

A STORY OF INCLUSION

JILLIAN WEIR

Jillian Weir was born February 9th 1993 in Menlo Park, California. Jillian comes from a very diverse background. Her Canadian grandmother is Mohawk from the Tyendinaga Territory, and her father is from England and has Jamican parents. Jillian's father is also an accomplished three time Olympian, professional football player and coach! This meant Jillian grew up around different sports starting at a very young age.

“My brother and I would go to the track while Dad was coaching, whether it was playing in the long jump pit, running around the track or hanging out on the field.”As a student, she was surrounded in an inclusive athletic environment and encouraged to try a variety of sports. In school she played all different kinds of sports such as water polo, basketball and track and field.



Jillian began to focus on shot put and discus throwing, and went to university to compete. “At first, shot put and discus throwing were really my main events with hammer throwing kind of as a third event.” Eventually, Jillian moved to a larger university and started to train more in hammer throwing. “I just kind of found my own halfway through university and was really able to develop my skill from there.”

Jillian was then able to pursue and continue with hammer throwing all the way to the Olympics. Jillian competed in the Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games placing 19th for Team Canada which is the second best all time by a Canadian woman in the hammer throw. It wasn’t always easy for Jillian though. She faced stereotyping as one of the few athletes of colour within hammer throwing. However, this didn’t stop Jillian. “Track and field is a sport where it doesn’t matter what your gender is, your size, or the colour of your skin, there is an event for everybody.”

During the summer, when Jillian was young, she would travel back to Canada with her family. This was an important connection back to Jillian’s Indigenous roots. “We would go to the reserve as often as we could and I just have such fond memories of seeing family and getting authentic moccasins and dream catchers. I always had a dreamcatcher in my room and I still do. There were little pieces of my background and culture that were comforting that I liked to have and be a part of.” Jillian still makes sure to go back to Tyendinaga, and even visited many schools on the reserve as a guest speaker with her grandmother in 2021. While growing up in California, Jillian and her family would attend a Pow Wow every Mother’s Day weekend. “My mom always made a point to take my brother and me to that so we would recognize that this is similar to our Indigenous family back home. It was something that we really looked forward to going to each year, just to be connected to the culture and support the families that were there.”

Inclusion is a theme that has stuck with Jillian throughout her years as a competitive athlete and an Olympian. “Everybody wants a place where they feel that they belong. When you compete in athletics and in sport, no matter what level, what matters is being able to go out there and do your best. It doesn’t matter where you come from, what you look like, what your beliefs are or anything like that. Sport, for me, is really a place where everyone belongs and all those other identities don’t have to define you.”



LEARNING ACTIVITIES

LEARNING GOAL

By the end of the lesson students should have an understanding of what inclusion is and how it relates to the concept of diversity. Students will learn about the importance of diversity within different spaces and that diversity ensures that everyone feels represented. Diversity includes identifiers such as our race, nationality, gender, sexuality and physical ability. Inclusion is a human right and it ensures we have a broad range of diversity in our communities, leadership, schools, sport and culture

MATERIALS

Jillian Weir Athlete story, chart paper or a board for students to see examples, inclusion maps BLM

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Discuss the quote from the athlete story “Track and field is a sport where it doesn’t matter what your gender is, your size, or the colour of your skin, there is an event for everybody.” Why is it important that sports and activities are inclusive and how does it relate to feelings of belonging?

Why is it important to ensure inclusion in roles of leadership?

Who’s voice are we missing if we don’t make active choices to include people of diverse backgrounds?

How are inclusion and diversity related? Is it possible to have inclusion without diversity?



CONNECT

After reading Jillian Weir's athlete story and going over a few discussion questions, make an identity map (similar to a mind map with the topic in the middle and bubbles surrounding it). This will be an example to work through with the whole class before students create their own. As a class, discuss examples of inclusion from the athlete story. If students need more examples, you can create an additional example with someone all students are familiar with.

Ex. Jillian is a woman and an athlete of colour. Jillian has both Mohawk and Jamaican heritage. Jillian competed in shot put and discus and hammer throwing and has a diverse background in track and field sports

Please see examples of potential layouts for the identity maps. Be sure to adjust the amount of bubbles and complexity of the maps based on student level and ability. The map can be modified and adjusted to support all different learners, they can also express their identity map through pictures instead of words, or support their words with drawings.

