Theory of Mind Inventory-2

About Face: Teaching basic emotion recognition through talking & drawing

Activity 1:
Happy, Sad, Mad, or Scared?

- Happy, sad, mad, and scared are the emotions that children first learn to recognize and discriminate (Caron et al., 1982; Crawford et al., 2015; Nelson & Dolgin, 1985)

- In this first exercise, explore emotion recognition with your student through inspection of cartoons paired with focused drawing activities.

- When thinking about the identification of emotions, talk with the student about what the eyes are doing, what the mouth is doing, what the pictures for one emotion have in common, and also how might they differ.

Let's begin by looking at the emotions: happy, sad, mad, and scared

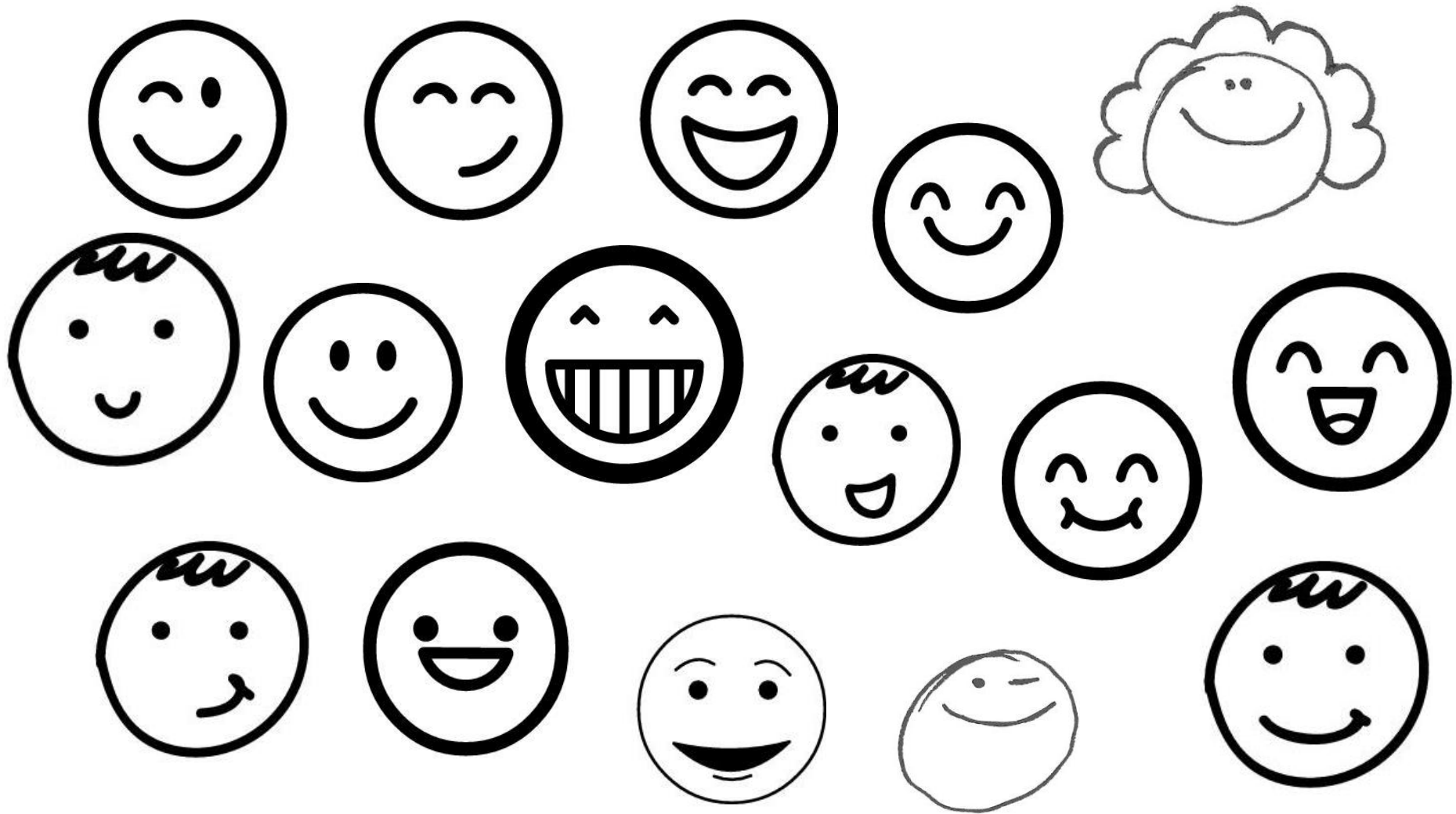This face looks_____

This face looks_____

This face looks_____

This face looks_____

Now let's just look at happy faces.
The faces are drawn differently but they are all happy faces.
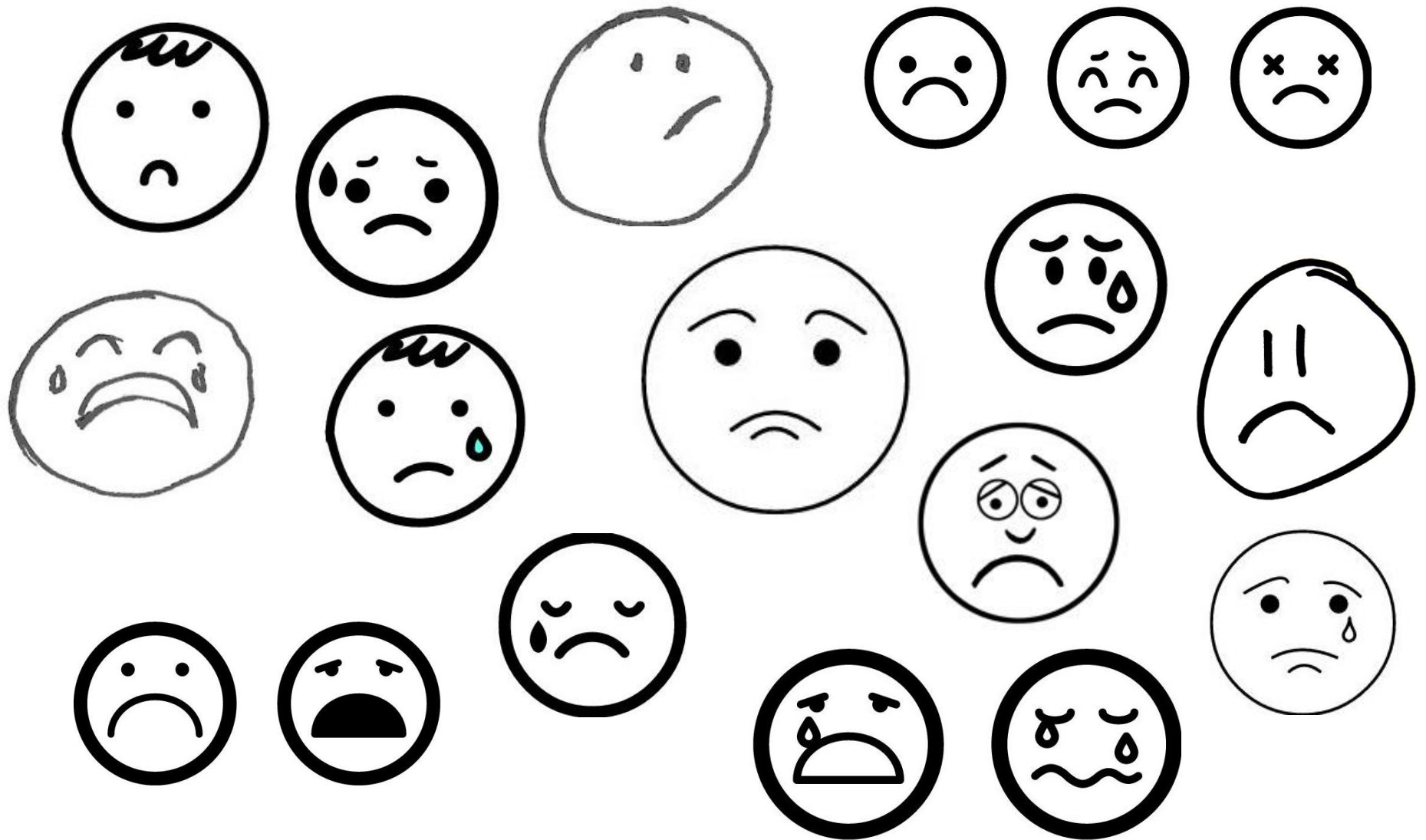How can you tell that they are all happy faces?

Now it's your turn to draw faces.
For these faces, let's make them all look happy!

Now let's just look at sad faces.
The faces are drawn differently but they are all sad faces.
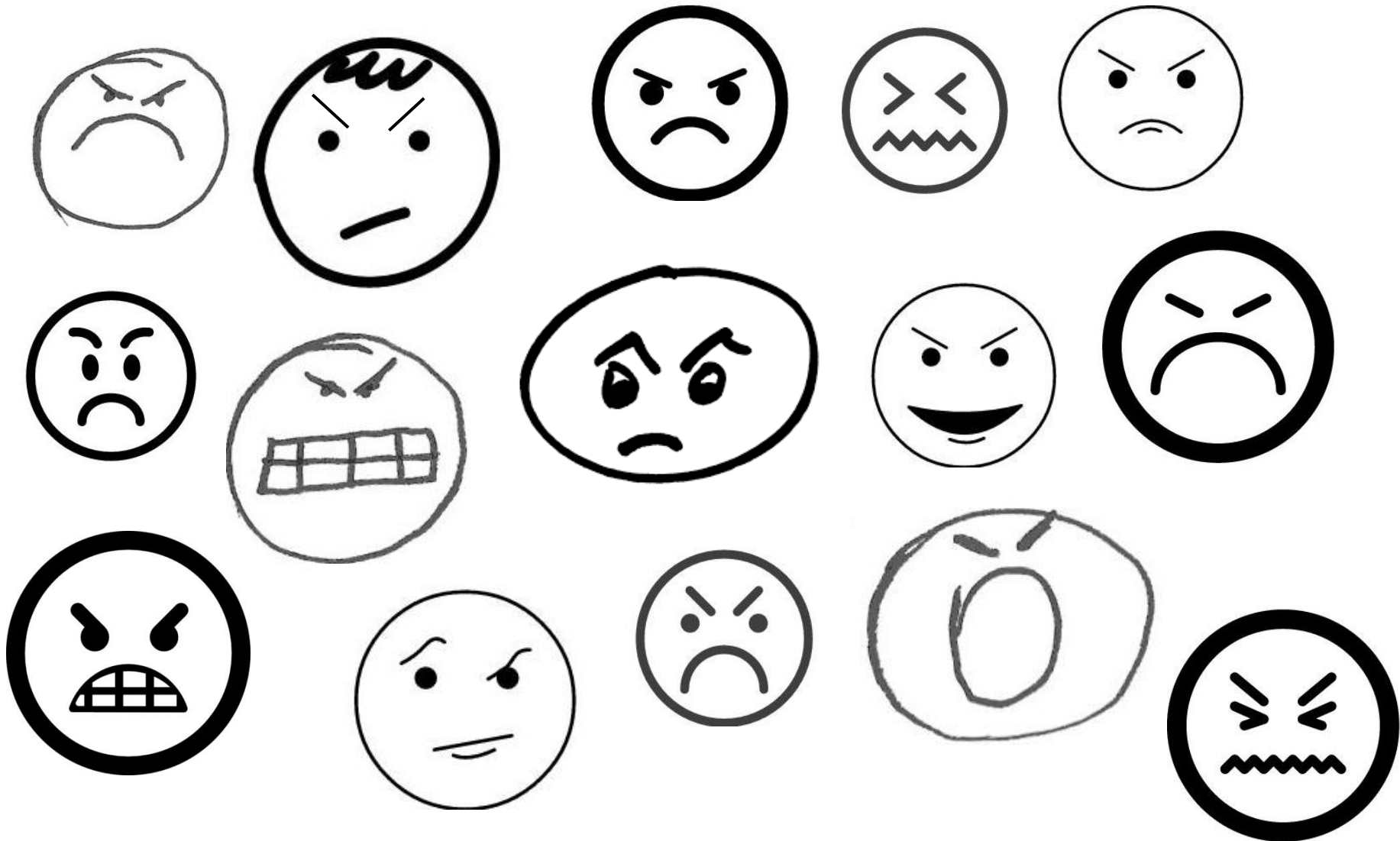How can you tell that they are all sad faces?

