

# A LEVEL SOCIOLOGY

## Lesson Element

### Identity and hybrid identity

#### **Instructions and answers for teachers**

*These instructions should accompany the OCR resource 'Identity and hybrid identity' activity which supports OCR A Level Sociology..*

The screenshot shows a worksheet titled 'A LEVEL SOCIOLOGY' with a purple header. Below the header, it says 'Lesson Element' and 'Identity and hybrid identity'. Under 'Aims and Objectives', there are four bullet points: 'To understand what is meant by identity and group identity', 'To understand that identity is made up of many different parts, some of which are ascribed and some of which are achieved', 'To begin to understand theoretical perspectives on identity, structure and agency', and 'To explore the relationship between identity and culture'. Below this is 'Task 1 - Defining Identity' with the instruction 'In small groups discuss the following questions:' and three bullet points: 'What do you think is meant by the word identity?', 'What influences a person's identity?', and 'How is identity related to culture?'. There are two empty rectangular boxes for answers, one under 'Definition of identity:' and one under 'Two types of identity:'. At the bottom left, it says 'Version 2' and at the bottom right, there is the OCR logo.

#### **The Activity:**



*This activity offers an opportunity for English skills development.*

#### **Associated materials:**

'Identity and hybrid identity' Lesson Element learner activity sheet

'Identity and hybrid identity' PowerPoint that can be used alongside the worksheet.

#### **Suggested timings:**

**Task 1:** 30 minutes

**Task 3:** 20 minutes

**Task 5:** 30 minutes

**Task 2:** 20 minutes

**Task 4:** 30 minutes

**Task 6:** 30 minutes



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## Aims and objectives

- To understand what is meant by identity and group identity
- To understand that identity is made up of many different parts, some of which are ascribed and some of which are achieved
- To begin to understand theoretical perspectives on identity, structure and agency
- To explore the relationship between identity and culture.
- To understand what is meant by hybrid identity and explore the relevance of hybrid identity in the context of postmodern society.

## Suggestions for delivery

1. Begin by asking students to write their own definition of identity, including a discussion of the difference various factors which influence a person's identity.
2. Develop ideas about the various influences that affect people's identification process. Suggest some influences then ask students to apply this to their own identity and consider which factors affect their identity most.
3. Reverse the process and ask students to consider a range of statements and ask them to link these to a particular aspect of identity. Good for application skills.
4. Consider the identification process, in the context of structure or agency. To what extent is identity given and to what extent is it acquired? Going further, encourage students to consider which aspects of identity can be changed and which cannot.
5. Apply these ideas to theoretical perspectives - consider the Marxist and neo-Marxist views of class identity. Contrast these ideas and consider the power of ideas. Contrast and challenge these views with a postmodern perspective, considering the ways in which identity is becoming more complex and fragmented.
6. Using a range of examples, explore the concept of hybrid identity showing the ways in which identity has transformed from being stable and predictable to complex and fluid. Refer back to the structure vs agency debate.
7. Use the sorting activity to consolidate your knowledge.

You may wish to use the accompanying presentation when delivering this lesson element.



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## Formative assessment

It is a good idea to engage students in becoming aware that they are challenging their own non-sociological ideas about identity. Throughout this lesson element, students should begin to consider sociologically specific understandings of identity as a process and begin to appreciate the various influences on a person's identity. This will be assessed through the various formative activities including the sorting activities and the application activities. It may be a good idea for students to research their own example of hybrid identity and present this back to the rest of the class.

## Summative assessment

Assess the view that identity is chosen by the individual

Examine the view that identity is ascribed.

Explain what is meant by hybrid identity and provide an example.

## Task 1 – Defining identity

In small groups discuss the following questions:

- What do you think is meant by the word identity?  
*Students may have a sense of group identity or a sense of the concept in lay terms. Encourage students to consider that identity from a sociological perspective has a particular meaning.*
- What influences a person's identity?  
*Students might suggest religion, ethnicity, music choices, etc.*
- How is identity related to culture?  
*This may be a challenging question for students, they may recognise that the two concepts shape and inform each other. What might young people see as attractive about youth subcultures?*

Definition of identity:

The way people see themselves and how other people see them.

