PART **1**

PRELIMINARY COURSE

ONE
THE SOCIAL AND CULTURAL WORLD

This chapter introduces concepts, the process of research, and how research methods are used in the context of understanding our social and cultural world. The focus study of this chapter features the Maasai culture of East Africa.

Outcomes

A student:

P1 identifies and applies social and cultural concepts

P3 identifies and describes relationships and interactions within and between social and cultural groups

P6 differentiates between social and cultural research methods

P9 uses appropriate course language and concepts suitable for different audiences and contexts

P10 communicates information, ideas and issues using appropriate written, oral and graphic forms.

BOSTES NSW, *Society and Culture Stage 6 Syllabus*, Sydney, 2013.

WEBLINKS

Weblinks relevant to this chapter can be found at **http://sandc. nelsonnet.com.au**. Just look for the weblink icon.

The key concepts are:

CITIZENSHIP ▶ The rights and duties of a member of a nation-state. The status of citizenship can be defined by the civil, being rights and freedoms, the political, being the right to participate by voting or holding office, and the social, being access to services such as education and welfare.

COMMUNITY ▶ A (usually local) social system with an implied sense of relationship and mutual identity among its members. As well as being locational, a community can be a group that shares a strong common interest and whose members communicate over space and through time using communication technologies.

CONTINUITY ▶ The persistence or consistent existence of cultural elements in a society across time. Continuity can also be referred to as the maintenance of the traditions and social structures that bring stability to a society.

CHANGE ▶ The alteration or modification of cultural elements in a society. Change to society can occur at the micro, meso and macro levels. It can be brought about by modernisation processes, including technological innovation. This force results in an alteration to culture.

MACRO-LEVEL SOCIETY ▶ The 'big picture' – the wider social structure, social processes and their interrelationships. Macro-level society includes those social institutions – such as the media, the law, the workplace and the government – that help to shape the social and cultural world. The macro level examines how these collective groups relate to the wider society of which they are a part (as a whole).

MESO-LEVEL SOCIETY ▶ The middle ground where individuals interact within groups such as schools, communities, church groups and neighbourhoods. The meso level consists of larger groups that interact directly with the individual. It focuses on relationships between middle-level social structures and the individual. Meso-level society is also known as middle-level society.

MICRO-LEVEL SOCIETY ▶ Where individuals' everyday actions and social interactions occur – for example, within families and small-scale social groups. The micro level focuses on patterns of social interaction at the individual level.

SOCIAL CONSTRUCT ▶ A socially created aspect of social life. Social constructionists argue that society is actively and creatively produced by human beings rather than being merely given or taken for granted.

SOCIAL STRUCTURE ▶ The recurring patterns of social behaviour and the ordered interrelationships between different elements of a society. For example, the statistical distributions of occupations and employment reveal important features of the social structure of society. Socialisation is important for maintaining social structures because norms and meanings become evident through the shared ideas and actions of individuals.

SOCIALISATION ▶ The process by which individuals learn to become functioning members of society by internalising the roles, norms and values of that society. Socialisation occurs as a result of the individual's interaction with the agents of socialisation, through which he or she learns to perform social roles.

BOSTES NSW, *Society and Culture Stage 6 Syllabus*, Sydney, 2013 (adapted).

INTRODUCTION

The first step in succeeding in your study of Society and Culture is to appreciate that this course is based on concepts. A concept is an important idea expressed using significant words that shape our understandings of human behaviour, which is the major aim of the Society and Culture course. Concepts are the language of this course. Learning to use this language appropriately and insightfully and using concepts effectively will enable you to go beyond merely describing human behaviour. It will facilitate a deeper examination and encourage analysis of all the weird, wonderful and normal aspects of our lives and the lives of those we are studying.

FUNDAMENTAL CONCEPTS

Persons

> Every person is a unique individual who develops in a social and environmental setting in which he or she is influenced by, and interacts with, other persons and groups. Communication, the sharing of values and beliefs, and cooperation are major interactions. The identity achieved by each individual is the result of interactions at the micro, meso and macro levels of society.
>
> BOSTES NSW, *Society and Culture Stage 6 Syllabus*, Sydney, 2013.

We each have our own identity, personality and character, as well as our own specific DNA, physiology and psychological make-up. Our social world is formed from the interactions and communications among individuals and groups. In understanding the concept of the person, our level of social and cultural literacy develops because we become more self-aware and develop a sense of our own personal, social and cultural identities.

Society

> Society is made up of people, groups, networks, institutions, organisations and systems. These aspects of society may include local, national, regional and international patterns of relationships and organisation. People belong to informal and formal groups, and within and between these groups there are patterns of interactions that contribute to unique cultures.
>
> BOSTES NSW, *Society and Culture Stage 6 Syllabus*, Sydney, 2013.

Society is the context in which we live our lives. Our family, our friends, the sporting teams we play in, our schools and workplaces, our social-media networks and the groups we belong to are all elements of our social world. This is where we interact with others and typically have a role and a status in the context of each group.

Culture

> Culture refers to the shared knowledge, attitudes and behaviours that give each society its coherence, identity and distinctive way of life. Culture is demonstrated by the beliefs, customs, values, norms, rules, laws, governance, arts, technologies and artefacts that people generate and use as they interpret meaning from their world and solve present and future problems. Culture is dynamic and undergoes change, and is therefore not static.
>
> BOSTES NSW, *Society and Culture Stage 6 Syllabus*, Sydney, 2013.

The distinctions between society and culture are often difficult to make. While society is the context in which we live our lives, culture makes up the 'unseen' but defining elements of our way of life. Culture typically defines our lifestyle, which we tend to take for granted on an everyday level. When we speak, we do so in the language of our culture. Mostly this is automatic and we do not need to make a conscious choice.

For Australians, citizenship and freedom are a part of living in a democracy. This is not usually thought about in everyday circumstances, but it forms a part of who we are. Our religious beliefs shape how we think and how we act towards others. Our justice and legal systems usually guide us in what we would consider doing or not doing as part of our daily actions. Our use of computers and databases is increasingly normalised and simply a part of living in this culture.

Environment

> Every society is located in a particular physical setting and interacts with its environment. The attitudes and values that people have in regard to their environment greatly affect interactions between persons, society, culture and the environment. Unique culture is generated from the interactions with the immediate environment. Different locations and their environments – including urban, rural, coastal, inland and isolated – present societies and their cultures with both opportunities and constraints.
>
> BOSTES NSW, *Society and Culture Stage 6 Syllabus*, Sydney, 2013.

Our physical setting is a major determinant of our way of life. You only have to look at the concerns that exist over global warming influencing water availability, rising sea levels and climate change to realise that our environment shapes and determines our activities. Why are so many Sydney houses made of brick and tile when clay is abundant and also forms a good insulator from the weather? Why do so many Australians swim well compared to Norwegians and why do so many Norwegians ski better than most Australians? Our activities and skills are shaped by the need to survive and thrive in our environment. If you review the summer and winter Olympic gold medal tallies for Australia and Norway, for example, it is obvious how the environment shapes our abilities and lifestyles.

Shutterstock/Ruslan Guzov

Shutterstock/Rob Kints

Figure 1.01 Do you swim better than you ski?

Time

> Every person, society, culture and environment is located in a period of time and is changing with time. Time can be examined as past, present and future. Our perceptions of time are drawn from past events and these influence our ideas about the present. These perceptions need not, however, determine possible ideas of a future. The concept of time is best studied in context – last century, this century, and pre- and post-events – or as a particular decade. Time is studied in relation to continuity and change.
>
> BOSTES NSW, *Society and Culture Stage 6 Syllabus*, Sydney, 2013.

Time is a construct of our culture; how we understand time is a product of our beliefs and values. For example, the Hindu perspective is that time is cyclical – that is, a cycle of birth, life, death, reincarnation and back again to birth. The Western/Christian perspective is that time is linear – that is, people have one life during which they shape notions of opportunity, progress and the eternal. Some cultures have different attitudes to particular aspects of time, for instance, the Japanese are very particular about punctuality, while the Balinese typically have a more relaxed view on this issue.
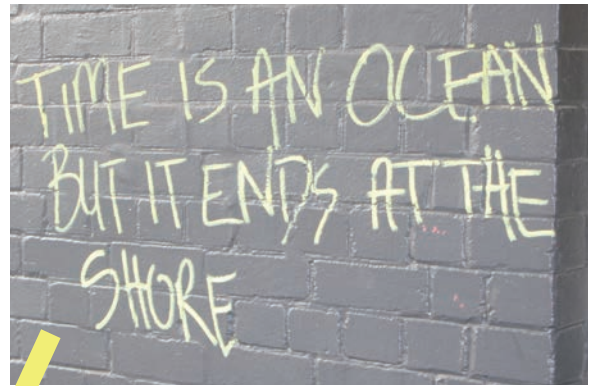

Figure 1.02 Making sense of time

ACTIVITY

1   Explain the concept of 'persons'.
2   What are the six components of society?
3   List three examples of cultural traits of your own culture.
4   List three examples of cultural traits of a culture different from your own.
5   Describe the culture of your suburb/locality compared to a different suburb/locality of which you are aware.
6   Many social or cultural groups have symbols that are well known. Identify three symbols and explain how effectively they represent these groups.
7   Ask two people about their perception of 'culture' and their perception of 'society'. Record and transcribe their responses.
8   Explain how democracy, religion and our justice/legal system shape our lives.
9   Identify two aspects of your natural environment that influence your day-to-day life.
10 Identify two aspects of your understanding of time and describe how these shape your day-to-day life.
11 Copy and complete Table 1.01 by stating how the environment influences human behaviour and culture in each location. The first one has been done for you.

Table 1.01

ENVIRONMENT	INFLUENCES ON HUMAN ACTIVITY	EXAMPLE
Alpine	Limits activity and settlement due to cold temperatures. Often attracts seasonal visitors for snow sports	Thredbo (Australia), Aspen (USA), Queenstown (NZ)
Tropical		
Coastal		
Mountain		
Desert		

12 How do people modify the environment to suit their own needs?
13 Briefly explain how a specific environment has changed over time.
14 A famous form of housing architecture in Brisbane is the 'Queenslander'. Investigate its design features, source an image and explain how its design features can be linked to its environment.

15 Explain the significance of the double-headed arrows in the diagram below.

BOSTES NSW, *Society and Culture Stage 6 Syllabus*, Sydney, 2013.
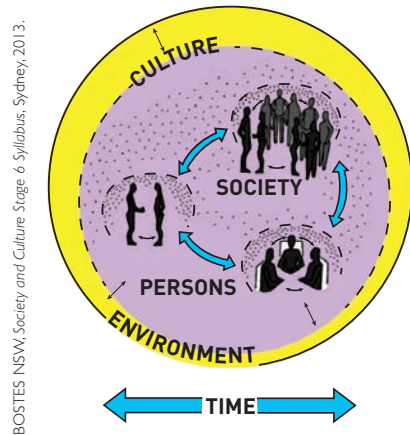
RELATED CONCEPTS

Framework for society and culture

- **AUTHORITY**
  The right to make decisions and to determine, adjudicate or settle issues and disputes in society. Authority is best understood as the legitimate use of power. The use of authority is important in the process of decision making and in initiating change and maintaining continuity.

- **GENDER**
  The socially constructed differences between females and males. Social life – including family life, roles, work, and other activities – is organised around the dimensions of this difference. Gender also refers to the cultural ideals, identities and stereotypes of masculinity and femininity and the sexual division of labour in institutions and organisations. Gender reflects the value a society places on these social constructs, which are unique to a society.

- **GLOBALISATION**
  The process of integration and sharing of goods, capital, labour, services, knowledge, leisure, sport, ideas and culture between countries. Globalisation is evident in the emergence of global patterns of consumption and consumerism; the growth of transnational corporations; global sport; the spread of world tourism; and the growth of global military and economic systems. Globalisation is assisted by technologies and media integration, resulting in an increasing consciousness of the world as a single place.

- **IDENTITY**
  The sense of self, which can be viewed from a personal, social and cultural level. Identity is formed over a period of time and is the result of interactions at the micro, meso and macro levels of society. An identity has dimensions or layers that create a sense of inclusion in a group or culture. Contributing factors to one's identity may be gender, sexuality, family, class, ethnicity, beliefs, social status, group membership and national pride.

- **POWER**

  The ability or capacity to influence or persuade others to a point of view or action to which they may not always agree. Exercising power is important in initiating or preventing change.

- **TECHNOLOGIES**

  The tools that we use to assist our interactions in society. Technologies can lead to innovation and can initiate change to micro, meso and macro operations in society. The value placed on technologies at any level of society influences the rate of change to society and culture. Technologies are constantly changing and adapting and their impact varies over time. Communication-based technologies facilitate the interaction between the micro, meso and macro levels of society.

- **SOCIAL AND CULTURAL LITERACY**

  An important strategy in learning to apply concepts is to understand that a major goal of the course for all students is to achieve social and cultural literacy. A socially and culturally literate person uses concepts to demonstrate that he or she:

  - has a sense of personal, social and cultural identity and understands that culture underpins one's behaviour, beliefs and values
  - is interested in, observes and asks questions about the micro, meso and macro levels of society
  - empathises with and appreciates the diverse beliefs and values of different societies and cultures
  - researches effectively and ethically, showing critical discernment towards information and the media
  - communicates effectively with individuals and groups and works cooperatively in a cross-cultural setting
  - applies skills to achieve social inclusion and is aware of the issues of discrimination and prejudice
  - avoids making judgements of another culture's practices using the values of his or her own culture
  - has a sense of social responsibility and displays active citizenship by engaging critically with social issues, and takes considered action for the welfare, dignity, social justice and human rights of others at the local, national and global levels
  - is aware of, and sensitive to, major national and global issues such as poverty, disease and conflict, including armed conflict
  - considers the impact of globalisation, technologies and rapid change, as well as continuity and its implications for the future.

  BOSTES NSW, *Society and Culture Stage 6 Syllabus*, Sydney, 2013.

ACTIVITY

1   Who holds power in your family? How does that person use it?
2   Who has authority in your family? How does that person apply it?
3   Who holds power in your everyday experience of school? How does that person use it?
4   Who has authority in your school? How does that person apply it?
5   List three male gender stereotypes and three female gender stereotypes. Will these stereotypes change over time?
6   Debate the topic 'Gender is power'.

7 Provide an example of technology that was essential in each of the following periods of history and explain why each was so important in those times.
   • medieval times
   • the industrial revolution
   • the information revolution
8 Identify six examples of globalisation in today's world.
9 You live in the future and are digging in the ruins of the city of Sydney. Identify three artefacts you uncover that are evidence of Sydney having been a globalised city. Explain why each item is effective evidence.
10 Explain the extent to which globalisation is dependent on technology.

Combining personal experience and public knowledge

Society and Culture as a course is unusual. The research and writings of sociologists, psychologists and anthropologists are significant and they build a foundation for our studies, but equally important in this course are the personal experiences of the students. To meaningfully achieve social and cultural literacy, successful Society and Culture students must be able to combine personal experience and public knowledge to provide a balance for their understandings.

The stories, memories and recollections of students in the classroom need to form an important dimension of the understanding of human behaviour through personal experience. However, this needs to be complemented by effective access to public knowledge in published works such as books, academic journals, magazines and newspapers, reliable websites, films and documentaries. A distinctive purpose of this course is to better understand our world through reading publications and exploring and reflecting on lived experiences. Combining these can bring our learning to life and add meaning. Knowledge for knowledge's sake is an important pursuit, but knowledge needs to be applied directly to life. The synthesis of personal experience and public knowledge is a vital process in this course and can take us beyond facts and towards wisdom.

Personal experience
e.g. memories, stories and reflections

Public knowledge
e.g. books, films and documentaries

Figure 1.03 The combination of personal experience and public knowledge provides a balance for understanding.

Micro, meso and macro

Micro-level society: Where individuals' everyday actions and social interactions occur, for example, within families and small-scale social groups, such as peer groups. The micro-level focuses on patterns of social interaction at the individual level.

Meso-level society: The middle ground where individuals interact within groups such as schools, communities, church groups and neighbourhoods, and workplaces, at branch and state level. The meso-level consists of larger groups that interact directly with the individual. It focuses on relationships between middle-level social structures and the individual. Meso-level society is also known as middle-level society.

Macro-level society: The 'big picture', where we observe the wider social structures, social processes and their interrelationships. Macro-level society includes those social institutions – such as the media, the law, the workplace

Figure 1.04 A person from your micro world could be your father.

institution and the government – that help to shape the social and cultural world. The macrolevel examines how these collective groups relate to the wider society of which they form a part and is evident at national and international level.

BOSTES NSW, *Society and Culture Stage 6 Syllabus*, Sydney, 2013 (adapted).

Figure 1.05 A person from your meso world is your teacher.

Figure 1.06 A person from your macro world is the prime minister.

ACTIVITY

1 In small groups, discuss and record one distinct example of a social action for each of the 10 characteristics of social and cultural literacy (see page 7). In your action plan, briefly explain the strategies to be used to meaningfully achieve each characteristic.

2 What is meant by 'public knowledge'?

3 Explain why reflecting on personal experiences is useful in the Society and Culture course.

4 In groups, share details of your experiences of primary school.

5 From information shared in Question 4, explore and explain whether the experiences of others add meaning to your understanding of the nature of the school experience.

6 Discuss the limitations of relying solely on personal experiences as the source of information on a social issue.

7 Identify four people from your micro world and indicate the micro group to which each belongs.

8 Identify four people from your meso world and indicate the meso group or institution to which each belongs.

9 Identify four people from your macro world and indicate the macro group or institution to which each belongs.

DEBATE/ESSAY

10 Debate the topic, 'Does communication technology enhance or inhibit personal experience?'

THE NATURE OF THE SOCIAL AND CULTURAL WORLD

Studying the social and cultural world is designed to familiarise you with some of the essentials in understanding yourself and your world. You live in a world of interactions between individuals, groups and communities.

To probe the social and cultural world, we will investigate the groups and institutions of family, school, peers, work, government, media and the legal system. We will explore how individuals and groups interact in these contexts and how they are socially constructed and influenced by social expectations. We will also apply contexts of the micro, meso and macro levels.

Figure 1.07 Some people choose to live in social isolation.

Figure 1.08 Some people choose to live in very close social proximity to others.

The multicultural and hybrid nature of societies and cultures

A multicultural society is one in which diverse ethnic groups and cultures are given the opportunity and right to live in a shared context. Each group is at liberty to practise its cultural traditions, such as rituals, religion, language and dress. All members are expected to display a willingness to respect the cultural traditions of others. This practice of accepting cultural diversity is also known as 'cultural pluralism'. A multicultural society contrasts with one where assimilation is the norm – that is, where various migrant groups are expected to conform to the values and behaviours of the majority culture and discontinue their own customs and practices.

The term 'multiculturalism' implies that promoting cultural diversity and harmony between different ethnic groups is a positive social goal. Multiculturalism is promoted in Australian Government policies. For example, the publication *Life in Australia*, published by the Department of Immigration and Citizenship, states:

> Australians from all cultures and religions can, within the law, maintain their traditions and beliefs while being united as one community.

This publication also details how non-English speaking citizens can access free 24/7 interpreter services.

Figure 1.09 Cultural identity shapes our lives.

1   Access the government publication *Life in Australia*. To what extent does it promote assimilation or multiculturalism?
2   Does Australian citizenship hold the expectation that people have to engage with different cultures?

Political scientist Bhikhu Parekh advocates multiculturalism by stating:

> The cultural identity of some groups (minorities) should not be confined to the private sphere while the language, culture and religion of others (the majority) enjoy a public monopoly and are treated as the norm. For a lack of public recognition is not conducive to encouraging the full participation of everyone in the public sphere.
>
> From A Giddens and P Sutton, *Sociology*, Polity, Cambridge, 2013, p. 688.

The contemporary world is complex. There are so many competing ideas, agendas and perspectives. There are multiple cultures in our pluralistic nation. How can we make sense of this? The notion of culture being a hybrid has a long and evolving story. In the era of European colonialism, the idea of being hybrid was negative because it was linked to intermarriage and interbreeding between races, which was associated with the notion of racial impurity.

Culture is not a fixed and static entity and by its nature must continually change in response to context and circumstances. In the contemporary context, if we perceive society and culture as being composed of a variety of different elements, we acknowledge the diverse influences that work to shape and reshape them. There were times when cultures were perceived as much more fixed and unchangeable, like monolithic structures that were very difficult to change. This way of seeing culture was evident in colonial times when notions of hegemony and power were dominant in the worldviews of the colonisers and the colonised. However, as the era of migration flourished in post-colonial times, the interactions and encounters between cultures grew and the notion of the resulting culture being a hybrid gained power. Culture was not seen as a fixed phenomenon, but rather one that could accommodate difference; this adaptability has become a powerful feature of our contemporary world. In the increasingly globalised world, with interactions and influences drawn from every corner of the planet, we can see culture as elastic and potentially open to a multitude of influences. The impact is very evident in popular culture where – despite the powerful influence of Hollywood, Nashville and New York City – we experience films and music from diverse sources, such as anime from Japan, Bollywood from India and country music from Tamworth.

The theory of hybridity was developed by Homi Bhabha in his book *The Location of Culture* (1994), in which he described the process as:

> more than merely fusing existing cultural elements. Rather, hybridity refers to the process of the emergence of a culture, in which its elements are being continually transformed or translated from irrepressible encounters. Hybridity offers the potential to undermine existing forms of cultural authority and representation.

Interactions with individuals, groups and the community

Understanding the social and cultural world is a vast undertaking. How can we best make sense of the huge range of options and possibilities? One important way is to package our understandings according to scope and context. Categorising social and cultural phenomena

into micro, meso and macro contexts allows us to better appreciate the scope and scale of what we are studying.
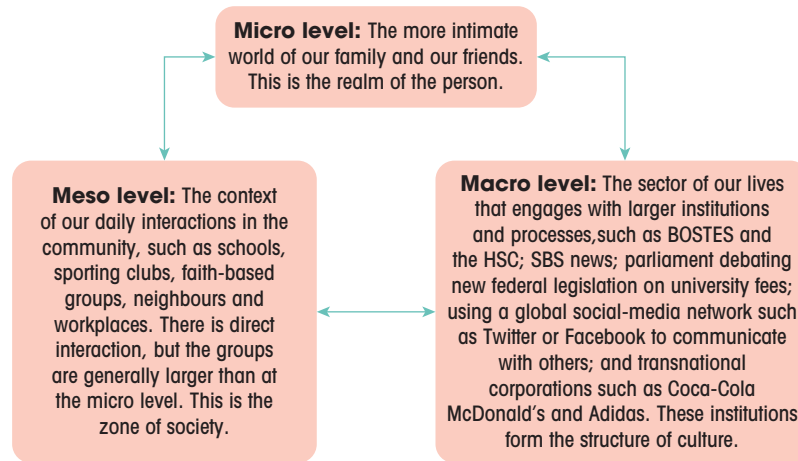
Micro level: The more intimate world of our family and our friends. This is the realm of the person.

Meso level: The context of our daily interactions in the community, such as schools, sporting clubs, faith-based groups, neighbours and workplaces. There is direct interaction, but the groups are generally larger than at the micro level. This is the zone of society.

Macro level: The sector of our lives that engages with larger institutions and processes, such as BOSTES and the HSC; SBS news; parliament debating new federal legislation on university fees; using a global social-media network such as Twitter or Facebook to communicate with others; and transnational corporations such as Coca-Cola McDonald's and Adidas. These institutions form the structure of culture.

Figure 1.10 Examples of the micro, meso and macro levels in society

ACTIVITY

Copy and complete Table 1.02 by classifying the following social and cultural phenomena as either micro, meso or macro level.

Table 1.02

SOCIAL AND CULTURAL PHENOMENA	MICRO LEVEL	MESO LEVEL	MACRO LEVEL
	✓ SELECT ONE ONLY		
Having breakfast at home			
Catching the bus to school			
Society and Culture in Lesson 2			
Sharing cake with friends at recess			
Accessing YouTube to illustrate an idea in your Legal Studies lesson			
Unpleasant conversation with a manager at your part-time job about why you were late for your shift			
Doing an Internet search of your rights as a casual employee			
Updating your status on LinkedIn as 'looking for work'			
Talking to your neighbour about working in her business			
Logging on to UAC to set your university course preferences			
Explaining your UAC preference options to your mother			

Society as a construct that develops through time

What do we mean when we say 'society is a construct'? The syllabus defines this as:

> society is actively and creatively produced by human beings rather than being given or taken for granted.
>
> BOSTES NSW, *Society and Culture Stage 6 Syllabus*, Sydney, 2013.

This means that the social world and how we perceive qualities such as gender and adolescence are creations of what we want our lives and behaviours to be. These constructs are not static and can evolve and change over time. For example, consider the way gender roles have changed over time: the 1950s role of Western women is typified by the housewife whose domain was the kitchen and raising her children. However, the impact of the women's liberation movements and feminism helped redefine gender roles for women, with challenges to existing notions of subservience, education, birth control, work roles and pay. The demand for change generated a dynamic interplay of radical ideas, public debate and changing behaviours. Over time, these social interactions and debates significantly altered behaviours and changed the life options and aspirations of women. Gender roles were redefined and – despite the challenges this represented to conservative elements of society at that time – the options for women were no longer 'fixed' and the way opened for new possibilities.

Figure 1.11 The classic 1950s look: conservative and demure

Figure 1.12 The classic 1970s look: assertive liberation

The macro level provides the framework for understanding the wider social structure and the institutions that shape day-to-day life. These include how our educational and political systems operate on a collective scale. For gender roles to improve, changes to the law were needed as well as educational opportunities for women and changes in the way women were portrayed in film, song and advertising.

The meso level is the world of our networks and the way we participate within our community. Changing laws does not necessarily lead to a change in attitudes and it is in the lived experiences of the social world that we enact our values and refine our behaviours. This is the contemporary domain where men decide to play mixed netball or girls stop playing on the same football teams as boys as they get older. Changing and evolving gender roles at this middle level are a very real and lived experience.

The micro level views gender on a very personal level, such as in the family. In this context, there can be intergenerational contrasts in values. For example, the attitudes of parents and grandparents may have been constructed at a very different time and context from that of the next generation. Such face-to face interactions are powerful determinants of identity and they work to shape values that influence behaviour. Society is composed of the interactions of its members at each of the micro, meso and macro levels and these interactions influence the ways its members interact over time.

Social expectation

Our behaviour is shaped by our expectations. If we do something that offends others, their negative reactions make it clear that this behaviour is unacceptable, just as we are rewarded when we act in a positive way. In Australia, it is considered polite and correct to say 'please' and 'thank you' as part of conversation, but this is not the case in all cultures – for example, in Indonesia, saying 'please' is not an expectation. If someone asks you for something, you give it to them. In an Australian context, omitting polite language is considered rude, so parents train their children by withholding something until they say 'please'. This training is a key dimension of socialisation, which is:

> the process by which individuals learn to become functioning members of society by internalising the roles, norms and values of that society.
> BOSTES NSW, *Society and Culture Stage 6 Syllabus*, Sydney, 2013.

Social norms are part of the fabric of social expectations – that is, the rules that define how we ought and ought not behave. As we learn these norms and adapt them into social roles, we learn to structure behaviour to meet social expectations so we can be successful participants in society. These norms become endorsed by our society. Consequences are developed to reinforce the acceptance of these norms – for example, getting in trouble with our family, getting a detention at school or being questioned by the police.

In our everyday micro- and meso-world interactions, we talk, smile, frown and in multiple ways construct a social landscape of agreements and rejections, approvals and disapprovals, 'head nods' and messages of ambivalence. We define who we are and who we are not in the context of our social world.

Social expectations can also be intensified by communications technology. The action of sharing a photograph, updating your status, accessing newsflashes or making a comment on an event that happened today puts you in a macro-world interaction. Although you may perceive this as just communication among a group of selected friends, the ownership and the options for this message to be globally distributed can take it out of your control. Information can 'go viral' and be spread by communication technology, potentially delivering instant fame or lasting shame. The worth of this communication is determined by the expectations and judgements of those who observe it, which is a dynamic illustration of how we socially construct the world and what we know and share.

1   Provide two effective positive-reinforcement strategies that you have experienced or observed and state why they were effective.
2   Provide one ineffective positive-reinforcement strategy that you have experienced or observed and state why it was ineffective.
3   Identify a decision you made that shaped your social world and explain how this decision brought either change or continuity to your life.
4   Select an appropriate YouTube video that has gone viral and note how many views it has achieved. Why has it achieved so many views? Can the message be identified as shaping social expectations for an audience?

Groups and institutions

In order to understand the social structure that makes up our social and cultural world, it is important to understand the roles of family, school, peers, work, government, media and the legal system.

FAMILY

Across all cultures and throughout people's lives, family plays a vital role in shaping individuals. Whether in child rearing, training in survival skills, creating a livelihood or nurturing each other, the role of the family is a compelling force. Throughout time and across the world some form of the family unit has been the basic building block of society. Family is recognised as the primary determinant of socialisation.

For most people, family is the social glue that binds our sense of self and place in the world. This is evident in the energy and expense that is typically associated with family events such as a marriage, birth, coming of age and even death. Different societies have different ways of celebrating these events, yet their importance is evident to the cultural observer. Likewise, the distress and challenges when family structures break down is equally powerful. The death of a family member, separation and divorce can all have a profound impact on people's lives. Indigenous Australians who have experienced the Stolen Generation know the profound impact of losing their family, a damage that extends into further loss of language and culture. The impact of such events on a person's life provides an important message to us all to respect the role of the family in identity formation and cultural transmission.