Now it's your turn to draw faces.
For these faces, let's make them all look sad!

Now let's just look at mad faces.
The faces are drawn differently but they are all mad faces.
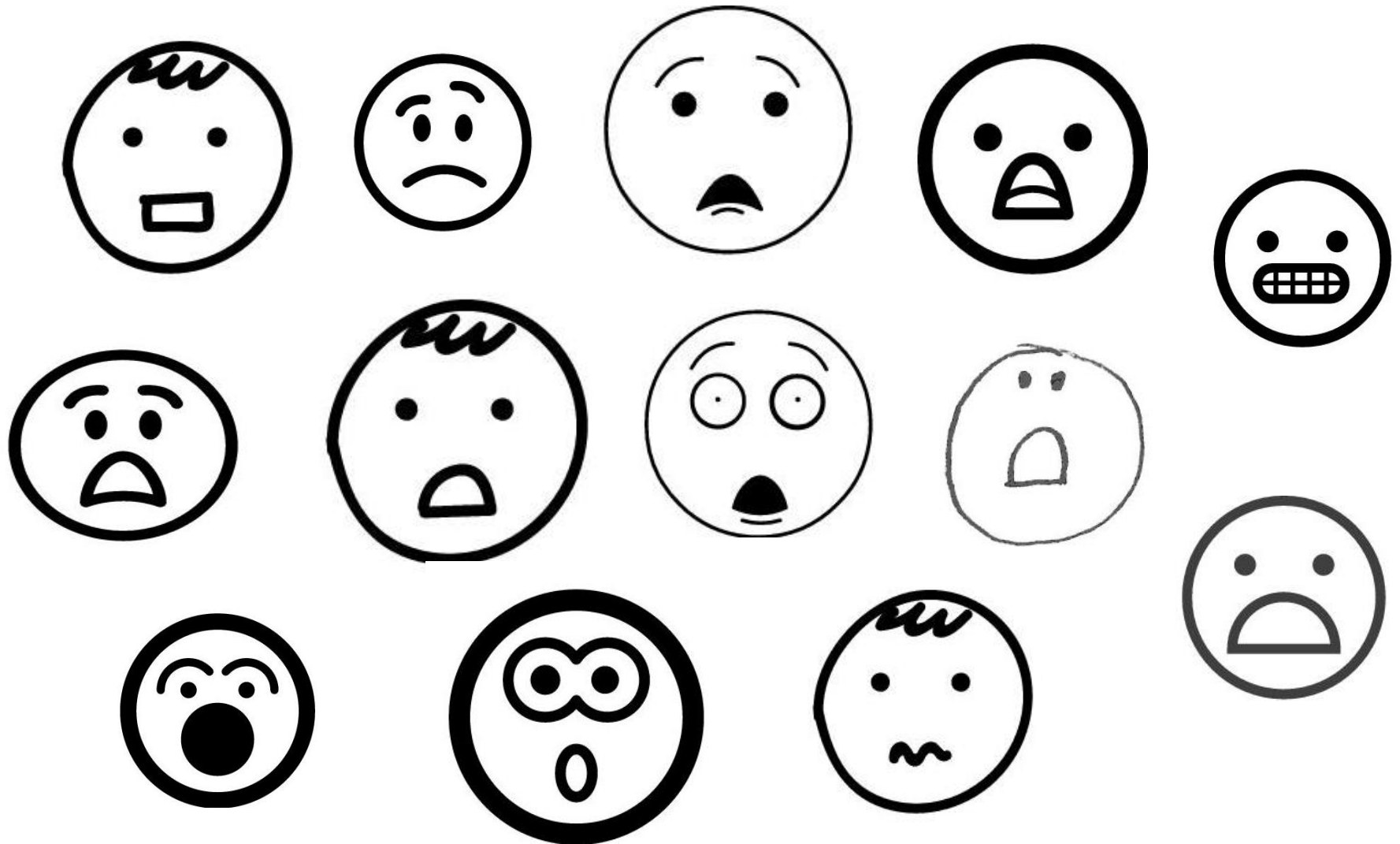How can you tell that they are all mad faces?

Now it's your turn to draw faces.
For these faces, let's make them all look mad!

Now let's just look at scared faces.
The faces are drawn differently but they are all scared faces.
How can you tell that they are all scared faces?

Now it's your turn to draw faces.
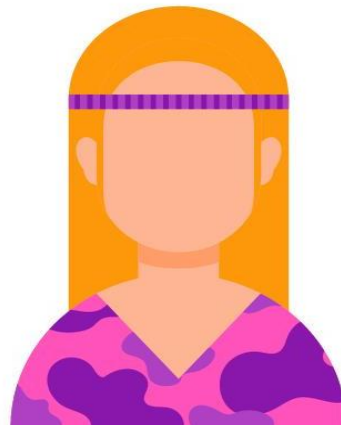For these faces, let's make them all look scared!

Give us each a different emotion

I'm feeling _____

I'm feeling _____

I'm feeling _____

I'm feeling _____

Activity 2:
Small emotion? Big emotion?

