



It isn't Christmas for everyone?

As winter takes hold across Britain, many people are preparing for Christmas. Businesses prepare to close for the holiday, people stock up their cupboards with indulgent foods and gifts are bought to wrap in paper and sit under the tree. Memories of Christmas can be some of the most powerful for people, as it is a time where families come together and share a meal and give and receive presents.

However, for many families across Britain, Christmas is not recognised in their home or local community. Yes, the lit streets, the Christmas adverts on the television and the gifts on offer in the shops cannot be ignored but come the 25th December, Christmas is not celebrated.

Christmas is a Christian holiday, meaning "Christ's mass" or the birth of Christ. As the Church of England is still one of the dominant religious groups in Britain this holiday is celebrated across the UK. However, I am sure many of us would confess that so many of the religious undertones have all but been lost under the glitz and glamour of the holiday.

Can you think of any of the other key holidays celebrated by other faiths across the world throughout the year?

Many of our neighbours celebrate and enjoy a very different religious calendar of events. Visit the link or scan the QR code below to see just how many religious holidays are taking place across the world each month.

<http://www.interfaithcalendar.org/>



What celebrations do you look forward to each year?

Many of these celebrations are happening in your town, in your street or next door. Families across the UK celebrate key moments in their faiths calendar alongside the Christian holidays that dominate British media and the cycle of the year.

Where are we from?

Throughout our lives, we are asked to state where we were born and identify our ethnicity or ethnic grouping.

We are faced with words like 'Nationality', 'Domicile', 'Origin' and 'Ethnicity' when we fill in most application forms.

The word 'nationality' means the status of belonging to a particular nation. For example, someone who holds a British passport is usually said to be of British nationality, but may view themselves as English or Scottish

The word 'domicile' means the country which a person treats as their permanent home which can be a challenge for international students, especially if they hold dual passports.

The word 'origin' means beginning, start, birth. This may be used to identify your place of birth.

The word we have come to hear so often is 'ethnicity'. The word ethnicity means, the fact or state of belonging to a social group that has a common national or cultural tradition. In modern society the ethnic boundaries have become diverse and stretched. It can now be more to do with how a person identifies with a culture or social group than, some may say, their true ethnicity.

[All definition have been taken from the Oxford Dictionary].

Below are the ethnicity codes used when our apprentices start their program.

Where do you fit?

Table 1 - Ethnicity
Please enter the appropriate code

31	English, Welsh, Scottish, Northern Irish, British	41	Bangladeshi
32	White Irish	42	Chinese
33	Gypsy or Irish Traveller	43	Any other Asian background
34	Any Other White Background	44	African
35	White & Black Caribbean	45	Black Caribbean
36	White & Black African	46	Any other Black
37	White & Asian	47	Arab
38	Any other mixed/multiple ethnic background	98	Any other ethnic group
39	Indian	99	Not known
40	Pakistani	ZZ	Prefer not to say

We live in a world that is becoming more and more aware of ethnicity and origin. We are nations with borders that allow freedom of movement and we welcome diversity in our communities. So the next form that you complete asking about your nationality and ethnicity, think about the difference in those two words and consider where you are from.



Who am I?

Many of us fight an intermittent internal battle over who we are, who we want to be and how we want to live our lives. For some people these are serious questions and the outcomes can be life altering.

Trans and gender non-conforming

Society has become more understanding of people who are trans or/and gender non-conforming however so many of us still do not understand what it means. The media have been exploring the meaning and how it affects people's lives through popular television series featuring transgender characters and documentaries that follow the journeys of a range of people living with gender identity issues.



What does this flag mean?

It is a symbol of Transgender Pride

Transgender is an umbrella term for people whose gender identity, gender expression or behaviour does not conform to that typically associated with the sex to which they were assigned at birth. This may be acceptable terminology to use but not everyone whose appearance and behaviour is gender non-conforming will identify as a transgender person.

Gender identity refers to a person's internal sense of being male, female or something else.

Gender expression refers to the way a person communicates gender identity to others through behaviour, clothing, hairstyles, voice or body characteristics.

If you or someone you know has been affected by the topic in this article, then behind this QR code and the link below is information on The Gender Trust who support all those affected by gender identity issues. There are many support groups that can help people with gender issues.



THE GENDER TRUST

Supporting all those affected by gender identity issues



Choosing a side

During the past few months we have seen some hard hitting stories in the media. A transgender woman died in a male prison as her appeal to be moved to a female prison was considered. The latest terrorist attacks across the world, hitting Paris and Mali killing hundreds of people.

News stories touch us all in different ways. Some people are driven to act and support a cause, some people choose to stop watching the news or reading newspapers and others are simply stunned by the stories that reach our homes. The fact is we all still get up in the morning and continue with our own lives and struggle to even imagine how the people trapped in this news world continue.

If we are able to gain a level of understanding of the reasons behind why an event has happened this can alleviate anxiety and frustrations.

Make your opinion an informed one.

We are in a constant battle to choose a side and build allies. It is ingrained in our culture or even in us as humans to choose a side. In some cases we can see that choosing one side over another has benefits or is easier.

Consider the time of elections, we can see the positives of each party and need to consider the negatives and weigh up our choice. It sometimes comes down to allegiances forged over many years of conditioning by parents and friends or society, making a change of heart difficult to follow through. This is why voting choices are often a taboo subject.

Consider your own feelings about topics in the media. Do you understand both sides?

Consider a terror attack, sides are swiftly chosen, however decisions on action need to be made in haste. The decision or action can affect the outcome of a sensitive situation so greatly. These are the decisions racing through parliament over the coming weeks.

We will never all agree, that is a fact and the way of the world, but we are entitled to our opinions on a topic. Our own opinions should not be thrust with force upon others and we should challenge those with radical views.