

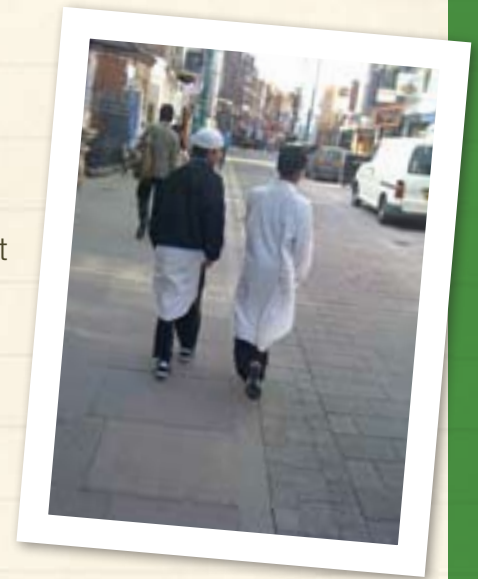
IDENTITY

SELF-IDENTIFICATION

Learning objectives:

- Introduce students to ideas of identity, multiple identities and meaning.
- Highlight the relationship between individual and group identities.
- Encourage young people to explore aspects of their own lives that contribute to their identity.

The first theme is intended to introduce the idea that identity and self-identification can be understood by students in a variety of ways including place, interests, ethnicity, gender, faith and beliefs, sexuality and individual characteristics. It gives students an opportunity to explore their own identity. It is best to proceed straight to Exercise 1 on page 4 as there is an opportunity to expand on what identity can be understood as.



English learning objectives:

- Developing active listening skills and strategies.
- Understanding and responding to what speakers say in formal and informal contexts.
- 3.1 Developing and adapting discussion skills and strategies in formal and informal contexts.
- 5.2 Understanding and responding to ideas, viewpoints, themes and purposes in texts.
- 10.2 Commenting on language use.
- Also, locating and extracting information.



Preparation/resources:

Exercise 2: Plain A4 paper for each person, approximately 6 sticky notes each, and paper for each divided group.

Exercise 3: Either a white board with the account of 'Khaled Ahmed: British or Bengali?' (www.banglastories.org/about-the-project/migration-themes/generation.html) or copies of extract on paper to be shared among students.



Exercise 1 (10 minutes):

Large groups

Ask student to spend 5 minutes brainstorming what identity means.

Bring the class together and consider briefly how identity can include aspects such as their pastimes, interests, likes and dislikes, faith, beliefs, language and individual characteristics.

Do not at this point write anything down.

Exercise 2 (25 minutes):

Individually

Ask students to write their name on the A4 paper. Then, give them 5 minutes to write 6 aspects of their identity on their sticky notes and then stick them on the A4 paper.

Whole group

Bring the group together asking students to move around the room looking at what others have written on their sticky notes and to form groups with other people with whom they share an identity in common. Then, in their newly formed groups, they list similarities and differences of their identity within the group.

Bring the groups together in a circle and ask them:

- What aspects of your identity did you focus on, and why?
- What similar identity traits did the group have?
- What were the identity traits that were different in the groups?
- Was it difficult finding others with similar identities and, if so, why?

Explain that there are many aspects of a person's identity and people who appear similar on the surface may not share interests, likes and dislikes, while those who appear different on the surface may share many things in common.

Exercise 3 (20 minutes):

As a whole group

Explain to the class that identity has meaning and that it can be understood in different ways by different people. Identity traits can be viewed positively and negatively by people ascribing or self-ascribing them. Identity can create a sense of belonging as well as divisions and stigmatisation. Identity is not fixed but can change and be negotiated in different contexts, times and places; sometimes others may perceive two different identities within one person as contradictory.

Read (or ask a student to volunteer to read) the following extract from the white board to the class, where Khaled Ahmed argues that the third generation are more 'British' than 'Bengali'.

Khaled Ahmed: British or Bengali?

(www.banglastories.org/about-the-project/migration-themes/generation.html)

Khaled Ahmed came to Britain from the United States in 2003. He told us that he thought that young Bengalis in Britain were more British than Bengali:

Here, many Bengalis are third generation. They are almost like the people of this country. The first generation speaks Bangla. Later on the young people lose their language. If you lose your language, can you be a Bengali? I don't think so.

He talked about the different values of British Bengali young people:

In this country there is a difference with those who are born and brought up here... In Bangladesh the situation inside the house and outside the house are the same. But there are differences here. The situation in the house is one thing and outside the house it's different... Inside they probably eat Bengali foods, but outside, they don't eat Bengali foods... Outside they have boyfriends, girlfriends and they mix freely, but inside the home parents object to this... They have to live in two cultural environments.

Ask the class to reflect on what was said and to answer the following:

- Can a person have two different identities such as being 'Bengali' and being 'British'? Is there a contradiction in being both?
- Can students think of two different identities that could cause people to feel conflicted or confused?

Reflection (5 minutes):

As a whole group

Steer the group to think about:

- Whether all the aspects of a person's identity are obvious to others.
- Which aspects of a person's identity are difficult to illustrate?
- How might this affect the way in which we perceive other people?