PROCESS

Students will now make their own identity maps. Students can include as much or as little information as they would like, however they should aim to have at least four bubbles on their maps. Let students know that our identity maps will be displayed. Information can include things such as gender, race, culture, hometown, place of birth, hobbies, and family. Make sure students can see the example created as a whole class as well as examples of what they can include on their inclusion maps while they work on it. Encourage students to decorate their maps once they are finished.

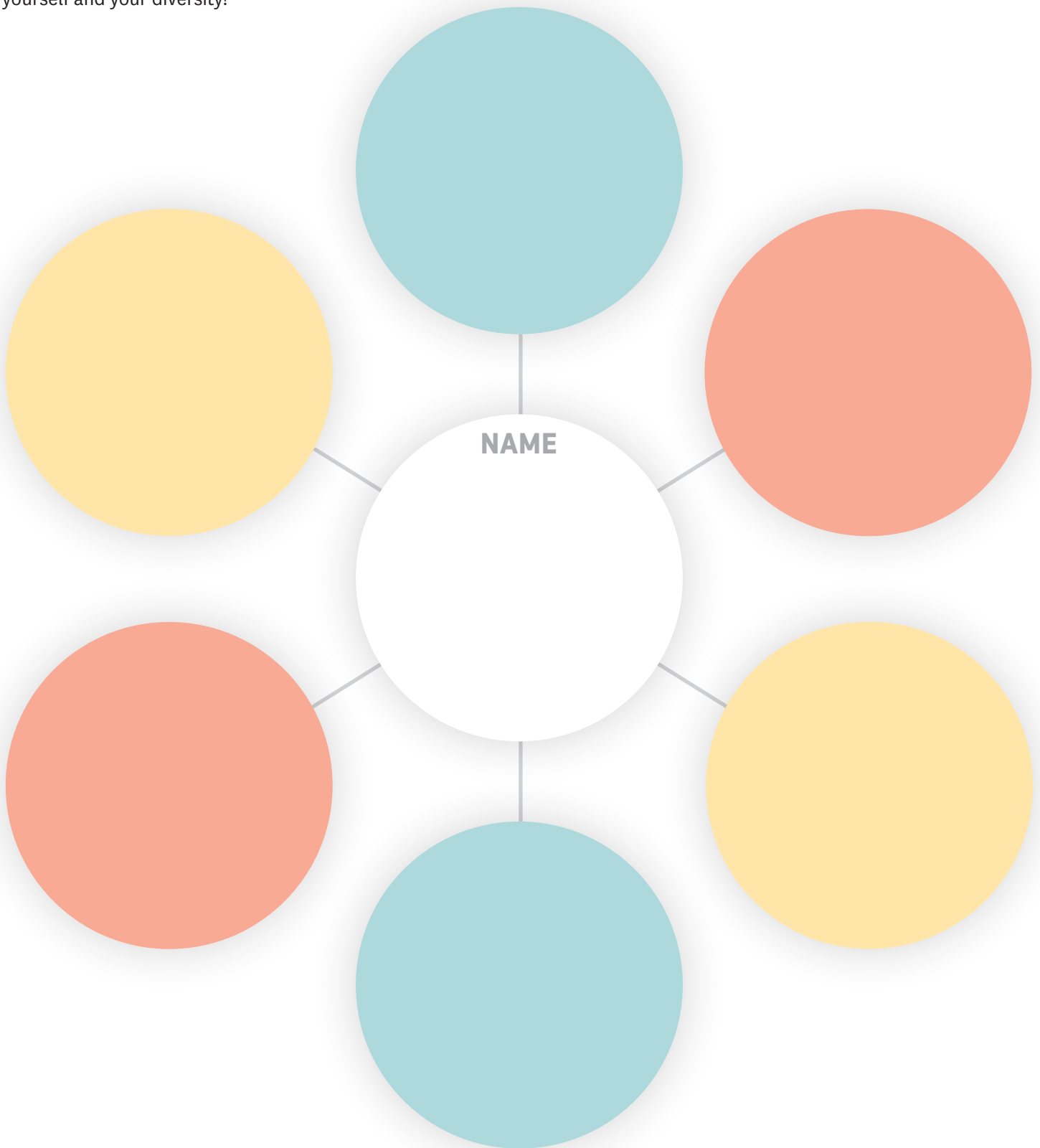
TRANSFORM

Display the identity maps somewhere visible to all students. Connect the activity back to the theme by demonstrating how everyone has so many different aspects of themselves to celebrate because inclusion means recognizing and celebrating our differences. Our differences should empower us because it means we can all bring a unique perspective and we each represent diversity in our own way. Inclusion is respecting and making space for these differences.



