

Topic: Identities and cohesion

Lesson: The Facebook generation	KS or Year Group: Year 9
Resources: <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Resource 1 – Key vocabulary2. Resource 2 – Fifteen quotes3. Resource 3 – Agree/Disagree	Objectives: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Students can appreciate that identities are complex.• Students can appreciate that modern technology has brought about changes in community cohesion.

National Curriculum

Key Concepts: 1.3a, 1.3d

Key Processes: 2.1a, 2.2a, 2.2b, 2.2c, 2.2d

Range and Content: 3e, 3i

Curriculum Opportunities: 4a, 4b, 4c

Lesson overview

Students explore the definitions of identity, cohesion and community. They discuss whether factors such as age, employment status and education are linked to these concepts. They then engage in a class debate about the effects of modern technology upon communities. At the end of the lesson, students work in small groups to decide upon ways in which identity, cohesion and community are changing within the Facebook generation.

Starter

- Hand out **Resource 1 – Key vocabulary**. Ask students to solve the anagrams at the top of the worksheet. Invite students to read out their answers and to provide an example of each word in context.
- Answers to anagrams:
 - ▶ identity
 - ▶ cohesion
 - ▶ community

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- Examples of sentences using the words in context:
 - ▶ ‘An important part of my identity is the fact that I am partially sighted.’
 - ▶ ‘In my form group there is not much cohesion because the males usually ignore the females and vice versa!’
 - ▶ ‘There is a large Asian community in Leicester.’
- Ask students to get into pairs. Ask each student to ask his/her partner question A from Resource 1. Each student should then fill in his/her partner’s name and answer on the worksheet. Tell students that they must give more than simple yes/no answers.
- Ask students to find new partners and to ask them question B. Explain that students should repeat the process until all five questions have been answered.
- Examples of good answers:
 - ▶ ‘Kial said that two people with the same job share some of their identity, but not all of it. For example, they might work the same hours but then have totally different religions or family backgrounds.’
 - ▶ ‘Hashim said that age can have an effect upon cohesion. He reckons that some elderly people are frightened of teenagers who wear hoodies, and he blames the media for this.’
 - ▶ ‘Carys said that she belongs to three communities. These are Welsh people, black people and Christian people.’
 - ▶ ‘Ashanti said that school does have an effect on young people’s identities. She thinks that it teaches them to view themselves as equal to other people. It also encourages them to be proud of their individuality.’
 - ▶ ‘Joseph said that the notion is not old-fashioned because there is nothing to prevent today’s communities from being cohesive. He pointed out that there is a Neighbourhood Watch scheme on his street.’

Main activity

Activity 1:

- Explain that the class is going to hold a debate about the effects that modern technology has upon identities and cohesion. Before the debate, invite some students to volunteer their initial thoughts.
- Examples of good responses:
 - ▶ ‘Some people use SIMS to create alternative identities for themselves. I suppose some people do it for fun, whereas others do it because they don’t feel happy with their real lives.’
 - ▶ ‘The internet can make groups of people more cohesive. I spend a lot of time on social networking sites because loads of my family live in Egypt.’
 - ▶ ‘I think that modern technology can have a negative effect on people’s identities. Nowadays, it’s so easy to contact people by phone or email that people probably don’t visit their relatives as often as they did 20 years ago.’

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Activity 2:

- Ask students to form a circle and go through circletime rules (one person is allowed to talk at a time, everyone faces the person who is talking, students respect each other's opinions, etc). Give each student **Resource 2 – Fifteen quotes** and allocate each of the 15 characters to a different student.
- Explain that the remaining students (i.e. those without a character) can 'be themselves' in the debate. In other words, they will give their own opinions.
- Explain that there are no right or wrong answers in a debate, and that in a debate everyone should use persuasive and assertive language of a formal nature.
- Invite students to debate several of the following questions (see also 'Extra support' section below):
 1. Does modern technology define your identity in any way? Explain.
 2. Does your family rely on face-to-face interactions to keep in touch, or do you prefer other means?
 3. Are social networking groups/chat rooms a safe way of forming communities?
 4. Has the definition of 'friend' changed in your lifetime? In the last 50 years?
 5. How involved are you in online communities? If you're not involved, why not? If you are involved, why?
 6. If computers and mobile phones were taken away for a year, what effect might this have on communities within the UK?
 7. How much say should parents/carers have in terms of the types of communities to which teenagers belong?
 8. Does modern technology have an effect upon UK citizens' interactions with people living outside of the UK?
- Examples of good answers:
 1. 'I am the Hindu man who meets other Hindus online. I am able to find people of a similar background to me through my computer. This makes me feel really passionate about my religion. It also helps me to feel that I belong in the UK. Without the internet, I wouldn't have much contact with other British Hindus.'
 2. 'I am answering as myself. We use loads of ways to keep in touch with my cousins in Dublin. We email them a lot, plus we bought a webcam when my baby sister was born so that they could watch her growing up. Mum says that it's always best to see someone in person, but that it's too expensive to fly to Dublin often. The internet makes me feel connected to the Irish side of my family.'
 3. 'I am the 18-year-old whose friends use a lot of chat rooms. I think that online communities can be really dangerous. It is virtually impossible to check who you are talking to when you meet someone in a chat room. When you meet someone in real life, you can see how old they are and work out what their personality's like. This seems the safest way to decide whether to interact with somebody.'

