

# MODULE 3

## Perceptions of Policing

---

**Focus Question - What are our perceptions of police and where do they come from?**

### Overview

This module invites students to examine their perceptions of police and where these perceptions come from. Media portrayals of the police are explored as a source of these perceptions and analyzed as to their accuracy. Personal perceptions are also explored and compared to ideal conceptions of policing. Ultimately, this challenge encourages students to compare and contrast their perceptions of the police to reality, and to think critically about their perceptions.

### Learning Objectives

- To see how the media influences perceptions of police.
- To see the differences between personal perceptions of the police and our ideal conceptions.

## MODULE 3 - Perceptions of Policing

# ACTIVITY 1

## Media Representations of Policing

### Materials

- Copies of *Policing on the Internet* (one per student)

### Teaching and Learning Strategies

1. To get students thinking about perceptions of policing, have them complete the worksheet, *Policing on the Internet*. Students will spend time searching “police” and “policing” on the Internet, looking through the image results and completing the related activities. This exercise may be assigned and completed the day before the module begins.
2. Ask students to brainstorm movies, television shows, games, etc. that portray the police in some capacity. Generate a class list on the board.



### Teacher’s Key

Some examples include:

- Movies - The Departed, 21 Jump Street, The Other Guys, American Gangster, Die Hard Series, Police Academy, Bad Boys, Training Day, Crash, etc.
- TV – Flashpoint, Rookie Blue, Hawaii Five-O, Bones, Castle, 24, NCIS, COPS, Law and Order, CSI, The Wire, Blue Bloods, The Closer, Police Women of Broward County, NYC22
- Games – Call of Duty, Grand Theft Auto, Tom Clancy’s Rainbow Six, Need for Speed Hot Pursuit etc.

3. Once there are around 20 examples, have students group them based on the following questions. You can ask a volunteer to cross out or circle the relevant titles.

- a. Which of these portray the police as funny, comical characters?
- b. Which of these portray the police as corrupt?
- c. Which of these portray the police as powerful, violent or aggressive?

- d. Which of these portray the police as compassionate?
- e. Which of these portray the police as professional?

### Discuss the following:

- f. Do you think these portrayals are fair?
- g. Do you think these portrayals are accurate?
- h. If you were a police officer, how would you feel about these media portrayals?
- i. Have you ever seen these kinds of police in your community?

4. Ask students to review their individual lists from the *Policing on the Internet* activity. Repeat the categorization with the image results. Discuss the following:

- a. How many titles (on the board or descriptions from the image results) are left uncategorized? What do those images look like?
- b. Which of these would you want as the police in your community?
- c. If none, what kind of police would you want in your community? (If Module 1 was completed, refer to the ideal police job descriptions).

# POLICING ON THE INTERNET

---

**Do an image search on the Internet of the following terms.**

- police
- police Canada

*To do an image search, select the 'Images' option from the search engine you are using.*

## Questions:

- What kind of images came up for each of those terms?
- In what ways are the images that came up similar to each other? In what ways are they different?
- What happened when you added "Canada" to your search?
- Do you think the images are an accurate reflection of the police? Why or why not?
- Describe the three images that you found to be the most impactful or powerful. Explain why you selected each particular image.

## MODULE 3 - Perceptions of Policing

## ACTIVITY 2

## Personal Perceptions of Policing

**Materials**

- Copies of *Personal Perceptions of Policing* rubric (optional)

**Teaching and Learning Strategies**

1. Divide students into groups of 4-5 and ask them to reflect on their own personal perceptions of the police. Have students use a creative method to illustrate their personal perceptions of the police. Some possibilities include:

- Preparing a skit
- Completing a drawing
- Making a collage
- Writing a fictional story or poem
- Making a video
- Writing a song or rap

Give students sufficient time to prepare their personal perceptions. Prior to starting, you may want to invite students to make a collective list of adjectives and characteristics that best represent their personal perceptions of the police. A few of these characteristics can then be chosen as the ones to be portrayed in the creative expression.



2. Have each group present what they have prepared and ask each to explain why they presented that particular perception of the police. A rubric is available for assessment purposes.

**Extension**

Refer to the ideal police officer job posting from Module 1, or direct students to reflect on what kind of police they would want in their community. Discuss the following:

- How are your personal perceptions different from your ideals?
- How are your personal perceptions different from those portrayed in the media?
- Which of these portrayals of the police (personal/media/ideal) are most accurate?

**Note:** Module 6 may be a relevant follow-up to this module as students would have the opportunity to meet with a real police officer.

# ASSESSMENT RUBRIC

	Level 4	Level 3	Level 2	Level 1
<b>Knowledge and Understanding</b>	Student has demonstrated an excellent grasp of the issue and has effectively and clearly identified a variety of personal perceptions.	Student has demonstrated a good grasp of the issue and has effectively and clearly identified many personal perceptions.	Student has demonstrated some grasp of the issue and has identified some personal perceptions.	Student has demonstrated limited grasp of the issue and has identified only few personal perceptions.
<b>Thinking and Inquiry</b>	Student has demonstrated excellent critical thinking skills and reflection on the issue.	Student has demonstrated good critical thinking skills and reflection on the issue.	Student has demonstrated some critical thinking skills and reflection on the issue.	Student has demonstrated limited critical thinking skills and reflection on the issue.
<b>Application</b>	Student has presented the issue in a very thoughtful and original manner. The presentation is very engaging and informative.	Student has presented the issue in a thoughtful and original manner. The presentation is engaging and informative.	Student has presented the issue in a somewhat thoughtful and original manner. The presentation is somewhat engaging and informative.	Student has not demonstrated sufficient planning and execution in the presentation
<b>Communication</b>	All ideas are very clearly expressed. Excellent presentation skills.	All ideas are clearly expressed. Good presentation skills.	All ideas are expressed somewhat clearly. Adequate presentation skills.	Ideas are not expressed very clearly. Presentation skills need to improve.