

Chapter 10: “Don’t Let Stereotypes Warp Your Judgment” from Select Readings (Upper-Intermediate, 2nd Edition) by Linda Lee & Jean Bernard, originally authored by Robert L. Heilbroner:

☒ Chapter Summary

What are stereotypes?

Heilbroner opens with provocative questions highlighting common, yet unfounded, assumptions—such as names, hair color, accent, nationality, or wearing glasses determining attractiveness or intelligence. He reminds us: the answer to all is clearly “no,” yet many of us still believe them .

Evidence—and errors

Research shows that people make judgments based on names: college students consistently prefer “Gloria” over “Bertha” or “Richard” over “Cuthbert” in blind-date scenarios . In another study, students misidentified the nationality of Europeans 93% of the time when matching faces to countries .

Stereotypes as preconceived “gossip”

He calls stereotypes “a kind of gossip about the world,” warning that they cause us to prejudge others before truly seeing them .

How stereotypes shape perception

Heilbroner describes a study where students rated photos twice—first with no names, then with stereotypical names attached. Adding names influenced perceptions of likeability, intelligence, and beauty, demonstrating how stereotypes distort our judgments .

Real-world implications

Stereotypes fuel prejudice. Once we assign mental categories, they influence our treatment of others, often unfairly and inaccurately, and can reinforce discrimination at individual and social levels .

Breaking the pattern

Heilbroner suggests slowing down our thinking—gradually introducing real-life exceptions to challenge stereotypes, and remaining skeptical and mindful of our own judgments .

☒ Chapter Structure & Skills

Pre-reading questions: Prompted by questions like “Is a girl named Gloria likely more beautiful than Bertha?”

Reading passage: Presents studies, anecdotes, and expert commentary on stereotype-driven misjudgments.

Comprehension tasks: Include identifying key evidence, causal relationships (e.g. name → perception), and author attitude.

Critical-thinking focus: Emphasis on recognizing inference traps, bias influence, and the importance of verification.

Post-reading activities: Likely cover summarizing studies, reflecting on personal stereotypes, discussing mitigation strategies, and vocabulary building.

☑ Key Vocabulary & Concepts

Stereotype, prejudge, prejudice, typecast, standardized picture, distort perception, challenge bias, mental category.