Getty Images/The Image Bank

Figure 1.13 A nuclear family: mum, dad and the kids

ACTIVITY

1   List the different types of families in contemporary society.
2   Identify two concepts or words that explore the relationship between a person and their family. Briefly explain the significance of each concept/word.
3   Debate the topic, 'The family creates the best and worst of times'.
4   Predict the characteristics of the family in the near future.
5   Identify the range of family types represented in your class. Ask each class member to provide one word to describe their family or how they would like their family to be. Create a table that categorises this information.

SCHOOL

Schooling and its primary goal of education is a significant determinant of how individuals are shaped. Schooling has a profound impact on the individual; it can influence so many qualities and capacities, such as literacy, numeracy and the ability to think in new ways. It offers knowledge, understanding and the skills to analyse and research in an interactive context with fellow students. While the social dynamics with fellow students during recess and lunch may be the highlight of the school day, we should not lose sight of the life opportunities an education can provide. Schooling is a vital dimension of socialisation with a key capacity of forming an identity by refining values, ethics, citizenship and aspirations.

In Australia, all young people have the right to an education. It is compulsory, embraces both primary and secondary education and is organised into government and non-government systems, as well as home schooling. Opportunities presented through schooling can influence personal and social identity.

For most young people, schooling is a significant early encounter with a social institution. Each schooling system typically has formal structures such as a hierarchy of leadership and across the student cohorts there are roles, statuses and responsibilities. There are formal requirements, including attendance, curriculum and testing, which all operate in political, economic and cultural contexts. Schools have to engage with interrelated issues such as religious, moral and ethical education, strategies for discipline and learning to deal with authority.

In Western cultures, the rise of mass education was driven by the Industrial Revolution of the 19th century. Before that time, education was only available to the wealthy elite. Although every Australian child has access to core educational opportunities, is there a case for arguing that our system reinforces inequality? The social mobility that access to education offers has enabled many Australians to expand their life options. Questions such as, 'How do we measure the success of our education systems?' are crucial questions for our future.

ACTIVITY

1   Is schooling part of the micro, meso or macro world, or a combination of these?
2   List four concepts or words that explore the relationship between a society and a school. Briefly explain the significance of each concept/word.
3   List four concepts or words that explore the relationship between time and school. Briefly explain the significance of each concept/word.
4   Take five photographs that depict hierarchy in your school context and explain how hierarchy is evident in each photograph. Make sure you do this activity ethically and that you have the permission of the people in the photographs. Note the details of these permissions. Ethical behaviour follows understood codes of what is morally right when undertaking any study of people or society.

5   Evaluate one policy or program at your school that promotes ethical behaviour from members of its community.

6   Evaluate the programs at your school that are aimed at expanding the personal horizons and potential for students. In what ways could these be improved?

7   What is a 'hidden curriculum'? Is there one in your school?

PEERS

One of the greatest influences on children and teenagers is the interaction and dynamics of the peer group: the micro network of close friends, companions and colleagues, often with a circle of acquaintances close by. Peer groups can be closed, operating as a clique, or open and fluid, allowing access and easy interaction with other groups. Peer groups can come together and maintain a connection through a common interest, such as sport and sporting ability, style or fashion sense, a leisure focus such a particular music genre, ethnicity, academic interests, a particular sense of humour, or popularity. Is could be driven by the people you meet on the first day of school and it can be difficult to change peer groups once you have become part of a group.

For many teenagers, peer groups are powerful socialisation agents, and are often more significant than family or teachers. Peer groups typically require strong loyalty from their members, and have roles and statuses that may be unspoken but are very real in interpersonal dynamics. Members are expected to conform to avoid rejection. The friendships you form at school can be lifelong or short-lived.

There will probably be no time in your life when you know and can appreciate as many individuals as you do when attending school. Students are typically acquainted with as many as 100 people during the years when they are forming their identities, making mistakes, having victories and experiencing aspects of life for the first time. This is a powerful way to learn about the diversity of experiences life offers. However, it also means you are learning from some relatively inexperienced people.

ACTIVITY

1   List four concepts or words that explore the relationship between a person and their peer group. Briefly explain the significance of each concept/word.

2   List four concepts or words that explore the relationship between time and your peer group. Briefly explain the significance of each concept/word.

3   Keep a tally of the time spent in communication with your parents in one week. Also keep a tally of the time spent in communication with your peers in one week. Compare the quantity and quality of communication between these groups.

4   Sometimes, peer groups are led or dominated by an individual who is described as an alpha male or alpha female. Does your peer group have an alpha female and/or male?

5   Does your peer group have any rules, symbols or special language? If so, what are the purposes of these?

CLASS DISCUSSION

6   Discuss the following statement: 'Peer groups are essential for social survival'.

WORK

Work in day-to-day life has many challenges and opportunities. Of significant sociological importance is the way that work roles shape a person's sense of self. People dedicate much of their waking lives to work and work is an important identifier of self. The questions 'Who are you?' and 'What do you do?' typically receive a response linked to a person's work role – for example, 'I'm a nurse ... taxi driver ... ferret wrangler ... barista ... barrister ...'. Each work role

comes with its perceived respect, status and position in a hierarchy, with an expectation of job satisfaction and financial rewards.

The task of every culture is to find ways of making and distributing things people need and want. Providing these goods and services is at the core of work as an essential social institution that shapes the lives of people. In understanding work, there are many issues and questions. How do we distinguish between paid and unpaid work? How do we deal with the unemployed and those alienated from their work roles? Does social class dictate work opportunities? What is the impact of consumerism? How do we ensure work is ethical and does not exploit workers?

For many adults, the workplace is also a social network that provides friendships, relationships and daily routines. The tasks performed at work can be inspiring, creative and challenging, as well as routine, monotonous and even dangerous.

ACTIVITY

1   Identify three work roles in different industries or professions. Describe the meso-level and macro-level aspects of each role. Imagine and describe the ways each work role may influence the personalities and behaviours of those involved.

RESEARCH

2   Describe the issues associated with blurring the boundaries between work life and home life.

3   Assess the purpose and value of the networking site, LinkedIn.

GOVERNMENT

The social structure of any country is defined by the system of government – that is, the means by which the laws of a nation are made and carried out. Governments can be categorised into a number of broad types, including democracy, communist, dictatorship and monarchy. There are many variations of these types, including, republic, commonwealth, people's republic, fascist state, constituent assembly and constitutional monarchy.

Australia's government is defined under the Australian Constitution as a constitutional monarchy. In Australia, every elected government at either local, state or federal level has the right to create laws that Australians are expected to live by. An understanding of these processes is a vital dimension of citizenship. Voting in elections enables eligible citizens to indicate their preference for which political party will make the laws that govern their country. However, our system of government, which reflects our British heritage, is in contrast to the laws and customs of the First Australians. In Aboriginal cultures, traditional laws do not change. In Aboriginal culture, these laws have been in place since the beginning of time, so the process of creating new laws by Australian governments can be a source of confusion to traditional peoples. For example, the combination of some protectionist principles, land rights decisions and the Northern Territory Intervention removed the power for traditional peoples to make decisions and has been a source of confusion.

Getty Images/Getty Images News

Figure 1.14 Protest as a means of engaging with government: protests in Brisbane during the G20 summit in November 2014 called for an end to black deaths in custody

In the era of globalisation, the role of government is changing because of expanding privatisation, free trade and the increasing power of transnational corporations in a global context. Nonetheless, governments will have to effectively deal with global issues such as climate change, global financial crises, terrorism and rising militarism.

MEDIA

The influence of the media as a dynamic aspect of our social structure is substantial, and at times, overwhelming. One voice, one opinion or one action can be distributed on a global scale to anyone who has a form of the technology that provides access. Mass media has changed and developed over time: from print (such as newspapers and magazines), film, records, radio and television, to the Internet and social-media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter and Instagram, as well as online news and other news media options.

The question of how these forms of media shape individuals and are shaped by individuals is a crucial one in considering how we can be critically discerning about information and the media and aware of major national and global issues.

When we access media, whether the news or the latest blog update, we unwittingly invite information providers into the intimate space of our homes and our lives. Their perspectives and information either inform or connect with us, or we switch channels. If they are popular they shape not only our view of the world, but simultaneously they shape the perspectives of the millions of viewers in their audience. How do we respond when a celebrity, sports star, 'shock jock' or even a terrorist sends a message to the world? Do we get an exaggerated perspective when particular events are replayed on every media source?

What is the role of the media? In this age of information, our popular culture and media are filled with corporations, lobby groups and advertisers who are engaged in shaping opinions and we must decide the extent to which they shape our behaviour, our spending and most importantly, what we value.

Figure 1.15 Being 'liked' is everything.

ACTIVITY

1 List four concepts or words that explore the relationship between culture and the media. Briefly explain the significance of each concept/word.
2 How much influence do you think the media has over your micro, meso and macro worlds?
3 What are the key roles and responsibilities of the media?

THE LEGAL SYSTEM

Laws and the justice system are enacted by the police, the judicial system (lawyers, the courts, judges), the prison system and welfare organisations, as well as the victims and perpetrators of criminal activity. These represent the social institutions that express power and authority in most contemporary cultures. Max Weber, considered one of the founders of modern sociology, identified a key form of authority as 'legal-rational authority'. This model identified that explicit rules and procedures are created by those who govern and must be followed by those who are governed. To break these agreed rules identifies those individuals as deviant and their actions as criminal behaviour.

Legal systems cannot guarantee that all citizens agree with or support the values and beliefs that created the laws. Many of the laws in a capitalist economy focus on protecting property and there is an argument that laws tend to defend those in positions of power and privilege. Historically, Australian laws created and supported the White Australia Policy and enabled the Stolen Generation, policies that were not supported by all citizens. Who receives the attention of our legal system? Is it organised crime or corrupt politicians or corporate criminals? Which groups populate our prison systems? It is now generally accepted that in Australia justice should facilitate social inclusion and promote a sense of social responsibility. It is also accepted that justice should encourage active citizenship and support the welfare, dignity, social justice and human rights of all at the local, national and global levels.

ACTIVITY

1 Search 'Zimbardo and the Stanford Prison Experiment' to find information on this study.
2 What was the purpose of the Stanford Prison Experiment?
3 Was this purpose achieved?
4 Identify an ethical issue that was evident in this experiment.

Figure 1.16 A 'prisoner' with a 'guard' involved in the Stanford Prison Experiment in 1971.

SOCIAL AND CULTURAL RESEARCH

Social and cultural research is a process. It involves a series of steps which, if effectively carried out, will lead to a better understanding of specific aspects of the social and cultural world. The syllabus outlines 10 distinct steps in conducting social and cultural research.

1 DECIDE ON THE TOPIC TO BE RESEARCHED

Clearly define a question, a problem or a topic of specific interest to you. This can be as straightforward as asking yourself what interests you or which issue you find challenging or frustrating and want to better understand. For example, you may be interested in researching aspects of 'disputes within the family'.

2 DEVELOP A FOCUS QUESTION OR HYPOTHESIS

To ensure there is an appropriate focus topic, consider which concepts would provide a clear emphasis. For example, kinship and socialisation, as well as conflict and cooperation, communication, roles and statuses would form an important foundation for defining your research into 'disputes within the family'. This may mean 'disputes within the family' takes on a more detailed focus, such as 'disputes between teenagers and their parents'. Dividing your research and report writing into convenient sections makes the process easier and more manageable. For example, the topic 'disputes between teenagers and their parents' could have a sequence of:

Chapter 1: Teen identity and the struggle for independence

Chapter 2: Parental responsibility and the 'need to know'

Chapter 3: Advice to families on negotiating teen freedoms and responsibilities.

3 GATHER BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Conduct a literature search by finding and reviewing appropriate secondary material related to your topic. This secondary research will fast track your knowledge and enhance your capacity to apply other research methods. Consider doing a journal search with providers such as the Australia and New Zealand Reference Centre, which can offer specific articles related to your topic. Consider looking at films on the topic, such as *Rebel Without a Cause, Ferris Bueller's Day Off, Mean Girls* or *Juno*. Balanced secondary research should include books and published works as not all information is available on the Internet.

4 DESIGN THE RESEARCH

Understand the full array of research methods available and plan which ones you will use in addition to the secondary research already undertaken. You should consider the time and resources you have available. Aim to achieve a balance of primary and secondary research, as well as qualitative and quantitative research methods. Also consider in advance any ethical issues that might have an impact on the relevance and validity of your results.

5 DEVELOP THE RESEARCH METHODS TO BE USED

Ensure the time frame for conducting research is suitable. For example, if you conduct a questionnaire, there must be sufficient time to draft questions, trial them and make the necessary edits. Writing good questions is an art! They must be framed and written to draw out the information you need and it may make take several versions to get this right. Distributing your questionnaire and waiting for responses also adds to the time frame, as does collating the results. For any research, it is important that you review the questions and perspectives you bring to the task and deal with any evident personal biases.

6 APPLY THE RESEARCH METHODS ETHICALLY

The ethics of research are vital to the overall integrity and processes of your research. Ethical research ensures trust and respect for all involved, including treating data with responsibility and confidentiality. This is the context in which honest responses will be achieved. A detailed explanation of ethical issues is available on page 21 of the *Society and Culture* syllabus. Ensure that you fully understand issues around correctly acknowledging and referencing the research and writings of others and that you never plagiarise.

7 COMPILE AND ORGANISE THE COLLECTED INFORMATION

The collected information generally involves written text, including quotes from secondary research, but should also include tables, charts, diagrams, illustrations and other graphics

that are relevant to your research and your written text. Variety is the key word here: try to avoid the 'wall of words' approach and instead use a visually interesting means of presenting information relevant to your findings. For example, the results of conducting a questionnaire with a section of your year group will provide important information for your discussion of 'disputes between teenagers and their parents'. Congratulations, you are now a researcher.

8 ANALYSE, SYNTHESISE AND INTERPRET THE FINDINGS

One strategy for organising your data is to keep your chapter headings in mind so that information collected from a questionnaire, interview or secondary research can be sorted under appropriate headings. Also, in evaluating research methods and their relevance to the topic, the challenge is to develop the skills and judgement to assess whether your research is appropriate and valid.

9 WRITE UP THE CONCLUSIONS

Do the same conclusions emerge from the different research methods you have used? Balancing this is an amalgamation of all your findings, but ensure you are not excluding data just because it contradicts your hypothesis.

10 CHECK THE FINAL PRODUCT

Carefully reading and editing expression, spelling and grammar, your use of concepts, paragraph structure and correct referencing are crucial. Ensure you leave enough time for this to be thoroughly completed. Your finished report is a formal response, which means that slang and abbreviations are not appropriate. Errors in any of these areas will limit the impact and credibility of your report. Ensure that all bibliographical information is included and correct.

ACTIVITY

GROUP WORK

Identify a research topic and brainstorm. Using Steps 1 to 10, record how this topic should be effectively and ethically conducted, including the pitfalls to avoid.

QUANTITATIVE AND QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

Understanding, using and applying concepts is a crucial skill in Society and Culture. Another vital capacity in succeeding in this course is developing knowledge and understanding of research methods. A research method is a way of acquiring knowledge. We gain knowledge by reading texts, watching films, searching the Internet, asking questions and listening to others. By doing these activities we add to our knowledge and build up our skills in acquiring new knowledge and understandings. Research methods are categorised as either primary or secondary, as well as whether they produce quantitative and qualitative results, or a combination of both. These qualities are detailed in the following research methods.

CONTENT ANALYSIS

Content analysis is often misunderstood as a primary research method, even though it uses secondary sources. It is not merely reading a book or watching a film. This research technique requires the development of a systematic process for examining the subject matter of a source of information such as television, magazines, radio, films, graffiti, newspapers or songs.

The systematic process must be applied thoughtfully and consistently to ensure that justifiable and reliable information is extracted and that the results typically yield quantitative data, although they may also reveal genuine qualitative insights. An example of content analysis is researching the relative importance of a newspaper story by measuring the size of the article/s published about it. For a story in a print publication, this involves measuring the relative height of the headline in relation to the article text and other articles, the number of words in the article, whether there are photographs or other illustrations and on which page it appears. This information is quantifiable and can be compared with other stories. Using a coding sheet is recommended.

Content analysis is a way of examining the information in written material or other sources. These sources, whether publications or audio/visual items such as films, contain information. This information is communicated through

Figure 1.17 It is important to find a balance across a range of research methods

ideas, key words, facts, opinions, assumptions, points of view and images. The aim of content analysis is to systematically examine the information contained in a source and categorise it. If done correctly, this can be used to compare one source with other similar sources.

For example, say your research task is to examine the extent of acceptance of Asian Australians into mainstream Australian society. To better understand the degree of this acceptance you could conduct a content analysis of the number of characters of Asian appearance who have an on-screen role in the television series, *Neighbours*. There are many issues to consider in structuring the information you record, but this example provides a starting point.

As a source, *Neighbours* could be seen as an acceptable example of mainstream Australian society because it is a widely watched series in Australia and overseas. Other factors you could consider in setting up a scheme for a content analysis tally include:

- Do the characters of Asian appearance have to have speaking roles?
- What if they are portrayed in stereotypical ways, such as a Chinese cook, an illegal immigrant or a maths geek?
- How many episodes should be part of the sample examined and are these episodes representative of the series generally?

ACTIVITY

1   How is content analysis different from reading a book or watching a film?
2   Provide your own effective example of a research topic that could apply content analysis and briefly explain how this would be conducted.
3   Why is being systematic so important in using content analysis?
4   Why is it important to qualify your conclusions drawn from evidence gathered using content analysis?
5   Conduct a content analysis to record and review 'Congratulations on your new baby' greeting cards. The aim of this task is to determine the extent of gender stereotyping evident in samples of the boy and girl versions of these cards. Consider doing tallies on colours used, images used and the text in the card. Make a conclusion on the evidence collected that assesses the extent of stereotyping in greeting cards.

INTERVIEW

An interview is essentially a conversation between two people that takes place with the aim of communicating specific information. It is a primary and qualitative research method. There are two specific roles: the interviewer – the person wanting to find out certain information – and the interviewee – the person willing to give information. The interviewer should not act as a passive sponge by simply soaking up the information because a good interview is a dynamic process that works best when both individuals are engaged and motivated.

An interview has the potential to be an excellent source of detailed information and understanding about a research topic. It is important to give careful consideration to your choice of interviewee. It may be an expert in the area of your research. For example, if you are researching the topic, 'Hip Hop: an Evolution or a Revolution?' and a renowned MC is visiting your town, this is a real opportunity for you to discover aspects of the genre that have been difficult to resolve. If you expect someone to offer the benefits of their wisdom, you need to have done your homework! This would typically require background knowledge and secondary research. Respect the interviewee and they will be more likely to respond positively to your requests for information and insights.

Make a list of the questions – both open and closed – that you wish to ask in the interview. There are *two* general methods of preparing your questions for an interview (you can use a combination of these methods). The first is to prepare a specific list of *structured* questions, which has the advantage that you can have a clear and precise flow of questions with a sense of direction and purpose. The second style of interview is *unstructured* in that the questions arise out of a response that you want to investigate further. This needs planning as well, but is generally more flexible and allows both parties to be responsive.

Audio recording your interview is probably the easiest means of collecting and storing the interview responses. Ensure your equipment is working and ask the permission of the interviewee to record before you begin. Remember that an hour of interviewing means at least another hour of listening and even longer to transcribe and analyse the interview.

The answers to your questions will be unique to your research. This is significant, and may provide genuine insight and understanding of the topic. You will not always have to provide a transcript of the entire interview, although it is valuable to be able to 'quote' from your source and discuss the relevance of any such quotes. Evaluate how the contribution of your interviewee has influenced your understanding of the topic.

Figure 1.18 'What is your impression of …?'

ACTIVITY

1 What are *two* strengths and *two* weaknesses of an interview as a research method?
2 Explain the difference between structured and unstructured interview questions.

OBSERVATION

There are various strategies for observing human behaviour for research purposes. These include observation and participant observation. These methods take the researcher to where the focus of the research is actually taking place – that is, where the subjects of their research live, learn, work and play. Observation is a primary and quantitative research method. Have you ever observed the effects of the unwritten rules that influence people's everyday lives? For example, why do people form orderly queues at a bus stop in some locations and rush at the door when the bus arrives at others? Are the rules for queuing the same in all cultures?

Observation involves watching the action taking place without actively engaging in it or interacting with the participants. The researcher draws meaning from what is being observed. A criticism of this non-participant observation is that the very presence of the researcher may alter the behaviours and interactions of those being observed (this is known as the Hawthorne effect). It is difficult to draw the line between non-participant observation and participant observation because it can be argued that the observer will always influence, in some way, the actions of those being observed. However, observers can certainly limit their interaction with those they are observing without necessarily going to the extreme of using one-way mirrors or hidden cameras.

Examples of topics for appropriate application of this method would be:

- the extent of littering in a school playground during lunchtimes
- examining water safety by observing people swimming inside and outside the flags at the beach.

PARTICIPANT OBSERVATION

Many of the principles of (non-participant) observation also apply to participant observation. This method is considered to be a more qualitative research. A clear difference is that the researcher actually joins the group being observed and attempts to be one of them. For example, if the researcher believed this method was the best way to understand a topic such as 'Understanding the loyalty of the die-hard Sydney Swans fans', he or she would need to join the Sydney Swans fan club and maybe even become a member of the football club. By attending matches and training sessions, and travelling to away games, the researcher could become immersed in the Swans fans' culture and achieve a fuller understanding of the reasons for their loyalty and dedication. Remember that in attempting to become a member, the researcher must also continue to observe.

Effective participant observation achieves knowledge and understanding of what is actually occurring in the group you are studying, not just what is said about it. If you wish to research another culture, Australia, with its rich cultural diversity, is a great place to start. Imagine you are the only person in your school from Chile, and only one of three students who speak Spanish. Your research could involve trying to understand how the political beliefs and attitudes of young Chilean Australians compare with those of Anglo Australians.

How can you connect with a group of people from Chile for the purposes of your research? A solution may be to arrange a mini exchange program to visit a school with a significant population of Chilean students. Ideally, this could be arranged at a school that teaches Society and Culture as they might better appreciate the purposes of your research. Even if such a visit were for a few days, the potential to gain real insights into the lives and attitudes of students with a Chilean cultural heritage is enormous.

i

REMEMBER

1   You need to gain the permission of the people you are researching.
2   You need to protect the privacy of the people you are researching.
3   Your identity as a researcher should be known to all concerned.

ACTIVITY

1   What distinctions can be made between participant observation and (non-participant) observation?
2   Provide an example of research that would be suitable for (non-participant) observation. Explain why it is suitable.
3   Provide an example of research that would be suitable for participant observation. Explain why it is suitable.
4   What are the possible effects of bias on the research examples provided above?
5   What are the possible effects of unethical research strategies on one of the examples provided above?
6   What is *one* distinct advantage of observation as a research method?

QUESTIONNAIRE

The strategy of preparing a set of questions and distributing copies of them to a selected group of people is a very popular one. While this is a primary research method, it is also considered to be qualitative and quantitative. To effectively apply the questionnaire method, each step must be thoroughly prepared. While all research methods have their complexities, the questionnaire does present some difficulties, which can mean incomplete results.

The use of a questionnaire is an important option and is accepted as being accessible to the student researcher. Designing, trialling, copying, collecting and analysing the questionnaire are actions that generally require time and patience. Be prepared for some questionnaires not to be completed or returned on time. If the questions are well written, the responses can provide information and genuine insights into the opinions of a large number of people. This primary and quantitative data can be a real asset if the researcher has a specific purpose and if appropriate principles are applied.

It can be very frustrating trying to complete a questionnaire that does not allow a sufficient choice of options, or space to clarify opinions and understandings. Aim to frame your questions to obtain the information required. This is not the same as getting the answers you want or writing questions that only you understand, as good questions need to allow for a wide range of possible responses. Ensure your responders remain anonymous.

Shutterstock/Zimmytws

Figure 1.19 By completing a questionnaire you get to have your say.

QUESTIONNAIRES

A questionnaire is about:
1 creating a range of questions that will provide useful information
2 requesting a large number of people to answer your questions
3 having the answers efficiently returned to you
4 collating the answers in a way that can provide measurable and meaningful results.

Your questionnaire can have a mixture of closed and open-ended questions. The closed questions provide an option for the collection of quantitative data. Open-ended questions can provide quantative and qualitative responses. The inclusion of open-ended questions also allows respondents to express their ideas in more detail, while closed-ended questions allow for a shorter response.

ACTIVITY

1 What are *two* strengths and *two* weaknesses of using this method of social research?
2 Why is it important to trial a draft questionnaire?
3 Explain the importance of effective page layout in this research method.
4 Distinguish between closed and open-ended questions.
5 Why are skills with graphs and tables important when using this research method?
6 Why is the selection of an appropriate sample population so crucial for an effective questionnaire?
7 Is it necessary to receive a 100 per cent return rate from the questionnaires you distribute? Why/why not?
8 Who owns the data when questionnaires are published with online providers such as SurveyMonkey?
9 What are the risks and ethical issues associated with using online providers for distributing and collating the results of a questionnaire?

SECONDARY RESEARCH

In any research, the researcher needs to be aware of work already undertaken in their area of interest. It is hard to imagine a topic where some research has not already been done. There may already be a wealth of knowledge available about your area of interest in books, websites, documentaries and feature films; or newspaper, magazine and journal articles. This process of searching out information can be time consuming, but it is a very important early step in the research process.

Secondary research information needs to be identified, sourced and discussed. For example, quotes from a book about feminism can be discussed, or comments from film reviews could form the basis for a question in an interview. The ethics of research require that such material be acknowledged and correctly referenced. Passing someone else's work off as your own is plagiarism. Don't go there!

ACTIVITY

1   Why is it important to undertake secondary research?
2   What is an effective way to integrate secondary research into your writing?
3   Explain why plagiarism is a relevant issue in the application of secondary research.

STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

Statistical analysis is a powerful quantitative tool in social and cultural research. As a researcher, it is vital to have the capacity to deal with statistical data and to understand how this can provide support for a better understanding human behaviour. Developments in technology have made the gathering of statistical information simpler and, as a consequence, we are increasingly presented with research results, percentages, graphs and statistics. This information is valuable to researchers, however, you must be able to understand statistical information and draw conclusions that are valid interpretations of such data.

THE AUSTRALIAN BUREAU OF STATISTICS

There is a large amount of statistical data available from the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS). The ABS conducts a census every five years, requesting information from every household in Australia. Access the ABS website to see the survey results.

A key decision for the presentation of statistical data is which type of graph will best display your selected statistical information. Will your data be best presented in a pie chart, column graph, line graph, picture graph, histogram or another variation? Certain formats are appropriate for certain types of information. Is the data expressed as a percentage or in numbers? How many variables apply to the data? Are significant trends evident and is it possible to make predictions based on these? The effective analysis of statistics allows the researcher to present clear arguments with strong evidence. However, do not lose sight of the fact that all research results will have elements of being socially constructed.

Figure 1.20 It is important to choose the most appropriate type of graph for displaying your data.

It is assumed that some statistics, such as the number of births, will be recorded accurately, but the same cannot be said for crime statistics. A crime only becomes a statistic when it has been reported to or seen by police. Many crimes go unreported by the victims or witnesses. So an area identified as having a low crime rate may be identified as such because there are relatively few police patrolling in that vicinity. Police can also make decisions on which crimes to prosecute. Therefore, crime statistics may reflect people's attitudes to crime more than the actual number of crimes committed. Information on crime becomes socially constructed.

IShutterstock/Maxx-Studio

ACTIVITY

1   What is one of the largest sources of statistical data available in Australia?
2   What *two* key questions need to be resolved when using statistical data?
3   How can statistics be 'socially constructed'? Explain with reference to the example about crime statistics provided above.

LOOKING IN/LOOKING OUT: EXPLORING THE SOCIAL AND CULTURAL WORLD

A particular challenge of this course is examining other ways of living. You are expected to move outside the familiar boundaries of your own day-to-day experience and outside your culture. It would be too restrictive to only study Australia. Society and Culture mandates that other cultures, other countries or other ways of living be a feature of learning. Of course, a substantial part of course work will relate to local examples, content and understanding, but to ensure that there is an appreciation of the world beyond our own, it is important to do some cross-cultural studies, which offer a more universal understanding of human behaviour.

For effective cross-cultural studies:

- suspend making judgements: when we first encounter unusual cultural practices, our first reactions are typically disbelief, dismissal or judgement. Such negative reactions mean we cannot effectively come to a genuine understanding of the behaviours in question. Aim to find out more information. What are the circumstances and social context of these behaviours? What concepts can better help you understand them? Realise that you are not being asked to deny your own values and beliefs, just to put them aside while you explore the reality of the lives of people who have another way of living. When we do not judge, we are able to demonstrate social and cultural literacy by showing concern for the welfare, rights and dignity of all people.

- avoid being a tourist: studying other cultures can be quite exotic and is often the reason why many Australians spend so much money on overseas travel. Typically, we enjoy new, exciting experiences that take us out of our everyday world. However, aim to look beyond the exotic and find aspects of behaviour that add meaning to understanding people's lives. Be more of a traveller, and less of a tourist. Get off the bus and get to know the locals!

