



# FLAUNTING YOUR DIFFERENCES

Empower students to embrace their unique qualities and build empathy with this transformative class activity.

Perfect project  
for getting  
to know your  
students!

## Objective

Students will boost self-esteem and empathy by brainstorming positive ways to describe, appreciate, and flaunt their differences. Then they'll brainstorm, organize, and write an essay or create artwork.

## Time

45 minutes (plus additional time for creating an essay or artwork)

## Materials

- Activity sheet: It's Time to Flaunt!
- Contest planners (essay and/or artwork versions)
- Entry form
- Art supplies for the artwork option

## Standards

**ELA: CCSS, Grs. 3–5**

- W.3 Write narratives to develop real experiences
- SL.1 Engage effectively in collaborative discussions with diverse partners

**SEL: CASEL Competencies**

- **Self-awareness:** Assessing one's own strengths [...] and possessing confidence and growth mind-set.
- **Social awareness:** Taking the perspective of and empathizing with others from diverse backgrounds and cultures.
- **Relationship skills:** Establishing healthy and rewarding relationships with diverse individuals.

## Remote Options

Visit [scholastic.com/flauntit](https://www.scholastic.com/flauntit) for a step-by-step version of this learning experience in Google Docs for independent student work.

## Instructions

**1 Explain** that today the class is going to talk about their unique differences. Ask students to answer silently: *Who thinks they are different?* Share that sometimes it can be difficult or uncomfortable to talk about our differences. Ask the follow-up question: *Why might that be?*

**2 Tell** students that this class is a “safe space.” That means *everyone* belongs and can show their true selves. Inform students that each one of them is responsible for making all their classmates feel welcome. Call on students to provide ideas for safe-space ground rules about how to show respect for all. (For example: *Listen to what others have to say; be kind to one another.*) Ask students to explain why these rules might be needed. Write the rules on chart paper to display in a prominent spot, or share your screen.

**3 Pair up** students (or give them the option to respond to the upcoming prompts in a journal entry). Explain that they are going to interview their partners. Remind them this is a safe space with ground rules. Pairs should ask:

- *What do you like about yourself? Why?*
- *What don't you like about yourself? Why?*
- *Do any of the things you like about yourself set you apart from others? Do any make you similar to others?*
- *Do any of the things you dislike about yourself set you apart from others? Do any make you similar to others?*

**4 Write** the following on the board or screen: “We all have differences.” “What makes me different is what makes me, me.” Underneath, write two categories: “Visible Differences” and “Invisible Differences.” Share and discuss the **reading passage**, then fill out the chart together. (Visible differences include: glasses, braces, height, limb difference, weight, and wheelchair use. Invisible differences include: accent, stuttering, learning challenges, dyslexia, autism, and unique family structure.) Ask students how their own visible and invisible differences define them. Remind students that even if they can't see someone else's differences, everyone has something that makes them unique.

## ENTER THE CONTEST!

Teachers or parents/guardians: Submit your students' **essays or artwork**. Students have a chance to win an HP laptop!

Deadline: **11/16/20**

Find a student planner, rubric, and details at [scholastic.com/flauntit](https://www.scholastic.com/flauntit).

**5 Have** students work in groups to explore words people use when speaking about visible and invisible differences. Ask students to choose one of the following to describe each word: “positive,” “negative,” or “neutral.” Discuss why they attached these feelings to their words.

**6 Ask** students what they think “flaunt” means. (“Flaunt” means to confidently display something.) Once the class has a working definition, start a discussion by asking: *What do you think would happen if you flaunted your differences?* Make sure to include the following points in the conversation: Flaunting your differences will make you stronger, help you to have a better attitude about yourself, help other people be brave about their own differences, and show people that differences can be a positive part of life. Share the Kids Flaunt winning essays and artwork from [scholastic.com/flauntit](https://www.scholastic.com/flauntit).

**7 Have** students identify their unique qualities using the peacock feathers on the It's Time to Flaunt **activity sheet** (or have students draw their own peacock—or simply make a list). Then, hand out the **contest planners** (versions for essay or art) and **rubric**. Send home the **entry form** for parent signature. Then, submit the essays/art and forms to the Kids Flaunt Contest!

**8 Ask** whether anyone wants to read their essay to the class or share their artwork. Validate students as they volunteer to flaunt their differences. Explain that it is equally important to respect and celebrate other people's differences. Make a class commitment to value one another's differences. *Tip: Use this work as a foundation for future conversations about inclusion/diversity.*

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