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AMAZING MINDS

SOCIAL

*throughlines*



● Integrated development of literary, cultural and **subject-specific** competences

● Focus on Critical thinking, Social awareness, Digital and **Subject-specific** literacy

MAURO SPICCI

**AMAZING** MINDS

**SOCIAL**

throughlines



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# The Challenges of Multiculturalism

## *"Diversities that Enrich Our Lives"*

### TACKLING THE TOPIC

These pictures represent two examples of a British family: one is an example of a Victorian family, the other is a typical modern English family.

Answer the following questions.

- Which of the two pictures is more:
  - static?
  - homogeneous?
  - varied?
  - rigid?
- Which of the two pictures is:
  - monocultural?
  - multicultural?
- What do these two pictures reveal about the evolution of society from the Victorian age to the contemporary age?
- Does the picture on the right suggest whether multiculturalism is a positive or a negative thing? Why?

Share your ideas with the rest of the class.



## Multicultural Societies



The encounter, the mutual influence and the hybridisation among cultures and peoples are phenomena that have characterised the development of world societies since their earliest origins. In today's interconnected world such phenomena have acquired a global dimension and the question of multiculturalism has become of primary importance in all contemporary countries. The following texts and activities will help you understand the meaning, the origins and the historical development of multiculturalism. It will also help you focus on one significant (yet still problematic) example of European multicultural society: Great Britain.

### The Origins and Development of Multiculturalism

#### SOCIOLOGY NOTEBOOK

##### SOCIETY

In sociology **society** has two meanings: one refers to the association of people who meet to reach a common goal; the second refers to the particular organisation that allows a certain group of people to live together.

● In the Western world sociologists agree on the idea that the phenomenon of multiculturalism started to emerge in the Early Modern Age, thanks to the birth of the modern concept of State. The **formation of modern European States** happened between the 15<sup>th</sup> and the 16<sup>th</sup> centuries and coincided with the fusion of territories inhabited by communities who had different origins, languages and traditions. In the same period, European explorers began to **expand their geographical horizons** by exploring parts of the world that had remained unknown to the Europeans until then. The age of explorations and discoveries was dominated by a phenomenon called **Colonialism**, by which European countries exercised control and influence over many countries in America, Africa and Asia. Driven mainly by economic reasons, colonial countries strengthened their links with colonised countries, making it possible for people to move from one continent to another and allowing cultures that had remained basically isolated to mix and to create brand **new forms of hybrid cultures**.

► Settlers in Jamestown, the first permanent English settlement in America, trading with Indians in the fort (1609).



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## SOCIOLOGY NOTEBOOK

### REFUGEES AND ASYLUM

**Refugees** are

people who have been forced to leave their home country because of a difficult situation (war, famine, terrorism, etc.).

**Asylum** is a particular kind of protection offered by a country to people who have been forced to leave their country because their lives are in danger.



◀ A human trafficker boat crowded with illegal immigrants.

The constant movement of people and cultures continued throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century, when **migratory phenomena acquired a planetary dimension** thanks to a series of historical facts such as **decolonisation** (the end of the colonial empires that had been created in the Modern Age), the fall of the totalitarian regimes that had ruled Eastern European countries in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the mobility of people that has been made possible by the recent phenomenon called **globalisation**, and the growing phenomenon of **asylum seekers and refugees** that has been ignited by the turmoils, the economic instability and the intestine wars that have characterised the history of North African and Middle Eastern countries.

## Equality, Tolerance and Difference

● The idea that all individuals are equal and that cultural diversity needs to be tolerated was originally elaborated by the English philosopher **John Locke** (1632-1706) and later developed by the French Enlightenment philosopher **Voltaire** (1694-1778), who considered intolerance one of the most dangerous evils of democratic societies. The idea of **tolerance** is still obviously at the basis of the encounter between different cultures in today's world. What the contemporary world has added to the Enlightenment view of **equality as a universal right of human beings** is the idea that **diversity is a value that enriches society** and that needs not just to be tolerated, but also to be promoted and preserved. This 'positive' view of diversity has favoured the birth of a new interpretation of the concept of '**multiculturalism**', which is today defined as 'the belief that it is important and good to include people or ideas from many different countries, races, or religions' (*Longman Dictionary*, Online Edition). In the modern and contemporary world multiculturalism has become an opportunity and a tool to promote the specific ethnic and cultural identity of the communities that constitute modern societies. This was particularly evident, for instance, in the 1960s in the United States, where the fight for the conquest of human rights by African Americans went hand in hand with the need of African Americans to retrieve their cultural, linguistic, and ethnic identity.