- be respectful: it is easy to act in a charitable and tolerant manner when you meet people of other cultures. Most Australians struggle to realise the full implications of being part of a dominant culture and find it hard to fully appreciate the reality of being marginalised as a minority. Offer all cultures the respect and dignity you would expect for your own.

- consider cultural relativism: despite the best intentions and any amount of detailed study, it is difficult to fully understand what it is like to belong to another culture. The process of socialisation is a lived experience over many years and as a researcher you must accept that you may never really understand how subtle and knowledgeable you need to be. However, this does not excuse you from making the effort. The rewards typically outweigh the limitations and your life will be richer for the experience.

FOCUS STUDY: THE MAASAI

Note: This case study was reviewed by Mr John Lepi Lanyasunya, a former Kenyan High Commissioner to Australia. He has lived in the Maasai area of Kenya and endorses the perspectives and information presented in the case study.

The Maasai of Tanzania and Kenya is a cultural group that has amazed anthropologists and travellers alike. It is not possible to cover all the elements of the Maasai's social and cultural world in a brief study, but let's make a start. Note that although the most accepted spelling is 'Maasai', you will occasionally see it spelled 'Masai'. In this book, Maasai is used, except in direct quotations from other sources that use the alternate form.

Maasai environment

The Maasai live on the Great Rift Valley of East Africa, which traverses Kenya and Tanzania. These highlands are their traditional lands and they extend 250 kilometres east to west and 900 kilometres north to south. They live with two seasons, the wet from May to October and the dry from November to April. The Maasai retained control over their lands through much of the colonial era as their much-feared warriors kept other tribes, European settlers and the British colonial administration out of their lands. This is how the Maasai's distinctive culture, customs and way of life have survived relatively intact through the colonial and modern eras. It is believed that during the era of the slave trade, the Maasai were never captured because the slave traders feared the Maasai warriors and would not venture to their lands. British colonial control of Kenya resulted in the Maasai eventually being restricted to a portion of their former lands and this isolation also restricted their contact with outside influences and limited their options for change and development. However, in recent times a significant population growth has occurred in this region, which has prompted the Kenyan government to reduce the traditional lands even further in order to develop other ways of producing more food.

Maasai culture

The Maasai traditional way of life is that of herders of cattle. Cattle are not only their main source of food, but also determine their status and wealth. The Maasai traditional lifestyle is semi-nomadic because they must regularly move in search of grass and water for their cattle, particularly during the dry season. They build low huts from branches and cattle dung and construct *kraals*, which are fences of sticks and thorns that encircle the huts and keep them and their herds safe from predators at night. In comparison to their architecture, their clothing and jewellery is very decorative. The women and girls make elaborate beaded jewellery and there is a rich layering of styles and language connected with this activity. Each distinct clan in the Maasai nation has its own identifiable colour combinations and styles of beadwork. Local variations also extend to their dialects, ceremonies, ways of building and structures of leadership.

The Maasai culture is interdependent with cattle. They believe their god, Engai, gave all the cattle in the world to them. Each family has its own herd of cattle and strong bonds are formed with them.

A family's cattle are personally known and loved in the same way that people love their children. The temperament of each animal and even its particular voice are recognised. While still young, Maasai children are taught how to sing to cattle and to describe their horn formations, humps and colours as well as their individual peculiarities. The song that follows was sung by a young woman to the warrior she loved:

> *Mee osingolio kisiaje nemee engopiro natii elpapit, kisiaje ilooitong' oseroo laalaram onaree irrepeta.*

which means:

> It was not your dancing nor the feather in your hair that attracted me, but rather your big herd of cattle which tramples the bush and clears the forest it passes. It is this which deserves praise.
>
> Tepilit Ole Saitoti, *Maasai*, Elm Tree Books, London, 1981, pp. 28–29

Figure 1.21 A young Maasai woman wearing typical beaded body decorations

Figure 1.22 Young Maasai boys wear mostly black clothing and white markings for several months following their initiation as a warrior.

Cattle are rarely slaughtered for food. Instead, they supply two items that are major staples of the Maasai diet: milk and blood. Milk is consumed fresh and as ghee (clarified butter) and yoghurt. Blood is obtained by piercing the animal's jugular vein with an arrow, and is particularly important in the dry season when milk becomes scarce. The Maasai believe that drinking blood gives them strength. Cattle supply the ongoing essentials to sustain life and are therefore too valuable to be killed regularly. Meat is eaten on rare occasions only – for example, at ceremonies or at times when strength is required, such as during childbirth, when warriors journey into the bush, or if a person is sick. When one of the cattle is killed, all members of the community share the meat.

MAASAI CATTLE

All parts of the cattle are used when one is slaughtered. The Maasai use:

* horns to make containers
* hooves to make rings and ornaments
* hides for clothing, shoes, bedding and ropes
* urine for medicine
* dung for covering their houses.

Grass is a potent symbol of life and peace to the Maasai and is used in ceremony because of its significance to the Maasai way of life. The Maasai say:

> Engai gave us cattle and grass – without grass there is no cattle, and without cattle there is no Maasai.
>
> Tepilit Ole Saitoti, *Maasai*, Elm Tree Books, London, 1981, p. 30.

ACTIVITY

1 Describe the culture of the Maasai.
2 List three distinctive symbols that are important to the Maasai identity and explain the meaning of each.
3 Why do the Maasai put more emphasis on clothing than buildings?
4 Read the following article extract and then complete the questions.

> Angry Masai tribesmen have begun marching onto ranches held by whites in Kenya's lush Rift Valley and claiming the tracts as their own … Police in riot gear forcibly removed the men and their cattle and arrested more than 100 … and an elderly Masai man was shot dead during the confrontation. In Nairobi, Masai marched to the British High Commission to highlight their rejection of colonial-era agreements that stripped them of their land.
>
> The Kenyan Government has adopted a cautious approach to land reform. A new constitution being drafted proposes that the long leases granted to some wealthy ranchers, some of which exceed 950 years, should be reduced to 99 years. When the leases expire the land will be reallocated, the Minister for Lands and Housing, Mr Amos Kimunya, said.
>
> The controversy started this month around the centenary of the agreement reached between British colonialists and the Masai elders. The deal pushed the Masai from their traditional turf in the Rift Valley, where a railway was being built, into reservations on less desirable lands …
>
> 'We're now squatters on our own land,' said Ratik Ole Kuyana, a Masai tour guide who narrowly escaped arrest at the protest …
>
> Excerpts from 'Tribesmen want their lush land returned', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 26 August 2004. Copyright © 2007 by the New York Times Co. Reprinted with permission.

a What is the nature of the conflict over this land in Kenya?
b Discuss the processes of decision making that created this conflict and what the possible future options might be.

Roles, status and gender

Maasai culture prescribes very clear social roles and associated status for its people. Clearly prescribed and celebrated rituals announce the change of Maasai individuals from one role to another. One of the most distinctive of these is the initiation to become a *moran* (warrior). The transition from childhood to moran is dramatically enacted during the ritual of circumcision. The initiate must demonstrate his bravery to endure the challenges of being a moran by showing no outward signs of pain during the operation.

The physical appearance of moran is a significant aspect of the Maasai warriors' identity. They take great pride in grooming their hair, arranging their togas and ornaments and painting themselves with an ochre mixture. The spear is ever present and is the warrior's most precious possession. They derive much honour from protecting their people against attack, either from other groups or from wild animals. It is their role to take on any challenging tasks and their status is acknowledged with praise and being given the best food. The moran are also allowed to have

girlfriends and they sing to them and play mock battles among themselves to impress them. However, it is the girls' right to select which moran will be their lovers. They are normally limited to three.

> The first lover is *asanja* (the sweet heart) and is the one for whom she prepares milk to share. The second is *oljipet* (the skewer), who takes over when the first is not present, as does the third, *olkeloki* (the one who crosses over when the first and second are not near). There is no jealousy among the three lovers, but they must respect each other's status in relation to the girl.
>
> Tepilit Ole Saitoti, *Maasai*, Elm Tree Books, London, 1981, p. 112.

Figure 1.23 A Maasai warrior. The warriors take great pride in their appearance. Their hair is braided and ochre is used to colour their hair and bodies

Getty Images/Martin Harvey

In recent years, Maasai elders have pronounced changes to these age-old sexual and social behaviours to combat the spread of HIV/AIDS in their communities.

ACTIVITY

1   What is a moran? Outline the social expectations associated with their initiation.
2   Compare and contrast the roles and status of young people in Australia with that of the Maasai.
3   Compare the gender roles portrayed in the films *Masai: The Rain Warriors* (2004) and/or *The White Masai* (2005).

Maasai power and authority

The traditional family structure is based on polygamous marriage. The husband is the head of the family and, while the wife is responsible for running the household, she has little say in major decisions. Men marry as many wives as they can afford to support, but the wives can also take lovers.

Only *ilpayiani* (elders) may marry. Morans must go through a ceremony called *olngesherr* – where their heads are shaved and there is a blessing ceremony for their cattle sticks and branding irons – to become elders. Girls must also become women to marry and this involves rituals that include female circumcision – that is, the removal of the clitoris.

Each wife has her own hut. These huts are arranged in a circle inside the *kraal*. Her roles include the building and maintenance of huts, collecting water and firewood, milking, cooking, sewing and beadwork. The task of child raising is shared by all members of the community. Children are given simple tasks such as herding lambs and kids, but are not punished if they fail at these tasks. Childhood is a time of play and great freedom, as the Maasai believe that the self-confidence of adulthood is built in these early years. The gender division of work means that the men build the fences, take care of the herds and find and maintain sources of water.

The *ilpayiani* fulfil many roles. They are the family men, wise men, healers, spiritual advisers and judges of Maasai society. They speak eloquently and when decisions have to be made, they hold councils.

Decision making – dealing with change

EDUCATION

Only 35 per cent of Maasai children attend school as the pastoralists depend on their children's labour. The result is an illiteracy rate of more than 90 per cent, leaving the Maasai vulnerable to more worldly neighbours.

With their lovingly slit and stretched earlobes, their ochre-stained warriors … the Maasai live much as they have for centuries, but in a radically changing world.

In an effort to break this debilitating cycle, a group of educated young Maasai have established classes to bring schooling to the shepherds … Over the past four years, meeting under shady thorn trees, 1800 young herders have acquired basic literacy, Swahili, English and maths. Nearly 100 have continued into formal education and the prospect of jobs, while those remaining with herds are able to read the instructions on packets of veterinary drugs in English, or hold their own against Swahili-speaking livestock traders for a fair price.

James Legei, a social worker, argued that, 'The education system in Kenya is killing individual cultures. If you educate my way of life out of me and there is no job at the end of it, what then?'

excerpts from James Astill, 'Once were warriors', *The Age*, 26 June 2002

It is worth noting that in 2011, the Kenyan government banned the traditional practice of female circumcision (also known as female genital mutilation or FGM) in all communities in Kenya. However, the Maasai way of life still forms many distinct contrasts with day-to-day life for most Australians.

This focus study is a useful learning tool for studying cross-cultural comparisons. However, fully understanding a different culture and all the interconnected elements that go towards building a culture is challenging. The level of detail in the case study is barely the beginning to understanding this amazing and much-studied culture. An important part of this process is remembering to take cultural beliefs into account.

The practice of clitoridectomy, or female circumcision, is opposed around the globe by human-rights groups. It is a challenging cultural tradition. All cultures have distinctive rules governing gender roles, and one thing you should consider is whether you should disregard your own values when you are studying another culture. When you reflect on this you will begin to appreciate the intricacies of the social and cultural world.

ACTIVITY

1 What does polygamy mean?
2 Describe the role of Maasai women in the family and society.
3 Who are the *ilpayiani*?
4 Compare and contrast the importance of ceremony in Maasai culture compared to ceremony in Australian culture.

EXTENDED RESPONSE

5 Discuss the significance of gender in the identity formation of a Maasai and compare this to the gender identity of youth in Australia today.

REFERENCES

J Dent, 'Colour Missing on TV: We're Failing Our Ethnic Actors', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 2 May 2000, p. 4.

Department of Immigration and Citizenship, *Life in Australia*, October 2007.

A Giddens and P Sutton, *Sociology*, Polity, Cambridge, 2013

Tepilit Ole Saitoti, *Maasai*, Elm Tree Books, London, 1981,

J Scott and G Marshall (eds), *Oxford Dictionary of Sociology*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2009

K Suter, 'A Suggested Grassroots Response to Media Problems', *Global Agenda*, Albatross Books, Sutherland, 1995, pp. 83–4.

Lynn Williams, *Finding Out About Society*, Unwin Hyman, London, 1988

TWO
PERSONAL AND SOCIAL IDENTITY

The aim of this chapter is to study the process of socialisation, and the development and coming of age of individuals in a variety of social and cultural settings. The focus topic on the Yolngu people of Arnhem Land highlights the way in which the key concepts of the course are integrated within the context of personal and social identity.

Outcomes

A student:

P1 identifies and applies social and cultural concepts

P2 describes personal, social and cultural identity

P3 identifies and describes relationships and interactions within and between social and cultural groups

P5 explains continuity and change and their implications for societies and cultures

P8 plans and conducts ethical social and cultural research

P10 communicates information, ideas and issues using appropriate written, oral and graphic forms

BOSTES NSW, *Society and Culture Stage 6 Syllabus*, Sydney, 2013.

The key concepts are:

CLASS ▶ A system where societies are organised into hierarchical levels based on power, privilege and wealth.

ETHNICITY ▶ An individual's identification with, or sense of belonging to, an ethnic group. This is based on perceived common origins that people share, such as a specific ancestry and culture, that mark them as different from others.

KINSHIP ▶ Established relationships between individuals and groups on the basis of socially recognised biological relationships or marital links.

LIFE COURSE ▶ A culturally defined sequence of age categories through which people are usually expected to pass as they progress from birth to death.

LIFE STAGES ▶ The successive stages of life from childhood to 'adolescence', adult life and old age that collectively define people by being of a particular age group.

RESPONSIBILITY ▶ The ability or authority to act or make decisions on one's own, without supervision. This is associated with being accountable for decisions that are made.

RIGHTS ▶ The social, civil and political rights accorded to individuals. These include human rights – the fundamental rights that individuals should have as humans, such as the right to life, equality before the law, education and freedom of belief.

ROLES ▶ The social expectations attached to a particular social position and the analysis of those expectations. This may include the rights and obligations associated with the position.

SELF-CONCEPT ▶ Composed of the various identities, attitudes, beliefs and values that an individual holds about himself or herself and by which the individual defines himself or herself as a specific objective identity: the 'self'.

SOCIAL CONSTRUCT ▶ A socially created aspect of social life. Social constructionists argue that society is actively and creatively produced by human beings rather than being merely given or taken for granted.

SOCIALISATION ▶ The process by which individuals learn to become functioning members of society by internalising the roles, norms and values of that society. Socialisation occurs as a result of the individual's interaction with the agents of socialisation, through which he or she learns to perform social roles.

STATUS ▶ The form of social stratification in which social positions are ranked and organised by legal, political and cultural criteria into status groups which confer positive and negative privileges. Status groups can be competitive as they seek to preserve privileges by excluding rivals.

BOSTES NSW, *Society and Culture Stage 6 Syllabus*, Sydney, 2013 (adapted).

WEBLINKS
Weblinks relevant to this chapter can be found at **http://sandc.nelsonnet.com.au**. Just look for the weblink icon.

THE NATURE OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF PERSONAL AND SOCIAL IDENTITY

Personality, self-awareness and self-concept

There are so many influences that shape our personality that the task of understanding them is quite a challenge. You are the product of diverse influences – of experiences that affect your identity.

In some situations we behave and are expected to behave in particular ways, which shapes our sense of self, while in other situations we can behave differently and portray a very different sense of self. For example, you might be assured and confident when playing a sport that you are good at, but you find yourself unsure and hesitant in a class with unfamiliar course content. We can appear to be different people in different situations, but the aim is to become confident with your own identity, attitudes, beliefs and values.

How do personalities develop and can they be categorised? The work of Carl Jung on identifying psychological types and Isabel Briggs Myers in developing tests has enabled people to be characterised according to whether they:

- prefer being seen as extraverted or introverted
- use perception by sensing or intuition
- make decisions by thinking or feeling
- use judgement or perception in their understandings.

Isabel Briggs-Myers developed tests that categorised people into 16 personality types. This process is generally respected in industry and careers testing. What type are you? Is it possible for a test to sum up the options and possibilities of human personality?


Figure 2.01 Our sense of 'I am' comes from a combination of identities, attitudes, beliefs and values.

Identity and the social self

Many theories have been formulated about, and a great deal of research has been conducted into, identity formation and the development of the social self.

The social self is a conscious experience in which you become aware of your own personal identity – distinct from other people. How do you develop this awareness? Some theorists and researchers believe that identity formation is part of the expanding brain function of children as they grow. Other theorists consider it to be more a function of human interactions. The capacity to say, 'I am …' whatever that ends with, is a clear indicator that a sense of self is evident. What would be some of your 'I am …' statements that reveal how you operate in the social world? We can be many of these at the same time. For example, the same person could reveal, 'I am talented; I am athletic; I am tired, lazy and cheeky at school; I am respectful to my coach'. Is self just the summation of qualities such as gender, religious beliefs and occupation or do other characteristics such as being forgiving, humorous or impatient offer clearer pictures of the real person?

As children, we imitate, pretend and play, and these actions become our guide for how to act and how not to act, and they give us options for who we can be. As we grow up we begin to perceive the choices and the possibilities. Are we only the person we present to the social world, or also the person others label us as being, or the person we aspire deep inside to be? Our identity and our social self can be a complex process of reconciling the individual 'I', that inner person, and the societal 'me' of the social self.
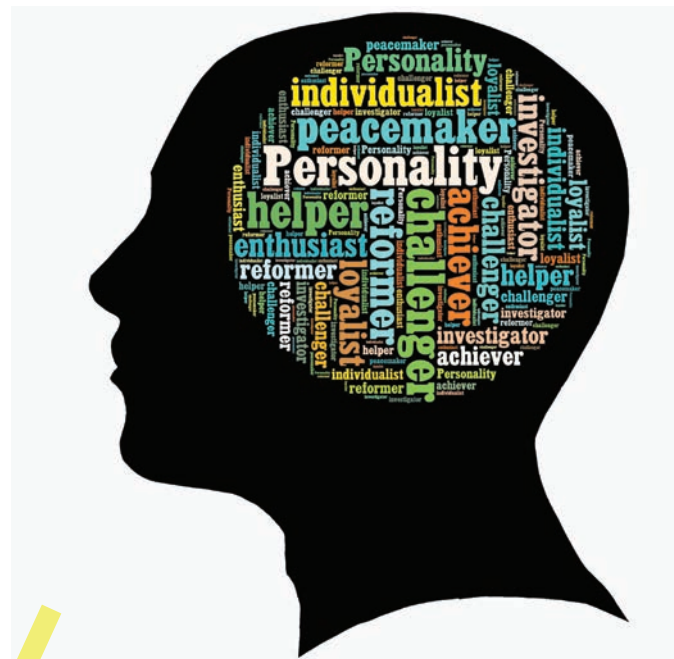
Figure 2.02 We can be many things at the same time. What are some of your 'I am…' statements?

The role of socialisation

Our lives are complex. We need to negotiate the realms of emotions and relationships, information and decision making, spirituality, sexuality, friendships and enmity; learn how to really communicate, make good choices and maybe even acquire wisdom. Becoming adequately socialised means we can function effectively in society. But how do we become ourselves? How do we get to really know ourselves? Knowledge of ourselves can only be meaningful when it is connected to our understanding of our world. Our sense of self, our identity, our personality, the person that we are, are all constantly influenced by the network of events, people and circumstances that make up our lives. How we deal with these different influences in our lives is quite important.

In essence, the process of socialisation is about learning to deal with the social world by gaining knowledge and understanding of the rules and expectations for the social situations in which we find ourselves. Socialisation is divided into two types: primary and secondary. Primary socialisation is the knowledge that we gain from our family. Secondary socialisation includes influences outside the family, such as peers, religion, school and the media. The impact of all these agents of socialisation is ongoing, as we will typically encounter new situations throughout our lives and will need to adapt and adopt appropriate behaviours if we want to be accepted. These roles, norms and values typically become internalised and part of who we are and how we present ourselves to the world.

Socialisation is a lifelong process of learning, a process of taking from, and being influenced by, the experiences in our lives. Throughout life, new circumstances arise, be it graduating from school, falling in love, taking on a sport or a new job, or retirement. We need to adjust to new circumstances, learn new rules and meet new expectations.

1   Can you explain the difference between identity, self-concept and personality?
2   Describe the processes of socialisation.
3   How would you explain the concept of socialisation to a child?
4   What skills and abilities are required on a daily basis to interact with others?
5   How long does the process of socialisation last? Explain why.
6   There are many challenges to understanding our social self. How do our moods, circumstances, the expectations of others, even the medications we may be taking influence who we are?
7   Access and complete an online test related to each of the following:
    •   The Myers-Briggs/Jung typology test
    •   The Herrmann Brain Dominance Instrument (HBDI) – the brain dominance test
    •   The Positivity Ratio by Barbara Fredrickson.
8   Compare the results from these tests and comment on their relevance to your sense of identity and self-awareness.
9   Critique the use of these tests. Assess the reliability, validity and bias of the tests.

FAMILY AND KINSHIP

Of primary importance in understanding identity formation is the role of the family and in particular, parents, whether both mother and father or sole parent, biological or adoptive. The profound effect of these significant people on your life and personality can never be underestimated. In addition, the influence of siblings (brothers and sisters) and members of the extended family – grandparents, grandchildren, uncles, aunts, cousins, nieces and nephews – are of similar importance in shaping identity. The role of a partner, whether girlfriend, boyfriend, lover, husband or wife – also has a profound effect on your life. Most people go through their lives coming to terms with just how powerful an influence their family has been in shaping their character.

Shutterstock/Julie Keen

Figure 2.03 Family has a powerful influence on the development of our own identity.

> Kinship refers to the systems that establish relationships between individuals and groups on the basis of socially recognised biological relationships or marital links.
>
> BOSTES NSW, *Society and Culture Stage 6 Syllabus*, Sydney, 2013.

Kinship refers to the systems that govern marriage and inheritance; for example, whether patrilineal or matrilineal, or how authority, economic and social relations are defined.

How crucial is the composition of a family? There are many versions of family life: nuclear, extended, sole parent, blended. No matter what form, they all aim to provide a living environment for people. The variety of family structures is representative of the pluralistic society that is Australia today. The family represents a key building block in society. It is of major influence in the socialisation of individuals because it shapes so many personal characteristics and aspirations. Yet is it changing? Certainly the extended family of adults with grandparents and often uncles, aunts and cousins living in the same household with parents and their children is not as common now as it was. Would living with this diversity of people and personalities mean that a child would be better able to deal with a diversity of people? For example, if there was a dispute with one member of the family, there would always be others to turn to for support and advice. Does the nuclear family offer a too limited scope for people to interact with and learn from? Or do smaller families permit more scope for individual development? Perhaps other areas of social life, such as friends, schools and the media fulfil our needs to learn from a diversity of influences.

ACTIVITY

1 Define the term 'kinship'. How is this different from 'family'?
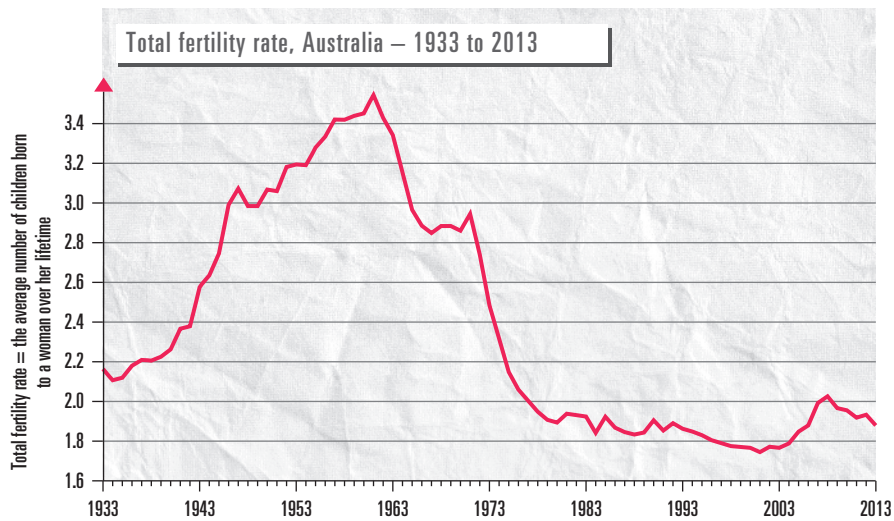
GROUP WORK

2 Brainstorm and record ways in which families influence our day-to-day living. Can these influences be linked to the socialisation process?

Family size

There have been many changes in recent times that have influenced the way in which families operate in our society. Are the roles we take in life shaped by these influences?

Data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics reveals that there has been a significant decline in the birth rate over the past 50 years. In 1961, at the end of the post-war' 'baby boom' the birth rate peaked at 3.5 children per woman; whereas by 1992 the birth rate had dropped to 1.9 children per woman. In the past 30 years, Australian families have almost halved in size and fewer than 2 per cent of families have five or more children. The predominant size is either one or two children, which accounts for 76 per cent of families.

In 2013, Australia's total fertility rate (TFR) was 1.88 babies per woman, a decrease from the 2012 figure of 1.93 babies per woman, continuing the trend of the past five years. Since 1976, the total fertility rate for Australia has been below replacement level. That is, the average number of babies born to a woman throughout her reproductive life has been insufficient to replace herself and her partner. The TFR required for replacement is currently considered to be about 2.1 babies per woman. The TFR reached a low of 1.74 babies per woman in 2001 before increasing to a 30-year high of 2.02 babies per woman in 2008.

Total fertility rate, Australia – 1933 to 2013

Total fertility rate = the average number of children born to a woman over her lifetime

1   Describe the general trends in Australian family size since the Second World War.
2   How might family size impact family life and the process of socialisation?

GROUP WORK

3   List the advantages and disadvantages of growing up in a family:
    a   as an only child
    b   with a sibling who is the same gender as you
    c   of more than four children.
4   Try to contact people who have personal experience growing up in each of these family groupings and share your findings. Which type of family group appeals to you the most? Why?
5   How may the process of socialisation differ for each of these people as a result of family size?

The politics of birth order, or 'How come she's allowed?'

It is a widely held belief that birth order in a family will directly affect an individual's character and personality. Is it true that a person who has grown up as the eldest child will exhibit very responsible or even domineering characteristics? Do youngest siblings tend to 'get away with things' and are they not subjected to the same amount of discipline as their older brothers and sisters experienced?

Shutterstock/Volt Collection

Figure 2.04 A widely held belief is that the order in which we are born directly reflects our character and personality.

Chinie Diaz presents the following reasons for certain traits being relevant to birth order:

> Eldest: Firstborns are natural leaders. Taking the lead from their parents, they like taking charge and want everything to be just right. This may also mean they struggle to admit when they are wrong. Typically reliable and conscientious, firstborns are often perfectionists who do not like surprises. Although firstborns are usually aggressive and confident, many are also people pleasers with a strong need for approval from anyone in charge.
>
> Middle: Middle-born kids are the most difficult to pin down, because while they are guaranteed to be opposite of their older sibling, that difference can manifest in many ways. Middle kids will usually develop skills and interests different from those shared by the family, and prioritize friends and peer groups since they often feel they do not have a special place within the family. Middle children often feel that they receive the least attention, which can make them insecure and secretive; however, it also makes them more independent, inventive and resourceful. They can usually read people well, and often act as mediators or peacemakers since their 'middle' role allows them to see all sides of a situation.
>
> Youngest: The lastborn or 'baby' of the family usually benefits most from the fact that by the time they come around, parents are more comfortable and experienced when it comes to the art of parenting. Kevin Leman argues that lastborns 'shoulder less responsibility, so they tend to be more carefree, easygoing, fun-loving, affectionate and sociable, and they like to make people laugh. However, while lastborns may be charming, they have the potential to be manipulative, spoiled or babied to the point of helplessness. They are also the most financially irresponsible and can turn rebellious, with an "I'll show them!" attitude, as they tend to view their elder siblings as faster, stronger, bigger and smarter.'
>
> C Diaz, 'Birth order and personality: Are you true to type?' in K Leman, *The Birth Order Book: Why You Are the Way You Are*, Revell, MI, 2009.

Making statements that describe a large number of people carries the risk of over-generalisation. People often resent being placed into categories and being told they should be like 'this' because they are 'that'. It is important to allow each individual the scope to fulfil his or her potential. Are there patterns in the ways people behave that allow social scientists to better understand the influences on our lives?

Dr Phillip Slee, a lecturer in human development at Flinders University, Adelaide, argues that birth order can be of more significance in more authoritarian families where there is a definite hierarchical structure.

Yet if there is a change of attitudes regarding traditional roles within families as well as a trend towards smaller family sizes, perhaps the significance of birth order is reducing. Added to this are the effects of step-parents and blended families where a child's role can change with the sudden addition of new siblings who alter the age patterns in a family. Dr Slee argues temperament and styles of child rearing are a more important influence on personality. What do you think?

