

Goals:

- Discuss the nature of beauty and what makes something beautiful
- Get students to think about the difference between objectivity and subjectivity

Introduction Activity:

- Students are instructed to think of three beautiful songs and one ugly song
 - And write a sentence explanation
- Have them talk in groups of 2-3 about first one of their beautiful songs and then the ugly song they chose (explain to your partner why you think this song is beautiful or ugly)

Discussion:

- Have everyone go around and say what their songs are (see if anyone has any in common!)
- Raise your hand if this adjective describes one of your songs:
 - Simple, complex, smooth, happy, sad, gentle, rich, chaotic, melodic
- How did you recognize the beauty of this song? Was it a feeling? A thought? What was the process you went through to get to the belief that this song is “beautiful”?
 - Does anyone think that their song is mostly beautiful because of a memory that they associate with it or a feeling it gives them?
- Find two students who disagree about one song being beautiful (if no one disagrees then Audrey/Tyler can).
 - Why do you think other people might not see this song as beautiful? Is the song beautiful in itself, or does it depend wholly on the listener? If no one ever heard Beethoven’s Fifth Symphony, for example, might it still be beautiful?
- Scientists report that animals (non-humans) do not appear to respond to beauty. They respond to stimulus, preservation, instinct, utility, and habit. Is it possible that we operate like this too or are we different from other animals?

Concluding Questions:

- Do the qualities that we found beautiful in music translate over to other mediums of expression (e.g. art, sports cars, people)?
- What is the difference between subjectivity and objectivity? Can there be objective beauty or is it always in the eye of the beholder? Is there something in all of our brains that unifies our perception of beauty?