In the context of contemporary multicultural societies, cultural differences are not just tolerated: they are (or at least should be) respected and promoted as an opportunity for understanding and mutual growth. Multiculturalism is an essential condition of the contemporary 'globalised' age, in which national boundaries are weakened and replaced by concepts such as interconnectedness, interdependence, and global networks. The phenomenon of **globalisation**, in particular, and its consequences on the perception of the self and of its cultural boundaries has been the object of analysis by the Polish sociologist **Zygmunt Bauman** (1925-2017), who coined the expression '**liquid society**' to refer to the fluid psychological dimension of the contemporary self, torn between continuous changes, constant transformations, endless hybridisations, and the impossibility of relying on stable relations.



▲ Polish sociologist Zygmunt Bauman.



## Approaches to Multiculturalism

● In the contemporary world the first country that decided to address the issue of multiculturalism at a parliamentary level was **Canada**, which promulgated the so-called **Multicultural Act** (1971) to allow each of the provinces constituting the state to promote specific measures to preserve minorities.

Following the example of Canada, many other countries have felt the need to preserve and promote cultural diversity and its various expressions in a more official way.

In **Europe**, it is possible to identify three main ways in which the promotion of 'multiculturalism' has been guaranteed in the contemporary world.

Some states have decided to **institutionalise the status of the immigrants** by considering them **transitory inhabitants of the country**: this approach implies that the state has to provide immigrants with what they need to survive and defend their cultural identity until the moment when they can go back to their home country. Other countries have adopted a more **assimilationist approach**, which implies that immigrants are considered **citizens with full rights** and, as such, have to adopt the habits and the values of their new community. In the assimilationist model immigrants are free to show respect for their original culture only in the private sphere, but have to show respect for the culture of the country that welcomes them in the public sphere.

The third model of multicultural promotion comes from **Great Britain** and is characterised by a **pluralist approach**, which allows the communities of immigrants to express their cultural views as long as they do not conflict with the liberty of the others. This model is based on the liberal conception of the state, which grants immigrants the right to show their cultural specificity and guarantees that this freedom does not limit the liberty of other people of other communities within the state.

Of the three main different approaches to multiculturalism that have been identified, the one promoted by Great Britain seems to suggest that multiculturalism is actually possible in a liberal state in which all citizens have the right to express themselves on condition that they respect the others. But there are some challenges that destabilize the so-called 'British multicultural model': it is not always easy to establish a clear boundary between freedom of expression and legality; the conflict between individual expression and collective right is sometimes hard to define; the tendency to preserve differences makes the dialogue among cultures difficult or even impossible; if they are rigidly preserved, cultures become 'fixed' and do not merge.

### SOCIOLOGY NOTEBOOK

#### LIBERAL STATE

The expression  
**liberal state**

refers to a state that promotes and respects people's ideas, opinions and beliefs.



One of the risks that may emerge from the multicultural model adopted in Britain is what the French sociologist **Pierre-André Taguieff** (1946-) calls '**differentialist racism**'. By this expression Taguieff refers to the risk that the preservation of cultural differences that has become typical of contemporary societies may lead to the impossibility of any form of intercultural dialogue.

In the last few years, an interesting phenomenon that has emerged as a possible solution to the complexity of the 'multicultural model' is '**interculturalism**', which is based on the idea that despite cultural differences, people can find a 'shared space' for establishing a mutually enriching dialogue. Interculturalism differs from multiculturalism for a series of reasons: unlike multiculturalism, which focuses on the preservation of the cultural specifications of the communities within a State and often encourages the members of the single communities to live separately, interculturalism focuses mainly on the elements that unite different communities in order to promote **mutual exchange, fusions, interactions and coexistence**. This approach has been promoted by the Council of Europe through the **White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue** (2008), a document containing a series of guidelines for the promotion of intercultural dialogue, mutual respect, and reciprocity in European states. Interculturalism proposes that the rights of minorities as well as social cohesion can be promoted through intercultural dialogue and can lead to respect for universal values such as human dignity and human rights.

### Nadine Gordimer • **The Moment Before the Gun Went Off**

Nadine Gordimer is a South African writer who strongly criticised Apartheid and its effect on the lives of South Africans.

#### → CHAPTER 7

- Read the excerpt from *The Moment Before the Gun Went Off* and list all the reasons why multiculturalism was highly problematic in South Africa.

### CHECKPOINT

#### 1. Answer the following questions.

- 1 When did multiculturalism start to emerge?
- 2 Why was multiculturalism originally linked to the birth of 'modern' states?
- 3 How did Early Modern explorations influence the concept of multiculturalism?
- 4 How can multiculturalism be defined?
- 5 What was the first country to promote multiculturalism in politics?
- 6 What approaches to multiculturalism have been developed by modern states?
- 7 What makes the British approach to multiculturalism difficult?
- 8 What is 'interculturalism'?

