Who Gets the Role?

Trace how assumptions can shape opportunities.

S.4.5 "Describe how stereotypes are formed, including the mechanisms of self-fulfilling stereotypes, and explain the impact stereotypes have on various groups in society."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline two places where a belief about a group forms or spreads. Number the steps of the self-fulfilling cycle in the order they happen.

Roles at the Makerspace Fair

1. At the fall makerspace fair, students sign up to build exhibits for the public. A stereotype is a generalized belief about a group that people may wrongly apply to an individual. Some students have heard repeated jokes suggesting that girls are less interested in building circuits. A few past fairs displayed mostly boys at electronics tables because boys had been encouraged to sign up. Viewers may mistake that pattern for evidence of natural ability. Repeated messages and selective attention can turn a limited observation into a broad assumption, even though interest and skill vary among girls and boys.

2. When a student leader assumes a girl will struggle with wiring, the leader may assign her to make posters instead. She gets less time to practice with circuits, even if she wanted to learn. At the next fair, she may feel less prepared to volunteer for the electronics table. Someone who notices only her hesitation might claim it confirms the original belief. This is a self-fulfilling stereotype: unfair expectations change opportunities and behavior, making the belief seem true. The cycle is not inevitable. A fair chance to learn and choose a role can interrupt it.

3. Another assumption at the fair targets students who speak more than one language. Some visitors may treat an accent as evidence that a student cannot explain scientific ideas. If organizers keep those students away from presentation roles, the students lose a chance to demonstrate their knowledge, and visitors miss useful explanations. These assumptions affect groups differently, but both limit access to visible roles and can influence whose talents receive recognition. An organizer can invite all students to try each role, offer practice to everyone, and evaluate explanations by their content rather than a speaker's accent. Such choices provide stronger evidence about individuals.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How could the jokes and the pattern at past fairs combine to form a stereotype about girls?

2. Trace how the student leader's assumption could appear to confirm itself at the next fair.

3. How could an assumption about a student's accent affect both that student and visitors?

4. What effect do the two assumptions have in common, and how could organizers interrupt it?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Choose a setting other than a makerspace fair and a group other than those in the passage. In four or five sentences, show how a generalized belief about that group could form, create a self-fulfilling cycle, affect someone, and be interrupted.

Who Gets the Role?

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline two places where a belief about a group forms or spreads. Number the steps of the self-fulfilling cycle in the order they happen. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How could the jokes and the pattern at past fairs combine to form a stereotype about girls?	**Repeated jokes spread the belief, while viewers may mistake the mostly male electronics tables for proof, overlooking that boys had been encouraged to sign up.**
2	Trace how the student leader's assumption could appear to confirm itself at the next fair.	**The leader assigns the girl to posters, so she gets less wiring practice. She may then hesitate to volunteer for electronics, and someone may mistake her hesitation for proof of the assumption.**
3	How could an assumption about a student's accent affect both that student and visitors?	**The student could lose a chance to present and show their knowledge. Visitors could miss useful scientific explanations.**
4	What effect do the two assumptions have in common, and how could organizers interrupt it?	**Both can limit access to visible roles. Organizers could let all students try roles, offer practice to everyone, and judge their work rather than group traits.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

At a community garden, some adults assume teenagers are careless with tools because they have heard repeated complaints about young volunteers. They assign teens only to carry mulch, so teens get little practice using tools and may hesitate when asked to use them later. Adults might mistake that hesitation for proof of the belief, while teens miss chances to build skills. Rotating tasks and teaching everyone safe tool use would give each person a fairer chance.

Accept other passage-supported wording that distinguishes an assumption from evidence about an individual. For Part 3, look for a plausible source of the belief, a clear expectation-to-opportunity-to-apparent-confirmation cycle, an impact, and a way to interrupt it.