- Research suggests that an important part of emotion recognition is being able to identify the same emotion when it is displayed with varying intensity (Miranda et al., 2015).

- In this next exercise, explore emotion intensity with your student through drawing.
  - Strong expressions involve the whole face in large, obvious expressions whereas subtle expressions involve small expressions that often appear only in one region of the face (e.g., just brows, eyelids, or lips; Miranda et al., 2015)

- Introduce language such as "a little scared", "very mad", a "small feeling", and a "big feeling" while limiting your discussion to the basic emotion categories: happy, sad, mad, and scared.
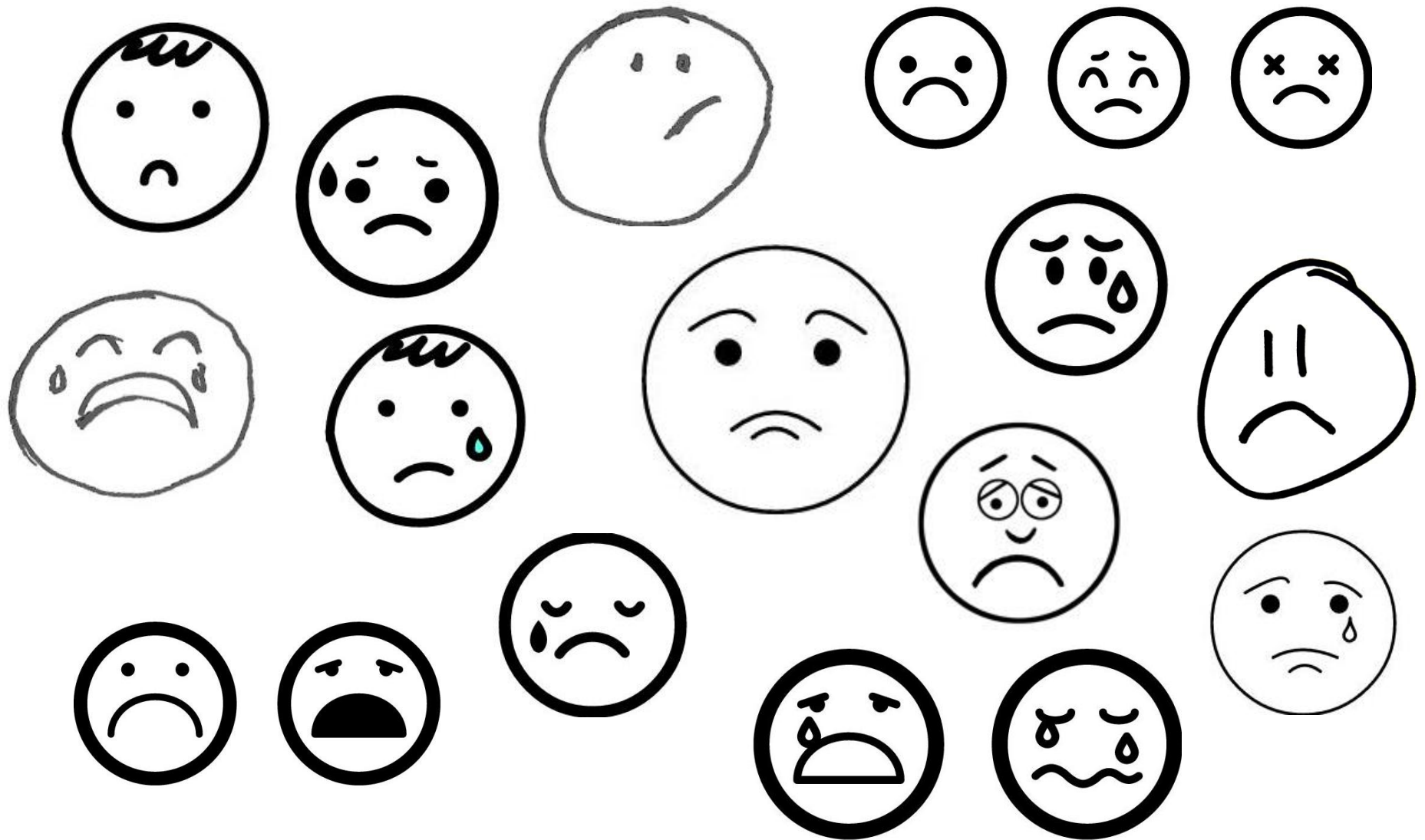
Let's look at the happy faces again.
Some faces look a little happy and others look very happy?
How can you tell which is which?
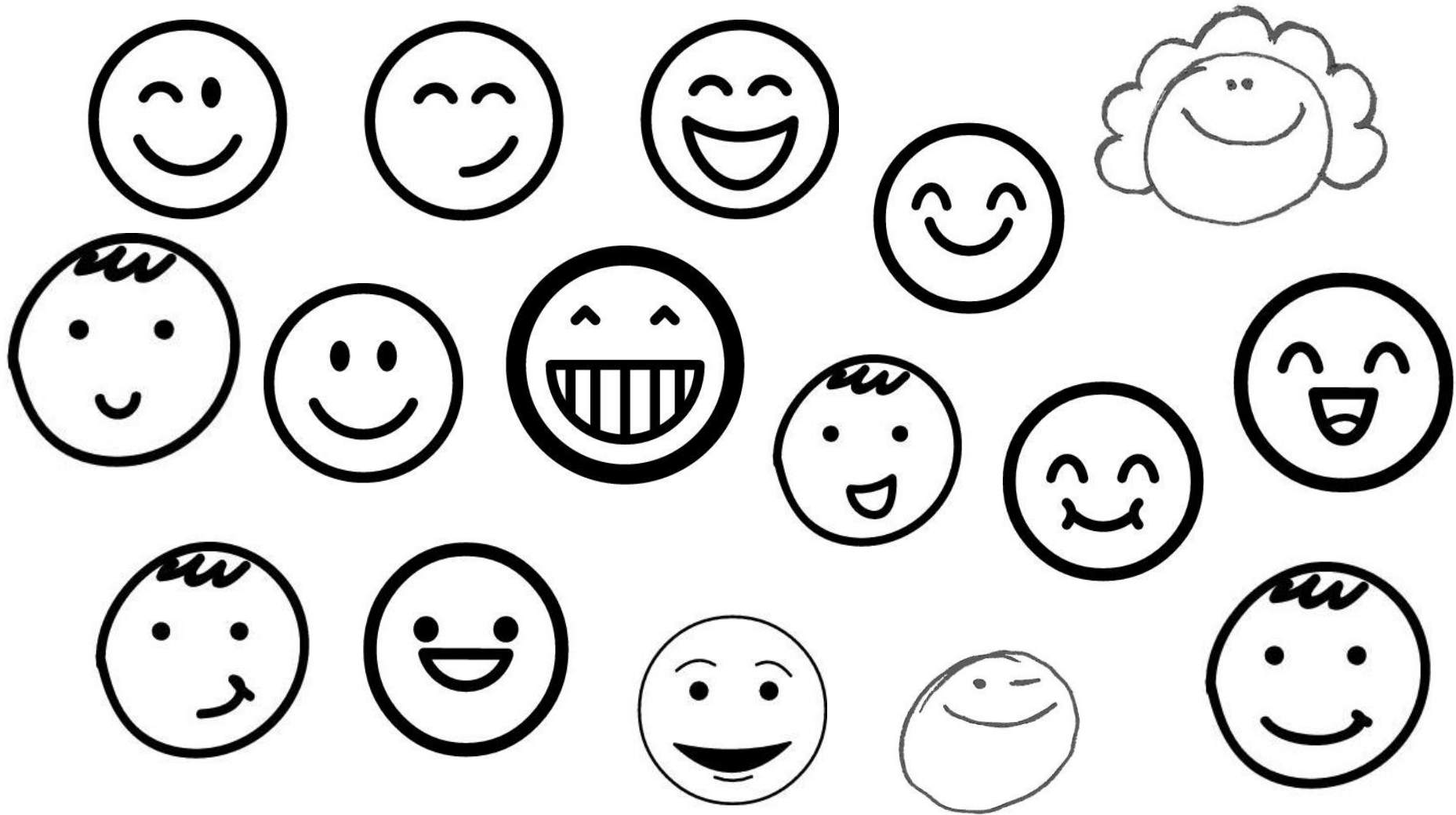
Now it's your turn to draw.
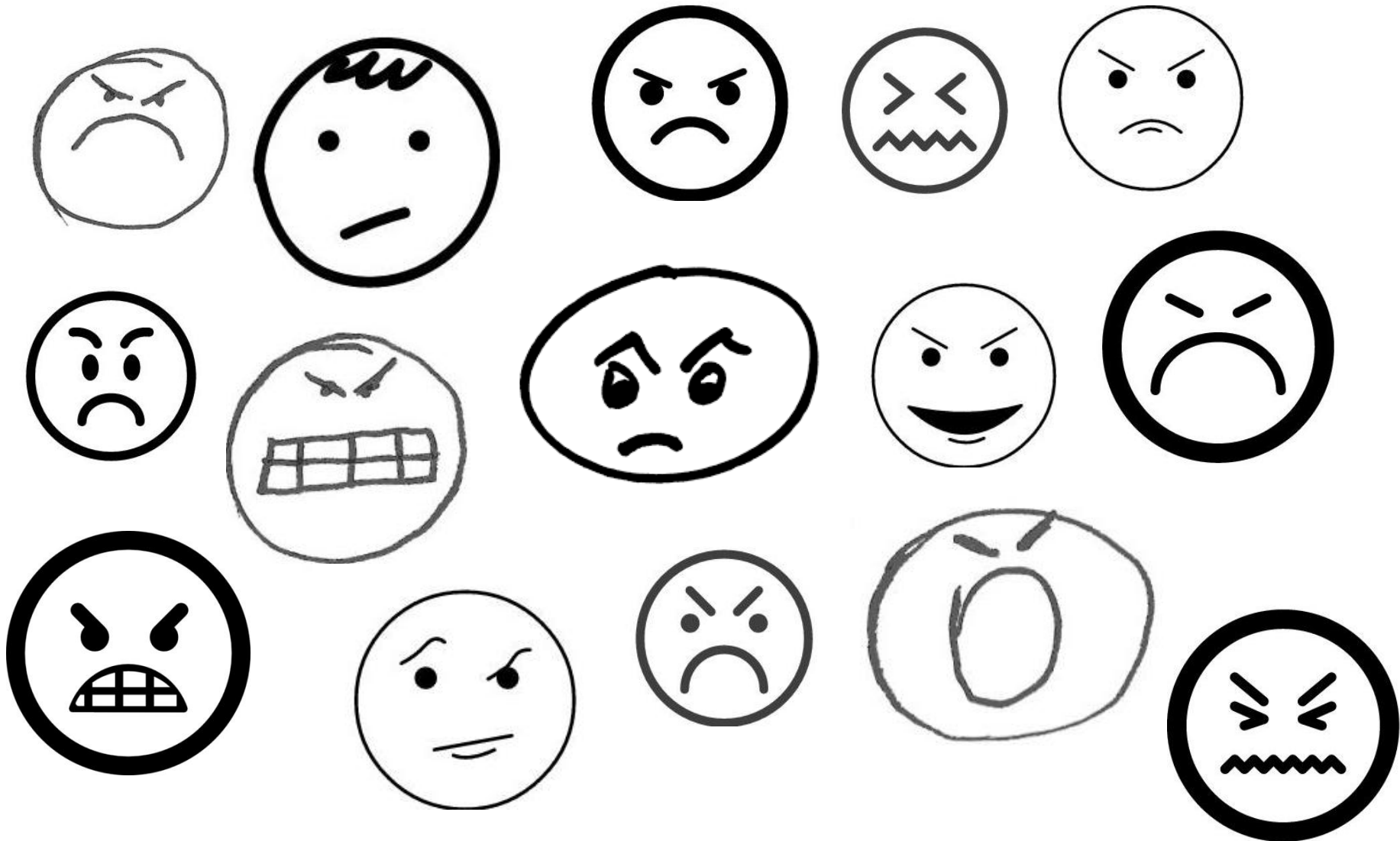## Make one girl a little happy and other girl very happy.