ACTIVITY

1   Create a list of character attributes for:
  a   eldest children
  b   middle children
  c   youngest children
  d   only children.
2   How might gender make a difference to birth-order characteristics?
3   Organise a group of people who are not likely to know the birth order of others in the group. Ask them to circulate within the group and, without speaking, attempt to identify

someone who has the same birth order as themselves; that is, either eldest, youngest, middle or only. When everyone has settled on an individual or small group ask them for a show of hands to see how accurate the selections are. Ask everyone to discuss what made them make their selection. You may follow up this activity with groups of each birth order discussing what it is like being them and asking if they can identify and share any general characteristics with the whole group.

4   Design and conduct a brief questionnaire to determine whether the general characteristics of birth-order types described above are correct. Include both open- and closed-ended questions and ensure you test a draft copy of your questions before finalising your questionnaire format.

Compile the results of this questionnaire and present its findings using graphs and diagrams. Make an assessment of whether the majority of respondents agreed with birth-order profiles. Also include a statement on how you have conducted ethical research through this process.

Adapted from teaching strategy by Anne Hudson.

ETHNICITY AND CULTURE

Ethnicity

Cultural identity is a distinctive factor in determining who we are. This cultural identity is called 'ethnicity'. Anthony Giddens defines ethnicity as:

> the cultural practices and outlooks of a given community of people that set them apart from others. Members of ethnic groups see themselves as culturally distinct from other groups in a society, and are seen by those other groups to be so in return.
>
> A Giddens, *Sociology*, Polity Press, Cambridge, UK, 2006.

The features of a distinctive ethnicity include language, national origin, cuisine, religion, styles of dress and a sense of common historical heritage. This sense of ethnicity may or may not be apparent to the wider society, but it can strongly shape the worldview of individuals. Ethnicity is a concept that is distinct from race. Ethnicity is about culture and lifestyle, whereas race is an attempt to categorise groups of people according to a perceived understanding of their biological features. The concept of race, although still used in everyday language, has been challenged as an insufficient method of labelling people. 'Race' has more to do with colonialism than with understanding ethnicity, despite the fact that it shapes many opinions, attitudes, stereotypes and prejudices.

The process of taking on rights and responsibilities in any social group requires knowledge of the rules, the customs and the manners of that group. To be accepted, you need to be approved by and committed to that group. For a Canadian Australian, it may include dismay and disdain for imitation maple syrup, whereas for a Chinese Australian it could be a knowledge of traditional medicine. These decisions and behaviours would be observed by others of that ethnicity and would serve to reinforce that shared sense of belonging.

How does being part of a minority ethnicity shape identity? How does being part of the dominant culture affect ethnic identity? Do all Australians have an ethnicity? Commonly, migrant groups are referred to as 'ethnic', yet 98 per cent of Australians have migrant heritage.

Culture

Cultural heritage also has a profound influence on identity formation. Our cultural background or combinations of backgrounds shape the way we see the world. The traditions, values and beliefs we absorb through the cultural context of our lives are profound. All Australians have an ethnicity. Ethnicity is not merely the domain of recently arrived migrants. Australians of

Anglo-Celtic background have an ethnicity that may shape their interests, choice of places to travel and even their sense of humour. The impact of culture on a person's experience of growing up can be evident through life choices. Culture refers to the shared knowledge, ways of thinking, attitudes and behaviours that give each society its coherence and its distinctive way of life.

Culture can determine the sports we choose to engage with, the foods we eat, the languages we speak and the alliances we form. The influence of culture shapes our interests, our tastes and our way of looking at the world.

THE CRONULLA RIOTS, 2005

The Cronulla riots of December 2005 provide an example of how cultural identity can profoundly shape the way we see the world and interpret events. Why did young people form such volatile groups at that time? Why did violence erupt? Why was an Australian flag burnt? Were the events simply the result of a peer group that escalated into violence and rioting? Or did the influences of cultural identity come into play?

Which of the research options listed below would lead to a better understanding of what happened? Why?
- a content analysis of news reports on that day
- interviews with young people who were in Cronulla on the day of the riots
- a focus group on how awareness and responses to these riots may have changed people's sense of community in suburban Australia
- secondary research on the court cases of those who were charged that day.

Figure 2.05 The December 2005 Cronulla riots are an example of the different viewpoints that shape our world.

Outline a variety of factors that would influence the usefulness, validity and bias of such enquiries.

ACTIVITY

1 Identify the cultural practices and traits associated with ethnicity.

2 Why is it more appropriate to use the word 'ethnicity' than 'race'?

3 Conduct research to find three cultural practices associated with the following ethnic groups:
- Brazilian
- Canadian
- Irish
- Afghani
- Israeli
- Japanese
- Italian

GROUP WORK

4 Ask each person in your class to state their ethnic identity. Those of similar ethnicity then form groups. Ask these groups or individuals to prepare a summary of their connections to their ethnic identity. Consider language, religion, values, national origin, food and drink, clothing preferences, sporting loyalties, cultural associations, rituals, festivals, music and any other ways of living. Each group/individual is to present their findings with cultural artefacts and respond to the statement 'My connection with my culture is … '

GENDER

Boy germs … chick flicks … everyone is strongly influenced by the social and cultural expectations of gender. Our actions and reactions to events are profoundly shaped by gender. Our masculinity or femininity is a quality shaped by both our biology and the experiences of our lives.

Gender refers to the socially constructed differences, rather than biological ones, between females and males. Gender relates to the roles and expectations associated with being male, female or other in a particular social and cultural context. Many of the qualities we associate with gender are, in fact, social constructs. We, or those who have gone before us, have established rules, norms of behaviour and social roles regarding gender expectations.

In addition to factors such as family and culture, many social movements have shaped our sense of gender. These movements include the suffragettes, the Women's Liberation Movement, feminism, gay liberation, fathers' rights groups and the men's movement. However, while customary gender roles remain a dominant factor in shaping our expectations of male and female behaviours, there are increasingly diverse ways in which we express our gender identity. Are we becoming more open to diversity or are traditional roles still influential in shaping identity?

There is a diverse range of sexual orientations – including straight, gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, transsexual, androgynous and asexual. There are also conservative and fundamentalist reactions against such diversity.

Figure 2.06 Deconstructing traditional gender roles

Girlfriends and boyfriends

A boyfriend–girlfriend relationship can have a significant influence on an adolescent's world. These relationships usually grow from the peer-group network and can influence an adolescent's identity formation.

Since the 1960s, women's liberation and feminism have generated a re-examination of what it means to be a woman and served to redefine the roles, expectations and aspirations of women. Have men experienced similar scrutiny of their gender roles?

Relationships between men and women are in a state of change. As Australian social researcher Hugh Mackay states:

> There has been an upheaval in the patterns of marriage and divorce, a growing presence of women in the upper echelons of government, business and the professions … the emergence of 'the women's vote', the fact that the majority of university students are women and the plummeting birth rate are all dynamic indictors of change in our gender roles.

In 2004, Mackay argued that young women were reluctant to be identified with feminism:

> … the revolution is history: they are about 'living' equality, not preaching it … that, 35 years on, young women want to distance themselves from the rhetoric of the revolution because such language sounds outmoded to them.

H Mackay, 'Children of the Revolution. I want it all …', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 12–13 June 2004.

ACTIVITY

1 List five traditional characteristics of a masculine person and five of a feminine person.

2 Explain how gender is a social construct.

3 Is contemporary society's perception of gender changing? Explain your perspective.

4 Research one of these social movements and assess its impact on the wider society: the Women's Liberation Movement, feminism, gay liberation, fathers' rights groups or the men's movement.

FILM STUDY

5 Choose one of the following and discuss how it challenges the traditional notions of gender:
   • *Priscilla, Queen of the Desert* (1994). Director: Stephen Elliot
   • *Brokeback Mountain* (2005). Director: Ang Lee
   • *The Underground Girls of Kabul* (2014). Author: Jenny Nordberg.

6 Watch the video of Tavi Gevinson's TEDxTeen talk, 'Still Figuring it Out'. What is Tavi's strategy and message about being a teenage girl?

RESEARCH

7 Select an appropriate research method (observation, interview or questionnaire) to develop your understanding of teenage relationships. Research:
   • the proportion of teenagers who are in relationships
   • the typical duration of these relationships
   • the impact of the relationship on peer friendships
   • the effect of the relationship on the identity formation of the individuals involved.

8 Develop a research proposal to examine the changing nature of feminism. Your research must include an interview method. For example, you could interview a man and a woman who experienced the gender revolution known as feminism and explore the extent to which changing gender roles have influenced their identity.

SEXUALITY

Stud, lad, slut, virginity, gay, straight, love, passion, orgasm, jealousy, adultery, hooker, hooking up, masturbation, acting promiscuously, fetishes and chastity … the concept of sexuality has many associations. Sex is essential to our survival as a species, yet we can be reluctant to discuss it and deal with sexuality as a social issue.

Reproductive scientists Malcolm Potts and Roger Short argue that humans are so bashful about sex that we are unable to rationally discuss important issues such as birth control, population growth, homosexuality, sexually transmitted infections and the taboos prescribed by religion and culture.

Like other forms of human activity, sexual behaviour is learnt, but it can be argued there are no universal sexual norms. We learn about sexual conduct through the socialisation processes. The diverse age range for the onset of puberty complicates this learning because there is similarly a diverse age range for interest in sex. What are the facts and which choices are people making?

Since 1992, the Australian Research Centre at La Trobe University has conducted a regular survey of students in Years 10 to 12. The most recent is the '5th National Survey of Australian Secondary Students and Sexual Health', conducted in 2013. Among its findings, the survey revealed that:

• 69 per cent of students in Years 10 to 12 had experienced some sexual activity

• 34 per cent had experienced sexual intercourse

- 23 per cent of Year 10 students, 34 per cent of Year 11 students and 50 per cent of Year 12 students had experienced sexual intercourse
- 59 per cent of sexually active teens used a condom during their most recent sexual encounter
- 63 per cent thought other people always used a condom
- about 40 per cent of students had experienced oral sex
- approximately one-quarter of sexually active students reported an experience of unwanted sex
- the majority of the sample reported sexual attraction only to people of the opposite sex (83 per cent of young men and 76 per cent of young women)
- 8 per cent of young men and 4 per cent of young women reported sexual attraction only to people of the same sex. Five per cent of young men and 15 per cent of young women were attracted to people of both sexes. About 4 per cent of young men and 5 per cent of young women were unsure about their sexual attraction
- religious and cultural beliefs or parental disapproval were less frequently cited by non-sexually active students as reasons for not having had intercourse
- about 20 per cent of non-sexually active students reported feeling 'extremely' happy, good and proud that they had not yet had sex. Large proportions reported that they did 'not at all' feel guilty (75 per cent), regretful (63 per cent) or embarrassed (51 per cent) that they had not yet had sex.

How accurately these findings reflect student sexuality and sexual practice are open to question. The nature of the survey, its timing and the cohort surveyed are obviously significant. Nonetheless it does highlight the complexity of the topic.

Information about sexual activity is interesting and important for young people to access. Whether in the form of gossip about celebrity liaisons, 'Dolly Doctor' advice or X-rated websites, the sexualisation of adolescence is an actuality. It has to be, as sexuality is a significant aspect of life, living and growing up. However, the increasing access to online pornography has arguably altered the expectations of adolescents about sexual activity. Has this access normalised what was once considered extreme sex acts? If porn is becoming a tool for 'education' about sex, how is this aspect of media changing the norms and values of people who choose to access it?

While much of our energy is focused on sexual acts, thoughts, feelings and fears, the need for distinct rights and responsibilities associated with sex is a common feature of human societies.
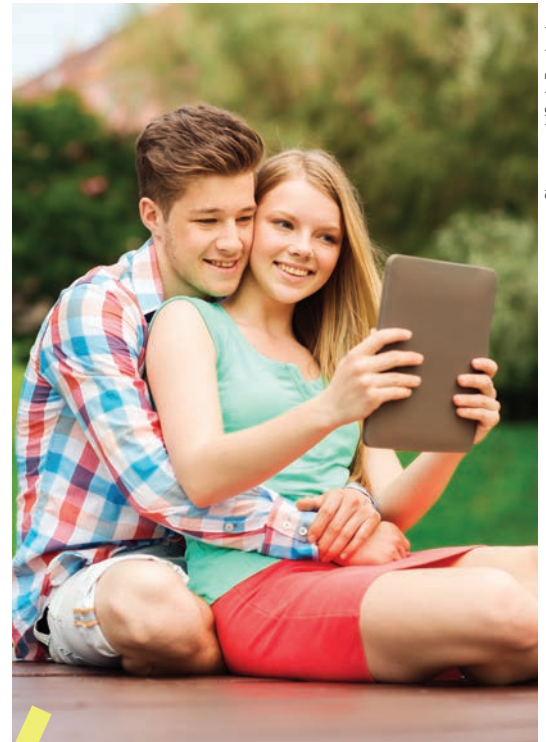
Shutterstock/Syda Productions

Figure 2.07 Sexuality is a significant aspect of life, living and growing up. It is important for young people to have access to information about sexual activity.

ACTIVITY

1 Identify the three factors that influence how you learn about sexuality.
2 Is there an over-emphasis on sexuality or is society's emphasis on sexuality an appropriate reality?

BELIEFS

Religion is a dimension of society that has traditionally determined beliefs, values and ideals. It has a profound effect on society because it shapes ritual and belief; defines behaviours, whether religious or not; identifies the nature of faith and the meaning of life and death; and provides a means of understanding divinity. The capacity for religion to shape and influence culture can be witnessed by a study of virtually any people of any era. From the Dreaming of the Aboriginal peoples to the Zoroastrians of Persia; from the Hindus of India to the Semitic traditions of Judaism, Christianity and Islam, the impact of religious visions of truth are inspiring and confounding. From the teachings of 'love thy neighbour' to the practice of the persecution of the 'Godless heathen', the array of actions delivered in the name of God is immense. The capacity of religion to shape the values of the individuals within a culture is profound.

Throughout history, people have grown up immersed in the religious rituals, texts and beliefs that have shaped the actions and reactions of people and the hierarchies of their way of life. These religious rituals have inspired the opinion shapers and the visionaries and even defined the truth. Social sciences should not judge the faith of the people being studied. Individuals have their personal commitments to particular religious views; however, it is not appropriate to judge the religious beliefs of others. The study of the social world does allow for appreciating the capacity of religious beliefs to shape our way of life and our actions.

ACTIVITY

1   What does religion provide for societies?

2   Emile Durkheim, considered the founder of the academic subject of sociology, argued that shared religious beliefs and the rituals that go with them are so important that every society needs a religion. Does every society need a religion? Provide reasons in your response.

3   Select a religion or belief system other than one you may believe in. Outline three significant beliefs of that religion and then link each belief to a specific ritual. How does each ritual provide meaning to the participants? Discuss how these practices shape the values of these participants.

LOCATION, CLASS AND STATUS

Location

The links between our personal and social identity to class and status are evident. One additional factor in this is location – that is, where you live. The question, 'Where do you come from?' may not be as simple as it appears. Stereotypical labels such as snob, bogan, westie, preppy, normcore, ghetto, bushie, posh and pouty, shirtless 'n' Straylian … all work to ridicule and even simplify our understanding of other people's lives. We seem to invest so much time and energy on assessing others by property values, income, ethnic origin, languages spoken, ATARs, teen pregnancy rates, drive-by shootings … all according to postcode or suburb. There are perceived social and cultural divides in and across Sydney and the nature of the social world is that we typically associate with 'people like us' in order to connect with those we understand.

Location can influence a person's political ideals and values. If we were to examine the distribution of voting patterns in federal elections, there is typically a geographic divide that splits the way the majority of people vote.

There are other measures of social class that divide Sydney. The location of university-educated people follows a similar distribution, with a north–south divide. The relative value of properties also has an unequal distribution, as do the proportion of students attending private schools and of average income.

There is a vast amount of information, statistics and data on these issues, collected and held by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS). The ABS is responsible for collecting data from every Australian in its census, which is carried out every five years. The wealth of information collected in the census enables researchers to explore empirical evidence, which can deliver an understanding of the social world that moves into specific evidence and goes beyond generalisations and impressions.

Figure 2.08 Voting patterns across Sydney

THE AUSTRALIAN BUREAU OF STATISTICS
Visit the ABS website and explore the information on 'regional wage and salary earner statistics', as well as the analysis of education issues in the 'social trends' section.

ACTIVITY

1   Access the Australian Electoral Commission website to find federal election results across Sydney. Suggest reasons for any patterns you detect.

2   How does location influence activities during adolescence? Are there certain activities some groups are more prone to take part in because of their location (for example, surfing or rodeo)? Explain whether your location influences your leisure activities.

DESIGN AN EXCURSION

3   Design an excursion for your Society and Culture class to visit a Society and Culture class from another school in a different suburban area or location of New South Wales. The aim of the excursion is to explore issues of location, class and status. The plan for your program must include the means of transport; the purposes of the excursion; activities so the two groups can get to know each other; specific activities to explore location, class and status; and the strategies you would use to ensure information you collect and the conclusions you reach do not reinforce stereotypes.

Figure 2.09 Playing roles, or for real?

Figure 2.10 Some insignia of status are more obvious.

Class and status

Where we live, as well as social class and status, are indicators of our personal and social identity. For example, a person who holds a job as a garbage collector, which may be perceived as low status, might also hold the position of president of a sports club with major responsibilities and recognition of status. Similarly, in one social context we can be the life of the party, while in another we may feel much less confident and appear more introverted.

An important signifier for role and status in our culture is occupation. For example, the ways we might introduce people:

'This is Alistair. He is a lawyer.'

'This is Cynthia. She is a receptionist.'

These introductions indicate, despite the stereotyping, a likely expectation regarding the relative gender role and status of each person. Adults typically identify strongly with their occupation. For many people, it defines their place in the world and gives them a context for their identity.

What, then, is our real identity? The actor, the spy and the suicide bomber all take on roles meant to disguise their other identity. Do we do the same in day-to-day life? George Herbert Mead, a renowned social psychologist, argued that a vital skill for people to learn is to anticipate the expectations of others and to act accordingly. When children play, they take on the roles of those they see around them. For example, playing doctors, mothers and fathers, schools, or cops and robbers forms a means of learning to act and interact in the social world. Through such role-playing we learn to see the world and ourselves from the point of view of others.

Status is linked to the concept of authority. If you are recognised as having a particular authority in certain circumstances, this gives you status. You are recognised for your position in society and in general you have the capacity to make things happen. We each play many roles in life. Who is the real you?

The role of class and status

Australians live in a democracy. We have freedom of choice and we can elect who we want to be in power. For a fee of about $300, any eligible person can nominate themselves to stand in local or state elections. There is a higher fee to nominate for federal elections. In theory, anyone can become the mayor, the premier or the prime minister. Australians are not born into slavery or into families where a particular caste determines their roles and opportunities for life. We are free to be, within reason, whatever we want to be!

Status is a measure used to compare people or groups based on criteria such as income, employment and residential location. The status we achieve is always relevant to its social context. Someone might have status as a renowned DJ in the Sydney club scene, but not be recognised for their skills in

New York. Likewise, the transition from primary school to secondary school or from school to university typically means that your previous status counts for little because the context has changed.

Status is determined by the esteem of others. Are people or groups honoured or are they rejected? How can their status be measured, relative to others? Can status be inherited or must it be achieved by merit? What is the link between status, power and authority? These fundamental questions are vital for understanding how any society operates. Two key elements of social and cultural literacy, 'being self-aware, with a sense of personal, social and cultural identity' and 'showing concern for the welfare, rights and dignity of all people' are essential when considering an effective appreciation of the importance of status in the social world.

Class is a system where societies are organised into hierarchical levels based on power, privilege and wealth. When social status becomes strongly established in our way of life it can be perceived as a large-scale grouping known as class. Class has a historical basis, with people being 'born into old money' or coming from a 'working-class family', for example. Class is typically determined by the access to economic resources that in turn shape our way of life, our aspirations, our behaviours and our life chances. Examples of categories of class include working class, middle class and upper class.

In modern societies, class divisions can be quite fluid. Through education, hard work or marriage, you can improve your status and class options. Similarly, the descendants of wealthy and powerful people can lose their fortune, face bankruptcy and slide down in social standing. Class that is based on achievement and economic standing is therefore changeable. These concepts are explored in the research and writings of Karl Marx and Max Weber, each of whom was focused on the relevance of social class as a major influence in the social world.
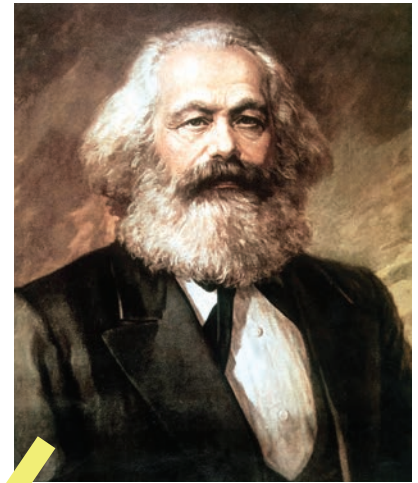
Getty Images/Hulton Archive

Figure 2.11 Karl Marx

ACTIVITY

1 What are the measures of status? Rank the following factors according to which has the highest status in your world:

physical strength	intelligence	beauty	height
wealth	occupation	academic results	sporting ability
where you live	house (style/size)	family connections	body type/shape
car (type)	clothing and accessories		other …

2 Collect the top five choices for Question 1 from each class member and collate the overall pattern by giving a score of five to each top choice and a score of one to the fifth choice. Discuss the results. What influences may have affected these results?

3 In pairs, collect images associated with each of the following groups:
   • high class
   • middle class
   • working class.

   Compare your results with another pair and then the class as a whole. Are the images selected to represent each group myths, stereotypes or based on fact?

4 As a class, design a 10-question questionnaire to determine a person's social class. Consider schooling, sporting interests, hobbies, family history, politics and occupation. Distribute your questions to a Year 11 Society and Culture class in a different area of your city or region. What did you learn? Review your results to determine their usefulness and validity, or whether any bias was evident.

5   Research: divide the class into two groups. One group is to research Karl Marx's ideas on the role of social class in shaping society and the other is to do the same using Max Weber's *(pronounced vay-ber)* ideas. Each group is to prepare a poster that details why their perspective is correct.

6   Distinguish between social class and status.

7   Were there greater divisions in society created along class boundaries in the past? Which class divisions are evident in Australian society today?

CLASS DEBATE

8   Debate the topic, 'Sooner or later, we become what we pretend to be'.

PEERS

Peers are the friends and acquaintances we spend time with on a regular basis in a social context. Many are friends from school, but peer groups can come from a diverse range of contacts. Peer groups represent a powerful force in the lives of most adolescents because they provide the most dynamic opportunity for adolescents to explore the world beyond their family.

Naturally, family is of major importance throughout childhood, but as adolescents develop maturity, they want to explore the wider social world. This wider social network typically consists of friends, classmates, members of the extended family network, acquaintances made through groups such as sporting clubs and churches, and boyfriends or girlfriends. This role of this peer group does not necessarily conflict with the role of the family, but it does serve to generate alternatives and wider areas of exploration, as well as new possibilities.

Acknowledging Street Artist: CANTWO. Image used with permission.

Figure 2.12 Graffiti, like slang, is a language only some can decipher.

A peer group is a source of influence distinct from the family. Typically, it provides a new sense of identity, which could include a shared style of dressing, shared interests in types of music, and even shared language. Teen slang helps define the group by creating meanings that are distinctive and which parents and teachers cannot understand.

Slang can be defined as an informal language, more often spoken than written. It might include words and meanings that might be considered rude and might be in use for only a short time. Slang is used by particular groups of people and is spoken rather than written.

Table 2.01 Slang words and their meanings

1990s	EARLY 2000s
oofed/schwinger: hot guy **axed/burnt/pebble:** embarrassed **fig jam/fish:** I'm so hot … **zigged/dogged:** stood up **mac:** pick up **mullet:** hair style **shag:** have sex **wicked:** good **had a Barry:** stupid action **n.f.i.:** particularly unaware **sick:** good **blah, blah, blah:** general all-purpose fill in	**bring it on:** accept a challenge **rolled:** mugged **player:** guy who gets around **random:** unknown, weird, out of context **shut down:** extremely hurt **check:** it's ok **meat and 2 veg/schlong:** male anatomy **try hard:** wannabe, nerd **hard:** too good (as in hard core), above others **blonde:** bimbo, dumb **stack it:** fall over **taxi:** drunk person in need of help **that's gold:** that's good **sick mate:** good, ethnic approval **sitch:** what's the situation **chops:** side burns **lowie:** undesirable person of low status **pov:** poverty **cankles:** fat ankles **gronk:** uncoordinated **chimed:** to include yourself in conversation **rock up/front up:** to turn up **sweet:** good **majorly:** overdone **cut:** rejected
MID TO LATE 2000s	CIRCA 2015
hooked up: getting together and kissing **toolies:** older guys trying to pick up girls at schoolies **chick flick:** movies for girls **chick lit:** books for girls **lad:** Nike/Nautica-wearing, sus-looking gang member **lass:** female lad with violent tendencies, does not wash hair **cutting someone's grass:** guy steals a mate's girl **shiffle:** lad dancing	**ermehgerd:** oh my God **twelvie:** someone below the age of 15 **dog:** unloyal **#hashtag:** social media **yolo:** you only live once **keen:** excited **sprout:** someone who will be hot when they're older **tuning:** flirting/having a thing **titf:** took it too far **ott:** over the top **#firstworldproblems:** trivial issue in the scheme of life **cray:** crazy **caked:** a girl with a lot of make-up on **gurfer:** a girl who surfs **fitspo:** inspiration for fitness **fishing:** looking for someone between 18 and 20 to buy alcohol for you **swag:** being cool, having swagger **v plates:** a virgin **twerk:** a dance move in which you repeatedly gyrate your posterior **I can't even:** white-girl term for being extremely overwhelmed **selfie:** taking a photo of yourself

ACTIVITY

1   How does language define a peer group? Choose five words that illustrate how peer groups contribute to a sense of personal and social identity.
2   What is the purpose of teenage slang?
3   Review the slang words in Table 2.01, which were compiled by Society and Culture students from the 1990s to the present. Categorise particular themes in the messages that are typically used in teen slang. Why might these themes be important to adolescents?
4   Make a list of slang terms relevant to your peer group.
5   Personal reflection: how has your peer goup influenced your identity?

SCHOOL

Schools are an important influence through the formative years because of their role in education, training, discipline and often instilling particular values. The impact of the school learning environment is significant in two areas: the curriculum and extra-curricular activities. There is much potential for learning experiences in the curriculum to shape knowledge, opinions and attitudes.

Consider English lessons that explore the issues of racism in texts such as *The Book Thief* or *To Kill a Mockingbird*; or history lessons that shape our understanding of freedom, democracy and human rights; or the opportunity for developing creativity through courses in the performing and visual arts, as well as the logic and discipline of mathematics. There is probably no other time in life when our minds are exposed to such diverse opinions, knowledge and opportunities to experience new ideas. Up to six times a day, high-school students all over the country walk into classrooms where there are opportunities to extend their knowledge and understanding during a lesson led by a professional who makes a career from his or her expertise in a particular subject.

For most people, high school is an interactive experience on a significant scale. At no other time in your life will you spend six years with such a large group of people. Your cohort will spend time experimenting with and exploring different friendship groups and getting to know the qualities and character, and the strengths and weaknesses of most of the people in your

Figure 2.13 Despite the blurring of the years, I remember you and still know who you are.

year level. You go to different classes together, you grow up together and you share collective experiences. Life after school is much more varied. In the workplace, you will usually have contact with fewer people and typically not all workers stay at one job for six years.

Beyond syllabus and teaching programs, there are myriad activities going on at school that have an impact on socialisation. It could be the skills and teamwork developed playing sport, a community service activity that made you look at your interaction with others in a new way, or that excursion to Canberra where you had an epiphany about the nature of justice on a tour through the High Court.

Each school has a culture and traditions. Public or private, secular or denominational, each is an institution with customs, rules and agreed ways of behaving, and these cultures and traditions influence students both positively and negatively. Many students resist these values and rules, but even if they are rejected, students are still being socialised by them.

ACTIVITY

1 What have your school experiences revealed to you about the following aspects of society?
  a authority   **c** humour   **e** society   **g** multiculturalism
  b responsibility   **d** history   **f** relationships   **h** discrimination

2 What can be learnt as part of a family that you would not learn at school? What can be learnt at school that you would not learn as part of a family?

CLASS DISCUSSION

3 What are the human qualities that make the learning experience in high school most successful?

4 List the extra-curricular activities you have been engaged in at your school. Then list the extra-curricular activities you have avoided. Explain what these choices demonstrate about who you are and who you want to be.

MEDIA

The mass media maintains a powerful role in our society, whether via television, radio, newspapers and magazines, books, cinema, music, gaming or social media. The strength of the media is in its ability to influence our ideas, opinions, attitudes and images of the world. We live in a world where our technology is driven by access to information in the form of images and descriptions that, in turn, shape our opinions, actions and behaviour. But are these news reports more infotainment than in-depth analyses of current affairs?

Anyone can access images from all over the world in real time. Media enables teenagers who have access to this technology to simultaneously experience new songs, movies, fashion, news and ideas. Has the capacity to access information in a global context redefined what it means to be a young person today? Or is it the same as in previous eras when the youth of the day accessed The Beatles and Bob Dylan from all over the world? Events such as Woodstock (1969) and Live Aid (1985) challenged the adult world's values of those times.

