One and Only One Word

Line of inquiry (essential question)
How can assumptions and stereotypes interfere with a growing community? How can personal bias change the way we learn?

Grade range: 4-10
Group size: Any sized classroom.
Materials: Dry Erase board or overhead.
Students will need paper and a pencil.
Time: About 15 minutes

Language Arts Core: Grades 6-10 [L] 4 [RL] 4
Students will determine the meaning of unknown phrases based on what they already know about language structure.

Skills: Critical thinking skills, critical reading
Space: Any classroom

Directions: Before students arrive, the facilitator will write YONDEONNAOWREONDL on the board. When students are settled, they will be instructed to get out a piece of paper and pencil and solve the puzzle.

Deliver the Challenge: Students will be told that the letter on the board spell one and only one word, they should take 2 minutes and work individually to solve the puzzle silently. When a student has solved the puzzle, they should raise their hand to get checked, turn their paper over and wait silently for the others to finish.

Extensions: Most students will try to create one word out of all the letters. They have a bias, school has taught them to solve it! Once they are finished, the facilitator can have a discussion to tie the activity to the curriculum.

Reflection: Were you fooled by the puzzle? Why?

Notes: It is important that students play along; they should stay quiet and let others have their aha moment.
Answer: YONDEONNAOWREONDL spells: “one and only one word”