

# Identity exercise

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This exercise allows students to reflect upon their own identity and promotes diversity as something positive and natural. The exercise aims to raise awareness about how we create our own identities and how we view the identity of others.<sup>1</sup>

**Time:** 45-60 minutes

**Tools:** Pen and paper for each student

## **Objective:**

This exercise aims to illustrate how our own identity and the identity of others are complex, dynamic and diverse. If we are aware of this diversity, we might consider more carefully how we treat others, despite our prejudices. Prejudices oversimplify or distort reality, and allow no room for human complexities.

## **Important information for teachers and educators:**

This exercise should be done individually, as identity may be a private matter for some students. General and impersonal questions may, however, be discussed in class or groups, as this allows students to choose whether they wish to share personal matters with their peers or tutors.

## **Guidelines and directions for students:**

1) Everyone starts with a blank sheet. Write your name in the middle of the sheet.

2) Answer the question "What constitutes who you are?"

Write down all the keywords you come up with that you think make up who you are, your identity:

Such as "sister", "brother", "artist", "likes to play sports", "student", "believer", "girl", "Iraqi" etc.

The keywords should be spread around your name. This is now your personal identity chart.

3) Reflect on the following:

In your daily life, what keywords do you consider most important to define who you are? Draw a line below these that you select. For example: "student", "believer", "Iraqi" etc.

Consider this: Does whatever that matters to you change, depending on where you are or who you are with? Or are you the same all the time? Write down your thoughts on these questions.

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<sup>1</sup> Minor adjustments have been made for using within the framework of this international learning resource on "inclusive citizenship and human rights" ([www.inclusive-citizenship.no](http://www.inclusive-citizenship.no))

4) Reflect on this:

Look over the words on your identity chart once more. Make a *circle* around the key words that mean that you belong to a group, for example: "believer", "Muslim", "Yazidi", "Christian", "Kurdish", "Iraqi", "Al-Shorta supporter", "student" and so on. Did you underline some of the same words that you just circled? Which groups are important to you and why?

5) Imagine meeting a person who has strong prejudices against one of the group identities you drew a circle around. What kind of prejudice might you have faced as being part of that group? What would you want a person who is prejudiced against one of the groups you are part of to know about your identity or about you as a person? (This question can be answered individually at first, and then discussed in smaller groups during the exercise).

6) Do you have prejudices against any groups? Did you discover any prejudices you have against the individuals or groups you believe might have prejudices against you? (This question can be answered individually at first, and then discussed in groups).

**End comments for teachers and educators:**

Review/closure (optional):

You may want to round off the discussion by asking the students what they thought of the exercise, what they learned and how they now perceive identity in general (as a concept), their own identity and the identity of others. This could be done as an oral exercise in plenary, but if you want to ensure that all students are heard, they could also write their answers individually on paper to be handed in.