What are the media events that shape youth culture today? Has the way young people used media changed from previous generations? The media has certainly changed in the context of who controls the corporate structures. Corporations such as Google, Disney, Sony, Time Warner, Viacom, Fox and Vivendi have a massive influence over the content of the media. The power of the media to shape popular culture is self-evident. But the ways youth interact with each other through technology can form a viable alternative to these global trends.

1   By accessing their websites, review Woodstock and Live Aid as past – but significant – music and media events. Are there comparable events for music fans today? What is the role of the media in supporting these events?

2   Find the websites of Disney, Sony, Time Warner, Viacom, Fox and Vivendi and assess the impact these corporations have on the entertainment industry.

3   Does the media dictate to society or does the prevailing society dictate what is shown in the media? Explain with examples.

4   Provide an example of a time when you have been shocked by headlines and images in the media. Why were you shocked? Was there an effect on your behaviour?

5   Are the adolescents of today more or less influenced by media through their access to information technology than adolescents of previous generations? Provide reasons for your answer.

The 'nature versus nurture' debate

A fundamental question in understanding the formation of identity is whether we are predominantly a product of our nature or of how we were nurtured. What does this mean? Our nature refers to our biology – that is, those aspects of us that are part of our bodily being, our genetics, our DNA (all those qualities inherited from our parents that might, for example, give us a tendency to be susceptible to certain diseases such as breast cancer or alcoholism). Nurture refers to the aspects of ourselves that are acquired during life. On an obvious level, it refers to the way our parents raise us, but it also suggests the influence of the range of our life experiences that shape our identity.

On one level, our identity is shaped by distinctive features of who we are, such as being male or female. This is an aspect of our genetic make-up that determines much of our behaviour. Male images such as being strong, and being the provider, the hunter, or the warrior have been seen as normal across many cultures throughout time. However, the role of males as hunters or warriors is not universal, which suggests that the basis of these roles is cultural rather than biologically determined. Behaviourists – that is, people who believe that nurture has more impact than nature – argue that these human traits are predominately learnt, not biological. They argue that not all males exhibit the same levels of aggression and in some cultures, the males are more passive and gentle.

Shutterstock/Yvonne Wierink

Figure 2.14 Same, but different

1   Distinguish between nature factors and nurture factors. Is one stronger than the other, in your opinion?

2   Research how 'twin studies' and adoption studies could shed light on the 'nature versus nurture' debate.

3   Conduct secondary research on the Wodaabe, a distinctive cultural group from Nigeria. In particular, research the Wodaabe festival of Gerewol and compare the gender roles, behaviours and ideals of beauty between the Wodaabe and young Australians. To what extent are these based on 'nature or nurture' factors?

THE ROLE OF SOCIALISATION IN UNDERSTANDING NATURE AND NURTURE

The responsibility of being a parent is immense. The influence of parents on the lives of their children is recognised as one of the most profound social relationships. Dealing with and understanding the parent–child relationship is one of life's great challenges. How significant an influence is your relationship with your parent/s on your life?

The family is the primary source of an individual's socialisation and through the family, crucial early life experiences occur. It is there that emotional bonds, values, beliefs and attitudes are first established and essential life skills are passed on. These skills might include learning a language, becoming skilled in how to relate to people, dealing with gender expectations and identifying with the particular ethnicity, social class and religion of the family. Young children have few other experiences to compare with what they learn from their family, so family life has a profound effect on their sense of identity. The family is the universe for young children. As they get older, this universe expands to include neighbours, childcare centres, television and school, but the initial and constant influence of the family remains a powerful factor in nuturing them. The family environment also has a significant impact on a child reaching its full biological potential.

Figure 2.15 Affection and time spent together create close bonds between father and son.

RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES IN FAMILY LIFE

Despite a growing acceptance in Australia that people do not have to become parents to lead fulfilling lives, most people still want to have a family. Most people would believe it is their right to have children. Undoubtedly, the family forms one of the most significant social institutions: it is where we most often have our long-term relationships with people, and where we most often express our emotions and deepest feelings, including love, affection, frustration, hostility or grief. Typically, we express feelings within the confines of the family that would probably be inappropriate anywhere else. For example, most teens would never dream of treating their friends the way they, at times, treat their parents or brothers and sisters! The family is where we spend most of our money: on mortgages, living expenses and educational expenses. People invest so much of their lives in family.

Family is so important to our lives, yet the qualifications for having one are minimal. What training and skills do people receive to be successful in relationships and as parents? Should there be more support for people to develop skills in these areas? Typically, we rely on life experiences to give us these skills. Decisions about how to raise children are greatly influenced by the methods used by previous generations.

We all have choices in how we live our lives, but the influence our upbringing has over our personality is remarkable. For example, the argument about how much influence parents who abuse their children have on the children's future behaviour: will the children go through life more aggressively, or perhaps more passively, as a result of this treatment?

ACTIVITY

SMALL-GROUP DISCUSSION

1   In small groups, respond to one of the following scenarios:
  • *Scenario 1:* A mother is chasing her 13-year-old son around the backyard with a wooden spoon in her hand, threatening to punish him. They both eventually burst out laughing, each realising the ridiculous nature of their behaviour as she can't catch him and he is old enough to be treated in a more responsible way. Is corporal punishment an effective way to discipline anyone?

  or
  • *Scenario 2:* A baby is crying in the middle of the night. The child has just been fed but, as one of the parents gets up to see to the child, their partner says, 'Don't spoil him. Just let him cry himself to sleep'. Can a baby be 'spoilt'?

  or
  • *Scenario 3:* A dispute between a parent and a child where the outcome is that the parent claims authority and says, 'You'll do it because I said so!' Under what circumstances is it appropriate for parents to command their children and under what circumstances is it appropriate to settle disputes with reason and discussion?

Figure 2.16 Tears …

RESEARCH

2   Conduct a cross-generational focus group to develop your understanding of whether parenting changed between your parents' generation and your grandparents' generation. In your questioning, explore the idea that a 10-week course in parenting training should be mandatory for all new parents and describe what should be included in that course.

FILM STUDY

3   Evaluate the positive and negative effects of family life in one of these films:
  • *My Own Private Idaho* (1991). Director: Gus Van Sant
  • *American Beauty* (1999). Director: Sam Mendes
  • *What's Eating Gilbert Grape* (1993). Director: Lasse Hallström
  • *The Kids Are All Right* (2010). Director: Lisa Cholodenko
  • *August: Osage County* (2013). Director: John Wells
  • *Little Miss Sunshine* (2006). Director: Jonathan Dayton
  • *The Virgin Suicides* (1999). Director: Sofia Coppola
  • *The Squid and the Whale* (2005). Director: Noah Baumbach
  • *The Tree of Life* (2011). Director: Terrence Malick
  • *My Big Fat Greek Wedding* (2002). Director: Joel Zwick.

'Adolescence' as a social construct

Social constructs are a socially created aspect of the social world, and the stage of the lifecycle we refer to as 'adolescence' is a clear example of a social construct. In recent times, the delay between childhood and achieving adult status has continued to expand. Our increasingly specialised society means that young people need to spend longer at school and university than in previous generations, which means they enter the workforce and become financially independent later as well. This has had a number of consequences, such as extended times of dependency on parents and the rise of youth culture, with young people as powerful consumers and marketing phenomena, targeted by music, fashion,

films, cars, and so on. This extension of adolescence has also created a delay in the age of marriage and having children.

Being beyond childhood but yet not considered an adult is a fundamental issue for an adolescent. For many young people, their lack of rights and recognition is a problem; for others, it represents a waiting game; and for others it can be the best and most exciting time of their life. In reality, for most adolescents, their experience is a combination of these factors.

Many songs have been sung, words spoken, books written and films created about this adolescent experience. This period of the life course is an intensely personal one and, although experiences are shared with friends and family, each individual feels and faces up to questions of their own identity in a way unlike at any other time of life.

ADOLESCENCE AND ITS VALIDITY FOR DIFFERENT CULTURES

The Society and Culture syllabus uses quotation marks to identify the term 'adolescence' as having a distinct meaning that is only relevant in Western and modern cultures. The notion of adolescence cannot be considered a cultural universal. That is, not all cultures recognise adolescence as a life stage. We have already learnt that the Maasai conduct rituals that celebrate young people's passage from child to adult: at this time, boys become warriors with significant rights and responsibilities.

Not every culture has this extended time between childhood and adulthood that we call adolescence. This life stage is a social construct that may suit the needs of our culture, but is not appropriate to all ways of life. In our technologically driven, diverse and complex culture, we need extensive training and knowledge to achieve adult status. We have created a culture that expects extended education and qualifications to become an adult. The social-construct process that extends the time it takes for a person to begin earning an income effectively extends this 'not a child, not quite an adult' stage of life.

The term 'teenager' was a creation of the late 1950s when, as a result of the post-Second World War 'baby boom', there were many teen-aged people and they became a significant enough phenomenon to get a category all to themselves. Since that time, this life stage has been established, marketed and celebrated with distinctive waves of music, fashion, slang and attitudes.

ACTIVITY

1 Construct a mind map of the words and ideas that you associate with the experience of being an adolescent. Do any general patterns emerge from these ideas? That is, can they be organised into categories of behaviour?

2 Describe the responsibilities expected of adolescents today.

3 How would you describe the rights given to adolescents today?

4 Select three examples from art or the media – for example, from songs, films or books – that express something significant about the experience of adolescence. Briefly explain what you understand to be the key message being expressed and how this message is significant to understanding this life stage.

Examples of films that deal with adolescent themes include *Rebel Without a Cause*, *Kes*, *If*, *Walkabout*, *Harold and Maude*, *The Last Picture Show*, *American Graffiti*, *Mean Streets*, *The Breakfast Club*, *Stand by Me*, *Almost Famous* and *Boyz in the Hood*.

Theories and the development of the physical and social self

A theorist is a researcher whose work is to explore an idea and allow that idea to be extensively tested. When the research has been examined through sufficient investigation and scrutinised by other researchers and academics, it can be said to have gone beyond the idea and into the realm of theory. Of course, even the most widely accepted theory has a long way to go to become a 'social fact', as the diversity of human experience makes it very difficult to have a theory that is true for all people and all situations. In essence, theories are attempts to understand the world around us and enable us to better understand and make predictions about behaviour. Although they may not give us the 'whole truth', they represent valid attempts to know and understand the world in which we live.

The existence of a wide variety of theorists who deal with the development of the physical and social self indicates that there can really be no single theory that fulfils all we need to know about growing up. But we can acknowledge that the questioning, researching and testing that goes with any theory must add to our understanding. Exploring the range of ideas of various theorists will assist us in coming to terms with the body of public knowledge on adolescent development and will enable us to make individual comparisons to the world of personal experience. A range of the most important theorists are presented below.
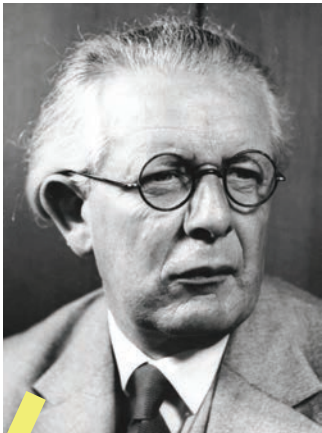
Getty Images/AFP

Figure 2.17 Jean Piaget

JEAN PIAGET (1896–1980)

Piaget was a Swiss psychologist who conducted pioneering research into the development of intelligence in children and adolescents. Piaget's work focused on the workings of the mind. He developed a four-stage model of cognitive development in individuals. These stages are:

1 the sensorimotor stage: typically from birth to two years, when the child is occupied with gaining motor skills and learning about objects

2 the preoperational stage: typically from two to seven years, when the child is attuned to learning words and using symbols. The use of reason is intuitive

3 the concrete operational stage: typically from seven to 11 years, when the child deals with abstract concepts such as numbers and relationships

4 the formal operational stage: typically from 11 years onwards, when the individual begins to think in ideas and ideals and to reason logically.

The relevant stage in the study of adolescence and beyond into adulthood is stage 4, the formal operational stage. Piaget's research demonstrated that by adolescence, a person's mind has developed sufficiently to allow a level of thinking that previously had not been achievable. This level of thinking is characterised by a capacity 'to think about one's thoughts', and as a result, adolescents have the capacity to look more objectively at the world around them, to not only observe, but to make decisions and judgements on what they experience and to consider what they would prefer to experience. For example, the actions of significant others, such as parents, are examined and compared to ideals of behaviour that may have been experienced with other families or friends.

Deferred gratification

Small children live in a very immediate world, the world of 'I want it now!' Their needs generally have to be fulfilled without delay, whether that be the urge for food or the desire to continue with the game they are playing. Small children exist in the here and now and can have difficulty dealing with a delay in what they really want now. However, as children grow older they develop the ability to deal with future events and they will, by adolescence, generally be able to practise what is known as 'deferred gratification'. This is the ability to understand that the benefits that come with something might not come immediately, but they are, in that person's mind, still very real. Working and saving now to have money for a future shopping spree, or sacrificing the opportunity to go out and instead staying home to study for a better examination result some time in the future, are examples of the ability to defer gratification. Such behaviour fits Piaget's model of how, during the development of adolescence, the growth of the cognitive processes are crucial in developing understanding.

Introspection

Introspection is the process of looking inwards to examine your own thoughts and feelings. Adolescents develop this capacity when they can examine their thoughts and at the same time contemplate

Figure 2.18 The me in the mirror …

a complex variety of possible consequences. For example, they can be self-critical of their ability to deal with the consequences of their own actions as well as observing how others are reacting. This capacity to think critically about themselves and about the way they think and behave is a skill that Piaget argued brings about a strong sense of egocentrism, and this preoccupation with themselves is evidence of their ability to:

- achieve adult reasoning
- recognise logical inconsistencies
- anticipate the consequences of particular actions
- comprehend the future.

During this time of development, Piaget observed that adolescents can swing from being withdrawn and uncommunicative to enthusiastic participants in large peer groups and back again. What do such patterns of behaviour reveal about the need for introspection?

For example, when confronting an authority figure such as a teacher or parent, a concrete response would be, 'I think you're wrong', whereas a formal operation response would be, 'I know you're wrong and I can show you why'. Piaget did not believe that all adolescents, or even all adults, reach the formal operation stage. Although Piaget acknowledged that cognitive development played a very important role in the development of personality, he believed that other social influences were also crucial.

1   What is cognitive development?

2   Outline the stages and characteristics of Piaget's theory of cognitive development.

3   Explain 'delayed gratification'. Why do children lack this skill? Provide examples in your life where you have deferred gratification.

4   Explain the term 'introspection'.

5   From your experience of people you know who fit the various stages defined by Piaget, create an image either as a drawing or in words, or both, that represents someone typical of that stage. Briefly explain why each image or statement is an appropriate representation of that stage.

Figure 2.19 Erik Erikson

Figure 2.20 Closeness and a sense of belonging are powerful dynamics in group behaviour.

ERIK ERIKSON (1902–94)

Erik Erikson was born in Frankfurt, Germany. He was an artist and a teacher when he met Anna Freud, the daughter of the renowned psychoanalyst, Sigmund Freud. It is not known whether they fell in love, but she did influence Erikson to begin studying child psychoanalysis. This new direction began a lifetime in research that would lead Erikson to make a major contribution to the understanding of adolescent development and to what is known as the 'identity crisis'. In 1933, Erikson migrated to the USA, where he continued his studies at the universities of Harvard and Yale.

Who am I?

To begin understanding the way Erikson viewed adolescence, we need to appreciate the question, 'Who am I?' Erikson's research revealed growing up to be a time when personal identity is formed through exploration and experimentation. He emphasised that social groups are a powerful factor in determining personal identity.

Erikson saw the clear potential for individuals to develop a positive sense of identity, or a less desirable sense of role confusion, at this time in their lives. He believed that individuals have to choose, from the wide variety of possible options available, which characteristics, desires, aspirations, parts of their life experience, role models and values and beliefs they would like to include in their own lives and, of course, which to reject.

Confusion seems inevitable in the growing-up process, but the resolution of these diverse choices is the primary focus. Any individual is simultaneously many things and is capable of many social roles – for example, a daughter or son, a student, a friend, a worker, a believer or a non-believer, an athlete, a partner … even 'outgoing' or 'introspective'. How can all these possible roles be reconciled? How can one person deal with such a mixed, and at times contradictory, set of options? What happens when people from one group meet people from another group and then start talking about you? Which is the real you? Trying to resolve these issues can cause what Erikson referred to as an identity crisis.

Dealing with crises

In exploring the process of identity formation in adolescence, Erikson defined four distinct reactions that adolescents may experience.

1 Identity foreclosure

This happens when an adolescent avoids a crisis by sidestepping the issue altogether. At a time of crisis, an adolescent may opt to follow the advice of others, such as that of parents, without first thinking about or exploring the possible alternatives themselves.

An example of identity foreclosure in relation to the process of decision making is when students follow their parents' advice as to the appropriate subject choices at school. Parents might say they know best and choose what they think are the most appropriate subjects; the adolescent goes along with their suggestions, without thinking about their own preferences. In this circumstance there is no real consideration of the alternatives, and the opinion of a dominant person is the only result. The real outcome could be a foreclosure on the decision-making process and possibly on the identity of the student. Of course, this is a situation that occurs in many life situations, not only adolescence, but if it comes at an adolescent's crucial identity formation stage, it may have a strong influence.

2 Identity diffusion

This is the situation in which an individual is unable to make a decision because of the meso and macro conditions affecting their life. The problems may be so big and so complex that the person is overwhelmed and cannot successfully consider the options. For example, problems associated with racial discrimination, poverty or lack of educational opportunity would greatly affect anyone's options and may ultimately prevent any appropriate reaction to the crisis.

3 Identity achievement

This is when adolescents successfully manage to resolve the various factors in their lives. Having considered these, they arrive at an assured position that blends these diverse elements. This achievement is probably best realised with a balance of their own abilities and aspirations; with the expectations of parents and family, friends and peer groups; and with broader societal and cultural considerations. Nothing to it really … however, if achievement seems too much to handle, Erikson predicted the next option.

4 Identity moratorium

Like a time-out in sport, a moratorium is a chance to suspend activity and consider the options. It may involve a state of confusion when there is experimentation with a range of roles, values and beliefs.

Erikson referred to this moratorium occurring when adolescents are faced with an overwhelming array of alternatives and delay making a commitment to any in particular. This allows for trying out a variety of roles and characters before making an ongoing commitment to any of them. Typically, this experimentation enables them to make more informed choices from a position of personal experience.

Shutterstock/Shipfactory

Figure 2.21 Taking time out

**Figure 2.22
David Elkind**

Getty Images/Barbara Alper

DAVID ELKIND (1931–)

In 1967, psychologist David Elkind applied Piaget's stages of cognitive development to provide insights into the adolescent stage of life. In an article titled 'Egocentrism in Adolescence', he stated that adolescence is a time of egocentrism, which is a preoccupation with self and physical changes such as facial features, physique, clothing and speech. This preoccupation can also be evident in adolescents' overdeveloped awareness of other people's perceptions of them or in a withdrawal into themselves, limiting their communication with others so as to avoid feedback.

Elkind illustrated this egocentrism in two distinctively adolescent characteristics:

1 The 'imaginary audience' happens in actual or impending social situations where an adolescent anticipates the reactions of other people. These expectations are based on the premise that others are as admiring or as critical of the adolescent as they are themselves and this process continually constructs and reacts to an imaginary audience.

2 The 'personal fable' exaggerates an individual's sense of being special. Elkind links this to diary entries that deeply explore experiences, joys and frustrations but also states that these events have universal importance and significance and heighten a sense of the uniqueness of a person's emotional experiences.

When Elkind published this article, there was no such thing as social media. Do you think that the existence of social media heighten these tendencies in contemporary adolescents? Do adolescents think too much about what will be posted on Instagram when deciding whether to attend a party? Which is more important: the party experience or the post? These aspects of Elkind's theory really focus on a description of the self-admiring and the self-critical qualities of adolescence.

CAROL GILLIGAN (1936–)

Carol Gilligan worked with Erik Erikson and psychologist Lawrence Kohlberg. Her research was inspired by Kohlberg's work on moral development. However, she came to challenge some fundamental assumptions of Kohlberg's research and explored the understanding of morals with a fresh insight. Gilligan's concern was that Kohlberg's research, and his theory of moral development, were developed from data collected exclusively from men. So she conducted new research that aimed to reduce such gender bias.

The key finding of Gilligan's research dealt with the influence gender identity has on moral reasoning. She theorised that men make moral decisions in regard to justice, rights and rules and in contrast, women apply a code that measures care, compassion and interpersonal relationships. Gilligan's aim was not to prove that one gender was better than the other, but she proposed that:

> men and women do emphasize different values in moral reasoning – an abstract conception of justice on the one side, and the principles of compassion and human responsibility on the other.
>
> in H Gleitman, *Psychology*, Norton, NY, 1999.

Gilligan adapted Kohlberg's idea that there are stages of moral development and proposed that:

- the pre-conventional stage, with its focus on individual survival, but embracing moving from selfishness to holding a sense of responsibility for others

- the conventional stage, where self-sacrifice and truth are vital motivators

- the post-conventional stage, where non-violence and not hurting others is vital in people's moral decisions.

Gilligan's research theorised that any moral decisions about what to do and what not to do were shaped by gender. She concluded that women worry about the impact of relationships while men focus on the issue of rules and justice. Is this at the core of gender difference? Can the contrasts between men and women come down to such sharp distinctions? Critics of Gilligan suggested her interviews were too unstructured, and her samples too small, but she did challenge the patriarchy evident in academic research and her work reflected the contemporary context of feminism and challenging traditional gender assumptions.

ROBERT HAVIGHURST (1900–91)

Robert Havighust's theory of human development was that each person goes through six stages in life and that there are developmental tasks associated with each stage. For the adolescent stage (13 to 18 years) the developmental tasks involve acquiring the skills, knowledge and attitudes that enable:

- forming friendships with peers of both sexes
- developing masculinity or femininity
- building emotional independence from parents and other adults
- finding pathways to economic independence and preparing for an occupation
- forming a sense of citizenship and civic behaviour that is socially responsible.

This theory is dependent on engaging with social expectations that are evident in any culture at a particular time. This strong focus on social and cultural context is a model that can build expectations of that age group.

JANE LOEVINGER (1918–2008)

Jane Loevinger's research focused on ego development, the process of personality maturation and evolution that results from the interaction of the inner self (id) and the wider environment, but analysed this through a focus on both moral and cognitive development. Her theory was that there are nine stages in ego development. These stages are the pre-social symbiotic, impulsive, self-protective, conformist, self-aware, conscientious, individualist, autonomous and integrated stages. The stages that are most linked to adolescence are conformist and self-aware.

Loevinger's conformist stage is associated with schooling, the peer group and that very strong sense of belonging to a group. During this stage, the impact of the fear of rejection and disapproval from the group is a significant influence on behaviour. It is a time of exaggerated confidence, trust and loyalty. For example, this could be demonstrated by in an overt commitment to a team in playing sport, mirrored by a sharp competitiveness against those from a different team.

While the subsequent stage, which Loevinger calls the self-aware, is not typically experienced by adolescents, the skills and abilities required to become self aware are part of adolescence. Those who are self aware have the abilitiy to imagine multiple possibilities in various situations and to move beyond the fixed option of the conformist stage. The sense of 'self' begins to flourish, even in the context of changing options and possibilities. Many adults do not develop beyond this stage and do not attain the stages of conscientious, individualist, autonomous and integrated. Ego development is the process that strives to make sense of, master and amalgamate life's diverse experiences.

ACTIVITY

Select two theorists and compare the extent to which their theories assist your understanding of the adolescent experience.

Transitions through the life course

With growth and maturity, people are typically able to accept rights and responsibilities. These are usually accompanied not only by rituals and celebrations, but also by tests and initiations. With adulthood usually come the privileges and responsibilities that distinguish status within any society. Across all cultures, the process of becoming an adult requires familiarity and understanding of the changing rights and responsibilities in the context of the power and authority structures of that culture. There is a lot to know if you want to become a fully accomplished and accepted member of the adult world.

LIFE STAGES

Shutterstock/Majivecka

Figure 2.23 The changing life stages

There are generally accepted stages in the life of a person and in the life of all peoples. In Australia, the stages of the lifecycle are typically identified as shown in the Table 2.02.

Table 2.02

STAGE	AGE
Infancy	0–2 years
Early childhood	2–5 years
Childhood	5–11 years
Adolescence	12–20 years
Young adult	20–30 years
Adulthood	30–50 years
Late adult	50–65 years
Mature age	65+ years

In the context of these stages, puberty typically occurs between the ages of 11 to 14 years, but can occur at any time from 8 to 20 years. A significant issue to consider is the impact of socialisation of individuals who develop physically at a young age and how this affects their relations with their peers at that stage. Is being a 'late bloomer' in relation to puberty likely to shape behaviours and attitudes? Would experiencing puberty at a very young or relatively old age make you stronger and more confident or hesitant and seemingly vulnerable?

Our attitudes to the various stages of life seem to be full of contradictions. Older adults can experience ageism, which can be just as negative as sexism or racism. How aware are we of how we prejudge people at certain life stages? The image of teenagers as rebellious,

inexperienced, aggressive and oversexed can be contrasted with the image of mature-age people being inflexible, isolated and unproductive. Are these images realistic? Are they stereotypes? Does time change our perceptions of ourselves? Consider a married couple in late adulthood: he is always looking to the past by dreaming of a youthful lifestyle that cannot be recaptured; she is wishing for a future where she will hold her grandchildren; and neither is happy with where they are in the present. People grow hair, lose hair, develop wrinkles and maybe mellow with wisdom. But who decides what the appropriate behaviours are for a particular stage of the lifecycle? It appears obvious when people break the code of social expectations, but who determines these norms of behaviour? Do they change and evolve?

ACTIVITY

1   Consider the sayings 'she is mature beyond her years' and 'act your age'. What other sayings can you think of that reflect life stages? Explain whether they are appropriate to age and stage or whether they limit who we can be.

2   Copy and complete Table 2.03 on the life stages.

Table 2.03

LIFE STAGE	AGE	TYPICAL ACTIVITIES	TYPICAL IMAGES	TYPICAL BEHAVIOURS	THEIR ATTITUDE TOWARDS LIFE	YOUR ATTITUDE TOWARDS THEM
Infancy						
Early childhood						
Childhood						
Adolescence						
Young adult						
Adulthood						
Late adult						
Mature age						

CHANGING RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Rights are social inventions that have context in particular social and political situations. Contemporary rights are expressed in ideals of liberty, freedom of thought and movement, holding religious beliefs, and having the right to vote in elections and participate in political processes. These rights are very desirable. Australian citizens expect them and they are why so many immigrants as well as refugees have a strong desire to live in Australia. Do we have responsibilities that link to these rights? Our responsibilities are those abilities and capacities that are enacted with a sense of authority and purpose. At a specific age, you have the right to apply for a driver's licence, but this also requires significant responsibilities, both legal and social.

In our study of the Maasai in Chapter 1, we identified the distinctive rituals that young Maasai undergo to become adults. With those rituals comes recognition from their community that they have new rights and responsibilities. What are the equivalent processes in contemporary Australian culture? Aside from baptisms and bar mitzvahs, weddings and funerals, what are the rituals that adolescents have to go through in Australia today to become adults?

ACTIVITY

1   Rank the following activities in order of significance for young Australian people:
- getting a driver's licence
- first school formal
- doing the HSC
- graduating from high school
- first overseas trip
- turning 18
- turning 21
- first job
- first date.

2   It could be argued that there is no one major ritual that recognises the arrival to adulthood in Australian culture. Your task is to design a new ritual that recognises and acknowledges the arrival of young Australians as adults.

3   Explain the meaning of rights and responsibilities and provide examples of each.

4   How do rights and responsibilities vary at different life stages?

5   Many young people have had to deal with the following retorts:
- But you've got no money!
- Do as you're told!
- Get a job!
- How would you know?
- Do you have any experience?
- Only when you're older.
- What do you want to be?

    What are some appropriate responses to these statements? Do your responses acknowledge authority, challenge it or sit somewhere in between?

Challenges to our rights and responsibilities

Adolescence is often perceived as a time of rebellion and typically this is a rebellion against authority. Whether this is true for all adolescents is debatable, yet in dealing with the world around them, young people of any era are challenged with achieving a role in society and this usually means dealing with authority in some form. However, all too often they are doing this from a position of limited power.

The idea that power exists presumes that in the social world, some people have power over others, and therefore there must be inequality. For someone to have that power, there has presumably been some way of acquiring and maintaining that power. Is this power recognised as legitimate by those involved?

These decisions are an essential task for any social group. The process of determining who does certain work, how decisions are made, who lives where and how resources are distributed is a vital one in the functioning of any society, whether a family, a tribe or a nation. Determining rights and responsibilities through decision-making processes is the essence of politics, both on the meso and the macro scale. All social situations can be interpreted as having a political or decision-making dimension. A challenge for each generation of young people is to find a way to negotiate, contest or accept the power and authority structures in their world.