Let's look at the sad faces again.
Some faces look <u>a little</u> sad and others look <u>very</u> sad?
How can you tell which is which?

Now it's your turn to draw.
Make one boy a little sad and other boy very sad.

Let's look at the mad faces again.
Some faces look <u>a little</u> mad and others look <u>very</u> mad?
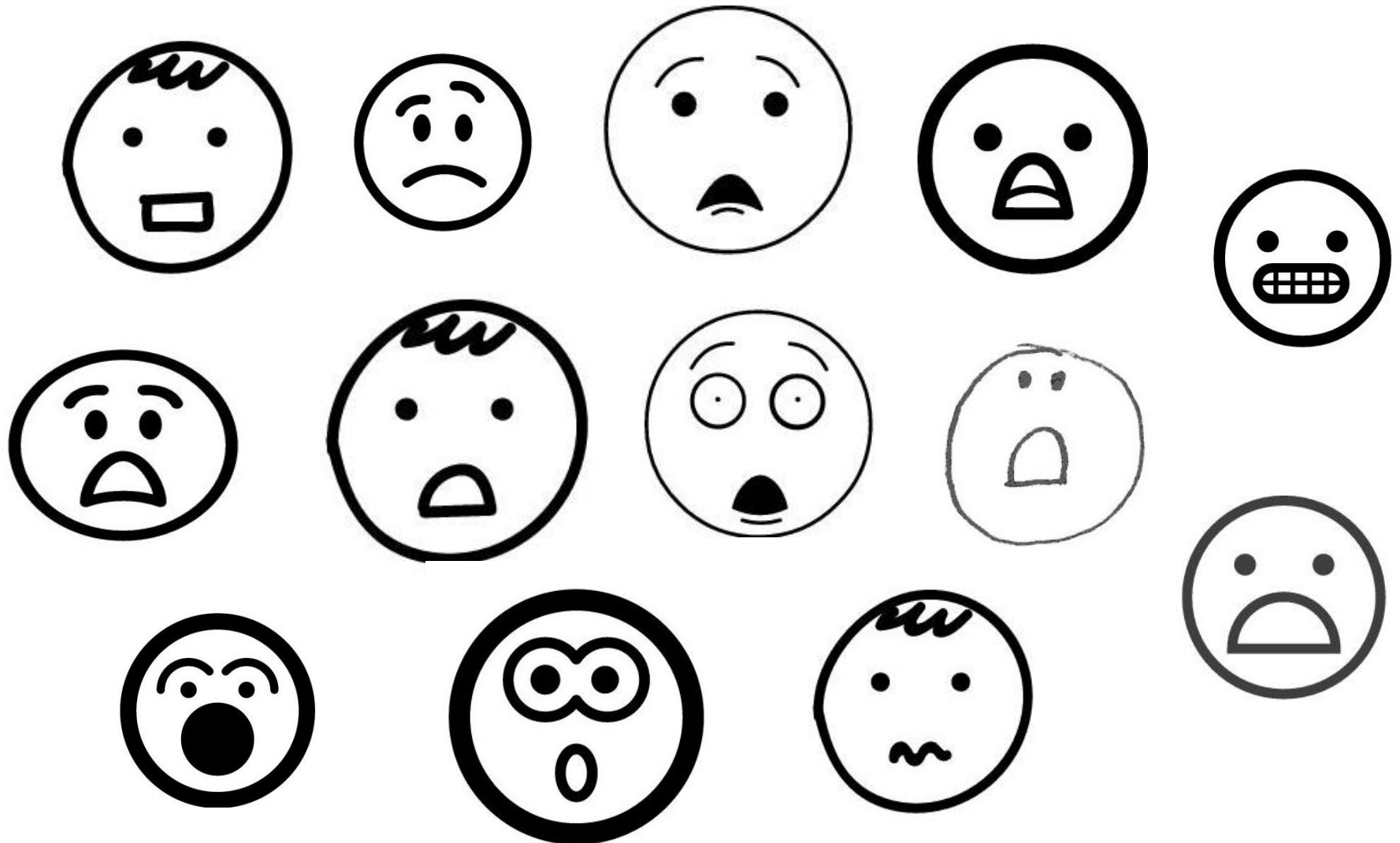How can you tell which is which?

Now it's your turn to draw.
Make one girl a little mad and other girl very mad.

Let's look at the scared faces again.
Some faces look a little scared and others look very scared?
How can you tell which is which?

Now it's your turn to draw.
Make one boy a little scared and other boy very scared.

Activity 3: Build a face!

• Research suggests that systematic manipulation of facial expressions can help teach emotion recognition (Miranda et al., 2015).

• For this activity, use the following pages for an emotion mix-and-match exercise.

• Begin with the eye and mouth shapes that the student is familiar with and systematically swap out different eyes or mouth shapes to see what happens to the emotion.