### VOCABULARY LAB FOR SOCIOLOGISTS

#### 2. What words correspond to the following definitions?

- 1 the idea that it is right to include people or ideas from different countries, races, or religions
- 2 the idea that it is important to support dialogue between cultures and prevent cultures from isolating themselves
- 3 the tendency for the world economy to work as one unit, led by large international companies doing business all over the world
- 4 the willingness to allow people to do, say, or believe what they want without criticising or punishing them





## The Language of Social Science

CLIL

## What is Cultural Identity?

by Stuart Hall

*In order to understand 'multiculturalism' it is important to define what 'culture' is. The following excerpt is taken from the book Cultural Identity and Diaspora (1990) by Stuart Hall, an influential sociologist who explored the field of cultural studies and focused many of his studies and research work on the definition of 'Britishness'.*

[Another] view of cultural identity [...] recognizes that, as well as the many points of similarity, there are also critical points of deep and significant *difference* which constitute 'what we really are'; or rather – since history has intervened – 'what we have become'. We cannot speak for very long, with any exactness, about 'one experience, one identity', without acknowledging<sup>1</sup> its other side [...]. Cultural identity, in this second sense, is a matter of 'becoming' as well as 'being'. It belongs to the future as much as to the past. It is not something which already exists, transcending place, time, history and culture. Cultural identities come from somewhere, have histories. But, like everything which is historical, they undergo<sup>2</sup> constant transformation. Far from being eternally fixed in some essentialised past, they are subject to the continuous 'play' of history, culture and power. Far from being grounded in mere<sup>3</sup> 'recovery' of the past, which is waiting to be found, and which when found, will secure our sense of ourselves into eternity, identities are the names we give to the different ways we are positioned by<sup>4</sup>, and position ourselves within, the narratives of the past.



<sup>1</sup> acknowledging: riconoscere

<sup>2</sup> undergo: subiscono

<sup>3</sup> mere: puro e semplice

<sup>4</sup> the different ways we are positioned by: i diversi modi in cui veniamo situati

## CHECKPOINT

## 1. Answer the following questions.

- 1 What is 'cultural identity' according to Hall?
- 2 Is 'cultural identity' a fixed entity? Why/Why not?
- 3 Hall states that cultural identity 'is a matter of 'becoming''. Complete the text with the words below.

influenced • past • future • identity

Hall refers to both the 1. .... and the future of our 2. .... : the past has 3. .... what we are now; likewise the 4. .... will shape and influence who we will be.

- 4 What does Hall refer to with the expression 'the continuous 'play' of history'? Tick as appropriate.
 

a the tricks played by history	b the future of humanity	c the ups and downs of history
--------------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------------
- 5 Hall defines our past in terms of 'narrative'. This term refers to 'the process of telling a story': which of the following mottoes best summarises the essence of Hall's idea? Tick as appropriate.
 

a We are what we eat.	b We are the stories we tell.	c We are the lies we tell ourselves.
-----------------------	-------------------------------	--------------------------------------
- 6 In the light of the paragraph you have read and analysed, which adjective(s) would you use to define Hall's vision of 'cultural identity'?
 

a static	b fixed	c fluid	d narrative	e changeable	f other (specify)
----------	---------	---------	-------------	--------------	-------------------

## VOCABULARY LAB FOR SOCIOLOGISTS

## 2. Match the words (1-4) with their definitions (a-d).

- |            |            |         |             |
|------------|------------|---------|-------------|
| 1 cultural | 2 identity | 3 power | 4 narrative |
|------------|------------|---------|-------------|

- |                                      |   |  |   |
|--------------------------------------|---|--|---|
| a a description of events in a story | b belonging or relating to a particular society and its way of life | c the ability or right to control people or events | d the qualities and attitudes that a person or group of people have, that make them different from other people |
|--------------------------------------|---|--|---|

## British Multiculturalism

The following excerpts will help you identify three different aspects of the interesting phenomenon of British multiculturalism. Zephanyah's poem redefines the meaning of the word 'British' by pointing out its intrinsic multicultural meaning; Kureishi's excerpt shows how multiculturalism has shaped the urban geography of the city of London; Smith's excerpt questions the effectiveness of multiculturalism by suggesting the idea that multiculturalism annihilates any sense of cultural belonging.



Benjamin Zephanyah  
**The British**  
(2000)

Born in England in 1958 to a very poor family, Benjamin Zephanyah grew up in Birmingham and in Jamaica. After leaving the school at the age of 14, he became a successful writer and poet. He is known also for being a Rastafarian.

