

Lesson 1

Differences and similarities

Am I equal? Am I different?

Learning objectives	The students can explain equalities and differences between people. The students appreciate both equality and difference.
Student tasks	The students discover differences and similarities between people. The students discuss some consequences of being different.
Resources	Copybooks or sheets of paper and pen for individual work. Extension activity is optional but groups will need large sheets of paper and markers if the teacher makes use of it.
Methods	Individual and small group work. Plenary discussion

The lesson

Students form groups of four or five. Each group needs a piece of paper and a pen.

The teacher explains that he/she is going to ask a number of questions to which the students must respond yes or no. In preparation for this, the students are asked to write down the letters A to R horizontally, in alphabetical order, leaving enough room underneath. The teacher can do the same on the blackboard.

Example

Questions: A B C D E F

Answers: 1 0 1 0 1

The teacher then asks a series of questions (from A to R) from List A, and the students note their answers individually in the form of 1 (“yes”) or 0 (“no”). The teacher tells the students that even if they have doubts about any of their answers, they are still expected to write down the answer they then think is most correct.

List A	List B
A. Are you a woman?	A. Do you always feel happy?
B. Have you visited more than one foreign country?	B. Do you have nails on your fingers?
C. Do you like playing some sports?	C. Are you able to think a little bit?
D. Do you play a musical instrument?	D. Did a mother give birth to you?
E. Do you have brown eyes?	E. Can you fly without using any equipment (like a bird can)?
F. Are both your grandmothers still alive?	F. Can you live without drinking anything?
G. Do you wear glasses?	G. Do you breathe?
H. Do you like being out in the countryside?	H. Do you live constantly under water?
I. Are you a rather quiet person?	I. Do you have feelings of any kind?
J. Are you rather tall (more than average)?	J. Is your blood green?
K. Are you a rather sad person (more than average)?	K. Have you ever fallen down?
L. Do you easily get cold?	L. Can you look through walls?
M. Do you like travelling?	M. Can you communicate with others?
N. Do you like going to the hairdresser's?	N. Do you like nice weather?
O. Do you like working with computers?	O. Would you prefer not having to meet people?
P. Are you afraid of heights?	P. Do you have a tongue?
Q. Do you prefer brown to blue?	Q. Can you walk on water (as some insects do)?
R. Do you like drawing/painting?	R. Do you sometimes feel tired?

The teacher asks one representative from each group to write their answers to List A on the blackboard. The teacher then asks the students to look at the answers given and to compare them briefly with their own. Do they see differences between the responses? Can they sum up some of the differences between them?

The teacher then asks the students to respond to the next series of questions, this time taken from List B. Again, a representative from each group is asked to write their answers on the blackboard, underneath the letters of the alphabet.

Why is there is almost no difference between the groups this time? The teacher asks the students if they can add more things that most of them have in common.

For the extension activity, the teacher gives each group a large sheet of paper and a marker. Their task is the following:

1. Find three examples each of situations in which it is pleasant to be similar to other people. Give reasons why you think being similar is pleasant.
2. Find three examples each of situations in which it is pleasant to be different from other people. Give reasons why you think being different is pleasant.

If necessary, the teacher demonstrates how a thinking frame gives structure to the students' results.

Situations where it is pleasant to be similar	Why?
a)	a)
b)	b)
c)	c)

Situations where it is pleasant to be different	Why?
a)	a)
b)	b)
c)	c)

Then the teacher asks the groups to find three examples of situations in which it is unpleasant to be different from others. And again, they should give reasons why they think this could be the case. What kind of feelings does it create?

Situations where it is unpleasant to be different	Why?
a)	a)
b)	b)
c)	c)

Then the teacher asks the students which groups of “different” people are sometimes badly treated and by whom.

Groups of people who are sometimes badly treated	By whom?
a)	a)
b)	b)
c)	c)

The teacher asks each group to present their answers. The class will further explore which rights might be violated in the cases presented. For this purpose, the groups are given a copy of student handout 5.2: List of human rights.