   • Teach the lesson that a small difference in expression can make a big difference in the we emotion see. Once the student masters how subtle changes in eye or mouth configuration affect recognition of the basic emotions happy, sad, mad, and scared, it may be time to move on to more advanced cognitive emotions such as surprise and disgust as well as self-conscious emotions like guilt, embarrassment, and pride.
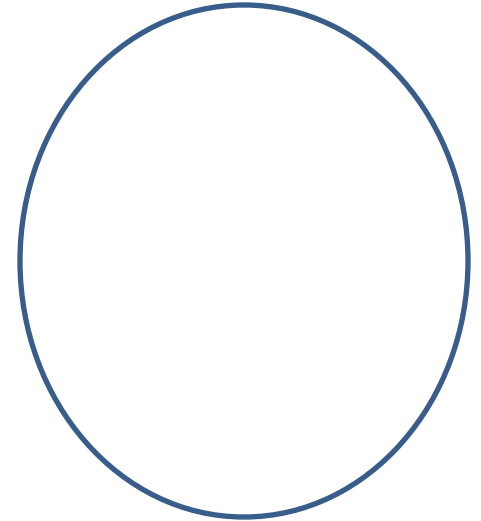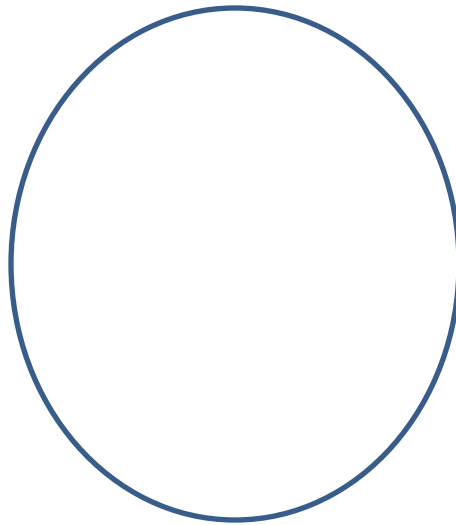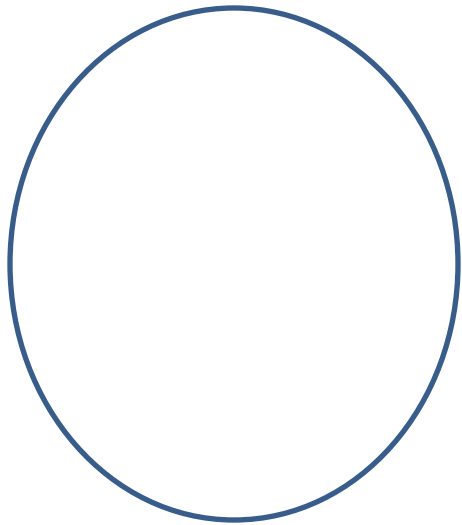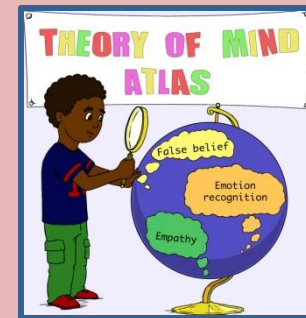
Pick some eyes
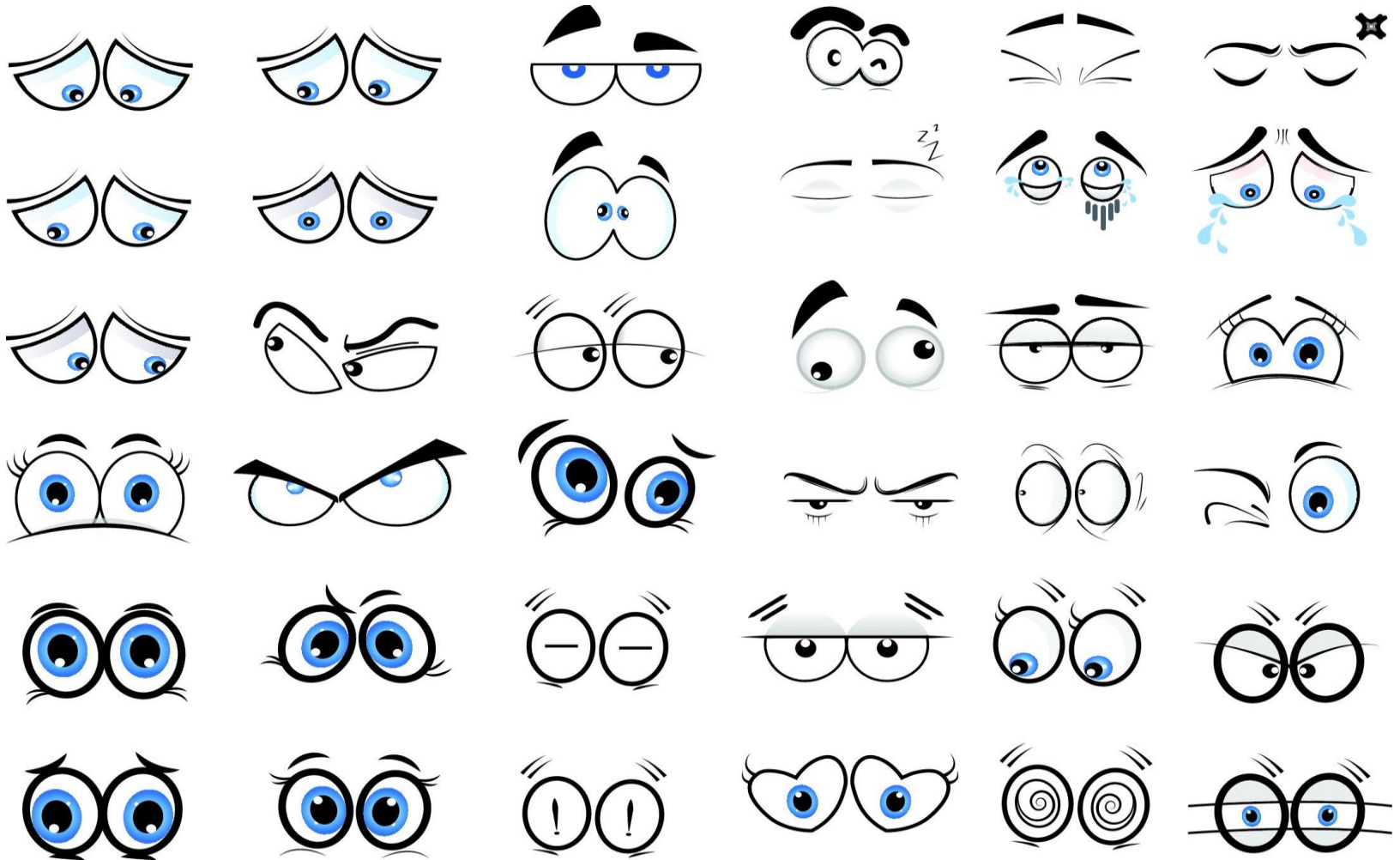
Pick some mouths
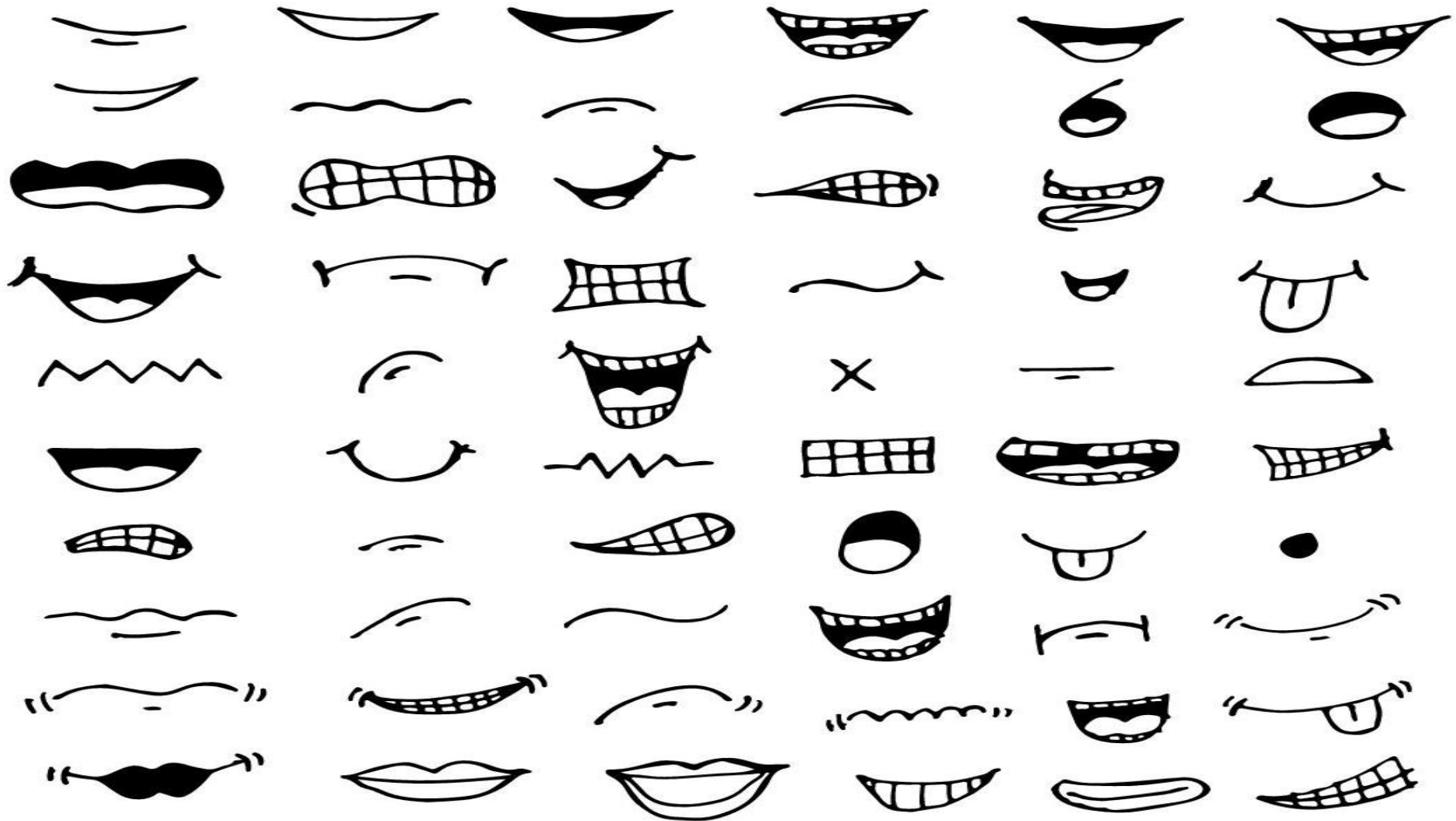
Build some faces!

Learn more?

- For more information about basic emotion discrimination, visit the Theory of Mind Atlas at theoryofmindinventory.com

- You can also read about each emotion individually as the atlas describes the nature and development of happy, sad, mad, and scared recognition and how it is affected in ASD, ADHD, and children with hearing loss.

References

Caron, R. F., Caron, A. J., & Myers, R. S. (1982). Abstraction of invarian face expression in infancy. *Child Development,* 1008-1015. http://dx.doi.org/10.2307/1129141

Crawford, H., Moss, J., Anderson, G. M., Oliver, C., & McCleery, J. P. (2015). Implicit discrimination of basic facial expressions of positive/negative emotion in fragile X syndrome and autism spectrum disorder. *American Journal of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities, 120*(4), 328-345.

Miranda, J., Fernandez, T., Sousa, A., & Orvalho, C. (2015). Interactive technology: Teaching people with autism to recognize facial emotions. In T. Williams (Ed.), *Autism spectrum disorders: From genes to environment* (pp. 299-312). Shanghai: InTech.

Nelson, C. A., & Dolgin. K. G. (1985). The generalized discrimination of facial expressions by seven-month-old infants. *Child Development, 5*, 58-61. http://dx.doi.org/10.2307/1130173