

## Materials for A-level Citizenship Studies

# Activity 1: Identity and belonging

### Background, organisation and resources

Britain is a country where many people from different backgrounds have lived side by side for centuries. However, many of us are not aware of this cultural mosaic; even our own cultural heritage may be hidden in our family history. Each one of us makes a unique contribution to our own communities and to our relationships such as friends, family, school, college, work, etc and we, in turn, gain something from these relationships. These two-way relations create our own unique identities and our identity evolves throughout our life.

This activity is a way of encouraging young adults to think about themselves, their own social and cultural backgrounds and thus will understand and develop a sense of 'identity and belonging'. This should also help young adults to understand the other members of the group they work with and the wider society in which they live. After all 'we all came from somewhere'.

### Link to AQA specification

This activity is linked to the Unit 1 Key questions: *What does it mean to be British?* and *How do individuals and groups define their identity/identities and where are these definitions drawn from?*

### Aims of the activity

- To introduce diversity within the UK and explore diversity within the group
- To understand the meaning of identity and belonging
- To encourage young people to explore their past and make links between the past and present.

### QCA learning objectives post-16 citizenship learning objectives

- Demonstrate knowledge and understanding about citizenship issues
- Show understanding of key citizenship concepts
- Consider the social, moral and ethical issues applying to a particular situation
- Discuss and debate citizenship issues.

## Tasks

### Stage 1

The activity will let young people introduce themselves to each other in an informal way while they are finding out about the group members.

This activity involves sharing some personal information. Since the information is going to be down to individual decisions, they have to decide what they would like to share with the others in the group.

Give students copies of the **Talk and share** worksheet to use during the activity. Ask students to do following:

- Stand up and find partners to do the 'talk and share' activity. It is essential that the learners move around the room and talk to as many people as they can and record their findings.
- Introduce themselves and share their names (this is also essential).
- Share information about themselves which they would like everybody in their group to know. This could be something they are good at, something about their family, something they would like to do in the future, something interesting about themselves or a story behind their names (these could include grandparents' name, named after famous people, etc).

This is a good way of finding similarities and differences between themselves.

### Stage 2

In this stage ask each learner to introduce and share the information they found out about one of the group members. The facilitator needs to be looking out for clues about the diversity within the group and to record by writing down on the board some of the information being shared. Usually young people think that they have nothing important or interesting to say but do not realise that they all have something interesting in their life. This point needs to be highlighted.

### Stage 3

This activity follows on from the second stage. Put learners into pairs. Give each a piece of flip-chart paper. Ask them to write down the things they have in common, for example the college they attend, the food they like, the football team they support, TV programmes they watch or the area they live in. Once they have exhausted their common ground, they should write the things which differentiate them on the same paper by dividing it into two sections: one side per learner.

After completing the activity learners re-group into fours and have a short discussion about their findings in their new group.

Take the points from each group to highlight the commonality between them and ask them what they found interesting during this activity and what they learned which they did not know before (for instance, found someone who went to the same school, lives in the same area, or somebody who has done something extraordinary).

At the end of this activity, while there will be differences, even learners who seem to be very different will see that there is much common ground between them,. These commonalities and differences make them who they are and bring people together as well as separate them.

### **Stage 4**

The learner should be encouraged to explore their own family history by interviewing their parents and the older members of the family in order to discover their family history. Then they can share some of the findings with the rest of the group.

After stage 3 or 4 (depending on the group) learners will be ready to discuss the AQA Unit 1 main question: *What does it mean to be British?*

### **Active citizenship opportunities**

Taking this activity as a starting point, it can be developed further as an active citizenship event or a community cohesion project. The learners can organise a meeting by inviting people from different backgrounds into college to talk about themselves and their understanding of identity and living in multicultural Britain.

### **Resources**

After this activity the Post-16 Citizenship Support Programme booklet and DVD, *We all came from somewhere: Diversity, identities and citizenship*, can be used to explore identity and diversity issues in detail.

## Talk and share

This is an opportunity to get to know other people in the group and to explore the diversity of young people.

1. Introduce yourself to as many people as possible
2. Tell them how you prefer to be called
3. Tell them things about you and your family that you would like them to know or do not mind if everyone knows
4. Ask them about themselves and write down interesting things you found out in the box below. Be prepared to talk about your findings to the whole group.

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin blue border, intended for students to write down interesting things they find out during their group discussions.