

# ScienceNews

## Activity Guide for Students: Seeing Faces Everywhere

### Directions:

#### Article analysis

Now that you have looked for faces in everyday objects and determined whether classmates are more likely to see them as male or female, let's see what happened when scientists studied the same phenomenon. Read the online *Science News* article "[Americans tend to assume imaginary faces are male](#)" that describes the scientists' work, and answer the questions below. A version of the article appears in the March 12, 2022 issue of *Science News*.

1. What is a bias?
2. What do you think the scientists' hypothesized?
3. What was the purpose of repeating the experiment with images of objects that had no faces?
4. What were the results of the experiment?
5. How did the class's results compare with the results of the research experiment in the article?
6. If the class's and the scientists' results are very different, what might explain the difference?
7. Why do you think that people might be biased toward seeing male faces?

#### Designing the next study

Use what you've learned to design a follow-up research study.

1. Based on the research results, what questions do you have about face pareidolia?

2. Pick a question that you want to address and write a testable hypothesis.
3. What can you do to test your hypothesis? Explain the design of your research experiment.
4. What are your variables?
5. What materials will you need to run your experiment?
6. How will you collect data?
7. When people are aware of a bias, they are likely to change their answers or responses. For example, someone who knows that people are biased to see male faces might avoid choosing male as an option because they know about the bias. How might you choose your participants to make sure you are getting reliable answers?

**Activity extension: Conducting the next study**

After designing your study, go ahead and do it. Decide how and where you will do the study, and use the following questions to evaluate what happened after you do the study.

1. What challenges did you have while running your experiment?
2. What were your results?
3. Did the results support your hypothesis? Why or why not?
4. If you were to do the same experiment again, what would you do differently?



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