### THINKING ROUTINE

See, think, wonder

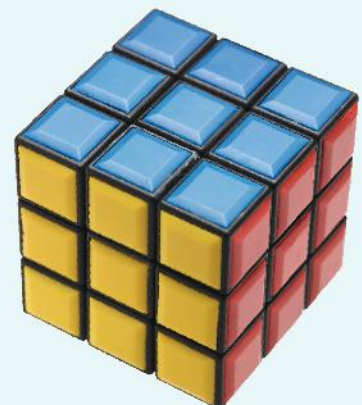
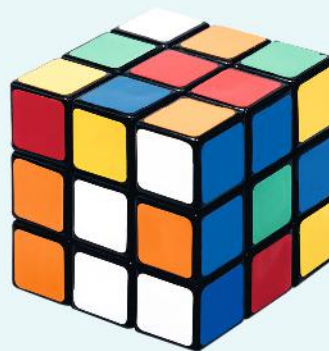
**C** COMPETENCES: developing awareness of learning and thinking processes

#### SEE

1. What does the picture represent?
2. How do they differ?

#### THINK

1. Which of the two cubes do you think is:
  - a more cheerful?
  - b more ordered?
  - c rigidly organised?
  - d more fun?
2. Which of the two cubes would you associate with:
  - a multiculturalism?
  - b nationalism?



#### WONDER

1. What assumption about multiculturalism and nationalism does the picture contain?
2. Does this picture reflect your view on multiculturalism? Share your opinion with the rest of the class.



# The Perfect Recipe for Britain

**The poem you are about to read is a desecrating representation of the melting pot that represents British society.**

Take some Picts<sup>1</sup>, Celts and Silures<sup>2</sup>  
And let them settle,  
Then overrun<sup>3</sup> them with Roman conquerors.

Remove the Romans after approximately four hundred years

- 5 Add lots of Norman French to some  
Angles, Saxons, Jutes and Vikings, then stir<sup>4</sup> vigorously.

Mix some hot Chileans, cool Jamaicans, Dominicans,  
Trinidadians and Bajans with some Ethiopians,  
Chinese, Vietnamese and Sudanese.

- 10 Then take a blend<sup>5</sup> of Somalians, Sri Lankans, Nigerians  
And Pakistanis,  
Combine with some Guyanese  
And turn up the heat.

- Sprinkle<sup>6</sup> some fresh Indians, Malaysians, Bosnians,  
15 Iraqis and Bangladeshis together with some  
Afghans, Spanish, Turkish, Kurdish, Japanese  
And Palestinians  
Then add to the melting pot.

Leave the ingredients to simmer<sup>7</sup>.

- 20 As they mix and blend allow their languages to flourish  
Binding them together with English.

Allow time to be cool.

Add some unity, understanding, and respect for the future,  
Serve with justice

- 25 And enjoy.

*Note: All the ingredients are equally important.  
Treating one ingredient better than another will leave  
a bitter unpleasant taste.*

- Warning: An unequal spread of justice will*  
30 *damage the people and cause  
pain. Give justice and equality  
to all.*

1 Picts: Pitti (popolo di origine pre-celtica)  
2 Silures: Siluri (tribù dell'antica Britannia)  
3 overrun: invadi  
4 stir: mescola  
5 blend: miscela  
6 Sprinkle: spruzza  
7 simmer: cuocere a fuoco lento



## COMPREHENSION AND INTERPRETATION

## 1. Answer the following questions.

- 1 Find all the words related to 'cooking' in the poem. What is the British society compared to in the poem?
- 2 What is the element that unites all the ingredients in the recipe mentioned by the poet?
- 3 Are native cultures suppressed or promoted in Britain? Quote from the text.
- 4 At the end of the poem the poet lists four main ingredients that make the British society strong. Can you find them?
- 5 The poet underlines the idea that equality and balance are important elements of the 'British melting pot'. What may happen if the ingredients are not mixed equally?

## YOUR VOICE

## 2. The metaphor of the 'melting pot' is frequently used to describe multicultural societies.

- 1 Why do you think it is so common and popular?
- 2 Do you think the society you live in is a 'melting pot'? If so, is it a balanced melting pot or not? Share your ideas with the rest of the class.

William Shakespeare • **The Tempest**

Shakespeare's *The Tempest* can be read as an interesting example of a multicultural encounter because in the play Prospero acts as the prototype of the European man who encounters a native for the first time.

## → CHAPTER 2

- Does the encounter between Prospero and Caliban end up in a successful story of integration?

## Seen on Screen



**TITLE:** The Road: a Story of Life and Death

**DIRECTOR:** Marc Isaacs

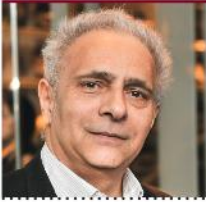
**YEAR:** 2012

**COUNTRY:** UK

In 2012 the filmmaker Marc Isaacs made a documentary in which he reconstructed a vivid portrait of the multicultural society of Britain. The documentary, called *The Road: a Story of Life and Death*, focuses on the stories of the immigrants living along the A5, one of Great Britain's oldest and longest roads. The A5 connects the city of London to Wales and represents an ideal line which connects the stories of migration that have characterised the history of Britain. The director follows many of these stories, which reflect how British society is multi-layered and based on a history of successive migratory fluxes coming from Ireland, Europe, Asia, and Africa. What emerges is a fascinating human tapestry and the complexity of the status of the immigrant, whose sense of belonging is always questioned.