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4. 'I am answering as myself. The way people talk about friends has changed. When we were little, our friends were the children that we played with in the playground. Today, I suppose we think about how many friends we've got on Facebook or on MSN. Fifty years ago, people probably made friends with people who lived in their street or who worked in their local shop. Nowadays, you can make friends with someone on the other side of the country. You can talk to them every night without ever even meeting them!'
- Throughout the debate, praise those who politely challenge the opinions of others.
 - Remind students of the lesson objectives, and ask volunteers to summarise the main features of the debate in relation to them. Praise those that do so.

Plenary

- Ask students to get into groups of five and to each choose a statement **Resource 3 – Agree/Disagree**.
- Ask each student to feed back to his/her group about whether he/she agrees with the statement (and why).
- Encourage volunteers to come to the front of the room and share their responses with the whole class.
- Examples of good responses:
 - ▶ 'I totally agree with statement B. I'm really interested in what's going on in my local community, so I'm always looking up what's going on online. Last weekend I went to a youth club that I'd found on the internet, and tomorrow I'm helping out at a homeless shelter that I found on a website.'
 - ▶ 'I totally disagree with statement D. Society would not crumble if we got rid of phones and computers. I actually think society would improve. At the moment nobody on my street really knows anyone else's name. We would probably make more of an effort with each other if we couldn't email our friends at the other side of the city every ten minutes.'
- Encourage students to challenge other students' responses.
- Examples of good challenges:
 - ▶ 'I disagree with you about statement B. You might find out lots of stuff online about your local community, but don't you think that that's because you're a young person? My grandparents don't have the internet. They'll miss out if local issues end up only being discussed online.'
 - ▶ 'I disagree with what you said about statement D. I do think that communities would crumble if modern technology was taken away. At the moment, I have loads of online friends who are interested in beatbox. They're from all over the country. We tell each other about competitions and new types of music, and I have more in common with them than I do with most people at this school. My online friends are the people I trust the most. If I couldn't chat to them, I'd feel like I didn't really have a community anymore.'

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Aim high

- Within the debate, give two volunteers the chance to ask the class a question. It should be relevant to the lesson objectives.

Extra support

- You may want to provide a simplified version of the questions in activity 2. If so, invite them to debate two or three of the following:
 1. Does your family keep in touch just by meeting up, or do you use the internet and texting too?
 2. Do you think that chat rooms, MSN Messenger and Facebook are safe?
 3. Can you call someone a friend if you haven't met them but talk to them through the computer?
 4. Are you part of any online communities? For example, do you have a group of Facebook friends or do you go on football chat rooms?
 5. If computers and mobile phones got taken away for a year, would it change your life?
 6. Is it fair for parents and carers to ban children from texting certain people or from talking to them online?

Assessment

- For homework, ask students to find evidence (e.g. a magazine article or a summary of something heard on the radio) of modern technology having an effect upon UK communities. For example, this might be details of an internet forum set up for wheelchair-using teenagers in Lancashire.

Level 5:

- Students communicate their arguments clearly about the effect that modern technology is having upon community.
- Students give reasons for their opinion about the above and recognise the range of ideas involved.

Level 6:

- Students describe some of the influences that shape people's opinions about modern technology's influence on community.
- Students show understanding of the complexity of identities and diversity in groups and communities.

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Level 7:

- Students argue persuasively during the debate, and represent the views of others including those they do not agree with.
- Students, as a result of informed debate, question their own views about modern technology's effect upon community.

Level 8:

- Students understand how citizens participating in social networking can bring about change in society.
- Students ask challenging questions about the way in which community has been affected by modern technology over the last 50 years.

Check the web

http://news.sky.com/skynews/Home/UK-News/West-Midlands-Police-On-Facebook-And-YouTube-Using-Social-Websites-To-Engage-With-Youth/Article/200812115171919?lid=ARTICLE_15171919_WestMidlandsPoliceOnFacebookAndYouTube:UsingSocialWebsitesToEngageWithYouth&lpos=searchresults
or search on <http://news.sky.com/skynews> for 'Police Crime Alerts on Facebook' (4 December 2008)

West Midlands Police use **Facebook** to engage with young people.

http://news.sky.com/skynews/Home/Technology/Jordans-Queen-Rania-Launches-YouTube-Conversation-To-Tackle-Stereotypes/Article/20080411311746?lid=ARTICLE_1311746_Jordan's%20Queen%20Rania%20Launches%20YouTube%20Conversation%20To%20Tackle%20Stereotypes&lpos=searchresults

or search on <http://news.sky.com/skynews> for 'Queen Rania Reaches Out on YouTube' (4 April 2008)

Queen of Jordan encourages young people who hold negative stereotypes of Muslims to find out what Arab world is really like via **YouTube**.

http://news.sky.com/skynews/Home/Technology/Twitter-Social-Networking-Website-Sparks-Twestival-185-Charity-Fundraisers-And-Auctions/Article/200902215221375?lid=ARTICLE_15221375_TwitterSocialNetworkingWebsiteSparksTwestival:185CharityFundraisersAndAuctions&lpos=searchresults

or search on <http://news.sky.com/skynews> for 'Web Whizzes' Spontaneous Festival' (12 February 2009)

Twitter prompts people in nearly 200 cities to raise money for charity.