Mao Zedong, as a revolutionary leader in China, said, 'Political power grows out of the barrel of a gun'. Is this the only way to get something to happen? The person who has the power can certainly use it to influence events, even if by force, but the person who has authority has the right to influence events and does so with legitimacy. So significant decisions can range from, 'Who gets use of the car tonight?' to 'Which political party will I vote for in the elections?' to 'Will Australia go to war?'. The decision-making process is a complex one in which you need to be clear about your social responsibilities when dealing with status, power and authority in our world.

Figure 2.24 A challenge to traditional values

Figure 2.25 Che Guevara was an Argentinian Communist and revolutionary. His image is frequently used to suggest or evoke the idea of revolution and resistance to established authority.

Shutterstock/Roxana Gonzalez

THEORY OF GENERATIONS: KARL MANNHEIM

Sociologist Karl Mannheim pioneered research into how a group of people born over a series of years can share a worldview that is specific to that group. He said that:

> individuals who belong to the same generation are endowed with a common location in the historical dimension of the social process.
>
> A Giddens & P Sutton, *Sociology*, Polity Press, Cambridge, UK, 2013.

National Portrait Gallery

Figure 2.26 Karl Mannheim

We readily identify generations with labels such as Gen X, Gen Y and Baby Boomers and we make many assumptions about those who were born, grew up and formed their values and identity at a certain time in history – the presumption being that we are all strongly shaped by that social and cultural context. Mannheim's theory also identified that these generations exert significant influence on society and are the catalysts for significant social change. Mannheim believed that generations were as significant as social class in shaping society.

Figure 2.27 William Strauss

GENERATIONAL THEORY: STRAUSS–HOWE

In their 1997 book, *The Fourth Turning*, American authors William Strauss and Neil Howe developed the work of Mannheim by theorising that there are four cycles of generational characteristics that emerge and re-emerge through time. They referred to these eras as 'turnings' and predicted that they followed a pattern:

> The first turning is a High period, a positive era which strengthens institutions and a new civic order grows but individualism is weakened.
>
> The second turning is an Awakening period typified by a passionate time of change and upheaval. The former civic order is challenged by new values.
>
> The third turning is an Unraveling period when individualism rises and institutional power declines. With older values in decay, a new values system arises.
>
> The fourth turning is a Crisis, when there is great upheaval and the new values system drives creation of new civic order and institutions.
>
> W Strauss & N Howe, *The Fourth Turning*, Crown, 2009.

Strauss and Howe's generational theory is an interesting model because it enables us to predict the near future and provides a tool for considering the meso-level changes that apply in today's global context. The youth of today can so easily share anything, thanks to information technology – whether you are in Australia, the USA, the UK, Germany or Japan, the shared experience cuts through global, cultural and socio-economic boundaries. Globalisation, facilitated by social media and online technologies, means that the current generation is linked by shared experiences, creating our world's first global generation. How will this shape the future?

Socialisation shapes our identity and the process of becoming an informed member of society represents one of the major challenges of growing up. Knowledge of self and the forces that shape our lives is a complex mix of influences that people in transition from childhood to adulthood are assumed to know and understand. However, in a world that seems obsessed with change, the new knowledge that is needed simply for survival makes much of the knowledge passed on from previous generations seem redundant.

FOCUS STUDY: LOOKING IN/LOOKING OUT: EXPLORING THE PROCESSES OF SOCIALISATION WITHIN THE YOLNGU OF ARNHEM LAND

Cultural heritage

The Yolngu are the Aboriginal people of Arnhem Land in the north-west of the Northern Territory. Their land, culture, language and way of life are a source of inspiration to people all over the world. The Yolngu culture is their land. The Yolngu land is their culture. This comes from more than 40 000 years of connection with the land and a heritage that embraces countless generations.

Corbis/Penny Tweedie

Figure 2.28 Yolngu boys fishing

George Chaloupka, anthropologist and rock art expert, explained the world of the Yolngu:

> The pattern of living set by the ancestors is passed on from generation to generation through binding social relationships in the social structuring of their universe. Aboriginal people divide everything in their world into two categories know as moieties … and it is through these links that the sacred past is drawn into the present.
>
> George Chaloupka, in P Tweedie, *Aboriginal Australians, Spirit of Arnhem Land*, New Holland Publishers, Sydney, 2001.

International relations

The Yolngu had their first sightings of Europeans when Dutch explorers made their 'first contact' with these peoples in the early 1600s. However, this was not the first contact the Yolngu made with people from other lands. For many centuries, the Macassan people, from

the island now known as Sulawesi in Indonesia, had travelled to the land of the Yolngu for trade. The Macassans sought pearls, turtle shell and the trepang, a sea slug that was valued throughout the region as an ingredient for soups. The Yolgnu people traded these items for knives, axes, fishhooks, calico, blankets, steel, alcohol, swords and muskets.

Invasion

Despite a long history of contact with foreigners, the Yolngu had a relatively late engagement with the British colonialists. Arnhem Land is a remote area and was a long way from the first British colonies. It was not until 1885 that pastoralists first arrived in the area and pastoral wars between Europeans and the Yolngu people continued from this time until the Second World War. The memories and stories of these times are still very real to many Yolngu and their sense of connection with their pre-invasion culture is strong. Their stories and songs are passed from one generation to the next and this continuity is a powerful feature of Yolngu culture.

Family

The Yolngu sense of moiety – divisions within a culture – is very complex, but they consider it to be the perfect system to ensure each person knows his or her place in the world and how they can interact with others. The Yolngu world is one of duality, as everything in creation – from the land to the people, the animals, even plants – is divided into two moieties, Dhuwa and Yirritja. Each moiety is then further divided into four skin groups, which in turn are each divided into male and female halves. Therefore, Yolngu people have one of 16 different skin names, which form a vital part of their identity and shape how they interact with other entities, including people. This moiety system is also matrilineal, as skin names are derived from the mother's line.

Each Yolngu person is only allowed to marry someone from two of these skin-name groups and some people from the other skin-name groups must be avoided in all social situations. Individuals from opposing skin groups do not talk to each other and would typically leave when the other arrived at any social setting. When Yolngu are working in a *Balanda* (Yolngu word for 'whitefella') context, these moiety rules can complicate work relationships, but they should be acknowledged as an important part of culture.

The Yolngu understanding of family is also broader than simply one set of biological parents. Each person has multiple mothers and fathers, as uncles and aunts are considered to be parents as well. If the family and moiety systems seem complex, consider the issue of language. Each region has distinct variations of language. For example, in the area of Maningrida in north-west Arnhem Land, where 2500 Aboriginal people live, there are 16 different languages spoken and more than 60 different dialects. Two people can have a conversation in separate languages: one speaks in their language, the other answers in theirs. For many Yolngu, English is their fifth language; they live in one of the most linguistically diverse cultures on Earth.

Power and authority

For the Yolngu, as with other Aboriginal peoples, their elders hold authority. Aboriginal culture is not hierarchical in the same way as many other cultures. There are leaders, but no 'chieftains', kings or presidents. The elders hold knowledge and ensure the lore is followed. Someone does not become an elder merely by becoming 'old enough'. It is a special status that is recognised by their community. Democracy does not sit easily in many traditional communities, as the election of leaders may not follow traditional authority patterns. Yolgnu elder Galarrwuy Yunupingu stated at the 2004 Garma Festival that their leaders are born, not elected.

Yuin elder Djarla Dulumunmun (also known as Uncle Max Harrison) explains that everyone, from world leaders to ordinary people, must:

> " ... step out of ego and into the spirit and listen. One thing is for sure, we all breathe the same air, we all drink the same water. This is a message for everyone and to everyone! "
>
> Uncle Max Harrison/Djarla Dulumunmun, in P McConchie, *Elders*, Cambridge University Press, Melbourne, 2003.

This message conveys a way of thinking that challenges many assumptions about power and authority. For more than 200 years the efforts to communicate between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Australians have been typified by an inability to respect culture and understand that authority means different things to different people.

Celebration of culture: Garma Festival

Yolngu culture is celebrated at the annual Garma Festival, held each year at the Gulkula site in north-west Arnhem Land. Garma celebrates Yolngu dance, music and art, and holds academic forums and discussion groups on contemporary issues. More than 20 Yolngu clans from across the region attend the festival, as well as Aboriginal groups from across Australia, indigenous people from around the world, and many non-indigenous participants. Sharing knowledge and culture and building a model for how various indigenous and non-indigenous peoples can cooperate, learn and work together are features of this event.

> **GARMA FESTIVAL/YOTHU YINDI FOUNDATION**
> Access this website for more information on the annual Garma Festival.

Yolngu culture and life stages portrayed in film

YOLNGU BOY

The strengths and challenges facing Yolngu culture are evident in the 2001 film, *Yolngu Boy*. The film, directed by Stephen Johnson, captures a powerful sense of culture as it follows the lives of three teenagers, including their initiation through the Dhapi rite of passage, their connection with the elders, and following their traditional customs, all in contrast to their experience of Australian law in the context of family conflict and loyalty among friends. The main issue of this film is the dilemma of adolescents in an Aboriginal community. For most Aboriginal teenagers, adolescence represents not only the transition from child to adult, but

Figure 2.29 Young Aboriginal boys painted with their sacred totems for their initiation ceremonies in Arnhem Land, on the set of the movie *Yolngu Boy*

Figure 2.30 The Yolngu people of Arnhem Land have embarked on a long-term plan to create thriving Indigenous-owned tourism.

entrapment between the dominance of Western society and a culture recognised as one of the oldest on the planet. The future is uncertain and the path they tread is fraught with contradiction. *Yolngu Boy* also deals with the concepts of life stages, rights and responsibilities, kinship and authority.

TEN CANOES

Ten Canoes is an award-winning film from 2006 directed by Rolf de Heer that portrays the traditional culture of Arnhem Land. This film presents a story that moves through time but shows hunting, gathering and day-to-day life in the context of the relationships, rituals and status that govern people's lives. The film gives meaningful illustrations of life stages, gender, status and authority, as well as rights and responsibilities.

CHARLIE'S COUNTRY

Charlie's Country shows the struggle that is required to walk in two worlds: the world of the Yolngu and the Balanda. This 2013 film, directed by Rolf de Heer and starring internationally acclaimed Aboriginal Australian actor, David Gulpilil explores the impact of government policies, policing and the real challenges of living in a remote Yolngu community. The film also explores life course, authority, technology and kinship.
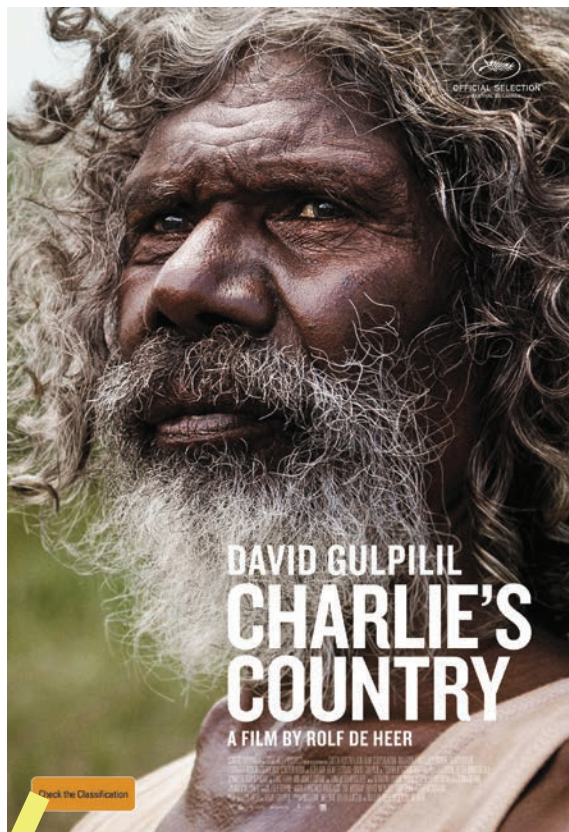
Figure 2.31 David Gulpilil as Charlie

ACTIVITY

Access this website for previews of the films *Yolngu Boy, Ten Canoes* and *Charlie's Country*. Explain how each film portrays aspects of the transitions through the life stages within Yolngu culture and comment on the extent to which interactions with white Australian culture can change Yolngu rights and responsibilities.

REFERENCES

PA Cowan, *Piaget: with Feeling*, Holt, Reinhart and Winston, NY, 1978, p. 289.

C Diaz, 'Birth order and personality: Are you true to type?' in K Leman, *The Birth Order Book: Why You Are the Way You Are*, Revell, MI, 2009.

E Durkheim in I Robertson, *Society: A Brief Introduction*, Worth, NY, 1989, p. 264.

D Elkind, 'Egocentrism in Adolescence', *Child Development*, vol. 38, no. 4., 1967, p. 1030.

GH Mead in I Robertson, *Sociology*, Worth, NY, 1987, p. 123.

A Mitchell et. al., *5th National Survey of Australian Secondary Students and Sexual Health 2013*, (ARCSHS Monograph Series No. 97), Australian Research Centre in Sex, Health and Society, La Trobe University, Melbourne

M Potts & R Short, *Ever Since Adam and Eve: The Evolution of Human Sexuality*, Cambridge University Press, 1999, p. 27.

R Trudgen, *Why Warriors Lie Down and Die*, ARDS, Darwin, 2007

THREE
INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION

The aim of this chapter is to assist you in understanding how people behave within and perceive the world around them. You will gain a deeper understanding of people from different social, cultural and environmental settings while also gaining a better understanding of yourself and those around you through improved communication.

Outcomes

A student:

P1 identifies and applies social and cultural concepts

P3 identifies and describes relationships and interactions within and between social and cultural groups

P4 identifies the features of social and cultural literacy and how it develops

P7 selects, organises and considers information from a variety of sources for usefulness, validity and bias

P8 plans and conducts ethical social and cultural research

P9 uses appropriate course language and concepts suitable for different audiences and contexts.

BOSTES NSW, *Society and Culture Stage 6 Syllabus*, Sydney, 2013.

The key concepts are:

ACCULTURATION ▶ The process of contacts between different cultures and also the outcome of such contacts. Acculturation occurs when members of one cultural group adopt the beliefs and behaviours of another group. It may involve direct social interaction or exposure to other cultures through mass media.

CHANGE ▶ The alteration or modification of cultural elements in a society. Change to society can occur at the micro, meso and macro levels. It can be brought about by modernisation processes, including technological innovation. This force results in an alteration to culture.

CONTINUITY ▶ The persistence or consistent existence of cultural elements in a society across time. Continuity can also be referred to as the maintenance of the traditions and social structures that bring stability to a society.

CULTURAL DIVERSITY ▶ Appears as a society becomes larger and more complex, immigrant groups join the dominant culture, and subcultures form within the society. The more complex the society, the more likely it is that its culture will become internally varied and diverse. Cultural diversity implies a two-way sharing of ideas, customs and values among the various cultural groups that comprise the society.

CULTURAL HERITAGE ▶ The practices, traditions, customs and knowledge that define who we are socially and personally. Cultural heritage is an expression of the values that help us to understand our past, make sense of the present, and express a continuity of culture for the future. Cultural heritage can be analysed at the micro, meso and macro levels in society.

CULTURAL RELATIVISM ▶ The idea that concepts are socially constructed and vary across cultures. Therefore, individuals and groups must always view other cultures objectively and not judge them using the values and norms of their own culture as a measure of right or wrong.

CULTURAL TRANSMISSION ▶ The transmission of culture – such as traditions, values, language, symbols, cultural traits, beliefs and normative behaviour – across and between generations in society.

CUSTOMS ▶ Established ways of acting or cultural practices that are unique to groups in society. Customs have important links to the heritage, values and traditions of people.

STEREOTYPE ▶ The preconceived view of the characteristics of a group held by individuals who are not members of that group. These views are usually negative, generalised and inflexible, and ignore differences that exist between the members of the stereotyped group.

VALUES ▶ Deeply held ideas and beliefs that guide our thinking, language and behaviour. Differences in values exist among groups of people in society and are a part of one's culture. Values can be challenged.

BOSTES NSW, *Society and Culture Stage 6 Syllabus*, Sydney, 2013 (adapted).

WEBLINKS
Weblinks relevant to this chapter can be found at **http://sandc.nelsonnet.com.au**. Just look for the weblink icon.

THE NATURE OF COMMUNICATION

A culture is made up of many varied parts. The parts that we can see and hear make communication between cultures reasonably effective. However, it is the parts we do not see that make communication more difficult; these include social mores, expectations and taboo topics.

When we look at the iceberg of culture, we notice that the most obvious parts of a culture are exposed; these cultural elements are apparent through our macro understanding. When equipped with intercultural understanding and social literacy, we can uncover the elements of a culture that are hidden beneath the surface, giving us a more detailed intercultural knowledge. Our communication skills and techniques must be honed and conducted with cultural sensitivity and empathy.

The world is characterised by an ever-changing availability of communication methods, resulting in communication between people of different cultures and backgrounds on a scale that has not previously existed. Our cultures determine the different ways we communicate.

The mediums we choose to use for transmitting messages vary depending on cultural background, societal norms and traditions.
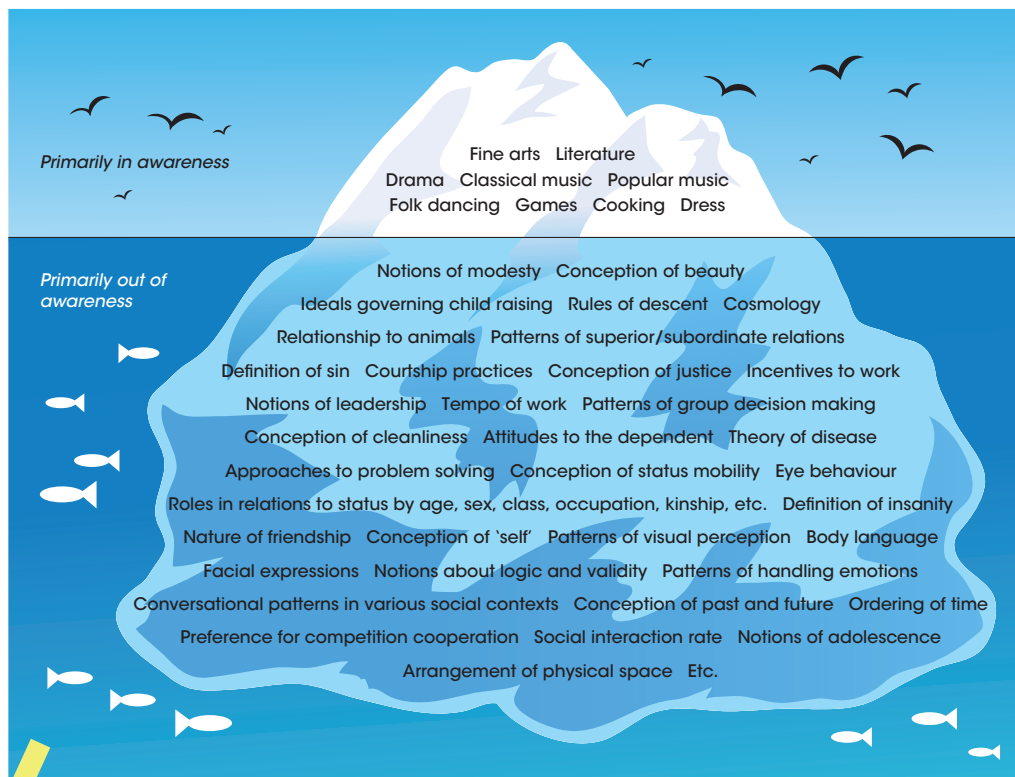
Figure 3.01 The iceberg of culture

HIGH-CONTEXT AND LOW-CONTEXT CULTURES

American anthropologist Edward T Hall's book, *Beyond Culture*, was published in 1976. This influential work explored the ways in which different cultures communicate. Hall's research led him to conclude that a culture's way of communicating could be understood as high context or low context. A high-context culture is relational, intuitive and collectivist, which means that people in a high-context culture value interpersonal relationships. The culture is indirect and formal, where humility, sophisticated language and elaborate apologies are the norm. Words are not as important; during a conversation, the sender and receiver develop

trust through gestures, silences and posture. (The Middle East, Asia, Africa and South America are typically considered to be high-context cultures.)

A low-context culture tends to be logical, individualistic and action oriented. People from low-context cultures value directness and facts. Problem solving is an evaluation of the facts one step at a time. A discussion ends in action and the decisions are based on facts rather than intuition. Communicators are expected to be succinct, concise and straightforward, outlining the expected action to be taken. Members of society strive to use precise words and expect they will be taken literally. (North America, Australia, New Zealand and much of Europe are considered to be low-context cultures.)
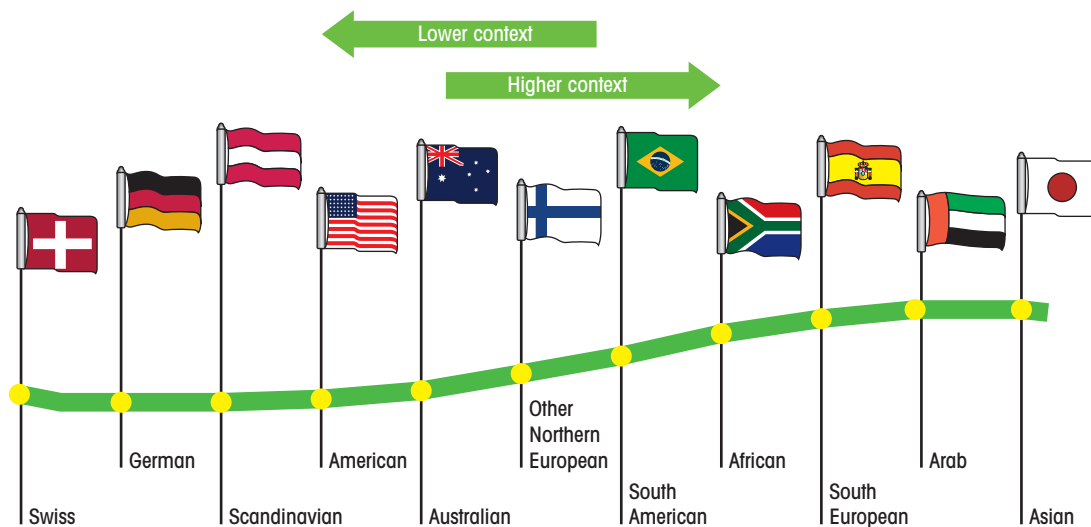
ACTIVITY

1   Research high-context and low-context cultures. Compare and contrast the different ways and challenges of communicating in high and low context cultures.

The process of communication

Information requires interpretation for meaning and if the purpose of communication is to get a message across clearly without ambiguity or misinterpretation, the interpretation needs to be correct and without interference. Messages can be misinterpreted and misconstrued as a result of various interferences, causing frustration and resulting in wasted opportunities.

All forms of communication start with a sender, who generates the message within their own cultural context. This communication is influenced by the person's own experience, cultural background and intentions. On occasion within the communication process, there may be forms of interference such as background noise or language barriers; mispronunciation of words, body language and gestures; misspelt words within written communication; or cultural differences. Communication can be broadly put into two categories: verbal and non-verbal communication.

> The average adult … utters approximately 16 000 words a day …
>
> Of course, most of day-to-day human verbal exchange is concrete, interpersonal and routine rather than an exchange of observations about the public and the political.
>
> WR Neuman, *The Structure of Communication: Continuity and Change in the Digital Age*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 2013.

HALL'S ENCODING/DECODING THEORY

Cultural studies scholar Stuart Hall developed the encode/decode theory of communication in 1973. His model of communication was based around television broadcasting and mass-media consumption. Hall states that the media has an interest in the production, circulation, consumption and reproduction of information rather than the message itself. Therefore, there is a complex structure of dominance by the sender in this model. Hall remarks on the media's (the sender) cultural dominance and the receiver's own strategies, such as reading to understand what is being communicated. Each point in the process is referred to as a 'moment'. The basis of Hall's theory is that the audiences are presented with messages that they decode or interpret in a certain way, depending on their cultural background, personal experiences or socioeconomic status. Hall believes the interpretation is reliant on the social context in which it is received.
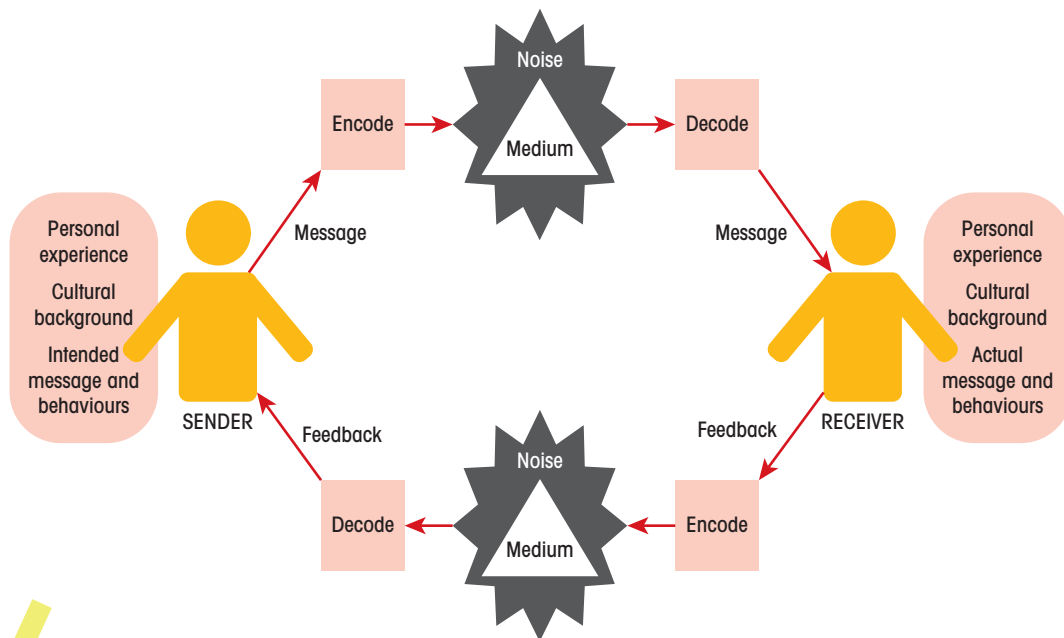
Figure 3.02 The communication process

ACTIVITY

1 Define the word 'communication'.

2 Why do people communicate?

3 What are some of the different ways people communicate?

4 a Describe the tools people use to communicate.
   b Categorise these communication tools based on similarities. For example: Are they face-to-face forms of communication? Are they media based? Are they written? Create a table to categorise and group the similar tools together.

5 List various types of interference someone might face when communicating.

6 Reflect on your family. How do you communicate? Which forms of communication are most successful in your household?

7 Reflect on yourself. Which forms of communication are most successful for you at school?

Verbal communication

Verbal communication is simply the noise we make with our voice when communicating. Examples include talking, singing, laughing and crying. We express ourselves through verbal mediums using our voice. Non-verbal forms of communication include writing, body language, gestures and signals. These can accompany verbal communication or be used on their own.

Your voice is a powerful tool. It indicates to others how you are feeling. Your voice tells listeners other things too – for example, your age may be detected from the vocabulary you use and the inflections in your tone. An accent can reveal your location, background and/or ethnicity and your tone can indicate your mood. These points of difference in our voice help to encode and decode a message. (We rely on individual nuances to give more details about the sender than we get from the direct message.)

Verbal communication is effective when the sender and receiver are calm and focused. Basic manners and etiquette also aid effective communication, but the most important factor in verbal communication is clarity of speech. A lack of clarity may result in a misinterpreted message.

WHAT DO YOU MEAN?

Sean Hall gives the following example in his book, *This Means This, This Means That: A User's Guide to Semiotics*, of how tone, pauses, inflections, accents and differences in general pronunciation can change the meaning and interpretation between sender and receiver.

Suppose a grandfather says to his granddaughter:

> I didn't eat Grandma's chocolate cake.
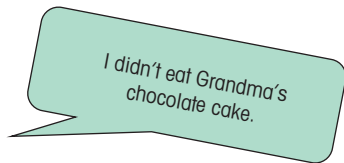
How would you interpret this statement? Say the sentence out loud, placing emphasis on different words each time. Does different emphasis change the meaning?

Could different people interpret the sentence in different ways? For example:

- *Cooper ate Grandma's chocolate cake*
- *I dropped Grandma's chocolate cake*
- *I ate Kelly's chocolate cake*
- *I ate Grandma's fruit cake*
- *I ate Grandma's chocolate biscuit*

ACTIVITY

1 List five types of verbal communication.
2 Give three examples of how culture and/or environment may affect verbal communication (for example, talking loudly on a train).
3 Write down an example of when you have had a message incorrectly interpreted. Indicate what the interference may have been.
4 Identify some elements of cultural diversity that might arise when you communicate with someone who speaks another language.

CHECK THE LYRICS

An example of interference can be misunderstanding lyrics in a song: where you hear the word but because of background noise, accent, music overlaid or any number of other factors, the message is not interpreted correctly.

KISS THIS GUY
Table 3.01 contains a list of misheard song lyrics from the online archive, 'Kiss This Guy'. Access this weblink to see the full list.