Hanif Kureishi

## Something to Tell You

(2008)

### THINKING ROUTINE

Think, puzzle



COMPETENCES: developing awareness of learning and thinking processes

London is the prototype of the modern European city: it is vibrant, full of energy, populated by people coming from all over the world, and it is always reinventing itself.

#### THINK

1. Close your eyes and think about London.
2. List the first three things that come to your mind if you think about London.

#### PUZZLE

1. Have your classmates come up with the same ideas/things?
2. Are there any recurring images?
3. Are the images you have come up with somehow related to fact that London is a multicultural city? Why?



## A World City

The following excerpt is taken from Hanif Kureishi's *Something to Tell You*, a novel set in London and published in 2008. In the passage you are about to read Jamal Hjan, a psychoanalyst living in London, takes his friend Henry for a walk in Shepherd's Bush, the multicultural and rather poor area of London in which they live.

Now the area was a mixture of the pretty rich and the poor, who were mostly recent immigrants from Poland and Muslim Africa. The prosperous lived in five-storey houses, narrower, it seemed to me, than North London's Georgian houses. The poor lived in the same houses divided up into single rooms, keeping their milk and trainers fresh on the windowsill<sup>1</sup>.

- 5 The newly arrived immigrants, carrying their possessions in plastic bags, often slept in the park: at night, along with the foxes, they foraged<sup>2</sup> through the dustbins for food. Alcoholics and nutters<sup>3</sup> begged and disputed in the streets continuously. [...] New delis<sup>4</sup>, estate agents and restaurants had begun to open, also beauty parlors<sup>5</sup>, which I took as a positive sign of rising house prices.
- 10 When I had more time, I liked to walk up through Shepherd's Bush market, with its rows of chauffeur-driven cars parked alongside Goldhawk Road Station. Hijabed<sup>6</sup> Middle Eastern women shopped in the market, where you could buy massive bolts of vivid cloth, crocodile-skin shoes, scratchy<sup>7</sup> underwear and jewellery, 'snide' CDs and DVDs, parrots and luggage, as well as illuminated 3-D pictures of Mecca and Jesus. (One time in the old city in Marrakech, I
- 15 was asked if I'd seen anything like it before. I could only reply that I'd come all this way only to be reminded of Shepherd's Bush market.)

- 1 windowsill: davanzale
- 2 foraged: rovistavano
- 3 nutters: pazzi
- 4 New delis: (delicatessens) negozi di gastronomia
- 5 beauty parlors: saloni di bellezza
- 6 Hijabed: con il capo coperto dall'Hijab (velo islamico)
- 7 scratchy: che provoca prurito
- 8 'snide': falsi, contraffatti

- 9 falafel: falafel (polpette di legumi tipiche della cucina araba)
- 10 QPR: Queens Park Rangers (una squadra di calcio)
- 11 hood: (neighbourhood) quartiere
- 12 schemes and selling: imbrogli e vendite
- 13 Belgravia, Knightsbridge and [...] Notting Hill: Belgravia, Knightsbridge and [...] Notting Hill (quartieri ricchi di Londra)

While no one could be happy on the Goldhawk Road, the Uxbridge Road, ten minutes away, is different. At the top of the market I'd buy a falafel<sup>9</sup> and step into that wide West London street where the shops were Caribbean, Polish, Kashmiri, Somali. Along from the police station was the mosque, where, through the open door, you could see rows of shoes and men praying. Behind it was the football ground, QPR<sup>10</sup>, where Rafi and I went sometimes, to be disappointed. Recently one of the shops was sprayed with gunfire. Not long ago a boy cycled past Josephine and plucked her phone from her hand. But otherwise the 'hood'<sup>11</sup> was remarkably calm though industrious, with most people busy with schemes and selling<sup>12</sup>. I was surprised there wasn't more violence, considering how combustible the parts were. It was my desire, so far unfulfilled, to live in luxury in the poorest and most mixed part of town. It always cheered me to walk here. This wasn't the ghetto; the ghetto was Belgravia, Knightsbridge and parts of Notting Hill<sup>13</sup>. This was London as a world city.

### COMPREHENSION AND INTERPRETATION

#### 1. Answer the following questions.

- 1 What is the main reason for London's multiculturalism?
- 2 What drove people to move to London?
- 3 Focus on the description of the Shepherd's Bush Market.
  - a Are the things you can find there typical examples of Englishness?
  - b Is the other market Kureishi compares Shepherd's Bush market to English? If not, where is it from?
- 4 In the passage Kureishi mentions that the coexistence of many ethnic groups in the same space can be problematic.
  - a What two episodes does he use to explain this concept? Find them.
  - b Do these episodes transform the area into a dangerous place to live? Quote from the text.
  - c Does the narrator express a positive or a negative opinion of London's multicultural experiment?
- 5 At the end of the passage Kureishi challenges the traditional view of a ghetto.
  - a What is the meaning of the word 'ghetto'?
  - b Why does he think that the rich area of the city are like a real ghetto?
  - c What does he like about the area where he lives?

