of many cartoon characters including Bugs Bunny, Daffy Duck, Porky Pig, Sylvester the Cat, Tweety Bird, Yosemite Sam, and Barney Rubble. Who am I?</p> <p>(Mel Blanc)</p>	<p>I was a famous poet who was one of the leaders of America’s Beat Generation. Government officials seized copies of my poem, <i>Howl</i>, for being obscene. In a 1957 court case, the judge decided it should not be banned because of its “social importance.” This was a landmark anti-censorship decision. Who am I?</p> <p>(Allen Ginsberg)</p>

Identity Cards

<p>I was an English singer-songwriter. My album <i>Back to Black</i> won six Grammys. Some of my famous songs are “Stronger Than Me,” “Rehab,” and “Love Is a Losing Game.” I died in July 2011. The next month <i>Back to Black</i> became the United Kingdom’s bestselling album of the 21st century. Who am I?</p> <p>(Amy Winehouse)</p>	<p>I played Maddie Fitzpatrick on <i>The Suite Life of Zack and Cody</i> and <i>Sharpey Evans</i> in the <i>High School Musical</i> movies. I also have a music career and released the album <i>Headstrong</i> in 2006 and <i>Guilty Pleasure</i> in 2009. I play Savannah Monroe in the television series <i>Hellcats</i>. Who am I?</p> <p>(Ashley Tisdale)</p>
<p>I am best known for playing the father, Danny Tanner, in <i>Full House</i> and for hosting <i>America’s Funniest Home Videos</i>. Though these are family oriented roles, I am also known for off-color and risqué material. In 2008, I was roasted on Comedy Central. Who am I?</p> <p>(Bob Saget)</p>	<p>I hosted the E! show <i>Wild On</i> and the CBS show <i>Rock Star</i>. In 2008, I became a contestant on the seventh season of <i>Dancing with the Stars</i>. My partner Derek Hough and I won the competition. I have three daughters and a son. Who am I?</p> <p>(Brooke Burke)</p>
<p>I am an Israeli-American actress who starred in <i>Star Wars</i> Episodes 1, 2, and 3 as well as <i>V for Vendetta</i>. I attended Harvard University and stated in an interview that I would “rather be smart than a movie star.” Who am I?</p> <p>(Natalie Portman)</p>	<p>I am ½ of the comedy-rock duo Tenacious D, but I am better known for my roles in movies such as <i>School of Rock</i>, <i>Nacho Libre</i>, and <i>Tropic Thunder</i>. Who am I?</p> <p>(Jack Black)</p>
<p>I was an American journalist who was kidnapped and murdered in Pakistan. My family created a foundation named after me to promote cross-cultural understanding. A World Music Day festival with the goal of promoting tolerance has been held on my birthday since 2002. So far, there have been more than 1500 concerts in over 60 countries. Who am I?</p> <p>(Daniel Pearl)</p>	<p>I was a member of the San Francisco Board of Supervisors, and I was assassinated along with the mayor, George Moscone. According to <i>Time</i> magazine, I was “the first openly gay man elected to any substantial political office in the history of the planet.” A movie about my life starring Sean Penn was released in 2008. Who am I?</p> <p>(Harvey Milk)</p>