



# DIVERSITY & DISCRIMINATION

***"The greater the diversity, the greater the perfection."***

Thomas Berry (1914 – 2009), American cultural historian

## 1. Diversity Discussion

1. What is diversity?
2. How diverse is your city, country or workplace? Do you think it would be better if they were more diverse? Why or why not?
3. What are the benefits of diversity to a city, country or workplace? Are there any negative effects of increased diversity?
4. Are you interested in learning about different people? Which different people would you like to know more about? Why?
5. How can people learn to understand different people better?
6. Do groups with diverse members make better decisions? Why or why not?
7. Should companies have an equal balance between men and women? Why or why not?
8. Despite their differences, aren't people essentially the same?

## 2. Diversity & Discrimination Vocabulary

- **to discriminate** (verb), **discrimination** (noun) – *the unjust treatment of people based on prejudice.*
- **privilege** (noun), **privileged** (adjective) – *an advantage a person has based on the group they belong to.*
- **stereotype** (noun), **stereotypical** (adjective) – *a generalisation, often untrue, about a group of people.*
- **prejudice** (noun), **prejudiced** (adjective) – *a preconceived opinion, often negative and not based on experience.*
- **racism** (noun), **racist** (adjective, person noun) – *prejudice or discrimination against members of a different ethnicity.*
- **(ethnic) minority** (noun) – *a group within a population that is different to the majority population; an ethnic minority has a different ethnicity to the majority population.*

**Using the vocabulary words above, complete the following sentences (remember to use the correct form of the word, e.g. verb conjugation or plural noun):**

1. Big tech companies were accused of being **racist** after it was revealed that Black and Latino people are hugely underrepresented in these companies.
2. Classism is a **prejudice** based on a person's social or economic class.
3. Hispanic people make up the largest **ethnic minority** in the United States.
4. Male **privilege** means that men will always have an advantage over women when applying for a job.
5. **Discrimination** against women means they have to work even harder than men to get a promotion.
6. Saying that all British people have bad teeth is a lazy **stereotype**.

### **Diversity & Discrimination vocabulary comprehension questions**

1. What different kinds of discrimination exist?
2. Do you think you have any privileges?
3. What are some stereotypes that people might have about you (based on your nationality, ethnicity, gender, etc)?
4. Where do prejudices come from?
5. Have you ever experienced or witnessed any racism?
6. What ethnic minorities are there in your city or country? Do you think they face any kind of discrimination?

### 3. Video: The Importance of Diversity in the Workplace

You are going to watch a video by Big Think called "Why Diversity Is More Important Than Meritocracy."

Watch the video here: <https://yourenglishpal.com/blog/esl-conversation-lesson-plan-diversity-discrimination/>

While you watch the video, answer the following questions:

#### Multiple choice

- CEOs know that diversity is...?  
a) *the fair thing to do*                      b) *the patriotic thing to do*                      c) ***the clever thing to do***
- Where does diversity go to die?  
a) ***middle management***                      b) *senior management*                      c) *the boardroom*
- How often do middle managers hire new staff?  
a) *never*                      b) ***infrequently***                      c) *regularly*
- The best person for the job is someone who...?  
a) *is different*                      b) *is similar*                      c) ***has the necessary skills***

#### Sentence completion

- There is nowhere more meritocratic than **Wall Street**.
- If diversity programs haven't increased diversity after five or ten years, it's time to stop it and do **something different**.
- There are plenty of professional women and people with diverse cognitive **perspectives**.
- More diversity on Wall Street would have made the **financial crisis** less severe.

#### Short answer

- How do all the people who work on Wall Street's trading floor look? **The same**
- What do homogenous teams tend to do to each other? **Over trust**
- What can testosterone increase? **(Trading) risk**
- It is not uncommon to see a photo of which people huddling round the president? **White males**

## 4. Discrimination Conversation Questions

1. Why do people discriminate? Which people are most discriminated against in your country? Do people ever discriminate against you for any reason?
2. What can be done to tackle the problem of discrimination?
3. Which group or groups of people have the most privileges in your country?
4. Do you think racism is a problem in your country?
5. Do you think discrimination is increasing or decreasing around the world? Why?
6. Do you agree with 'affirmative action' or 'positive discrimination' recruitment policies that give priority to candidates from under-represented groups when deciding who gets the job?
7. What questions do you think an employer should not be allowed to ask in a job interview? Why might they want to ask these questions?
8. What do you know about equality laws in your country? Are they effective?

## 5. Diversity & Discrimination Writing Task

Write about your opinion of diversity and discrimination. Try to use some of the vocabulary you learned earlier in this lesson. In your answer, you could include some of the following topics:

- The benefits of diversity in society and at work.
- The kinds of discrimination that exist and why people discriminate.
- Whether or not affirmative action is a good idea.

### **Alternative exam practice question:**

People argue that affirmative action is necessary to ensure underrepresented groups are given a fair chance of gaining employment or positions in top universities. Others, however, say that affirmative action itself is a form of discrimination, and other ways to help underrepresented groups should be considered. What do you think?