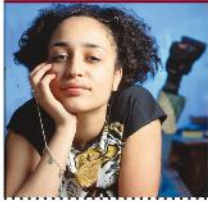
## THINKING ROUTINE

### Explore

#### EXPLORE

In the passage you have just read Kureishi suggests that the main reason why people moved to the UK in the past was poverty. Is it the same today? What are the reasons why people are still attracted by London in the 21<sup>st</sup> century? Use the Internet to find out more about this phenomenon and share your findings and reflections with the rest of the class.





## Zadie Smith **White Teeth** (2008)

### → CHAPTER 7

#### WARM UP

1. Look at this cartoon and answer the following questions.
  - 1 What is the man on the right doing?
  - 2 Korma is a typical Indian kind of food. Why can it be considered a 'traditional English' dish?
  - 3 What does this sentence suggest about the social composition of English society?
  - 4 Living in a foreign country is difficult because it challenges one's national identity. Do you think food is a means to keep our national roots alive?
  - 5 In the cartoon the woman on the left is taking a 'citizenship test'. Do you think citizenship can be formally 'tested'? How?



You've got the microwave, sauce and 15 minutes to make a traditional English Korma.



## Sounded like Freedom

The passage you are about to read is taken from Zadie Smith's *White Teeth*, one of the best portraits of contemporary multicultural London. In this passage Samad, a Bangladesh-born veteran of World War II living and working in Britain, tells Irie, a second-generation immigrant who is searching for her place in the world, about the sense of loss he felt when, after abandoning his mother country, he reached England. The passage contains two conflicting views of multiculturalism: while Samad, as a first-generation immigrant, feels he cannot fully belong to Britain, Irie, a second-generation immigrant, sees England as a land of wonders.

- 'These days, it feels to me like you make a devil's pact when you walk into this country. You hand over your passport at the check-in, you get stamped, you want to make a little money, get yourself started ... but you mean to go back! Who would want to stay? Cold, wet, miserable; terrible food, dreadful newspapers – who would want to stay? In a place where you
- 5 are never welcomed, only tolerated. Just tolerated. Like you are an animal finally housetrained<sup>1</sup>. Who would want to stay? But you have made a devil's pact ... it drags you in and suddenly you are unsuitable to return, your children are unrecognizable, you belong nowhere.'
  - 'Oh, that's not true, surely.'
  - 10 'And then you begin to give up the very *idea* of belonging. Suddenly this thing, this *belonging*, it seems like some long, dirty lie ... and I begin to believe that birthplaces are accidents, that everything is an *accident*. But if you believe that, where do you go? What do you do? What does anything matter?'
- As Samad described this dystopia with a look of horror, Irie was ashamed to find that the land
- 15 of accidents sounded like paradise to her. Sounded like freedom.

<sup>1</sup> housetrained:  
addomesticato

‘Do you understand, child? I know you understand.’

And what he really meant was: do we speak the same language? Are we from the same place? Are we the same?

Irie squeezed his hand and nodded vigorously, trying to ward off<sup>2</sup> his tears. What else could she tell him but what he wanted to hear?

‘Yes,’ she said. ‘Yes, yes, yes.’

2 ward off:  
scacciare

20

► Pupils at Millfields Community School, UK, line up in their playground before school in the morning.



## COMPREHENSION AND INTERPRETATION

### 2. Answer the following questions.

- 1 What does Samad compare immigration to?
- 2 What attracts immigrant about Britain?
- 3 Does Samad think immigrants really want to stay in London?
- 4 What makes it difficult for an immigrant to feel fully part of the ‘melting pot’ of London? Tick as appropriate.
  - a The inability to speak the language.
  - b The coldness of people.
  - c The fact that there is no real integration, but only tolerance.
- 5 What happens to immigrants’ sense of ‘belonging’?
- 6 Does Irie share Samad’s sense of loss? Why/Why not?

## YOUR VOICE

### 3. In the passage you have just read Samad suggests that the lack of a sense of ‘belonging’ to a place can be extremely painful for a human being.

- 1 Do you agree with this opinion?
  - 2 Do you think you ‘belong’ to one place?
  - 3 What elements make you think so?
- Share your ideas with the rest of the class.

## Edward Morgan Forster • **A Passage to India**

Edward Morgan Forster's excerpt from *A Passage to India* entitled ‘An intercultural encounter’ contains the representation of a failed encounter between cultures that literally speak different languages.

### ➔ CHAPTER 6

- What factors contribute to making this encounter unsuccessful?