Summary of key learning

- Students can appreciate that identities are complex.
- Students can appreciate that modern technology has brought about changes in community cohesion.

Resource 1 – Key vocabulary

1. **NTIETYD** _____ : who a person is, or the qualities of a person or group that make them different from others
2. **HNOECSIO** _____ : when the members of a group or society are united
3. **NITCMUYOM** _____ : the people living in one particular area, or people who are considered as a unit because of their common interests, background or nationality

A. I asked _____ whether two people with the same job have the same identity.

A. (S)he said that

B. I asked _____ whether citizens' ages have an effect on how cohesive society is.

B. (S)he said that

C. I asked _____ which communities (s)he feels a part of.

C. (S)he said that

D. I asked _____ whether school has an effect upon young people's identities.

D. (S)he said that

E. I asked _____ whether the notion of a cohesive community is old fashioned.

E. (S)he said that

Resource 2 – Fifteen quotes

<p>1. 14-year-old male. ‘Emails annoy me because they’re too impersonal. My teachers have started emailing us about our homework. I preferred it when we had face-to-face conversations about our lessons.’</p>	<p>2. 72-year-old male. ‘Twitter has changed my life. I use it to keep in touch with my friends from the cricket club. I’ve found it particularly handy since selling my car; it allows me to stay part of the group.’</p>	<p>3. 11-year-old female. ‘I hate MSN Messenger. Someone started using it to bully my friend about her sexuality. It became so serious that the police got involved.’</p>
<p>4. 54-year-old female. ‘Bebo caused a lot of upset in my family. My daughter used it so much that her husband became suspicious about whether she was contacting her ex-boyfriends.’</p>	<p>5. 31-year-old female. ‘Skype has revolutionised my life. I moved to Australia from the UK a few months ago, and use it to talk to my family. I talk to them more now than I did when I just had a landline in the UK!’</p>	<p>6. 90-year-old male. ‘I am worried about the effect that mobile phones are having on young people. My granddaughter gets phone calls in the middle of the night. How can her parents monitor who’s calling her?’</p>
<p>7. 17-year-old female. ‘I am totally addicted to online computer games. I spend most of my weekend playing them. It’s a great way to meet people from the other side of the world who are gaming at the same time.’</p>	<p>8. 27-year-old female. ‘People say that society isn’t what it used to be. Of course it isn’t! Everything changes. Modern technology has not ruined communities; it’s just altered the ways in which they develop and define themselves.’</p>	<p>9. 15-year-old female. ‘I use Facebook every night to talk to my cousin. I’m not allowed to walk to her house at night once it gets dark, so it’s a good way to keep in touch with her.’</p>
<p>10. 82-year-old female. ‘The internet has changed my life. When I need tips about how to grow something new in my garden, people give me free advice online. I have made a lot of friends via internet forums.’</p>	<p>11. 58-year-old male. ‘I use social networking sites to meet people from the same religious background as me. As there are not many Hindus living in my town, it’s a great way to meet like-minded people.’</p>	<p>12. 18-year-old male. ‘I find it scary that lots of my friends go on internet chat rooms. I don’t trust people in chat rooms to be honest. What if someone in their sixties was pretending to be my age?’</p>
<p>13. 77-year-old female. ‘I hate the fact that supermarkets offer online shopping. It’s creating a culture where people are encouraged to spend money all day long, and don’t have face-to-face conversations with strangers.’</p>	<p>14. 10-year-old male. ‘I send about 30 or 40 texts a day. Most of my texts are to my mum. She’s been living in London since she left my dad. Dad and I live in Cardiff and don’t see her very often.’</p>	<p>15. 35-year-old male. ‘I think that webcams are unhealthy. People fool themselves that ‘real life’ interactions can occur through a camera. Society is fragmenting because people are hiding themselves away with their computers.’</p>

Resource 3 – Agree/Disagree

Which of the following statements do you agree with? Which do you disagree with? You will need to justify your answers.

A. In the UK, online communities really matter to people. Citizens care more about Facebook friends or people from chat rooms than they do about their neighbours.

B. Modern technology helps UK society to develop strong communities. Local councils advertise community events via websites, the police offer advice by email, and charities are able to get their message across to thousands of people.

C. Internet communication breaks down the barriers between people. People do not have to worry about whether factors such as disability, skin colour or nationality will affect the way in which they're treated.

D. These days, access to mobile phones and the internet is vital. Society would crumble without them; businesses would have to shut down and people would lose contact with family and friends.

E. Chat rooms lead to a more cohesive society because they help people to find things in common with other citizens. For example, a retired mechanic in Blackpool might be able to offer job advice to a teenage apprentice in Aberdeen.