Table 3.01

ARTIST AND SONG	MISHEARD LYRICS	ACTUAL LYRICS
Sir Mix-A-Lot: 'Baby got back'	I like big butts in a can of limes	I like big butts and I cannot lie
Abba: 'Dancing queen'	See that girl, watch her scream, kicking the dancing queen	See that girl, watch that scene, digging the dancing queen
Madonna: 'Like a virgin'	Like a virgin touched for the thirty-first time	Like a virgin touched for the very first time
Bee Gees: 'More than a woman'	Bald-headed woman ... bald-headed woman to me	More than a woman ... more than a woman to me
Fifth Dimension: 'Aquarius'	This is the dawning of the Age of Asparagus, age of Asparagus	This is the dawning of the age of Aquarius, age of Aquarius

ACTIVITY

1   Think of some current songs that you listen to. What might be a form of interference that stops the receiver hearing the words and message correctly? Write down some examples of songs that have interference.

The power of the voice in communication

Reporter: Edmond Roy

MARK COLVIN: Finally tonight, as more and more business gets done over the phone, especially through call centres, the demand for voice training has hit an all-time high.

Why is it that certain voices are perceived as better than others and how do we form an impression of someone without ever seeing them? Scientists are spending more time trying to find out how and why we react to voices the way we do.

Edmond Roy reports on the importance of having a good voice.

EDMOND ROY: What is it that distinguishes a good radio announcer from a great one? A good phone sales person from an average one? And why is it that we find the French accent more alluring than, say, an Indian one?

It seems we don't really know. All we know is that we like and trust some voices while others, well, they just don't sound right.

Scientists are discovering more and more about how the human voice affects others and how the speaker is perceived by the listener. In this day of tele-marketing, voice prompts and voice recognition, the need to speak effectively cannot be over-emphasised.

Professor Jenni Oates is at the School of Communications Science at Melbourne's Latrobe University.

JENNI OATES: All we know is from quite a lot of research, mostly conducted in the 80s rather than more recently, that there is a direct connection between how you sound and how your personality is perceived but how that comes about we have absolutely no information at this stage. I have to say there that it's not only how your voice sounds, so it's not just how high or low or breathy or tense or strained it is, but it's also how variable your speech is.

So if you have a monotonous flat voice, people make judgements about your personality on the basis of that. People also make judgements about you on the basis of a lot of non-verbal characteristics like your gesture and your facial expression and so on.

It's a very messy area and it's very difficult to tease out exactly why these personality associations come about. So I can't give you a straight answer to that one.

EDMOND ROY: Is there a bottom line? Is there something you can say to a person – well, you have to sound this way if you stand a chance in an interview?

JENNI OATES: No there isn't because there are so many variables involved here. Firstly you have to remember there are huge cultural differences in what is perceived to be a good voice or speaking style and because of the huge cultural mix we have and the lack of knowledge about the differences between cultures in terms of what voice characteristics are perceived positively and negative, that is very difficult to say.

EDMOND ROY: Well from having listened to me what do you think?

JENNI OATES: I thought you might ask me something like that. I'd employ you, Edwid.

EDMOND ROY: Well, there you have it. I'll take the Professor's word for it, even if she got my name wrong. But that clearly was my fault. People have said they have trouble with my accent.

MARK COLVIN: Edmond Roy. Who could have said that?

'The power of the voice in communication', transcript from *PM*, ABC Radio, 23 May 2001, © Australian Broadcasting Corporation 2015

ACTIVITY

1 In your opinion, what distinguishes a good voice from an 'average' one?
2 What issues affecting communication could arise when someone speaks in a monotone voice?
3 Voice coaching is a lucrative business. Why would companies provide voice coaching for their employees?
4 Research Albert Mehrabian's '7%, 38%, 55%' communications model. Write a paragraph summary of his theory.

Non-verbal communication

Non-verbal communication is communication that requires the interpretation of body language, gestures and eye contact. These signs and signals make up approximately 75 per cent of our daily communication interactions.

Body language is the conscious and unconscious movements that communicate attitudes, feelings and emotions. Our facial expressions and body movements can give the receiver a clear message without any verbal context.

Body language has a clear cultural context and varies broadly between cultures. What is appropriate and acceptable in one culture can often be inappropriate in another. For example, during a business negotiation between an Arab man and an English man, the Arab man will move forward and stand close to the English man (to show the friendly and warm nature of the negotiations) while the English man will move back because his personal space has been invaded. The Arab man will then move forward to be closer; the English man will keep moving backwards. And it becomes a cycle. At the end of the negotiation, the two may be quite a distance away from negotiating a mutually satisfactory result – they will also be quite a distance away from the place where they were originally standing! In this scenario, according to authors Hui Zhou and Tingqin Zhang, the sending and receiving of a message faced interference from the body language.

Non-verbal communication is not only used in our social interactions. Many professions require the use of non-verbal communication to get a message across obviously or subtly. Some examples are shown in Figures 3.03 to 3.08.
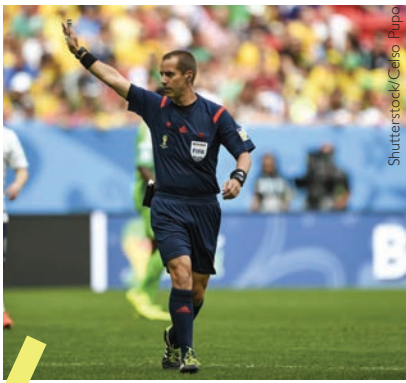

Figure 3.03 Sports referees communicate with players with a variety of non-verbal signals

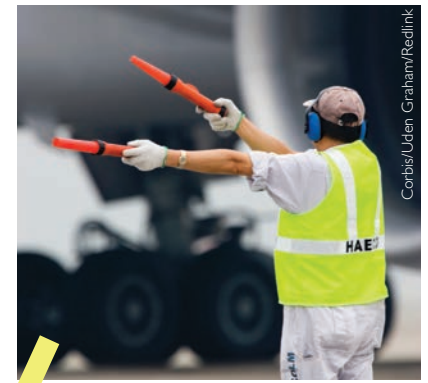**Figure 3.04 Morse code is a way to communicate non-verbally over a long distance.**

Figure 3.05 Aircraft marshallers use visual signals to communicate with pilots and other ground crew

Figure 3.06 Wearing a uniform is a form of non-verbal communication.

Figure 3.07 Wearing an official uniform indicates rank.

Figure 3.08 Motorsport marshalls use flags to communicate with drivers

THE CORNIA SIGN

Figure 3.09 The cornia sign can be interpreted in various ways, depending on cultural background.

This image conveys the message of 'rock on' in the USA, Australia and the UK (made popular by Ronnie James Dio during his time with the band Black Sabbath). However, in many other countries and cultures around the world, it takes on other meanings.

According to a author Roger E Axtell:

- The cornia sign indicates bull horns and in France is considered a childish prank, much like poking out your tongue. In Italian and Mediterranean cultures, the bull horns sign is used to ward off spiritual demons.
- In Colombia, Spain and Portugal, this sign means that your wife is unfaithful and is a deep insult to a man. It's also known as a cuckold.
- In Venezuela, making horns with your fingers is a sign of good luck!

Figure 3.10 Italian Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi was photographed giving the cornia sign behind the head of Spanish Foreign Minister Josep Piqué at a European Union summit official photo opportunity. When asked what he was doing, Berlusconi said, 'I was only joking'.

ACTIVITY

1 List five types of non-verbal communication
2 Why is it important to be aware of your body language and gestures?
3 Outline the role that stereotypes play in nonverbal communication.
4 a Analyse the image below. Do you agree or disagree with the annotations?

It's what you don't say that counts

insecure?
hostile attitude?
aggressive?
closed mind?
hiding something, but what?
menacing?
lying?
not open to communicating?
interested?
defensive?
thinks you're stupid?
impatient to leave?

Figure 3.11 Nonverbal communication

b Conduct observations in the playground or other appropriate settings. Record the body language and gestures you see and what they communicate. If permission is granted, take a photo and annotate it.

5 Research body language in Australia and in another country of your choice. What do the gestures in Table 3.02 mean?

Table 3.02

GESTURE	MEANING IN AUSTRALIA	MEANING IN _____
Nodding your head up and down		
Shaking your head side to side		
Pointing		
Burping after eating		
Standing with your hands on your hips		
Tapping your foot		
Holding hands with someone of the opposite sex		
Holding hands with someone of the same sex		
Turning your thumb down		
Shaking hands		

EXTENSION

6 Go to a public place such as a restaurant, café or shopping centre where you can observe two people having a conversation. You should be close enough to observe their eye contact, facial expressions and gestures, but not close enough to hear their conversation. Observe the interaction with the goal of answering the following questions.
  a What is their relationship?
  b What seems to be the nature of the conversation (general chit chat, making plans, problem solving, an argument or an intimate discussion)?
  c In your opinion, how does each person feel about the conversation?
  d Do feelings change over the course of the conversation?
  e Is one person more dominant? Take note of the specific non-verbal behaviours that led you to each conclusion.

  Write a summary of your answers describing the experience and what you have learnt.

PROXEMICS

The theory of proxemics was founded in 1966 by Edward T Hall, an anthropologist and cross-cultural researcher who studied the way people behave and act through culturally defined personal space. (Hall's later research into high- and low-context cultures was discussed on page 77–78)

The theory suggested that in Western society, physical distance depends on the relationship between those communicating and the nature of the social situation.

Hall's work can be broken down into two areas:

- personal space: the immediate space surrounding a person
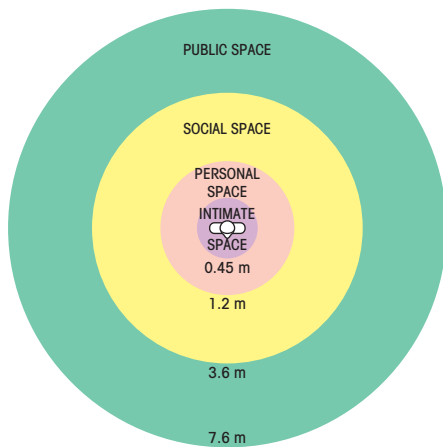- territory: the space a person 'claims' to stop others from invading.

Figure 3.12 The nature of personal space

Personal space is the region surrounding a person that they regard as their own. Most people value their personal space and feel frustrated, anxious and uncomfortable when their space is invaded. Permitting a person to enter your personal space and entering somebody else's space is an indicator of the relationship between the people communicating. In crowded environments – for example, in a lift or on public transport – it is difficult to maintain personal space; therefore people compensate for the lack of personal space by avoiding eye contact.

Hall's research on proxemics indicated that each person has various 'zones'.

Table 3.03

ZONE OF INTERPERSONAL INTERACTION	APPROXIMATE DISTANCE	EXAMPLES
Intimate distance	0 cm–45 cm	Sexual intercourse, nursing an infant
Casual-personal distance	45 cm–1.2 m	Conversation with a friend
Social-consultative distance	1.2 m–3.6 m	Conversation with a stranger, business meeting
Public distance	3.6 m–7.6 m	Giving a speech or lecture to a group of people

Edward Hall, *The Hidden Dimension*, 1966

Hall's research revealed that approximate distances vary with different personality types. An extravert, for example, may have smaller tolerances within their distances than an introvert, who may prefer to extend the distance parameters. People from urban areas are more familiar with squeezing closer together into small spaces, whereas rural people may prefer larger, open areas.

These distances vary greatly, depending on nationality, as you can see by the variation in these casual-personal distances for various regions:

- North America: 45 centimetres
- Western Europe: 35–40 centimetres
- Japan: 92 centimetres
- Middle East: 20–30 centimetres.

For a private conversation, the distance needs to be close and sustained, otherwise the distance can cause the sender to feel as though the receiver is stand-offish or uninterested (this could be insulting for some cultures).

Just as horizontal distances send specific communication messages, so do vertical distances. A person above you can be seen as dominant and powerful. Similarly, a person beneath you can appear submissive. Looking up or down at a person can be taken literally in many cases, where the higher person is asserting greater status.

ACTIVITY

SEATS ON A TRAIN

1 Consider each of the diagrams below as a row of seats on a train. There are four different scenarios. Indicate where you would sit with a cross (X), given some seats are already taken (the brown shaded seats are taken).

Scenario 1: Empty row

Window				Aisle				Window
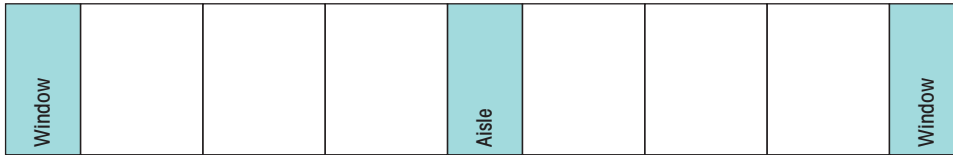
Scenario 2: One seat filled by a stranger

Window				Aisle			▓	Window
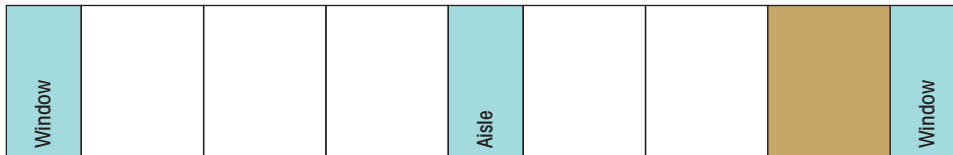
Scenario 3: Two seats filled by strangers

Window	▓			Aisle			▓	Window
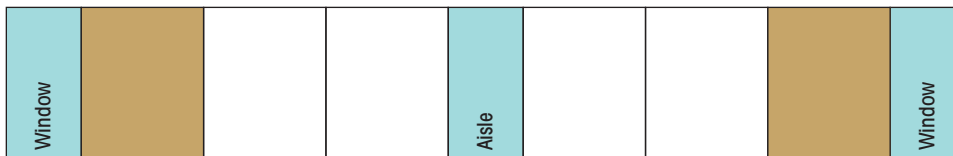
Scenario 4: Three seats filled by strangers

Window	▓			Aisle	▓		▓	Window
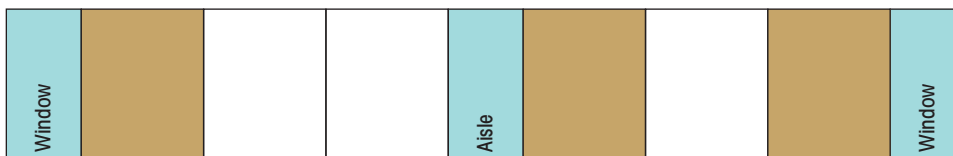
a Compare your results with those of other students.
b Discuss some reasons for the choices you made.

GROUP WORK

Teacher notes for activity 2 on page 88:

The aim of this activity is to find out at what point a person moves from feeling comfortable to uncomfortable within a confined space – how well they know their personal proxemics zones. This is then related to real-life scenarios where students can analyse body language and verbal/non-verbal forms of communication.

The group size can vary depending on class size. Break the class up and find a group of students who do not normally socialise with each other to simulate a real-life situation. You would ideally try to fit 10 people in the large 3-metre x 3-metre lift space; then, as the lift gets smaller (2 x 2), you will find the tolerance level of the group changes too.

Replay the activity with different group dynamics, all girls or all boys, or close-knit friendship groups; you should find that the personal space tolerance is far closer than that of strangers.

After each experiment, students can debrief by answering the questions individually and then as a group.

2 Create some space in the classroom and use the desks or use masking tape on the floor to make a 3-metre × 3-metre lift. Leave a gap as an opening for the lift.

Taking turns, act out entering the lift and pressing the button to the floor you wish to go to. All students must enter at different times and, one by one until the lift is full or becomes uncomfortable, as if it were a real-life situation.

The activity is designed to test your personal space boundaries.

a What did you notice?

b How many people fitted into the lift?

Now replay the experiment with a smaller lift size (for example, 2 metres × 2 metres) and mix up the members of the groups.

e How many people fitted into the lift?

f Did anyone rush to get out? If so, why?

g How did the different friendship dynamics play a part in the experiment?

3 Research and write a review of Edward T Hall's proxemics theory. Does his theory apply to you? Did you need more or less space in each zone?
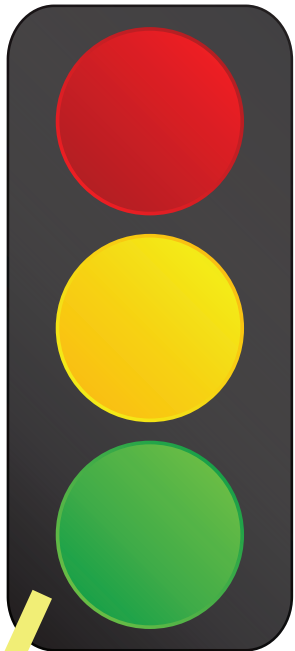
Shutterstock/DaGaAl

Figure 3.13 Semiotics is about understanding the meaning behind symbols. For example, the colours on a traffic light mean stop, prepare to stop and go. This is something that has been established by cultural norms over a long period of time.

SEMIOTICS IN COMMUNICATION

Semiotics is the study of the meaning behind signs and symbols and how signs and symbols and convey that meaning to the receiver. Semiotics began as an academic investigation of the meaning of words (linguistics); it developed into examining people's behaviour (anthropology and psychology); and then evolved to become an enquiry into culture and society (sociology and philosophy). Semiotics has been used to analyse cultural products such as films, literature and art. More recently, it has become a methodology for researching and analysing consumer behaviour and brand communications for large corporations. As we will see, semiotics is essential to understanding non-verbal communication.

Our automatic thoughts and actions are often the result of our cultural norms and values, which are governed by a complex set of cultural guidelines.

For example, when we see the different colours of a traffic light, we automatically know how to react to them without even thinking about it. But this sign has been established by cultural norms over a long period of time. We learn about it as children, but it requires a great deal of unconscious cultural knowledge to understand its meaning. Seeing and interpreting (or decoding) this sign enables us to navigate the landscape of our streets and society.

Here are some examples of cultural symbols and what they communicate:

SYMBOL	MESSAGE
Brass coils used by Padaung women to lengthen the distance between their collarbones and skull.	An extra-long neck is seen as a sign of great wealth and beauty.
Wedding bands and diamond engagement rings in Western cultures.	This is often a sign of wealth and status. The larger the diamond, the more expensive the ring and therefore the higher the socioeconomic status.
Family crests or tartans in Scotland and Ireland	Family crests and tartans are used to identify members of a specific family lineage.

THE POWER OF SEMIOTICS

Semiotics has been widely used as a way of understanding the messages behind communication, specifically non-verbal communication. However, it has become a way for marketing agencies to appeal to their customers.

Take this image, for example:

Figure 3.14 An advertisement for Old Spice men's aftershave

1 Look at Figure 3.14.
   a What is the advertiser really trying to say? What message do you receive from the image?
   b Look at the size of the product in relation to the image. Is it proportioned correctly? Why or why not?
   c What are the hidden messages being communicated behind this advertisement?
2 What do the following symbols represent? Redraw Table 3.04 and fill in the gaps. Some examples have been done for you.

Table 3.04

SYMBOL	MEANING
Sydney Opera House	Australian cultural icon
A throne	
A ring	
Fireworks	

SYMBOL	MEANING
The White House	USA, President, power, globalisation
A Christian cross	
A pair of thongs	
A flag	

What's the point?

The gesture of pointing is a culturally relevant and useful sign. However, it has several meanings or interpretations depending on how it is used.

What do you think President Obama is thinking and/or saying while he is pointing in these images?

Should people be more culturally sensitive when pointing?

Figure 3.15 What meaning can be attributed to President Obama's finger pointing?

The role of communication in maintaining social relationships and social control

Social control refers to the ways in which people's behaviours are regulated in a particular social system. This is also known as the regulation and enforcement of norms through political and social mechanisms. Institutions attempt to regulate social behaviour in an effort to gain conformity on an individual or group level.

Why conformity? Because it is easier and more cost effective to govern people when there is large-scale compliance to established rules.

The purpose of social control is to maintain social order, an arrangement of practices and behaviours on which society's members base their daily lives. Individuals, groups and institutions communicate both verbally and non-verbally and employ formal and non-formal penalties or punishments to maintain social relationships and social control.

FORMAL AND INFORMAL CONTROLS

Formal controls tend to be those enforced by the state, usually through the creation of laws. Examples include: the police issuing fines for speeding, new legislation created by the government to raise the drinking age and imprisonment for convicted murderers.

Informal social control mechanisms can be less obvious and are based on shame, ridicule, exclusion and disapproval. Informal social controls also include peer pressure and community pressure to conform to societal norms, customs and values.

The community rewards or disapproves of particular behaviours. Disapproving looks, snickering or shaming those who fail to conform are daily occurrences

ACTIVITY

Table 3.05 highlights various examples of control mechanisms in our micro, meso and macro worlds.

Table 3.05

MICRO	MESO	MACRO
▲ Disapproving looks, e.g., at people wearing inappropriate clothing for the situation, being too loud, having a screaming child in the supermarket ▲ Reinforcing good behaviour and promoting positive social relationships with smiles or comments from others, e.g. helping an old person across the road, returning a dropped item to the owner ▲ Internalisation (taking on board) of norms and values through socialisation ▲ Some peer groups ridicule other kids the same age if they are a bit 'different'	▲ A promotion at work to reward hard work and as an example to others of how to conduct themselves and perform ▲ Some community groups and clubs use shame to influence a person's behaviour and promote conformity to their norms ▲ Sarcasm and criticism ▲ Females using social discrimination and exclusion towards other females as a way of maintaining their own relationships with others who are closer	▲ Serious formal sanctions enforced by government to prevent chaos and promote regulation of society ▲ Punishments for violating norms, e.g. being arrested for shoplifting ▲ Rulers and leaders have used torture, murder, imprisonment and exile to pursue their own ideals of social control, e.g. imprisonment of Pussy Riot in Russia; Greenpeace activists ▲ Spatial constraint of people who operate outside the expected norms, e.g. detainment and trespass laws

Table 3.05 *Continued*

MICRO	MESO	MACRO
▲ Verbal reprimands from parents ▲ Traditional societies rely on informal controls. Cultural customs are embedded in their culture	▲ A written letter of warning to an employee for underperforming ▲ Expulsion from school for violating the code of conduct ▲ Video and audio surveillance to track people's words and actions	▲ In their article about ethnic media in the USA, Professor K Viswanath and Pamela Aurora write that the media often defines what is acceptable and not acceptable within the dominant norms and values of a given society

1   Indicate which examples of control mechanisms given in the table are verbal and which are non-verbal.
2   Determine whether the examples in the table are formal or informal controls.
3   Which have more influence in social control: formal or informal sanctions? Why?

EXTENSION

4   Hold a class discussion on the topic: Do belief systems exert greater control over human behaviours than laws imposed by governments?'

SOCIAL CONTROL IN CUBA

In 1956, Fidel Castro and Che Guevara landed in Cuba with a small group of insurgents, and began a guerrilla war against the Cuban Government, which became known as the '26th of July Movement'. In December 1958, Castro launched a full-scale attack and President Fulgencio Batista was forced to flee. In February 1959, Castro was sworn in as prime minister of Cuba and announced the introduction of a Marxist-Leninist program adapted to local requirements. Thousands of Cubans went into exile, mostly to the USA.

The Cuban government was quite successful in social control.

It represented the absolute truth and authority, it monopolised education and means of coercion, it promoted a politicised social life. Post 1989 economic crisis … Cuba minimised the number of people who participate in political protests, the number and variety of places in the society where these overt political acts occur, and the institutions of civil society that would provide support for political alternatives … through making it difficult for members of dissident groups to communicate.

Cuba succeeded in limiting communication about cultural heritage – people didn't really know about alternative ideologies, historical experiences, beliefs, values and myths of the nation.

Figure 3.16 This photo was taken in Havana and it is assumed to be graffiti or street art. The translation is 'All for the revolution', indicating how members of society support the Cuban Communist Party.

Its government has been in uninterrupted power for more than 40 years, long enough to create institutions, collective memories, and 'facts' or explanations of how the world operates, as part of a more or less cogent national cultural policy. It has total command of formal education and the mass media on the island and a near-monopoly on the information and interpretations Cubans use to make

It operated formal and informal systems of control that simultaneously emphasised rigidity (restraint) and openness (freedom).

Formal controls derived from the action of institutions, law, powerful organizations and associations, along with explicitly designed planning, programs, and professional staff acting to maintain political stability.

Informal control stresses internalization and the production of politically non-deviant social actors as outcomes of custom, socialization into the dominant ideology and acceptance of prevailing institutional arrangements, gossip and other forms of group censure, and the creation of consumption needs through advertising.

E.g. social control: Public transport – cost rose but access decreased … so that on average, people travelled less and lived in smaller physical areas. This reduction, in turn, increased the ability of government agents to survey them. BUT it increased people's interdependence with members of their intimate circles, friends, neighbours, and family members residing nearby.

E.g. maintaining relationships: *Chiste* – joke telling – is an anonymous expression of political dissent but also became a humoristic device through which people learned to trust each other.

Benigno Aguirre, 'Social Control in Cuba', *Latin American Politics and Society*, vol. 44, no. 2, John Wiley & Sons, Summer 2002, pp. 67–98.

CUBAN LIFESTYLES

From Cuba with Love is an SBS documentary from 2007. Although this is an older resource, it has relevant opinions, perceptions and values about Cuban lifestyles.

Watch the documentary *Buena Vista Social Club* (1999). It focuses on Cuban music and shows the music group going on a trip to the USA to play a show.

ACTIVITY

1 Read the extract above and make a list of positive aspects, negative aspects and questions that might arise relating to the situation in Cuba.

POSITIVE ASPECTS	NEGATIVE ASPECTS	QUESTIONS

2 Conduct some further research on Cuba.
   a Create a timeline of events of the Cuban Revolution.
   b Describe examples that indicate Cuba is a country with strict social-control measures.
   c In 2014, Cuba and the USA began discussions about repairing their relationship and lifting the trade embargo. Write a summary of these events and indicate what is planned for the future.

3 Watch the ABC's *7.30* program titled 'Post-Fidel Cuba makes undreamed of changes', broadcast on 30 January 2014.

Answer these questions about the changes occurring in Cuba.

a What is an entrepreneur?

b Why is this a new idea for Cubans?

c How could this relaxed market affect the culture of Cuba, and more specifically, Havana?

Rights and responsibilities in relation to communication, communication technologies and citizenship

> Communication rights are those rights that enable all people everywhere to express themselves individually and collectively by all means of communication in order to improve their lives. Communication rights are vital to full participation in society and are, therefore, universal human rights belonging to every man, woman, and child. Communication rights encompass freedom of expression, freedom to seek, receive, and impart information and knowledge. But they add to these freedoms, both for individuals and communities, the concepts of accessibility, participation, and cultural diversity. Communication rights include democratization of the media, protection of traditional means of communication, linguistic rights, and the right to enjoy the fruits of human creativity. These are questions of inclusion and exclusion, mutual respect, and human dignity.
>
> Centre for Communication Rights, http://centreforcommunicationrights.org/

Rights and responsibilities

FOR EVERY RIGHT GAINED THERE ARE CERTAIN RESPONSIBILITIES

Communication represents an essential human need and a basic right. The ability to communicate, or the general right of communication, makes it possible to exchange ideas, opinions, thoughts and meanings. That is, enabling people to express themselves results in the existence and prosperity of community groups and other institutions.

Consequently, communication enables people to be who and what they want to be and it strengthens human dignity. People feel equal when they have the right to communicate and express personal thoughts; in other words, communication validates human equality. Therefore, the protection of communication rights represents an essential part of the general topic of human rights.

Jean d'Arcy (a pioneer of French and European television in the 1950s) recognised that the freedom of expression and communication rights listed in the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights UDHR (1949) would need to be re-examined to reflect the changing nature of contemporary society. In 1969 d'Arcy was the first to identify communication as a universal human right. This thought was taken up by academics and policy experts who formulated groups and societies such as the 'right to communicate' group. The movement gained traction and the Communication Rights in the Information Society (CRIS) campaign began.

Seán Ó Siochrú wrote a paper, 'Assessing Communication Rights: A Handbook', for the CRIS Campaign in 2005, outlining the four pillars of communication rights:

1   Communicating on the public sphere: the role of communication and media in exercising democratic political participation in society

2   Communication knowledge: the terms and means by which knowledge generated by society is communicated, or blocked, for use by different groups

3   Civil rights in communication: the exercise of civil rights relating to the processes of communication in society

4   Cultural rights in communication: the communication of diverse cultures, cultural forms and identities at the individual and social levels.

Each pillar refers to a different social setting and it is important that they remain autonomous so that they cover a broad area of key functions, giving everyone the right to communicate on different levels (that is, if they were narrow in focus, they would exclude some members of society and therefore alienate people from communicating).

ACTIVITY

1   How do the ideas 'the right to communicate' and 'communication rights' differ?

2   Make a list of communication and citizenship rights by copying and completing Table 3.06. Consider your responsibilities relating to your list of rights. An example has been completed for you.

Table 3.06

RIGHTS	EXPLANATION OF RIGHTS	ASSOCIATED RESPONSIBILITIES
Access	*People should have fair and equitable access to local and global resources and facilities for effective communication to take place.*	*To ensure the access to these facilities is legal and that the use the services is done in a fair and equitable manner.*
Privacy		
Independence		
Literacy		
Right of reply		
Justice		
Consumption		
Respect		
Freedom		

3   Access the websites for the following and do some research on each project/campaign.
   • Centre for Communication, CRIS Campaign manual
   • Communication Rights Australia, 'Inquiry into social inclusion for people with disability', February 2014
   • International Communication Project 2014.
   Present your findings in a three-minute talk to the class.