## Multiculturalism and Britain

by Amartya Sen

*The following excerpt is taken from a famous essay written by the Indian economist Amartya Sen (1933 -), who was awarded the Nobel Prize in 1998. In this passage Sen demystifies the very concept of British 'multiculturalism' and poses a series of meaningful questions for contemporary multicultural societies.*

In discussing the theory and the practice of multiculturalism, it is useful to pay particular attention to the British experience. Britain has been in the forefront<sup>1</sup> of promoting inclusive multiculturalism, with a mixture of successes and difficulties, which are of relevance also to other countries in Europe and the United States. Britain experienced race riots in London and Liverpool in 1981, though nothing as large as what happened in France in the fall of 2005, and these led to further efforts toward integration. Things have been fairly stable and reasonably calm over the last quarter-century. The process of integration in Britain has been greatly helped by the fact that all British residents from the Commonwealth countries, from which most non-white immigrants have come to Britain, have full voting rights in Britain immediately, even without British citizenship. Integration has also been helped by largely non-discriminatory treatment of immigrants in health care, schooling, and social security. Despite all this, however, Britain has recently experienced the alienation of a group of immigrants, and also fully homegrown<sup>2</sup> terrorism, when some young Muslims from immigrant families--born, educated, and reared<sup>3</sup> in Britain - killed many people in London through suicide bombings in July 2005. [...]

I will argue that the real issue is not whether 'multiculturalism has gone too far' [...], but what particular form multiculturalism should take. Is multiculturalism nothing other than tolerance of the diversity of cultures? Does it make a difference who chooses the cultural practices--whether they are imposed on young children in the name of 'the culture of the community' or whether they are freely chosen by persons with adequate opportunity to learn and to reason about alternatives? What facilities do members of different communities have, in schools as well as in the society at large, to learn about the faiths and non-faiths of different people in the world, and to understand how to reason about choices that human beings must, if only implicitly, make?

- 1 forefront: primo posto
- 2 homegrown: coltivato in casa
- 3 reared: allevati

### CHECKPOINT

#### 1. Answer the following questions.

- What two words make you think that Sen believes that multiculturalism has been an ambivalent phenomenon in Britain?
- What made the multicultural experiment particularly positive in Britain?
- In Britain is it necessary to have British citizenship to have the right to vote?
- In what areas or sectors have immigrants always been treated in a non-discriminatory way? List them.
- What fact changed the British attitude towards immigrants? Why?
- Sen focuses on the experience of 2<sup>nd</sup>-generation immigrants.
  - Do they represent an example of valid integration? Why/Why not?
  - Does Sen's view correspond to Zadie Smith's? Why/Why not?
- The text ends with a series of provocative questions. What ideas do these questions suggest? Complete these sentences with the words below.
 

rights • education • real • imposed • community

  - Multiculturalism works better when it is not .....
  - ..... multiculturalism happens when all the members of a ..... have the same .....
  - Multiculturalism requires .....

### VOCABULARY LAB FOR SOCIOLOGISTS

#### 2. Match the words (1-6) with their corresponding synonyms (a-f).

- |                  |                     |
|------------------|---------------------|
| 1 commonwealth   | a unfriendliness    |
| 2 security       | b prejudicial       |
| 3 community      | c safety/protection |
| 4 terrorism      | d social commotion  |
| 5 alienation     | e society           |
| 6 discriminatory | f federation        |



**C** **COMPETENCES:** critical thinking • making connections • digital literacy • effective communication

The texts you have read pointed out that multiculturalism is an enriching, yet difficult, problematic and not always successful experiment.



### STEP 1 DISCUSSING THE ISSUE

1. Consider the first of the questions raised by Sen in the passage you have just read: 'is multiculturalism nothing other than tolerance of the diversity of cultures?'. Work in small groups and use the following questions to guide your reflections:
  - 1 What does 'multiculturalism' mean for you?
  - 2 What does 'tolerance' mean for you?
  - 3 What is the difference between 'tolerance' and 'respect'?
  - 4 What do you think the relationship between 'multiculturalism' and 'tolerance' is?
  - 5 What are the most urgent challenges for the success of multiculturalism in your country?

### STEP 2 RESEARCHING THE QUESTION

2. Work in small groups. Use the Internet to find answers to the following questions:
  - 1 What does 'multiculturalism' mean in Italy?
  - 2 Is Italy an example of successful multiculturalism?
  - 3 What successful examples of 'multiculturalism' can you mention about Italy?
  - 4 What are the most urgent challenges to Italy's multiculturalism?

### STEP 3 TAKE ACTION

3. Organise a debate in which you invite people from your school community to share their reflections on Sen's question: 'Is multiculturalism nothing other than tolerance of the diversity of cultures?'. Then agree on at least three actions you can take to improve 'multiculturalism' in your school community.



► Students playing 'ring-around-the-rosy' in the school playground.