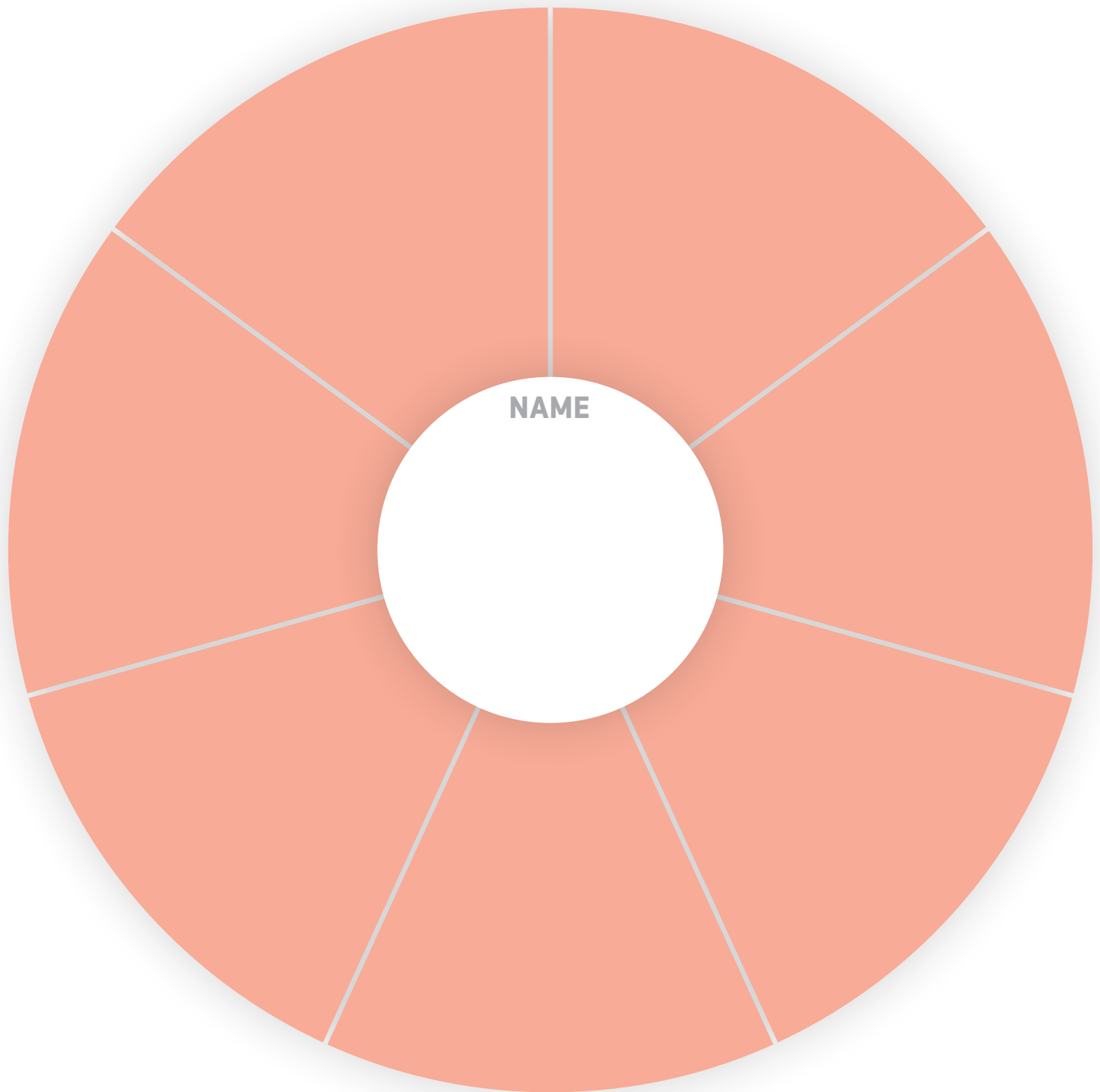
INCLUSION IDENTITY MAP

Write your name in the middle of the map. Surrounding your name, think of all the different ways you have diverse identities, like Jillian Weir. Think about gender, race, culture, hometown, place of birth, hobbies, and family as things that can be included. After you have included everything you would like to share, decorate the bubbles and the map to express yourself and your diversity!



