

**DEVELOPING****YOUR PERSONAL  
IDENTITY****Model**

Melinda is applying to enter a month-long summer sculpting and painting program for teens. One of the questions on the application asked her to describe herself in a short essay. Melinda began to think about who she is and what makes her unique. First she thought about all of her everyday activities: classes, band practice, and the time she spends baby-sitting her younger brother. Then she thought about the people who are important to her: her parents, her brother, and her best friends. They had all encouraged her to apply to the summer program. Finally she thought about her artwork. She remembered how proud she had felt when she completed her latest painting. She realized that her routine, the people around her, and her interests influenced her in significant ways.





## Analyzing Influences

Both internal and external influences affect who you are. These influences may include:

- Internal**
- Interests
  - Likes/dislikes
  - Fears
  - Curiosity
- External**
- Family
  - Friends
  - Media
  - Culture

## Practice

Many different factors make each person special. How can you find out more about what makes you who you are? Learning about your personal identity is like putting together a jigsaw puzzle. To develop a strong sense of self, you must be clear about what influences you. This will help you make good decisions that will build your self-esteem.

Copy the chart below onto a separate sheet of paper. Place a check mark in the column(s) that identify the major influences in your life right now. Then review your responses, and circle any check marks that would have been different two to three years ago. Explain why this is so.

## Apply/Assess

Using scissors and magazines, cut out pictures and words that describe you and the influences in your life. Glue the individual pieces onto poster board to make a collage. Be prepared to explain your collage to the class.

## Self-Check

- Does my collage show internal influences in my life?
- Does my collage show external influences in my life?

### What Influences Your Personal Identity?

ACTION	INFLUENCES				
	Myself	Family	Friends	School	Media
How I Feel					
What I Think/Believe					
Who I Spend Time With					
My Activities					
What I Wear					