

# Personal Histories: What is Significant in Our Lives?

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## Introduction

This activity is intended to be used across two sessions, and explores the nature of personal and wider significance, with younger pupils who

are focusing on the nature of 'the self' and our interactions with the world and with 'others'. The first lesson looks at the notion of personal significance, whilst the second lesson explores identity.

## Teaching and Learning Materials

Four resources are linked to this theme, one for the first task and the remainder for the second session.

	Title of Activity	Skills and Concept Development
3.1	The Events in My Life	Using the concept of significance: Identifying significant personal events; selection and inference
3.2	My Identity, My Identities	Evaluation skills, Significance
3.3	Identity Squares	Influence of contextual factors
3.4	What is Significant in my Life?	Decision making, Discussion, Reaching conclusions

## Lesson 1: What is significant in our personal lives?

### Key Question or Focus

What is significant in our lives?

### The Aim of the Lesson

The aim is to encourage pupils to think about their own lives and what has been significant for them; to compare and contrast pupils' lives.

### Intended Learning Outcomes

**All learners-** will be able to speak about significance, and will be able to identify some significant events in their own lives and explain why they are important to them as individuals.

**Most learners-** will be able to recognise that there are similarities and differences in people's experiences and explain why this occurs.

**Some learners-** will recognise that ideas about significance may derive from a variety of circumstances, beliefs and values: e.g. location, personal, economic, political, social, religious issues.

### Learning Objectives

To explore the nature of significance through discussing events in pupils' own lives. Pupils will recognise changes and significant events in their own lives and recognise that there will be similarities and differences between their lives and other pupils in their class.

**Preparation**

Prepare resource 3.1

Ensure that there are scissors and writing materials available.

**Starter**

Begin by recounting a story which is important for you in your own life. Tell the story and then let pupils ask you for any more information which they would like to know about this event.

Ask the pupils to explain why they think that this story explains something which was important in your life.

**Timing**

5 minutes

**Main Activities**

1. Ask the pupils to think about what have been the most important events in their own lives. Teachers will need to be sensitive towards pupils' home backgrounds and tell them that they only need to identify events which they feel happy about sharing with other pupils in the class.

2. Hand out resource 3.1. There are 6 squares on the worksheet. Ask the pupils to either draw or write about a significant event in their own lives in each of the squares. If they are drawing, the pupils will have to think very carefully about size of people and clues which will enable other pupils to decide their age at the event. Tell them they are not to include any dates or numbers showing their ages since they are going to use the squares to make a quiz to share with other pupils. Some pupils might find completing six squares is too demanding and therefore teachers may choose to limit the number of squares and ask them to complete less.

3. When the pupils have completed the squares, ask them to cut out the squares from the worksheet. Ask the pupils to mix up the squares into any random, non-sequential order.

4. Ask the pupils to work in pairs and arrange their partner's squares in the correct chronological order. When they have completed this task, each pupil is to tell their partner whether they have sequenced the squares in the correctly. Each pupil should also try to explain to their partner why they think the partner has chosen their events and then discuss their responses.

5. With the whole class working together, make a list of the sort of events which they have recorded in their sequence. Ask the pupils what clues helped them to sequence their squares. Make a list of the pupils' answers. You will probably find that some events are easier than other to sequence; For example: first day at school; being born; learning to read etc since we all share similar expectations when such events occur in our own lives. These are events which we share with members of our community and society. Other events will be more difficult; e.g. birth of a sibling; a favourite holiday; learning to swim. These are events which are personal to us as individuals and which we might share with our families. Draw pupils' attention to these distinctions.

6. Ask pupils whether the same things are significant for all people. Draw attention to the fact that there might be differences between individuals, and that it is important to recognise and respect these differences.

2 minutes

12 minutes

4 minutes

6 minutes

6 minutes

5 minutes

### Extension Activities

Pupils may choose to do a similar activity with other members of their family. What sort of events do other members choose? Are they the same? Why?

### Plenary

Pupils may select one event from their sequence and write a short paragraph about the event; e.g. What was the event? What happened before and after the event? Why have they chosen the event and why was it important to them?

### How would I build on this lesson?

*I would use this as a starting point to consider the lives of other children living elsewhere in the world or in different periods of history. Pupils would be expected to research children's lives and to try and reconstruct a sequence of events which would show important events for children living in different places or at different times. The activities would develop pupils' understandings of similarities and differences between lifestyles; help them to identify different values and also provide opportunities for them to explain their own understandings and values*

## Lesson 2: My Identity, My Identities

### Key Question or Focus

What identities are important for me?

### The Aim of the Lesson

The session aims to provide opportunities for pupils to discuss their identities and what is important for them.

### Intended Learning Outcomes

**All learners-** will be able to select cards which represent aspects of their identity which are important to them.

**Most learners-** will be able to select cards, order them and explain why they have created this order.

**Some learners-** will be able to situate their own identities within a wider context and draw implications for respecting difference and diversity in the wider world.

### Learning Objectives

Pupils will discuss identities which are important for themselves and compare with identities selected by other pupils.

### Preparation

Prepare resource 3.2 by cutting out the identity squares.

Prepare enough squares for pairs of pupils to work with, and ensure that there are some blank squares. Make copies of resource 3.3 or ensure that the text from the worksheet is displayed in the classroom. Teachers will need to be sensitive to some pupils' personal circumstances and recognise that not all pupils will wish to reveal some of their personal details.

### Timing

**Starter**

Begin by asking the pupils to work in pairs.

Ask the pair of pupils to discuss what they think the word 'identity' means: How would they describe their own identity? What makes them what they are?

After 2 minutes discussion. Join 2 pairs of pupils together so that there are now 4 pupils and ask them to engage in the same task.

