



Social Identity Wheel

Overview	The Social Identity Wheel worksheet is an activity that encourages students to identify social identities and reflect on the various ways those identities become visible or more keenly felt at different times, and how those identities impact the ways others perceive or treat them. The worksheet prompts students to fill in various social identities (such as race, gender, sex, ability/disability, sexual orientation, etc.) and further categorize those identities based on which matter most in their self-perception and which matter most in others' perception of them. The Social Identity Wheel can be used in conjunction with the Personal Identity Wheel to encourage students to reflect on the relationships and dissonances between their personal and social identities. The wheels can be used as a prompt for small or large group discussion or reflective writing on identity by using the Spectrum Activity Questions on Identity.
Goals	1) To encourage students to consider their identities critically and how identities are more or less keenly felt in different social contexts. The classroom and the university can be highlighted as a context as a way to approach questions on barriers to inclusion. 2) To illuminate how privilege operates to normalize some identities over others. For example, a student who speaks English as their first language can reflect on why they rarely need to think about their language as an aspect of their identity while some of their peers may identify language as the aspect of their identity they feel most keenly in the classroom. 3) To sensitize students to their shared identities with their classmates as well as the diversity of identities in the classroom, building community and encouraging empathy.
Implementation	1) View this video (at the 6:46 mark) to see how to facilitate this activity in your classroom. 2) There are three ways you can approach this activity: a. Option A: This can be done as an independent activity where students answer the questions on their own and then you lead a whole-class discussion. b. Option B: You can post the different social identity categories around the room and have students go through the questions on the handout, moving to the identity that best answers the question. Students can then discuss with other students who chose the same identity. You can then lead a debrief after the activity. c. Option C: In combination with Option A or B, have students complete the Personal Identity Wheel as well.

	3) If you are choosing Option B or Option C/B, place the social identity categories around the room before class.
Challenges	1) The students may not perceive the activity as relevant to the course and thus may exhibit resistance. 2) Students may not be familiar with particular concepts, or they may have different assumptions about those concepts that the activity assumes. For example, they may not know the difference between the terms “sex” and “gender,” or they may be resistant to the distinction between the two. 3) If the wheel is used as a discussion prompt or if students are in close quarters and are able to see what their peers have written on their worksheets, this exercise may feel especially vulnerable to students with invisible identities that they may not want to disclose to the class. Disclosure in verbal or written form should be voluntary and discussion questions should be broad enough that students can opt to not talk about more vulnerable aspects of their identities while still leaving space for them to share if they wish.
Materials	1) Social Identity Wheel Handout (Options A, B, C) 2) Social Identity Categories (Options B, C) 3) Personal Identity Wheel Handout (Option C)
Citations	Adapted for use by the Program on Intergroup Relations and the Spectrum Center, University of Michigan.

Option A Session Sequence

Lesson Structure	Time <i>(Estimated amount of time for each component)</i>	Activity Content and Instructions
Introduction	3 mins	The instructor welcomes the class and provides an overview of the activity: students will critically consider their social identities, reflecting on how they shape and inform their lives.
Social Identity Wheel and Social Identity Groups	15 mins	Individual student activity 1) Distribute the social identity wheel handout. 2) Review “Social Identity Groups” as a class, noting additional examples of the different identities presented. 3) Give students time to answer the five questions on the front and to review “Social Identity Groups” on the back of the page.
Large Group Debrief	15 mins	Lead the class in a debrief of the activity. Some possible debrief questions: 1) Go through the five questions on the handout: a. What identities do you think about most often? b. What identities do you think about least often? c. What identities would you like to learn more about? d. What identities have the strongest effect on how you perceive yourself? e. What identities have the greatest effect on how others perceive you? 2) Why is it important to critically reflect on our identities? 3) What is the value in completing activities like this in our class?

