

People and Cultures

Similarities and Differences

Objective:

Students will explore a variety of characteristics they may or may not have in common that are not based on appearance or physical characteristics.

Time:

10-20 minutes, depending on the size of the group, the number of questions asked, and the length of the discussion afterwards.

Materials:

If using the variation where students will note something they have in common with other students, paper and writing implements, otherwise no materials are required. The activity does require a room where students can move freely and congregate in different areas of the room.

Procedure:

The instructor should introduce the idea that there are many different things we may or may not have in common that wouldn't be obvious just from looking at someone. Explain that you're going to read some questions and designate spaces in the room for different answers to each question. Students should go to the part of the room that you've designated based on their answers. Identify a corner or other area where students can go if they don't know an answer, don't want to answer, or have a different answer to any question, and stress to the group that they are free to use that space for any question. Each time the students answer a question, ask them to look around at who is and isn't in their group.

Variation:

Before beginning the questions, students may be asked to write down five other students they do not know very well in their group (or they can write all the students in their group if the group is small enough) and to try to identify at least one thing they have in common with each student on their list and one thing where they were different.

Characteristic Questions: (remember to offer the “no answer” option for each question)

1. Do you have any brothers or sisters, including step siblings, half siblings, adopted siblings, or any other type of sibling? Divide the group into yes/no or divide further into one or two siblings and three or more siblings.
2. If you had to choose one of the following foods to eat right now, which would you choose? Example choices could be pizza, tacos, sushi, french fries, chicken fingers, salad.
3. Would you rather spend your free time outside or inside?
4. Would you rather vacation at the beach or in the snow?
5. Would you rather eat at home or go out to eat at a restaurant?
6. Would you rather read a book, watch a movie, or play a video game?
7. Would you rather live in a big city or far away from other people?

8. Would you rather have a dog, cat, snake, or bird as a pet?
9. Do you prefer doing things in a group or by yourself?
10. Would you rather eat breakfast foods for dinner (like eggs, cereal, waffles) or eat dinner foods for breakfast (like pizza or spaghetti)?
11. If you had to learn a new skill, would you rather learn to play a sport, play an instrument, or speak a language?
12. Would you rather take a shower or bath when you get up in the morning or before you go to bed?
13. Would you rather go on a boat, on a plane, or on a train?
14. Would you rather be a famous inventor, a famous athlete, a famous writer, or not be famous at all?
15. If you could have a superpower, would you rather be able to turn invisible, read people's minds, or be able to move things without touching them?
16. Would you rather have your own waterslide, have your own airplane, or have a secret room with cool stuff that no one knows about?
17. Would you rather eat a raw onion, a lemon, or a very hot pepper?
18. Would you rather never have homework again or get paid \$20 every night that you did your homework?
19. Would you rather have a cat the size of an elephant or an elephant the size of a cat?
20. Would you rather eat broccoli flavored ice cream or meat flavored cookies?
21. Would you rather be a kid forever or an adult right now?
22. Would you rather be able to find anything that was lost or to always know if someone was lying?
23. Would you rather ride a roller coaster or a water slide?
24. Would you rather have a room where the floor was a trampoline or the floor made of glass with an aquarium under it?
25. Would you rather live in a castle, a spaceship, or a house made out of legos?

Discussion Questions for the Group:

1. Were you surprised at any of the answers?
2. Were there any questions where you were surprised that one of your friends wasn't in the same group as you were?
3. Was there anyone that you noticed was in the same group as you a lot of the time?
4. Was it a big deal if someone didn't agree with you on a question?
5. (If you did the variation) did you find something in common with everyone on your list? Something different?