

Exploring perceptions

We all see the world through our own cultural lens. This activity encourages young people to think about how they form their views of people and places.

Aims

- ▶ **To recognise that young people living in other countries may have limited or inaccurate images of what it is like in the UK**
- ▶ **To be aware that our perceptions of people and other places are only partial**
- ▶ **To think about what kind of view of Scotland we would like to present to others**

What you need

- **Where is this place? Activity sheet cut into cards – see next page**
- **Broad selection of images of Scotland which show urban / rural, poor / wealthy, stereotypes / non stereotypes etc**

What to do

In pairs, give pupils two different cards from A, B, C and D. They must decide which country is being described and reasons for their decision.

Share the pupils' ideas and then tell them that all the statements represent views of the UK. They come from Kenyan girls (A) and boys (C) and Greek boys (B) and girls (D).

Is anyone surprised? Why?

Stick the statements onto a chart with 2 columns: those that they think **do** and **do not** describe the UK.

Discuss where the views come from – TV, films, tourists, school books, other?

Ask the pupils to think about what kind of image of Scotland they would like to present to people in other parts of the world.

In groups of 4, the pupils should select five photos they would send to a 'partner' school in Malawi to show them what Scotland is like.

Groups then feed back to the whole class and explain their choices.

Encourage the pupils to see that we may want to present an overly positive image to others about our country but it wouldn't be a balanced view. Consider how our perception of Malawi (or Africa) may be influenced by negative media images or tourist brochures and might not be balanced.

Teacher prompts

- ▶ How did you choose your photos?
- ▶ Do they represent a balance of what it is like in Scotland?
- ▶ Do they show good and bad things about life in Scotland?
- ▶ Do they show cities and the countryside?
- ▶ Are we using stereotypical images of Scotland?
- ▶ Is it difficult to show what a country is like using a small selection of pictures? Why?
- ▶ Where do we get our perceptions of Malawi from?
- ▶ Do you think our perceptions of Malawi are accurate?

Reflection and evaluation

We need to look critically at where we get our perceptions of people and places from. Do we have stereotypical images? How can we make sure we are getting a balanced view of a place?

Where is this place?

**A**

- They eat frogs and snakes
- There are no pickpockets
- There are no black people
- Guns come from here

B

- There are big forests
- They have large roads
- They have beautiful coins
- They have very tall mountains

C

- Their policeman wear red and black uniforms
- They live in flats
- There are many factories
- There are lots of churches and Hospitals

D

- There are lots of old things
- They have a nice climate
- There are many shops
- It has a large population
- The people speak a beautiful language

This activity come from [Failte Malawi](https://www.failte-malawi.org/). Find other teaching ideas for exploring the links and commonalities between Scotland and a partner country overseas.