Across Group Lines

Trace social influences at a community cleanup

PS.5.2 "Examine various types of social influence, including intergroup dynamics, persuasion, attraction, aggression, and altruism."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline two ways school labels shape behavior, circle the organizer's reason for sorting litter, and write AT, AG, or AL beside an example of attraction, aggression, or altruism, respectively.

One River, Two Schools

1. At a weekend river cleanup, students from East High and West High arrived in separate buses. Each group had heard that the other school rarely helped with community projects. At first, students stayed beside their own teammates and blamed the other school when supplies ran low. This is an example of intergroup dynamics: beliefs about a group shaped how its members treated people they had not met. The organizer then formed mixed teams with a shared goal of clearing one stretch of bank. As teammates passed bags and compared what they found, some began judging one another by their actions rather than by school labels.

2. During a break, the organizer asked volunteers to sort litter so the city could track what was entering the river. Instead of simply ordering them, she explained that the count could help the city place more trash bins near problem spots. Her reason was a form of persuasion: she tried to change behavior with a claim about a useful result. Maya from East High noticed that Luis from West High listened carefully and shared his gloves with a student who had forgotten theirs. She wanted to work with him again. Her attraction came from qualities she valued, not just from his school or his appearance.

3. Near the end, a West High student mocked an East High student for dropping a heavy bag. The insult was aggression because it was meant to hurt, even though no one was hit. Luis stepped between them, asked the student to stop, and helped lift the bag. He also stayed after his shift to collect litter from another part of the bank, where he had no audience and expected no reward. His extra work shows altruism because he intended to help others without expecting a reward. These influences do not determine what anyone will do next: people can question stereotypes, resist persuasion, or choose not to retaliate.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How did school labels affect the students before they joined mixed teams, and how did working together change some students' judgments?

2. Why was the organizer's request to sort litter an example of persuasion rather than just an order?

3. What drew Maya to Luis, and how was her judgment different from judging him by his school?

4. How do the motives behind the insult and Luis's extra work make them examples of different kinds of social influence?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Invent a school event where two clubs must work together. In 5 to 6 sentences, show intergroup dynamics, a persuasive message, and either attraction, aggression, or altruism, and explain how each influence shapes a choice.

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PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline two ways school labels shape behavior, circle the organizer's reason for sorting litter, and write AT, AG, or AL beside an example of attraction, aggression, or altruism, respectively. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did school labels affect the students before they joined mixed teams, and how did working together change some students' judgments?	**Students initially stayed with their own school and blamed the other school when supplies ran low. After working in mixed teams, some judged teammates by their actions instead of their school labels.**
2	Why was the organizer's request to sort litter an example of persuasion rather than just an order?	**She gave a reason to change behavior: the litter count could help the city place trash bins near problem spots.**
3	What drew Maya to Luis, and how was her judgment different from judging him by his school?	**Maya noticed that Luis listened carefully and shared his gloves. She valued his actions and qualities rather than judging him by his school.**
4	How do the motives behind the insult and Luis's extra work make them examples of different kinds of social influence?	**The student intended the insult to hurt someone, making it aggression. Luis collected extra litter to benefit others without expecting a reward, making that work altruism.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

The debate club and art club assumed the other group would not work hard at a school food drive. When they were assigned one goal, packing 200 meal kits, they began sharing supplies instead of guarding them. Their shift shows how a shared task changed behavior across group lines. Jo argued that clear labels would help drivers deliver meals faster, so both clubs labeled the boxes. Jo's reason persuaded them to change their plan. Later, Nia carried extra boxes for the next shift without expecting credit, an altruistic choice that helped other volunteers.

Accept other passage-supported examples of group-based behavior in question 1. For the open task, look for a new event with choices shaped by all three requested influences.