Two types of identity:

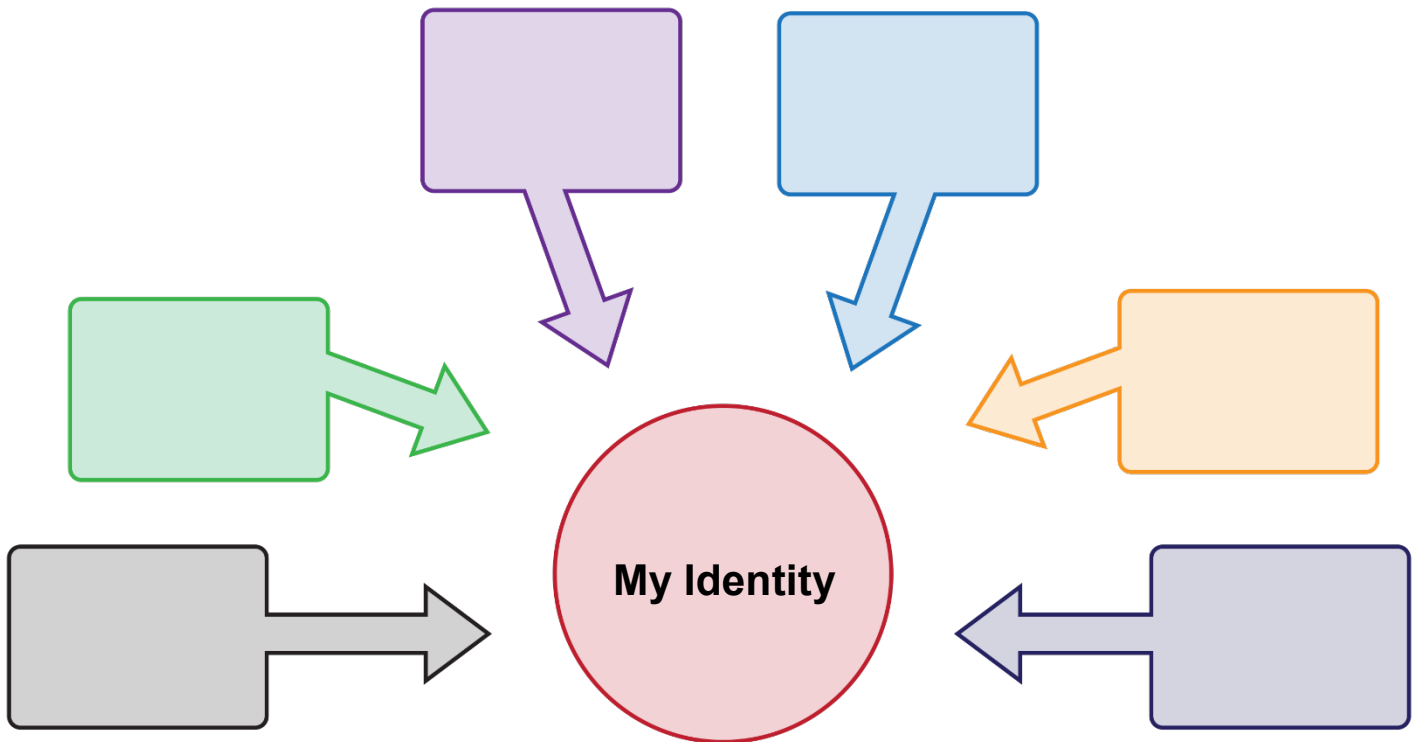
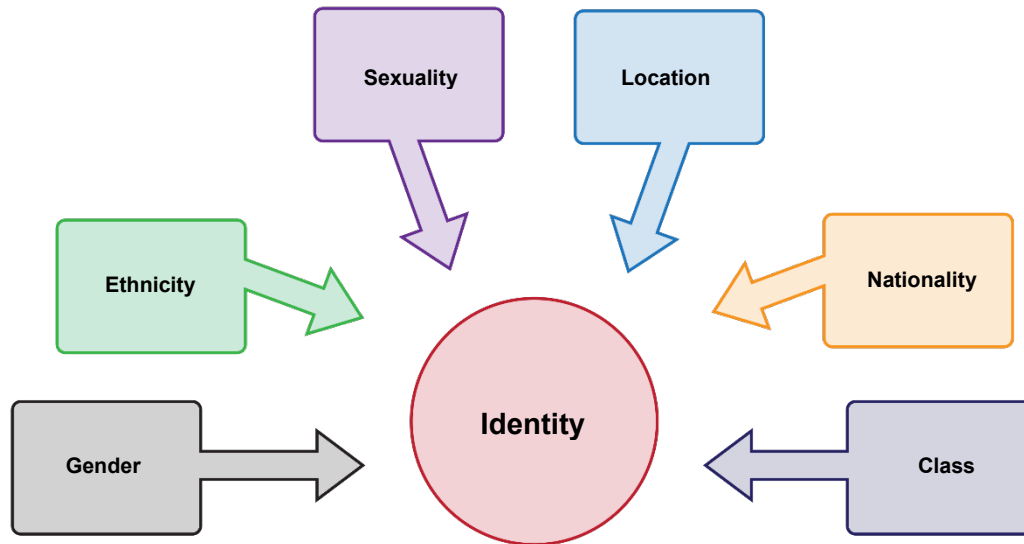
Individual identity and group identity.