Option B Session Sequence

Lesson Structure	Time <i>(Estimated amount of time for each component)</i>	Activity Content and Instructions
Introduction	3 mins	The instructor welcomes the class and provides an overview of the activity: students will critically consider their social identities, reflecting on how they shape and inform their lives.
Social Identity Wheel and Social Identity Groups	20 mins	Whole class activity 1) Distribute the social identity wheel handout. 2) Review “Social Identity Groups” as a class, noting additional examples of the different identities presented. 3) Having posted the different social identity categories around the room, ask each of the following questions out loud, allowing time for students to self-select the identity that best answers the question and time for students to discuss with others who chose the same identity. If there is a student alone in an identity, you can join them in conversation. Questions: a. What identities do you think about most often? b. What identities do you think about least often? c. What identities would you like to learn more about? d. What identities have the strongest effect on how you perceive yourself? e. What identities have the greatest effect on how others perceive you?
Large Group Debrief	15 mins	Lead the class in a debrief of the activity. Some possible debrief questions: 1) Go through the five questions on the handout: a. What identities do you think about most often? b. What identities do you think about least often? c. What identities would you like to learn more about? d. What identities have the strongest effect on how you perceive yourself? e. What identities have the greatest effect on how others perceive you? 2) Why is it important to critically reflect on our identities? 3) What is the value in completing activities like this in our class?

Option C-A Session Sequence

Lesson Structure	Time <i>(Estimated amount of time for each component)</i>	Activity Content and Instructions
Introduction	3 mins	The instructor welcomes the class and provides an overview of the activity: students will critically consider their personal and social identities, reflecting on how they shape and inform their lives.
Personal Identity Wheel, Social Identity Wheel, and Social Identity Groups	20-25 mins	1) Distribute the personal identity wheel handout: a. Give students 5-10 minutes to fill out. 2) In pairs or small groups, have students share their personal identity wheels: a. Give students 5 minutes to share. 3) Distribute the social identity wheel handout. 4) Review “Social Identity Groups” as a class, noting additional examples of the different identities presented. 5) Give students time to answer the five questions on the front and to review “Social Identity Groups” on the back of the page.
Large Group Debrief	15 mins	Lead the class in a debrief of the activity. Some possible debrief questions: 1) Go through the five questions on the handout: f. What identities do you think about most often? g. What identities do you think about least often? h. What identities would you like to learn more about? i. What identities have the strongest effect on how you perceive yourself? j. What identities have the greatest effect on how others perceive you? 2) Which components of the personal identity wheel were hard to fill out? 3) Which components of your personal identity were harder to share out? 4) Which personal identities, if any, are informed by your social identities? 5) Why is it important to critically reflect on our identities? 6) What is the value in completing activities like this in our class?

Option C-B Session Sequence

Lesson Structure	Time (Estimated amount of time for each component)	Activity Content and Instructions
Introduction	3 mins	The instructor welcomes the class and provides an overview of the activity: students will critically consider their personal and social identities, reflecting on how they shape and inform their lives.
Personal Identity Wheel, Social Identity Wheel, and Social Identity Groups	30-35 mins	1) Distribute the personal identity wheel handout: a. Give students 5-10 minutes to fill out. 2) In pairs or small groups, have students share their personal identity wheels. a. Give students 5 minutes to share. 3) Distribute the social identity wheel handout. 4) Review “Social Identity Groups” as a class, noting additional examples of the different identities presented. 5) Having posted the different social identity categories around the room, ask each of the following questions out loud, allowing time for students to self-select the identity that best answers the question and time for students to discuss with others who chose the same identity. If there is a student alone in an identity, you can join them in conversation. Questions: a. What identities do you think about most often? b. What identities do you think about least often? c. What identities would you like to learn more about? d. What identities have the strongest effect on how you perceive yourself? e. What identities have the greatest effect on how others perceive you?
Large Group Debrief	15 mins	Lead the class in a debrief of the activity. Some possible debrief questions: 1) Go through the five questions on the handout: a. What identities do you think about most often? b. What identities do you think about least often? c. What identities would you like to learn more about? d. What identities have the strongest effect on how you perceive yourself? e. What identities have the greatest effect on how others perceive you?

		2) Which components of the personal identity wheel were hard to fill out? 3) Which components of your personal identity were harder to share out? 4) Which personal identities, if any, are informed by your social identities? 5) Why is it important to critically reflect on our identities? 6) What is the value in completing activities like this in our class?
--	--	--