

# What is Beauty?

## Summary

This lesson is meant to be used as one of the very first lessons you would use for a fashion strategies class. Focus is on defining what beauty is.

## Main Core Tie

Fashion Design Studio

[Strand 5 Standard 2](#)

## Time Frame

1 class periods of 60 minutes each

## Materials

No Body's Perfect by: Kimberly Kirberger  
Collection of your favorite quotes about beauty  
Pictures of Ideal Beauty art  
Picture of \$\$ or actual \$\$

## Intended Learning Outcomes

Students will discover their own definitions of beauty.

## Instructional Procedures

1. Brainstorm Session. Have a student write on board, class responses to, "What is Beauty?"
2. Discuss Responses.
3. Beauty Ideals. Beauty is an idea. Everybody's idea of beauty is unique. Beauty is a function of culture also. When ideas about beauty make powerful impacts, they can become beauty ideals. What is ideal beauty? We see it everywhere, from paintings, to magazines to TV. Ideals evolve over time, or they can get stuck in a permanent loop. It seems like beauty is all about trying to live up to an ideal. Which is pretty much a hopeless pursuit, because...ideas and ideals are not real. You are! Beauty isn't just an idea. It's your idea.
4. Aesthetics. Aesthetic refers to someone's personal idea of what is beautiful. A lot of what we know about beauty comes from art. Realistic art and media is the product of choices made by an artist or media maker. While these images can give us a good idea of what people thought or think is beautiful, the images don't necessarily give us a good idea of what people really look like. For example, magazines and TV today do not really represent an accurate cross section of people in the real world.  
SHOW PICTURES OF MONA LISA, EGYTIAN ART, VENUS OF WILLENDORF, TO ILLUSTRATE DIFFERENT IMAGES OF PORTRAYED BEAUTY.
5. Perfect Woman. Read this to class. Discuss. Share some of your favorite quotes about beauty. Mary Englebreit has a good one.
6. Money. Another major factor that has influenced our idea of beauty is money. Historically, looks that implied wealth and status were equated with beauty and looks that were identified with working-class or poor people were thought to be less beautiful. As society has evolved, so have the physical traits associated with richness and poorness. This results in a turnaround of beauty ideals. Example: About 80 years ago in Europe and the U.S., rich people kept their skin as white as possible--because they could. Skin that was tanned and weathered was associated with menial outdoor work. By the 1920's more people started spending their workdays indoors in factories, offices etc. Rich people began

taking vacations to the beaches, making a suntan the mark of the lady leisure. The "healthy" suntanned look has remained something of an ideal.

7. Economic Conditions. Historically, larger (well-fed) bodies types were the ideal. Now, the wealthy person can show their status by their ability to spend time and money keeping themselves fit (eg. Sarah Jessica Parker 6 months after having her baby)

8. Art, Money and economic conditions all contribute to our idea of what is beautiful, but they don't define it. In the end, beauty is subjective, and only the individual can decide what he or she find beautiful.

The point is, BEAUTY is however you see it.

9. Your Own Look! Read this handout. Discuss. Share some more of your favorite quotes.

10. Read excerpts from "No Body's Perfect" by Kimberly Kirberger. These experts are good examples from other teenage girls that have come to accept themselves and consider themselves beautiful. pg. 41, pg. 78, pg. 169, pg. 263, pg. 268.

Assign students to write down their own beauty ideals on a piece of paper. Share with the class, you may want to do this anonymously.

### Strategies for Diverse Learners

Ahead of time, you could hand out some of the readings, from "No Body's Perfect", to students and have them come prepared to read them and comment on them in class.

### Bibliography

Amber Williams; "No Body's Perfect" Kimberly Kirberger; "The Looks Book" R. Odes, E. Drill, H. Mcdonald

### Authors

[Amber Williams](#)