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## Task 2 – What factors shape a person's identity?

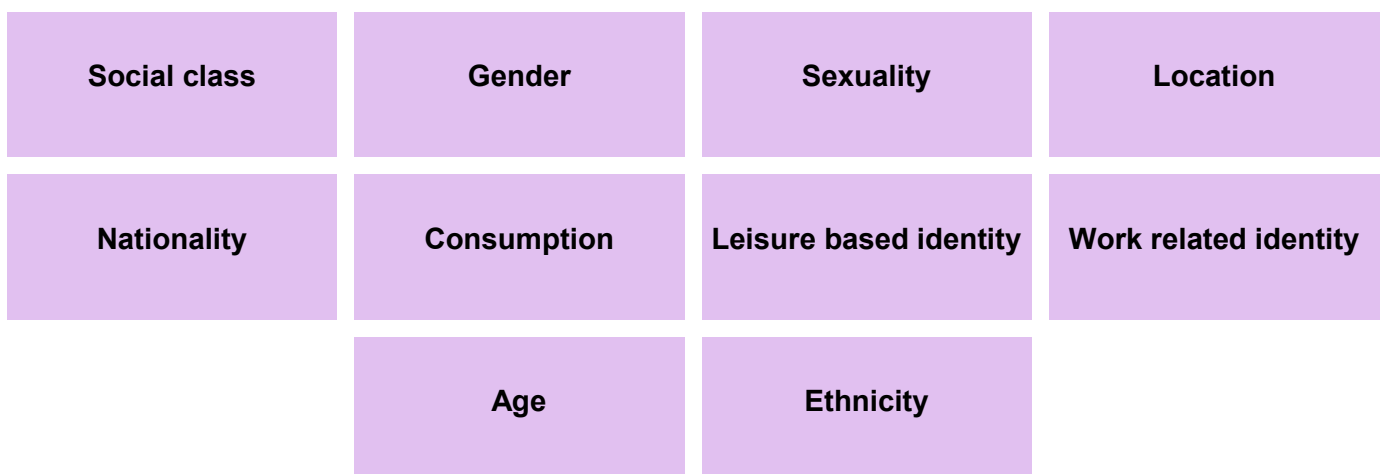
Look at the first diagram below. Explain each box and then think about what factors informs your own identity.



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## Task 3 – Types of identity

Description	Type of identity
The choices a person makes about how to spend their free time which shape their sense of who they are.	Leisure based identity
Socioeconomic position, according to Marx, the most significant part of your identity that is ascribed.	Social class
How people express their identity through their choices of relationships.	Sexuality
The idea that the country belongs to plays a significant part in defining who they are as a person.	Nationality
Where a person lives determines their identity.	Location
A shared sense of identity deriving from dress, language or beliefs for example.	Ethnicity
How peoples employment patterns shape their identity.	Work related identity
Expressing identity through patterns in buying certain products or services.	Consumption
Specific ideas about what it means to be a man or a woman shape a person's identity.	Gender
The way that identity is dependent upon the life stage a person is at.	Age



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## Task 4 – How does a person acquire an identity?

Ascribed identity:

Aspects of identity that is given

Achieved identity:

Aspects of identity that is chosen

Examples of ascribed identity	Examples of achieved identity
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Nationality</li><li>• Gender/sex</li><li>• Ethnicity</li><li>• Social class</li><li>• Location</li><li>• Sexuality?</li><li>• First language</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Social status position</li><li>• Religious beliefs</li><li>• Work role</li><li>• Relationship status</li><li>• Family role</li><li>• Belonging to a particular subculture</li><li>• The goods that you buy</li></ul>

### Stretch and challenge:

Which of the above are possible to change and which might not be? Why?

