

**Cosmetics, Plastic Surgery, & Authentic Beauty**

**MEDIA LIST**

The debatable issue for this project is:

**Cosmetics and plastic surgery can increase a person’s authentic beauty.**

These are sources that can be used in the Cosmetics, Plastic Surgery, & Authentic Beauty unit to teach content and provide source material from which students can build argument and counter-arguments.

**Background Information/Both Sides**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nTFuzk3vKlw>

[Video, 4 mins] 2015 video from The Talko, a fashion on-line media outlet, reviews photos of supermodels with and without make-up. In general, the video makes the argument that these models are beautiful without make-up, though perhaps even more so with the use of cosmetics. It seems to suggest that cosmetics *accent* models’ natural beauty. Some of the comments in response to the video disbelieve the images of the models without make-up.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WWRXOqYwRkM>

[Video, 12 mins] Journalist Esther Honig in a TEDx Talk discussing her “Before and After” photo project, in which she takes a photo of herself with no make-up, which is then “made beautiful” using Photoshop, by people in countries all over the world. The meaning of this “experiment” isn’t fully clear, but it does suggest that the standards of beauty are culturally relative.

**Affirmative: Cosmetics and plastic surgery can increase authentic beauty**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gmp53ZV6kLE>

[Video, 14 mins] YouTuber Lovelyti criticizes the “no make-up” movement for shaming women who wear make-up. She makes the point that Alicia Keys and other “no make-up” celebrities are naturally beautiful so it’s easy for them to go without cosmetics. But some women have flaws on their skin or don’t have natural beauty. Those women can be made much more beautiful with the use of tasteful cosmetics. Lovelyti also critiques the “no make-up” movement for being hypocritical about cosmetics and plastic surgery.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iQvYwXx7N9g>

[Video, 2 mins] Dr. Camille Cash and Dr. Kevin Smith talk about the positive impact of plastic surgery on some teens. Reconstructive plastic surgery can restore beauty lost in an accident, for example, and some teens have body image or weight problems that plastic surgery can fix.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZSAoETxubSI>

[Video, 5 mins] CBS News This Morning piece on the plastic surgery boom in South Korea. South Korea has more than 1 million plastic surgeries per year, spending more than $5 billion. South Koreans represented in this story seem pleased with their plastic surgeries and seem to view themselves as more beautiful afterwards.

<https://sites.psu.edu/siowfa15/2015/09/15/why-does-makeup-make-people-more-attractive/>

Penn State University history of science professor Stephanie Loesch posts in her blog that cosmetics make women appear more attractive to men, though not other women, according to several research studies. The reason for this may be that cosmetics accentuate feminine features, which social scientists have long found to be appealing to men.

<http://www.psychologicalscience.org/observer/beauty-is-in-the-mind-of-the-beholder#.WI4xxH88Nf4>

Article on the Association for Psychological Science website reports on studies showing that people’s perception of beauty is remarkably consistent across cultures, and that makeup can help women more closely approach the universal standard of beauty.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2011/10/13/fashion/makeup-makes-women-appear-more-competent-study.html?_r=0>

The New York Times reports on a study published by Nancy Etcoff, a professor of psychology at Harvard University. The study shows that women who wear cosmetics are viewed as more competent, more likable, and more attractive than women who do not wear cosmetics. The author of the study and several others comment on why that is. One reason may be that women who wear cosmetics feel more confident and beautiful, translating into how they are perceived.

<http://www.today.com/health/people-prefer-less-makeup-women-study-suggests-2D79609763>

A recent study published in the Quarterly Journal of Experimental Psychology concludes that cosmetics do make women appear more beautiful to both other women and to men, but it is the amount of cosmetics being worn that is key. A relatively small amount of make-up, cosmetics that are applied to look natural, is the most attractive to others.

<http://money.usnews.com/money/careers/articles/2008/05/12/why-people-are-investing-in-better-looks>

U. S. News reports on a trend toward using plastic surgery to enhance career prospects and to get a competitive edge in the workplace. Average people, not just celebrities or wealthy people, are getting more plastic surgery done because people with a more attractive physical appearance get a better response from other business people, are more welcome, are listened to more, etc.

**Negative: Cosmetics and plastic surgery cannot increase authentic beauty**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=63XsokRPV_Y>

[Video, 15 mins] Northwestern University psychology professor Renee Engeln discusses in a 2013 TEDx talk what she calls “beauty sickness.” Women are afflicted by an irrational comparison of themselves to media images of beauty that they know are unrealistic and idealized. But they can’t help being thrust into emotional suffering in the face of media images of beauty that they don’t rationally accept.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SeMHFJyd5L4>

[Video, 12 mins] Amber Starks, a cosmetic company owner, argues that there is no objective standard of beauty. Rather, all beauty is relative and culturally constructed. People should reject any universal definition of beauty and embrace diversity and the view that everyone can be viewed as beautiful the way they are.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wzTW8zZO0ho>

[Video, 4 mins] YouTuber Nicki Swift quotes from and comments on Alicia Keys’ “no make-up” manifesto. Keys argues that cosmetics are used to cover up, hide, obscure the real person, and that wearing make-up made her confused about who she really was and hurt her self-esteem. Keys doesn’t reject all cosmetics all the time, but doesn’t seem to believe that they can increase actual beauty.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GmbFPPiK6D8>

[Video, 4 mins] Alicia Keys in a 2016 interview on the NBC News program “Today” states that giving up cosmetics has been liberating and empowering. People should make up their own minds about using or not using make-up, but they should “be themselves.” In saying this, she seems to suggest that wearing cosmetics doesn’t allow people to be their authentic selves.

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/sciencetech/article-2586102/Bare-really-beautiful-Men-women-attractive-LESS-make-on.html>

New research shows that people have mistaken assumptions about cosmetics and appearance. Both sexes assume that women look better with make-up on, but actual response data reveal that men prefer women with very little or no make-up on.

<http://everydayfeminism.com/2016/01/when-beauty-equals-white/>

Maisha Johnson, of Everyday Feminism, argues that cosmetics and plastic surgery are part of a beauty industry that is racist. Beauty norms that encourage the use of cosmetics are also fundamentally about looking more like European people, so when people say that make-up makes women look more beautiful they are being racist, whether they know it or not.

<http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2014/08/07/cons-of-plastic-surgery_n_5618623.html>

Yagena Shah of the Huffington Post lays out four reasons not to get plastic surgery. One of them reports on research showing that people do not look any more attractive, according to a surveyed sample of people reviewing before and after photographs, following plastic surgery procedures.

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/health/news/9833321/Dont-promise-women-they-will-be-more-beautiful-cosmetic-surgeons-warned.html>

The British Royal College of Surgeons have warned plastic surgeons not to tell patients that plastic surgery will make them more beautiful or that it will make them look like celebrities.