



USE WITH:

Individual students, small group, or whole class



GRADE LEVEL:

Middle school or high school



CONTEXT:

Remote friendly

EDUCATOR PRACTICE

# More Than Meets the Eye

Find ways to bring cultivate curiosity and cultural humility about your students' cultures.

Created by [Character Lab](#)

## Description:

This resource encourages inclusivity and provides information on building authentic, supportive relationships with students (especially those growing up in immigrant families and/or students of color), that may foster a greater sense of belonging.

Est. time to complete:  
**20 minutes**

## Steps:

1. Read through the [More Than Meets the Eye "Tip of the Week."](#)
2. Think about times throughout the school year when your students may benefit from more inclusive, authentic, and encouraging environments.
3. Prepare for these moments in the year by proactively sending out an "About Me" to students and families. This note/flyer can include information about you as well. This may help families feel more comfortable opening up about themselves.
4. Consider how what you learn in the "About Me," or through other avenues, can help you to create an inclusive classroom environment. Bring to mind a lesson or unit you are planning. In what ways are you creating space for your students' unique identities? What else might you want to learn from students to create a deeper sense of belonging?

5. Make space throughout the school year for your students to share things about themselves that are unique, interesting, and/or important to how they interact with the world around them. You can use the "About Me" activity to help facilitate these discussions. By being open to learning from your students, you may build more authentic and supportive relationships that foster a sense of belonging.

### Tips for Educators:

- Consider the following when putting some of the learnings from "More Than Meets the Eye" into action:
- By 2040, one in three children in the United States will grow up in an immigrant family.
- Currently, more than 3.5 million Black children in the U.S. have at least one immigrant parent hailing from Africa, the Caribbean, or Latin America.
- However, when Black immigrant students go to school, they report feeling treated as a monolith, racially categorized based on their physical appearance. The result: kids feel like they don't belong, so they often struggle to persist in class.
- As you are thinking about and planning to bring more inclusive practices to your classroom, consider taking time to reflect on your own biases (e.g., gender, race, ethnicity, sexuality, class, etc.) and how they might show up in your view and treatment of certain students and their families. We all have biases. While this practice of reflecting on biases might be uncomfortable, ultimately it is important to ensure that your inclusive practices have a genuine and positive affect on students and their families.

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#### Inspired by:

1. Suárez-Orozco, C., Suárez-Orozco, M. M., & Todorova, I. (2010). *Learning a new land: Immigrant students in American society* (Illustrated ed.). Belknap Press: An Imprint of Harvard University Press.

#### Related Materials:

More Than Meets the Eye "Tip of the Week"  
<https://characterlab.org/tips-of-the-week/more-than-meets-the-eye/>