

Intended for Grades: 4 - 12      Estimated Time: 30-60 minutes      Date: January 27, 2025

Lesson Title: ARE WE SMILING YET? 

**Lesson Purposes:** *Students will:*

- \* Increase ability to determine a genuine or fake smile
- \* Learn how smiling can affect your thoughts & feelings
- \* Understand that smiles positively affect others around you

**Materials & Preparation:**

- \* Small mirrors (to study facial expressions while students practicing smiles)
- \* Computers with Internet access (to take on-line BBC smile test-see site below)
- \* PowerPoint of Smile Quotes (*See lesson PPT Resource; run off copies or prepare to project PPT*)

**Background Information:** (*See PowerPoint and information below:*)

“Too often, we underestimate the power of a touch, a smile,  
a kind word, a listening ear, an honest compliment,  
or the smallest act of caring, all of which have the potential  
to turn a life around.”

– Leo F. Buscaglia

**Steps:**

1. Begin discussion with prompting questions, such as:
  - \* *How many of you like to smile?*
  - \* *How many of you think you can spot a real smile from a fake one?*
  - \* *Do you know what your genuine smile looks like?*
  - \* *Can you smile a real smile on cue?*
2. Share that participants will be learning how to spot a real smile from a forced smile. They will also be practicing how to produce real smiles.
3. Have students take the on-line Smile Survey offered by the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) from England. Facilitate this according to computer resources:

Survey at: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/science/humanbody/mind/surveys/smiles/>

  - Project the survey to have the whole class take the smile test together, writing answers on a sheet of paper numbered 1-20. Pick answer with most votes.
  - OR -
  - With laptops for all, have students take the smile test individually.
4. Discuss findings from the Smile Test. Read information provided with test results and talk story about the impact of smiling and this smile test.
5. After the test, give students small mirrors (individual or share) so they can practice smiling. Pair students up and have them practice smiling at each other.

*Can the students crack a genuine smile?*

*\*Optional Activity:* As students look in the mirrors and smile, have them draw a self-portrait of their smile *without looking at the paper...*only looking at themselves in the mirror. Share and discuss the process, how it felt, and what they learned from this experience.

6. End by sharing the PowerPoint of Smile Quotes provided for this lesson. Students can discuss, pick one favorite to copy, or these quotes can be projected at different times as reminders to smile.

**Reflection Questions:**

- \* *What does it take to produce a genuine smile?*
- \* *Can smiling affect our moods or attitude?*

*Possible Homework Assignment:* Student picks a day that will be their smiling day – when they smile as often as they can. Then they journal how that day was for them.

**Resources:**

\* BBC Science Human Body & Mind:

[www.bbc.co.uk/science/humanbody/mind/surveys/smiles/](http://www.bbc.co.uk/science/humanbody/mind/surveys/smiles/)

\* Quotes about smiles: <http://www.goodreads.com/quotes/tag/smile>

*Additional Background Information - Adapted from:*

## **Your Brain Knows the Difference Between Phony Smiles and Real Ones**

*by Breanna Draxler | June 12, 2013 1:40 pm*

“Smiling comes in two distinct forms; genuine and polite. The genuine kinds are those that result from a friend showing you a hilarious new grumpy cat meme. These smiles are spontaneous and indicative of pleasure. Polite smiles, on the other hand, are the ones reserved for the awkward encounters with your coworker at the coffee machine. You don’t want to be rude, but you’re not actually enjoying the exchange. You just feel like you have to go through the motions.

Whether or not a smile is genuine, it is generally a reciprocal social action. When a person smiles at you, you usually smile back. And more often than not, you respond with the same kind of smile you perceive. In a previous study, researchers found this smile-matching to be the case over 90 percent of the time.

Socially, the smiles have different meanings: a genuine smile is a social reward, whereas the polite version is a social obligation. Since people learn to anticipate rewards, researchers wanted to know if people anticipate rewarding smiles, too.

Researchers set up two different experiments to find out. The first one analyzed natural conversations. Two strangers were asked to chat for five minutes while the get-to-know-you conversation was videotaped. Researchers then counted how many times the 96 participants exchanged smiles in the videos, whether they were genuine or polite, and how long it took for one person’s facial expression to trigger the other’s.

The resulting analysis showed that 21 percent of genuine smiles were reciprocated before the 200-millisecond mark (the minimum amount of time required to process and respond to a stimulus with a complex, voluntary response) compared to only 7 percent of polite ones. This indicated that genuine smiles were actually being predicted by recipients, while polite ones were only responded to after the fact.

To figure out why this is, the researchers conducted a second study. Thirty-five participants learned to play a button-pressing game in which correct answers were rewarded with a smiling animated face. Two of the faces gave fake smiles, and two gave real smiles. While playing this game, participants were hooked up to an electromyography machine that monitored the neurons responsible for contracting smile muscles.

This test showed that participants’ facial muscles started contracting even before the genuine smile was given—confirming that we’re subconsciously prepped for the real thing, according to the findings published in *Psychological Science*. Keep that in mind next time you try to fool your angry landlord with phony politesse.”

*Adapted from:*

## **Your Brain Knows the Difference Between Phony Smiles and Real Smiles**

“A smile is so simple, yet so powerful. Some noticeable effects of externalizing your internal joy are:

**People will be attracted to you** - People will feel drawn to your energy. When you smile more, you will carry an aura and poise that will draw people to you. People will look forward to being around you, knowing only that they feel great around you. We all like and want to be around happy and cheerful people, right?