*Taking things further: it could be suggested to students that all forms of identity can be negotiated/contested. Ask students to look at the list above of ascribed forms of identity and ask them how this might be so. For example, gender can be renegotiated/redefined according to a person's choices. This is a useful precursor to considering debates of structure and agency in relation to identity.*

*It is worth giving examples in discussion eg, how parts of a person's identity may become very relevant at particular times. So in cases of ethnic conflict, certain aspects of a persons national and/or ethnic identity may become critically important, yet at other times these parts of a persons identity may be dormant or less important.*



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## Task 5 – Sociological theoretical perspectives on identity

### Structure

The idea that identity is ascribed, individuals are passive and cannot change their identity, eg Marxism

### Agency

The idea that individuals and groups can and will change aspects of their identity, eg Neo Marxism

Marxism:

Neo  
Marxism:

- Updated Marxist views
- Class is important in shaping identity still, but individuals have more say in shaping their identity today
- Subcultures, for example, allow people to reject or rebel against their position and assert new forms of group identity
- One example is youth subcultures which develop an identity which allows them to challenge dominant ideas about identity.

Summarise the postmodern perspective of identity.

- In the past, or the modern era, according to postmodernists, identity was stable and relatively straightforward. People's identity was based on social class, gender and nationality for example.
- Today, however, in postmodern society, postmodernists argue that identity is far more complex and negotiated on an individual level.
- Identity can be based on a whole range of complex factors such as ethnicity, sexuality, consumption, lifestyle choices.



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In your own words, using the PowerPoint slide, describe the difference between identity in a modern era (1950's-1980's) with identity in a post modern era:

Identity in the modern era (approx. 1950-1980's) was very much stable and fixed, based around class and work. There was less negotiation of identity. In the 1980's onwards, identity became more fluid and fragmented, and also less stable. This shift was in part due to the increasing influence of the mass media and the effects of globalisation. Globalisation resulted in greater movement of people and as a result the spread of ideas and factors that shape people's identity. As a result, people became more focused on the individual rather than conforming to a shared group identity.

What is the relationship between culture and identity?

Culture refers to the way of life of a group of people.  
Identity is the way we see ourselves and the way others see us.  
Culture shapes and informs a person's identity.  
Culture and identity change over time.

What is hybrid identity?

Hybrid Identity is where two or more aspects of a person's identity are combined producing a unique form of identity

In your own words summarise the key reasons why hybrid identities form:

Hybrid identities are a product of the fusion of two or more types of identity which is much more likely to occur within a complex global culture where there is a greater flow of ideas and greater movement of people. The proliferation of the mass media has also contributed to the spread of ideas and enabled people to communicate and celebrate difference more easily for example through the use of new social media (Facebook, Twitter etc.) Hybrid identity often reflects the fact that some people live in plural worlds and gives individuals a chance to cope with rapid social change that may be forced upon them.





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## Hybrid identity:

A new form of identity that emerges as a result of the combination of two or more types of identity.

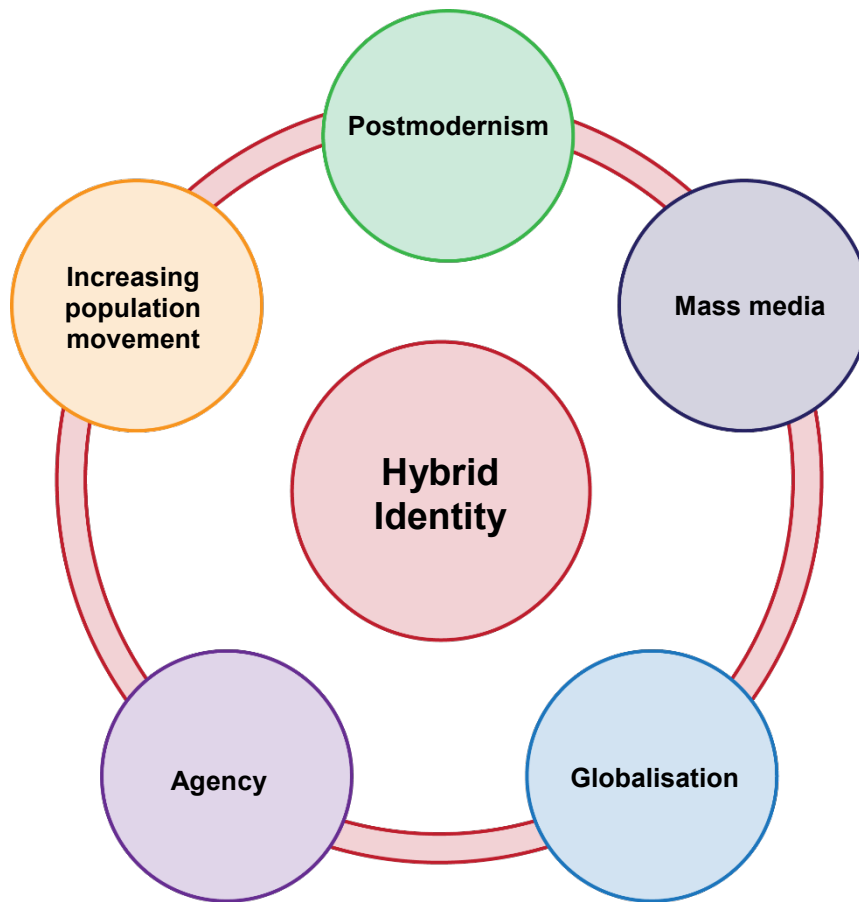
Examples:

1.