**THEME:** A Multicultural Policy

**TASK:** With this project students are asked to analyse how their school environment favours and promotes multiculturalism. After mapping the status of multiculturalism in their school, students are asked to work collaboratively to create a 'Multicultural Policy' for their school. The aim of the activity is to promote student-initiated action to transform schools and cities into places where multiculturalism is valued, promoted and celebrated.

**C**

## COMPETENCES:

- respect cultural differences;
- co-construct knowledge, meanings, and concepts;
- develop, implement and communicate new ideas;
- understand the interconnections among systems;
- demonstrate the ability to work effectively with diverse teams;
- use digital technology, communication tools and/or networks appropriately to access, manage, integrate, evaluate, and create information;
- use technology as a tool to research, organise, evaluate and communicate information.

## STEP 1 BRAINSTORMING (all class)

**Phase 1** – The following aspects represent different ways to promote multiculturalism at school.

1. Dealing with conflicts
2. Promoting diversity
3. Eliminating racism
4. Human rights education
5. Promoting global perspectives

Brainstorm and share your ideas with the rest of the class using these questions as guidelines:

1. **Dealing with conflicts** – Conflicts can create tensions in a school community. How does your school promote open dialogue among students? How are critical situations dealt with in your school? What practices are used in your school to promote collaboration and the expression of multiple perspectives?
2. **Promoting diversity** – How is diversity preserved or guaranteed in your school? How is your school promoting cultural diversity? What actions have been taken to avoid any form of discrimination?
3. **Eliminating racism** – How does the school ensure that students have a clear understanding of what 'racism' actually is?
4. **Human rights education** – How are the fundamental rights of human beings promoted and defended in your school? What kinds of action do you or can you as a school community take to defend human rights?
5. **Promoting global perspectives** – How do you celebrate and promote international mindedness in your school community? How does your school make sure that cultural perspectives are promoted and placed within a global context?



**SOFT SKILLS****HOW TO PROMOTE COLLABORATION IN GROUP WORK**

Collaboration is the ability to work together with other people or a group to achieve a common goal. In order to promote collaboration in group work, it is important:

- to establish group norms that are clear and possibly flexible;
- to create group roles;
- to make sure that everybody can express their own opinions;
- to value diversity.

**STEP 2 GROUP WORK** (small groups, max 3-4 people)

Select one of the areas of multiculturalism identified in Step 1. With the help of the Internet, search for significant cases that show how schools in the world have promoted and/or still promote the aspect you have identified. Use the following framework to guide your research and reflections:

ANALYSIS FRAMEWORK		
	Guiding questions	Is this significant for your school environment? Why?
<b>Type of school</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What kind of school are you considering?</li> <li>• Is it a primary or a secondary school?</li> <li>• Is it a private or a public school?</li> </ul>	
<b>Geographical position</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Where is the school located?</li> </ul>	
<b>Significant examples</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What significant examples of multicultural promotion can you find in the school you have identified?</li> </ul>	
<b>Social actors involved</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Who are the people involved in this particular kind of action?</li> </ul>	
<b>Monitoring and surveying</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How did the school keep track of the success of the action/campaign you have identified?</li> </ul>	
<b>Areas of intervention</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What particular area of multiculturalism has this action/campaign promoted?</li> </ul>	

**STEP 3 SHARING** (all groups)

Share the results of your analysis with the rest of the class. Take note of the comments and suggestions that your classmates may share with you and use them to improve your analysis.

**STEP 4 PLAN A MULTICULTURAL POLICY FOR YOUR SCHOOL** (group work)

Create groups of 3 or 4 people.

Each group will focus on a different aspect of the policy that your school should adopt to promote multiculturalism. In particular, each group can focus on one of the following aspects:

1. How can school subjects promote multiculturalism at school?
2. What events could be organised in your school to promote multiculturalism?
3. What can teachers and students do every day to promote multiculturalism?
4. What does 'multiculturalism' mean in your school? How can it be celebrated?  
What cultures are represented in your school? Are they promoted?
5. What aspects of multiculturalism should be urgently promoted in your school?

**STEP 5 SHARING WITH THE WHOLE SCHOOL COMMUNITY** (class work)

Share your ideas and plans to promote multiculturalism at school. Create a slideshow to share your plan to promote multiculturalism at school with the entire school community. Call a school assembly during which the entire class will present the slideshow to the school.

**STEP 6 PROMOTE A MULTICULTURAL POLICY IN YOUR CITY**

Imagine you are the mayor of your city. You want to organise a public event to celebrate multiculturalism in your city. Make a plan in which you:

- describe the kind of event you want to organise (where and when you want to organise it; the main aims of the event; who the people involved are, etc.)
- explain how you want to promote multiculturalism through this event
- make a plan that will enable you to pay for the expenses that you need to cover.

After drafting out the details of the event, make a speech in which you present it and try to convince a sponsor to support your plan by making a donation.