**Optimistic** - You'll feel more positive about yourself and the world.

**Happiness & Joy** – A smile is an expression of happiness and joy in you. Like an upward spiral, a smile will boost the happiness you feel.

**Healthy** – A smile can affect your internal state, which can have physiological impact on your physical and mental health.

**Approachable** - A smile is so welcoming and will make people feel more at ease.

**Making Other People Happy** - A smile has the power to make other people feel good about themselves. It's heart-warming and has the power to cheer up others instantly.

**Smiles Are Contagious** - Others can quickly and easily catch it and will experience the above 'side effects'.

**Smile at Strangers** -You know those times when we cross paths with a stranger or accidentally catch someone's gaze, and we (both) would suddenly look away in awkwardness. Well, the challenge is to give them a big smile. A genuine smile, showing teeth and everything.

**Smile at Homeless People and Street Hagglers** - Next time someone asks you for money, don't try to ignore them. Turn to them, smile warmly and tell them how you feel. If you don't feel like giving money, just tell them “Sorry, I don't have change now. Have a beautiful day!” Similarly, if something is trying to sell you something or 'hitting-on' you, simply smile and say “No thank you.” I've found that it takes more energy to ignore and pretend to be very serious, than it is to smile. So smile! Make someone's day!

**Smile Fully** - You know that half smile we give people when we're trying to be polite? Like on an elevator, bumping in someone at the front door, or waiting in line. Why not practice giving them a real smile? It'll be less awkward and you can potentially make someone's day, or a new friend!

**Smile at School** - Living under a routine, we can easily be in a zombie-like state when coming to school. The challenge is to practice beaming with smile as you get there. Smile genuinely with people you meet. Be completely pleased to see them. Make it a focus, to bring more happiness into the lives of others.

**A Small Compliment with Your Smile** - When meeting or encountering people, find things you admire or like about them, however small, and let them know. A small genuine compliment can go a long way to lift people's spirit.”

Olelo No 'eau -

I kani ko 'aka i ka le'ale'a:  
i pu'u ko nuku i ka huhū;  
i le'a ka nohana i ka ma'ona

One laughs when joyous, sulks when angry;  
is at peace with all when the stomach is satisfied.

“So true! Our emotions are revealed through our expressions. When someone is happy and joyful, it radiates in their countenance. They laugh, they smile, and their joy becomes contagious. It's hard to be in a room with someone who is joyous and not smile, too.

On the other extreme, when someone is angry, their anger manifests in their expressions, attitude and even their actions.”

- *Luana Kaawa from Maui*

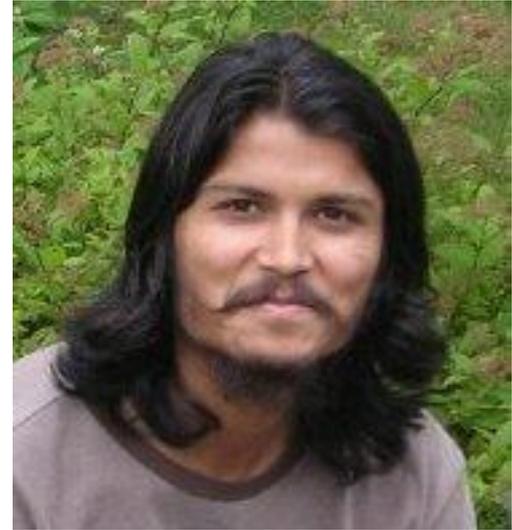


*“Every time  
you smile at someone,  
it is an action of love,  
a gift to that person,  
a beautiful thing.”*

*Mother Teresa, A missionary nun who started an open  
air school for the poverty stricken children in the slums  
of Calcutta, India. 1910 - 1997*

“Science teaches to think but  
love teaches to smile.”

- *Santosh Kwar, Nepalese Poet,  
Writer, Researcher and Engineer*



*“If you have only one smile in you,  
give it to the people you love.  
Don’t be surly at home, then go out  
in the street and start grinning  
‘Good morning’ at total strangers.”*

- *Maya Angelou, Writer and Poet*





“ The world is like a mirror:  
Frown at it, and it frowns at you.  
Smile and it smiles, too.”

- *Herbert Samuels,  
Historical Politician*

*“Children show me  
in their playful smiles  
the divine in everyone.”*

- *Michael Jackson,  
Musical Artist and Writer*





Down's syndrome,  
It doesn't mean I'm down,  
It means it help people  
Who are feeling down.  
My smiles are contagious  
My laugh is medicine for heart.  
My hugs are heavenly  
My heart is PURE GOLD.



“But you’re so busy changing the world...  
Just one smile can change all of mine.”



*- Jack Johnson, Internationally  
Famous Local Musician and  
Environmental Activist*



“Sometimes your joy is the source of your smile, but sometimes your smile can be the source of your joy.”

*-Thich Nhat Hanh,  
Vietnamese Zen Buddhist  
Monk, Teacher, Author, Poet,  
and Peace Activist*



“They say you can't give a smile away...  
...it always comes back!

The same is true of a kind word  
or a conversation starter.

What goes around, comes around.”<sup>[L]</sup><sub>[SEP]</sub>

- *Susan RoAne, Author*

*and Keynote Speaker*