Allow 3 minutes for discussion and then ask the whole group of pupils to tell you and the rest of the class some of the things which they have discussed. Record what the pupils say on the board or wall chart.

2 minutes

3 minutes

3 minutes

**Main Activities**

1. Ask pupils to work in pairs; giving each group a set of the identity squares. Ask them to talk about which features on the cards have the most influence on their identity and how. Ask them to group them in different ways. If the pupils feel that any features of their identity are missing, they can write them on the blank cards.

2. Support pupils as they are discussing their identities by asking them to distinguish between visible aspects of their identity, e.g.: clothes, gender, age, and other aspects which are dependent on their personality (self esteem, outlook on life etc) or cultural identity (arising from origins, traditions or beliefs etc).

3. Following the discussion, ask the whole group of pupils to report back on some of the main points which they have been discussing in their groups. This could be organised by asking each pair of pupils to report back on some or any of the following;

- a) the points they found most interesting
- b) the points they agreed/disagreed on
- c) the features which they have added to new identity cards.

4 minutes

2 minutes

2 minutes

**Extension Activities**

Give out copies of resource 3.3 or have these definitions already prepared in the classroom on a chart or the board. Talk through the definitions of culture with the pupils. Ask the pupils which they think is the most important feature for themselves. Which features do they use to judge other people by most often?

**Plenary**

Ask the pupils to represent their identity. They might choose to express their ideas in a variety of ways e.g. writing, poetry, drawing, a still freeze as themselves as a statute, musically etc.

**How would I build on this lesson?**

*I would use this lesson as a starting point for studying a past society or learning about people in different areas of the world. Pupils could establish enquiries to find out about the cultures of other peoples and what was/is important for them. Enquiries such as these could be useful in combating stereotypes about people in the past and in other areas of the world.*

### 3.1 Events in My Life

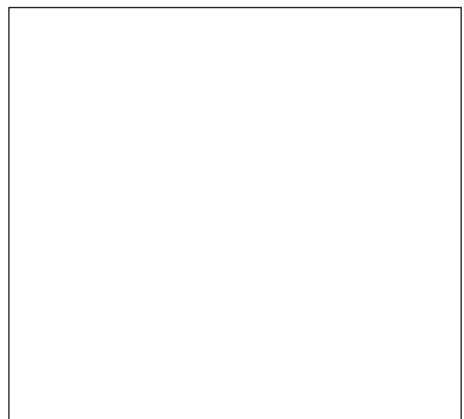
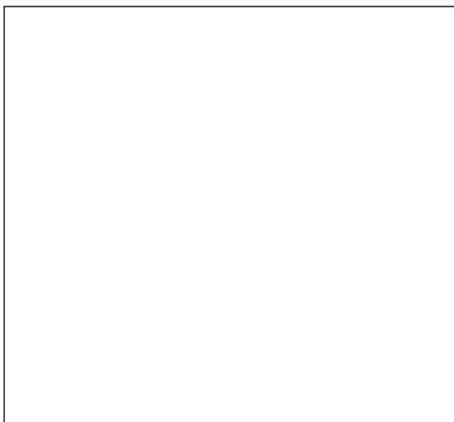
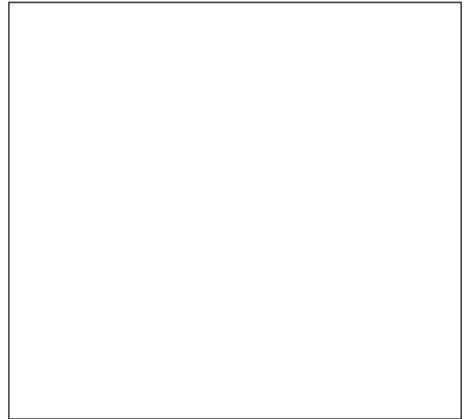
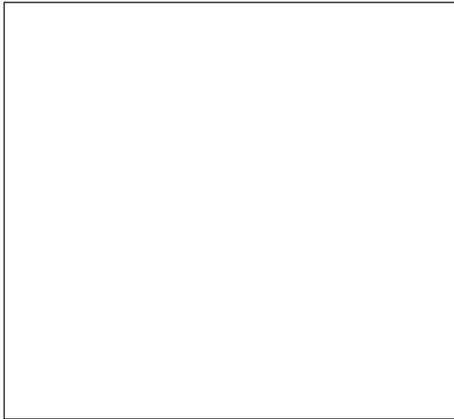
Think about things which have happened to you in your life.

Which have been the most important events?

Draw or write a sentence about an important event in each of the boxes below.

Do not put any dates or ages in the square since the squares are going to be made into a puzzle and other people will have to guess how old you are!

✂ Cut out the boxes after you finish



## 3.2 Identity Squares

In the squares below are different features which could influence our identities.

✂ Cut out the squares and think about which features are important for you.

If you wish- add more features in the blank square.

Where I was born	Food	Clothing
Religion	My friends	Language
Nationality	Gender	Hobbies/interests
Family	Where I live	Music, TV, films
Customs and traditions	Education	

### 3.3 What is significant in our lives?

Three levels of culture. Distribute these sheets to the pupils or ensure that these definitions are visible in the classroom.

#### 1. The concrete

This is the most visible level of culture and includes aspects such as clothes, music, food, games and so on. They are the aspects of culture most often focused on during festivals and celebrations

#### 2. The behavioural

This level of culture helps us define our social roles and includes language, gender roles, family structures, political ideas. The behavioural level is learned and reflects cultural values.

#### 3. The symbolic

This level of culture includes values, customs, worldview, beliefs, religion. It is often the key to how people define themselves.

Source: Hildago, N (1993) 'Multicultural teacher introspection' in: Perry, T and Fraser, J. (1993) *Teaching in the Multicultural Classroom*. New York, Routledge.