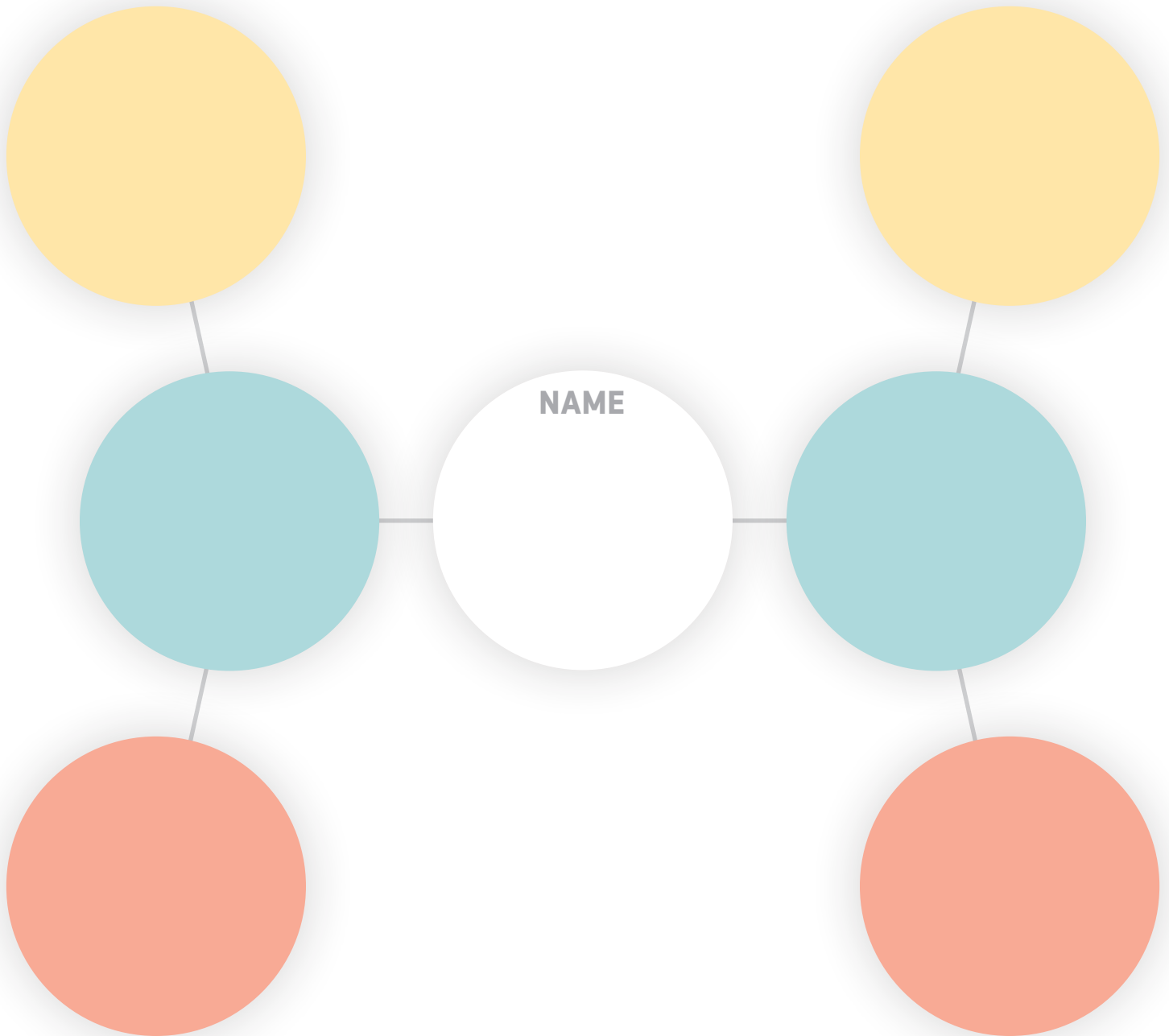
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