

Identity and Empathy Activity

Instructions for Teachers

Materials needed for in-class activity:

- Colored pencils or markers (red/green/blue/yellow) for each group
- Printouts of **12 Identities Grid Worksheet** (2-sided) - one per student

Instructions for in-class activity:

1. Give each student four colored pencils or markers (red/green/blue/yellow).
2. Handout **12 Identities Grid Worksheet** to each student.
3. Read the questions below to them. Ask students to mark the box of **their top three choices** with the colors indicated below.
4. Then, have students pair up and discuss their choices with one other student.
5. Have students flip the handout over and **answer the Identity and Empathy Reflection Questions**.
6. Finally, have student pairs share their ideas with the larger group.

Prompts for activity:

Students will use the colored pencils/markers to mark what is important to their identity.

- | | |
|--|--------|
| 1. Which of your identities are most important to you? | RED |
| 2. Which of your identities make you feel the most safe? | GREEN |
| 3. Which of your identities make you feel the least safe? | BLUE |
| 4. Which of your identities give you the most power and privilege? | YELLOW |

Group debriefing

Lead the class in a post-activity discussion using the following questions:

- Are there any characteristics that should be added to this identity chart? Explain.
- Can some characteristics make us feel safe and unsafe at the same time? Explain.
- How does identity help to give us perspective about an event or time period?

Handout Summary Questions:

After completing the exercise, have students flip over their chart and individually respond to the following questions.

1. How does your identity affect your actions and affect how people interact with you?
2. How does identity help you to understand historical events and current events? Give one example for each.
3. How could identities be used to humanize and dehumanize others?
4. What did you learn from this experience? Did anything surprise you about this activity?

Identity and Empathy Activity:

Use the colored pencils/markers to mark what is important to your identity.
Mark the box of **your top three choices** with the colors indicated below.

- | | |
|--|--------|
| 1. Which of your identities are most important to you? | RED |
| 2. Which of your identities make you feel the most safe? | GREEN |
| 3. Which of your identities make you feel the least safe? | BLUE |
| 4. Which of your identities give you the most power and privilege? | YELLOW |

Race/Ethnicity	Religion	Citizenship status / nationality
Geographical location	Family	Language
Gender and Sexual Orientation	Political beliefs	Physical Appearance
Personal abilities (skills)	Class/Wealth	Education



Identity and Empathy Questions

After completing the exercise, respond to the following questions.

5. How does your identity affect your actions and affect how people interact with you?

6. How does identity help you to understand historical events and current events? Give one example for each.

7. How could identities be used to humanize and dehumanize others?

8. What did you learn from this experience? Did anything surprise you about this activity?