2. **Hip Hop in Japan**  
Ian Condry (2006) argues that just as companies sell products that inform identities, individuals are also locally producing new forms of music based on a mixture of different cultural influences. It is also suggestive of a far more active role for individuals in selecting resources to shape their identity. Japan's vibrant hip-hop scene reveals how a music and culture that originated halfway around the world is appropriated and remade in Tokyo clubs and recording studios. Condry discusses how rappers manipulate the Japanese language to achieve rhyme and rhythmic flow and how Japan's female rappers struggle to find a place in a male-dominated genre. Condry pays particular attention to the messages of MCs, considering how their raps take on subjects including Japan's education system, its sex industry, teenage bullying victims turned schoolyard murderers, and even America's handling of the war on terror.



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In your own words, explain how each concept relates to the idea of hybrid identity, giving examples



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## Task 6 – Card sorting activity

Using the diagram below, link the correct concepts and ideas to the correct image.

Image 1



Image 2



Concepts and ideas	Image 1 or 2?
Working class	1
Fragmented identity	2
Fluid identity	2
Hybrid identity	2
Social class is important	1 and 2
Gender identity as fluid	2
1980's–today	2
Modernity	1



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Concepts and ideas	Image 1 or 2?
Agency	2
Marxism	1
1950's–1980's	1
Gender identity as fixed	1
Sexuality as a key part of identity	2
Globalisation	2
Post modernity	2
Identity stable	1
Structure	1
Ascribed identity	1
Increasing movement of people	2
Nationalism	1
Achieved identity	2
Neo Marxism	2
Mass media	2



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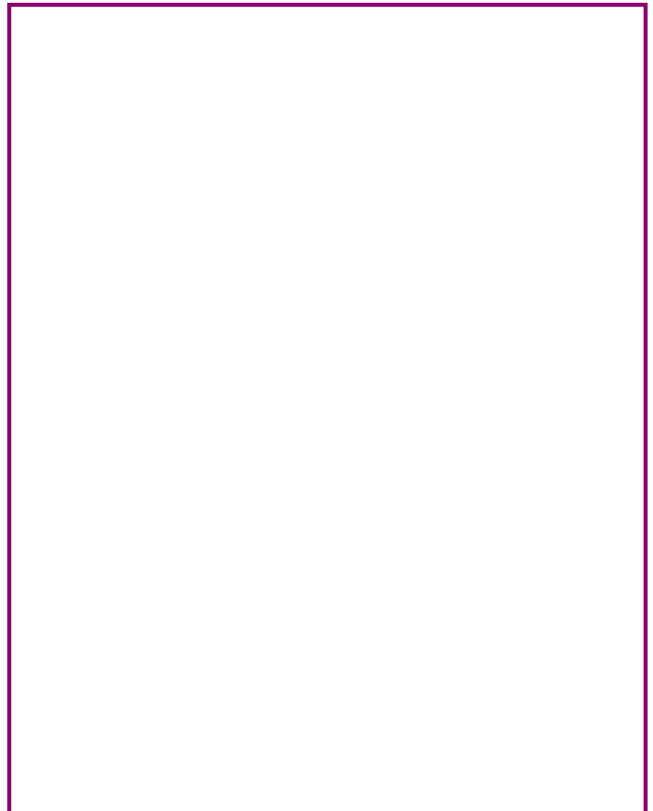
## Task 6 – Card sorting activity

Using the diagram below, link the correct concepts and ideas to the correct image.

Image 1



Image 2



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Working class	1980s–today	Sexuality as a key part of identity	Increasing movement of people
Fragmented identity	Modernity	Globalisation	Nationalism
Fluid identity	Agency	Post modernity	Achieved identity
Hybrid identity	Marxism	Identity stable	Neo Marxism
Social class is important	1950's–1980's	Structure	Mass media
Gender identity as fluid	Gender identity as fixed	Ascribed identity	

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