IMPACT OF COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGIES

Communication technologies have shifted rapidly over the past 10 years and so has the evolution of communication. In a relatively short period of time, Western society's reliance on television, radio and telephone for verbal communication has become inadequate. People are looking for more data and information in places such as YouTube, social media and online news sites. The speed of access and ready availability have contributed to the fast shift.

The way we share information is evolving. According to Paul Booth, Professor of Media and Cinema Studies in the College of Communication at DePaul University in Chicago:

> There has been a shift in the way we communicate; rather than face-to-face interaction, we're tending to prefer mediated communication … We'd rather e-mail than meet; we'd rather text than talk on the phone.
>
> P Booth, in M Keller, 'Social Media and Interpersonal Communication', *Social Work Today*, vol. 13, no. 3, May/June 2013, p. 10.

Even though we may not be talking as often as we used to, we are communicating more than ever. According to Booth, studies have shown that people are actually becoming more social and more interactive with others, but the style of that communication has changed so that we are not meeting face-to-face as often as we used to.

SOCIAL MEDIA

Outcomes of what you think might be harmless fun on social media can come back to haunt you. What we have not yet seen is the impact of posting photos and comments on Gen Y and Z as they progress through their careers and reach managerial positions, nor have we seen the impact on them when they are 50 and 60 years of age. As Internet users we are largely dismissive of what our future reputation might be.

Read the extracts below and answer the questions that follow.

ACTIVITY

> When Internet users visit various Web sites, they can leave behind evidence of which sites they have visited. This collective, ongoing record of one's Web activity is called the digital footprint. One of the biggest threats to young people on social media sites is to their digital footprint and future reputations.
>
> GS O'Keeffe, & K Clarke-Pearson, 'The Impact of Social Media on Children, Adolescents, and Families', *Pediatrics*, vol. 127, no. 4, 1 April 2011, pp. 800–4.

> An employee who posted a nasty rant wasn't protected, not because of the foul language, but because he only griped about his own working conditions, even when co-workers commented about his post. It said things like, 'Wuck Falmart! I swear if this tyranny doesn't end in this store they are about to get a wakeup call because lots are about to quit!' and 'You have no clue … [boss] is being a super mega p***! …'
>
> D Ballman, 'Facebook Posts and Tweets That Can Get You Fired', AOL Jobs, 24 May 2013.

> According to the research, a huge 91% of employers use LinkedIn, Twitter and Facebook to screen candidates. A further:
> - 13% rejected a candidate because they lied about their qualifications
> - 11% rejected a candidate because they posted inappropriate comments
> - The same amount rejected a candidate because they posted inappropriate photos, with another 11% rejecting applicants because of posting negative comments about a previous employer
> - 10% were rejected for posting content about them using drugs, while 9% were rejected for posting content about them drinking.
>
> L Sherriff, 'Effects of Social Media on Job Prospects', *Huffington Post,* 3 March 2014, © Huffington Post/Lucy Sherriff

1   How big is your digital footprint? And what does it look like? (Is it generally positive, negative, narcissistic?)

2   Can your social-media profile affect your reputation?

3   What do your social-media accounts communicate about your identity?

4   Access the eSafety website.

What type of information is available? Who would most benefit from this website? Conduct a site review and indicate whether you feel there are any areas that this site does not cover but should.

EXTENSION

5   Hold a class discussion on one of the following questions:
   • Who controls the media?
   • Do the owners of social-media sites have the right to use your information?
   • Is there such a thing as 'privacy' in the digital age?
   • Are social-media sites healthy for individuals' self-esteem?
   • Does digital communication affect your language and grammar use?

6   Interview a grandparent about the changing nature of technology.
   • Devise a set of five to ten open-ended questions.
   • Test these on your classmates to ensure they make sense and flow logically. Consider the age of your interviewee and their knowledge of computers and devices.
   • Seek permission before recording responses.
   • Analyse the responses and share your findings with the class.

Twitter grants $10 million to MIT for social data analysis, new tools

BY CHRISTINA FARR

Twitter Inc on Wednesday gave $10 million to the Massachusetts Institute of Technology for research that would explore how people use and achieve shared goals using social networks.

Over five years, the university's researchers will organize a vast quantity of content from Twitter, Reddit and other online forums and build new communication tools that journalists, policy experts and researchers can use to uncover new patterns and trends.

The new MIT lab is called the 'Laboratory of Social Machines.'

MIT will access data from Gnip, a Twitter-owned website that stores a vast database of historic tweets. Twitter has previously awarded smaller sums of funding to academic institutions in a program known as 'Twitter Data Grants', but the MIT grant is significant due to its size and scope.

There is an 'openendness' to the research, said Deb Roy, an associate professor at MIT's Media Lab, which is dedicated to projects at the convergence of technology, science and design. Roy said he has a close relationship with Twitter, in part because his former company Bluefin Labs was acquired by Twitter in 2013.

'Twitter has a special role to play in this concept of social change,' said Roy.

Roy said he hopes to understand how far certain messages travel online, and the origins of rumors, opinions and ideas. The research could yield new tools for the press as well as people working on 'gender equality and speech in the public sphere,' he said.

'Twitter is seizing the opportunity to go deeper into research to understand the role Twitter and other platforms play in the way people communicate, the effect that rapid and fluid communication can have and apply those findings to complex societal issues,' said Twitter chief executive Dick Costolo in a statement.

A Twitter spokeswoman said the company plans to invest more funding into academic research and stressed that the data will not be traced back to individual users.

Reuters, 1 October 2014;
© Reuters/Christina Farr

ACTIVITY

Read the article above and answer the following questions.

1 Identify the aims of the research.

2 Do you think Twitter has the capacity to change the way people communicate? Give examples.

3 Discuss a range of issues associated with Twitter funding university research.

THINK CRITICALLY

4 Now answer Questions 1 to 3 again from the point of view of someone who uses technology but does not have any social-media accounts. Share with the class the difference in your answers.

The impact of changing communication technologies

The evolution and changing nature of communication technologies has affected many facets of society and culture. Traditionally, native cultures were oral communicators – that is, the history of a culture was passed down through the generations. There were no books, and language was not formulated into signs or symbols. As time progressed, so did the written language. In current times, some might suggest that everything is written and we are lacking the social ability to pass messages, customs, traditions and cultural practices down orally. It is common to hear 'hang on a minute, while I write that down' as our memory may not be as reliable as it once was. The impact of technology has led to changes in social patterns of behaviour. But has this been a positive or a negative change?

INTRAGENERATIONAL INTERACTION

An increased use of communication technologies and a decrease in face-to-face interaction indicate that intragenerational communication is often contextual and the non-verbal language cues may be lost. Intragenerational communication most commonly occurs face-to-face, however with a higher use of mobile devices, the younger generation is often multitasking, so that the focus is not always specifically directed at the conversation. Some might be looking at a device, perhaps playing a game or reading or responding to emails while also holding a conversation. The body language and gestures do not always indicate a lack of interest, but rather, a growing acceptance of multitasking.

The boundaries regarding appropriateness and socially acceptable behaviours may be blurred in informal situations. However, relevance and formality of communication is adhered to in electronic communication, specifically work-related emails. The Millennials and Generation Z may have developed an entirely new language register, 'netspeak' language, which includes expressions such as YOLO (you only live once).

Social norms have changed with the evolution of technological devices. People of the Baby Boomer generation may frown upon your mobile device being on the table during dinner, but Generation Y would expect to have their device with them at all times.

LANGUAGE USAGE

The increase in use of technological devices to communicate has changed the way in which written communication is used. Many emails now read as though they are being spoken and the letters have become less formal. Text messaging has taken on a new language entirely; the grammar and conventions tend to be different depending on the age of the user. In some situations, there is a complete lack of language: why bother typing and reading when a photo

or an emoticon will say it all? There are various social-media applications designed specifically for photo sharing where very limited text is required, if any at all. Advantages of photo-based applications are that the sharing of an image allows for immediate communication without the language barrier.

CROSS-GENERATIONAL INTERACTION

The changing nature of communication devices has meant that cross-generational gaps in communication can be affected by the speed of delivery. Letters posted in the mail evolved to phones and faxes and now to emails and instant pictures or videos. Can different generations cope with the speed and volume of information? In May 2015, the following words were added to the *Oxford Dictionary:* bae, brain fade, lamestream, selfie stick and cyberwarrior. Many of these words would have very little relevance to some generations and could be cause for intergenerational misunderstandings.

The different norms created may potentially lead to social conflict. If one generation views a particular communication delivery method as inappropriate, but another does not, the result is that one generation will be evaluated in a harsher way than the other. The possibility of encountering multiple generations in the workforce means that managers must be tolerant and aware of of age-specific communication styles.

PHONE VS TEXT VS EMAIL
Access this weblink for Accredited Online Colleges, which has some interesting information on the shift in methods of communication over the past couple of generations.

SOCIAL INTERACTION

The instant nature of technology encourages people to be spontaneous in their social interactions. Geographic boundaries are no longer relevant to many of our social interactions.

Interest groups of like-minded people use an array of mediums to communicate. Amateur cooks, car enthusiasts and gamers all have online platforms to communicate, including blogs, message boards and private social media groups. This enables long-distance connections to be formulated without the constraints of proximity.

Children are equipped with a new and powerful form of media literacy – they are often able to teach parents and grandparents how to navigate an application or view a video clip. However, the development of a 'bedroom culture' and subsequent isolation can lead to stress and distraction.

For some employees, the interaction of the workplace can be difficult. In some industries, portability of the work office allows for flexible working hours, where leisure and family time can be increased. Online accessibility can also mean the work day stretches well beyond the traditional hours of 9 to 5 and there may be an expectation of employees to complete work, which often means they are working late into the night.

THE ONLINE DISINHIBITION EFFECT

According to psychologist John Suler, the increased use of technology has changed the way we interact with each other. The online disinhibition effect is an interesting way to understand the online/offline persona.

The online disinhibition effect refers to the way people behave with less restraint in cyberspace than they would if communicating face to face. This is due to a range of factors.

* Dissociative anonymity. This is when people separate their online actions from how they would conduct themselves in the real world. In a process of dissociation, users do not own their behaviours by acknowledging them within the full context and online/offline identity.
* Invisibility. In many online environments, especially those that are text based, people cannot see each other; they can be viewing message boards, websites and social-media profiles without anyone knowing they are there. Invisibility give users the courage to look at things they might never do in the offline world.
* Asynchronicity. This refers to the time lags between emailing, posting and reading replies. People are not always communicating in real time and this can conjure up emotional issues. A normal face-to-face conversation is cyclical – that is, forwards and backwards until the message is complete. The time delay in emails and text messages can cause emotional stress and heighten feelings that you would not normally experience had the conversation been face to face.
* Solipsistic introjection. When online individuals, lacking real-world cues, imagine the traits and characteristics of the person they are communicating with.
* The minimisation of authority. Authority figures express their status and power in their dress and body language. The absence of those cues in the text environments of cyberspace reduces the impact of their authority.

The online disinhibition effect can be seen as a variety of personality traits that vary from the offline personality. Different modes of communication (such as email, text messaging and chat) and different environments bring out a diverse range of personas. For example, it is easier to cancel a dinner arrangement via text or email than by picking up the phone to discuss it. You avoid a range of emotions (primarily, guilt) by emailing or texting.

CROSS-CULTURAL INTERACTION

Communication technologies have revolutionised cross-cultural interaction. The globalisation of communication has allowed us to be in contact across cultures frequently, learning more about cultural heritage and diversity than ever before. Applications and programs such as Google Translate ensure we are all able to communicate, despite language barriers.

Business interactions across borders are more common and can be initiated simply by an email. Mobile phone access in Sub-Saharan Africa has exploded over the past 10 years. Being able to phone or message people in neighbouring towns to find out which markets are interested in their goods is a benefit, rather risking a potentially fruitless trip. However, there is a risk of cultural imperialism and the assumption that core nations and transnational corporations know what is best for less developed nations.

GLOBALISATION

Globalisation is the process of interacting with people, institutions and businesses internationally. This becomes achievable through information technology sources. The rapid advancements in technology and accessibility mean we are communicating with those in other nations instantaneously and more frequently, which is creating closer connections between cultures in terms of work, finance and trade. Technology creates new ways to share information about successful crop-growing programs, or on the economic benefits of opening a new market for mobile phone use.

Changing communication technologies have advantages and disadvantages for cultural understanding. The global spread and penetration of new technologies may encourage some to search and gain knowledge on cultural practices via the internet rather than experiencing this transaction of knowledge first-hand through travel.

GOOGLE SEARCHES

We live in an age when most people have access to information instantaneously. Google has become a medium for curious users to ask questions and seek information.

To draw attention the extent of global gender inequality, UN Women – an arm of the UN that focuses on women's issues – created a powerful advertising campaign that uses data collected from Google on the most popular search terms. As it turns out, the most popular Google queries are indicative of the entrenched sexist attitudes that persist today.

Memac Ogilvy & Mather Dubai, developed for UN Women (2013)
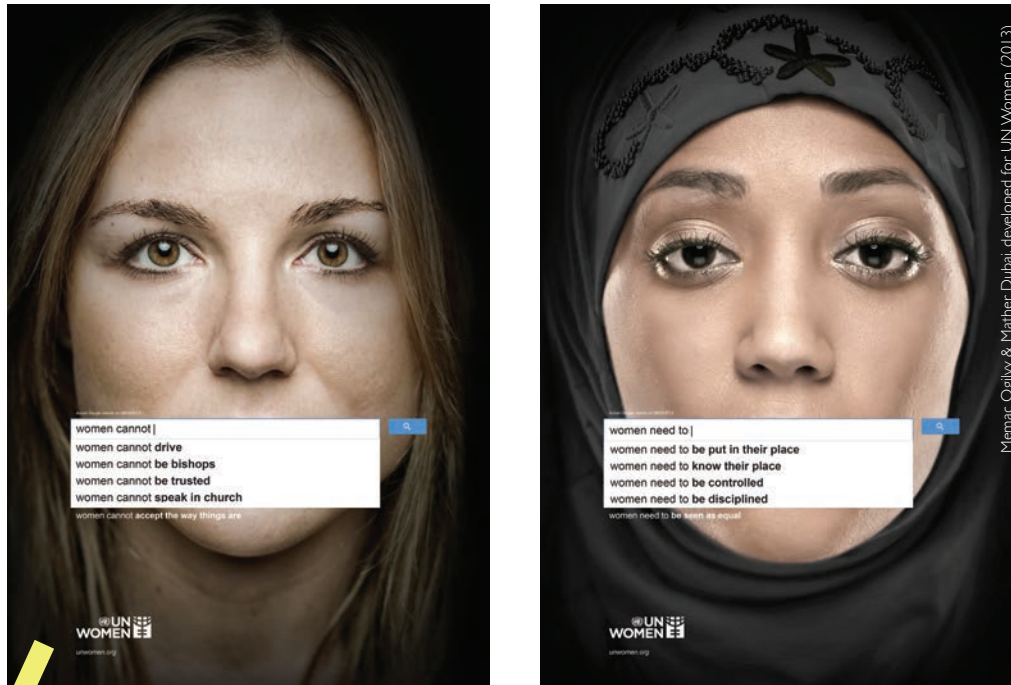
Figure 3.17 As part of the UN Women campaign, these striking advertisements were created to bring attention to online sexism.

Users are consuming information and transacting in a multitude of ways. In 2009, the US Government made a suggestion to Twitter that it be considerate of current global events. Reuters news agency reported that US President Obama asked the social-media giant Twitter to hold off on a scheduled upgrade to its website while the people of Iran were using Twitter and Facebook to protest about the Iranian elections. These sites were being used by many people to coordinate protests over the election outcome. In countries such as Iran where single voices are not heard, social media is an invaluable resource that enables planning and coordinating. Twitter responded by delaying the upgrade as it is an 'important communication tool in Iran'.

ACTIVITY

1   Observe how your parents and grandparents use their technological devices. Create a table and tally what is the most significant communication tool for them. Once you have analysed the results, ask them for their opinion of the result.

2   Research and locate four sources of information that discuss the change in social interactions for adolescents based on their use of technological devices (both positive and negative). Analyse the sources and report your findings in a one-page document.

3   Assess the impact of globalisation on communication. Is there evidence of cultural diffusion occurring? Give examples.

4   The Internet has enabled users to gain specific knowledge of cultural practices. Outline the advantages and disadvantages of this.

5   How has the increase in use of technological devices affected regional communities in New South Wales?

6 What are some of the side effects of too much technology?

7 To what extent has technology affected our language and writing skills? Support your answer with three sources for each side of the argument. To assist with this, watch the TED Talk video, `Txtng is killing language. JK!!!´
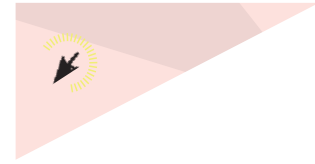
COMMUNICATION THEORISTS AND THEIR THEORIES

The syllabus requires that students learn a theory of communication. There are various ones to choose from. Two of these, the Communication Accommodation Theory and the Cross-cultural Adaptation Theory, are outlined in Tables 3.07 and 3.08.

Table 3.07

	COMMUNICATION ACCOMMODATION THEORY
Theorist	Howard Giles (1971)
Context	A theory of discourse and interaction. Focuses on the role of conversation in our lives. Developed in reaction to socio-linguistic theories of accommodation that did not recognise motivation.
Aims	To find the reason for the shifts observed in the speech of most people as they spoke to different people and to detail the consequences of this behaviour.
Assumptions	• Social norms provide guidance for appropriate and inappropriate behaviour. Therefore, accommodation occurs when both parties understand the appropriate norms. For example, when an adolescent is talking with their grandparent, it is best to avoid slang or specific language references as the grandparent may not feel included in the conversation. • In each conversation the participants bring similarities and differences. These differences in values, beliefs and attitudes allow the communicators to accommodate each other. The more similarities they share, the higher the chance of accommodating the differences. • The communicators evaluate a conversation based on perceptions of speech and behaviour. At the beginning of the conversation there is a short period where members evaluate and judge the behaviours of the other. This determines whether the communicators need to change the way they are behaving and if the conversation will continue or end. The way in which we perceive the speech and behaviours of others determines our evaluation of the conversation. • When two people from different cultures converse, it is common that they agree to conduct the conversation from the social standing of the higher-status person. One person often changes their behaviour to accommodate the other. For example, if one person has an accent and is perceived to be of higher social standing, the other may start to speak slower or with an accent too.
Main points	• Accommodation occurs when people talk to each other. They tend to change the way they talk to match the way the listener talks, adjusting, modifying or regulating behaviour in response to others. • Reasons for accommodating: wanting to elicit approval, maintain a positive social identity or achieve communicative efficiency. • Ways to adapt: – Convergence: changing things such as language, dialect, tone of voice, etc. to be more similar to a conversation partner. A person converges to seek approval, enhance comprehension or show solidarity with their conversation partner. The more a speaker converges to their partner, the more favourably the person is likely to be evaluated by the listener.

Table 3.07 *Continued*

	COMMUNICATION ACCOMMODATION THEORY
	– Divergence: used by a person to emphasise differences with their partner. Adjustment of communication behaviour is based on the perception that an individual has of the conversation partner's communicative behaviour. – Overaccommodation: when someone tries to compensate for the difference in linguistic ability, they are often perceived as rude, demeaning and/or patronising. Overaccommodation can exist in three forms: sensory, dependency and intergroup.
Strengths	The theory is detailed enough to be complete and is supported by various authors who have conducted a significant amount of research. The theory's core discussion of convergence and divergence makes it relatively easy to understand, highlighting its simplicity.
Weaknesses	Judee Burgoon, Leesa Dillman and Lesa Stern question the convergence-divergence frame. They believe that conversations are too complex to be reduced simply to these three processes. They also challenge the notion that people's accommodation can be explained by just these two practices: convergence and divergence. For example, what happens if people converge and diverge in the conversation? Are there consequences for the speaker or the listener? What influence (if any) does race or ethnicity play in this simultaneous process? Another criticism by Burgoon, Dillman and Stern is whether the theory relies too heavily on a rational way of communicating; i.e., although the theory acknowledges conflict between communicators, it also rests on a reasonable standard of conflict. Perhaps you have been in conflicts that are nasty and with people who do not have any sense of reason. They question if the theory ignores this possible dark side of communication.
SOURCES	• H Giles, J Coupland & N Coupland (eds), *Contexts of Accommodation: Developments in Applied Sociolinguistics*, Cambridge University Press, UK, 1991.
	• M Hellinger and A Pauwels (eds), 'Handbook of Language and Communication: Diversity and Change', 2007 • DA Cai and JI Rodriguez, 'Adjusting to Cultural Differences: The Intercultural Adaptation Model', *Intercultural Communication Studies* VI:2, 1996–7 • Lynn H Turner and Richard West, 'Communication Accommodation Theory', *Introducing Communication Theory: Analysis and Application* 4th edn, McGraw-Hill, New York, 2010. • H Giles and T Ogay, 'Communication Accommodation Theory', in Bryan B Whaley & W Samter, *Explaining Communication: Contemporary Theories and Exemplars*, Lawrence Erlbaum, Mahwah, NJ, 2007. • JK Burgoon, L Dillman and LA Stern, 'Adaptation in Dyadic Interaction: Defining and Operationalizing Patterns of Reciprocity and Compensation', *Communication Theory*, vol. 4, pp. 293–316.

Table 3.08

	CROSS-CULTURAL ADAPTATION THEORY
Theorist	Young Yun Kim (1995)
Context	A systems theory. Communication as an open system consisting of interrelated subsystems all working to achieve the same goal or purpose.
Aims	Attempts to describe the process of cross-cultural adaptation and explain the structure of the process and variables that influence the degree to which individuals adapt to new and unfamiliar cultures.

	CROSS-CULTURAL ADAPTATION THEORY
Assumptions	• Adaptation is a dynamic process involving both internal (intrapersonal) and external (social/environmental) variables. • People have an inherent drive to adapt and grow. • Adaptation to one's social environment occurs through communication. • Adaptation is a complex and dynamic process.

Main points	• Adaptation is a dynamic process involving both internal (intrapersonal) and external (social/environmental) variables. It is the process of learning and acquiring the elements of the host culture. It is a three-step process:
	  1 Stress − a challenge to the homeostasis (balance) of the system, e.g. culture shock, avoidance, hostility. Stress motivates a person to adapt to the home environment to restore the balance.
	  2 Adaptation − accomplished through acculturation (learning) and deculturation (unlearning). There is an internal transformation in the person.
	  3 Growth − not linear but helical due to the stresses and adaptations. Host, social and ethnic communication, environment and predisposition. They interact to facilitate or inhibit intercultural transformation.
	• Many people across the globe are for one reason or another embarking on international (cross-cultural) relocation. Each story is unique and personal. Although strangers, these people have something in common − starting afresh in an unfamiliar environment. Each individual has a common assignment of establishing a stable relationship with the host environment. This theory is framed by three boundary conditions:
	  1 The individual's socialisation has occurred in one culture and they have moved into an unfamiliar culture or subculture.
	  2 The host environment must meet their personal and social needs to some degree.
	  3 The new environment has communication experiences that are different from the original environment.
	• The theory is not intended to change ideas about being a foreigner; rather, it is intended to represent the multidimensional, multifaceted and dynamic nature of the cross-cultural adaptation phenomenon.

Strengths	The theory uses a systems approach, which is best suited to representing complex relationships. Adaptation theory also helps to explain the manner in which a person adapts to fit into a new culture.
Weaknesses	The theory assumes that assimilation is positive and that many people may adapt to a new culture but never fully adopt its ways of thinking. The experiment was conducted on a relatively small sample of 81 participants. Culture shock: Is this something to be dreaded?
SOURCES	• Young Yun Kim, 'Cross-cultural Adaptation Theory', in SW Littlejohn & KA Foss, *Encyclopedia of Communication Theory,* SAGE Publications Inc., 2009. • WB Gudykunst, (ed.), *Cross-Cultural and Intercultural Communication*, SAGE Publications, 2003. • Young Yun Kim, 'Communication and cross-cultural adaptation: An integrative theory', Vol 2 of *Intercommunication*, Multilingual Matters Limited, Clevedon, UK, 1988

FOCUS STUDY: EXPLORING INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION IN JAPAN

Japan is a fascinating country to study. It has diverse customs, behaviours and languages. It is a collectivist culture that places great importance on personal responsibility and working together. This encourages members to support one another in various facets of life. Harmony is an important value in the culture. It is a guiding philosophy for the Japanese in family and business settings. Children are taught about harmony at school and the cooperative nature filters through society, shaping it as a whole.

In terms of the number of people who speak it, the Japanese language is the ninth most spoken language in the world, with 125 million native speakers. Verbal communication in Japan is very closely interwoven with non-verbal communication and it is almost impossible to have one type of communication without the other. Words can have several meanings, and therefore, the body language associated with communication is of great importance. Because it is a high-context culture (see pages 77–78) the Japanese communication style relies greatly on facial expressions, voice tones and sender–receiver postures. Non-verbal cues play a significant role within a conversation. The context in which something is said also affects the meaning of the words, and therefore it is imperative to understand the whole situation to fully appreciate the response.

Verbal communication in Japan is not as direct as it is in Australia. The Japanese tend to ask broad questions so that they do not cause offence. The Japanese want to promote cooperation and harmony; therefore they frequently answer 'yes' to ambiguous questions, particularly in intercultural dialogue, to avoid being negative or offensive. Often, if a Japanese person does not answer the question or opts for silence while nodding their head, it may indicate that they do not fully understand, but they would prefer not to say 'no'.

Non-verbal communication methods such as bowing are used as indicators of respect. The person in the lower social position will initiate the bow and this must be deeper than the other person's. The bow will continue until the person of the higher social standing ends the bow and returns to the upright position.

Figure 3.18 Japan is situated to the east of China, Korea and Russia. The Japanese archipelago consists of 6852 islands, of which about 430 are inhabited. The four main islands are Hokkaido, Honshu, Shikoku and Kyushu.

A smile is a body language movement that hides the real emotions on the face. It might be hiding embarrassment or pain. Most Japanese people aim for an impassive face when speaking. Japanese people believe it is rude to be overly emotional in public and an expressionless face is a way of covering emotions.

Eye contact is rarely made in any form of Japanese communication. To look someone in the eye, particularly someone who is senior to you in age or status, is considered rude. Often, conversations rely on the sender and responder to be looking at the ground or in the air. It is not a sign of boredom or disrespect; it is to avoid any misunderstandings.

THE ROLE OF SILENCE

Silence can be a means of communication and it can also be a means of miscommunication. Long pauses have the power to convey different meaning, depending on the culture. A long pause can indicate deep thought, lack of authority or low self-esteem. A person's attitude to silence is determined by their own internal linguistic and cultural beliefs. Therefore, their perception of silence and the meaning attached to it can defy cultural norms.

Japanese academic Takie Lebra identifies four facets of silence in Japanese culture: truthfulness, social discretion, embarrassment and defiance.

TRUTHFULNESS

Truthfulness is embedded in Zen Buddhism, where silence was favoured over the spoken word because enlightenment could not be achieved by talking about it. Truthfulness is related to a person's inner (private) realm and this is associated with silence; the spoken word, voice and verbal organs are on the outer realm and therefore lack a relationship with truthfulness.

SOCIAL DISCRETION

Social discretion refers to the use of silence to build your social standing. Silence can be used in social settings to avoid 'losing face'. In the Japanese culture, to lose face means to lose dignity or respect; therefore, anything that might cause loss of face will be avoided. While in Western cultures you may be perceived to be ignoring the situation or 'giving the silent treatment', the opposite is said to be occurring in Japan. When a speaker and addressee are communicating, the addressee may avoid answering a question so that they do not lose face.

EMBARRASSMENT

Takie Lebra explains that in Japan, silence is an indicator of the degree of intimacy within relationships. This can be attributed to the belief in Japan that silence is typically associated with men. Even with the emotional detachment between husband and wife, this relationship is instead judged on whether the couple can comprehend each other without words. For some, verbalising their affection is highly embarrassing, so non-verbal communication is favoured by many couples.

DEFIANCE

Silence can convey defiance and estrangement and is often used if someone is sulking or engaging in prolonged eye contact. Used in conjunction with these non-verbal gestures, silence may indicate to the listener that the speaker is being defiant. Silence can have various meanings, depending on the context. For instance, in an Australian classroom setting, a student who avoids answering a teacher's question can be considered as acting defiantly. In Japan, however, this might also be attributed to politeness towards the teacher, the inability to answer a question and the negative connotations associated with expressing an opinion.

The act of being silent is a complex phenomenon. The honesty traditionally associated with silence in Japan is not always echoed in the other facets of silence. Because of its indirect nature, silence can reveal someone's deepest thoughts but can also hide them; it can express love but also anger and hatred. Therefore, the act of silence can be highly ambiguous. Furthermore, a significant disparity exists between the cultural norms regarding silence in Japanese and Western cultures. Learning to interpret and understand these differences will prevent cultural misunderstandings that could damage relationships between Japanese and Western people.

Table 3.09 Responses to the question, 'How true is the proverb "Silence is golden, speech is silver" in your country?'

SILENCE IS GOLDEN, SPEECH IS SILVER	BRITISH	OTHERS	JAPANESE
Silence is golden	20%	21%	40%
Both are needed	19%	32%	30%
Speech is golden	43%	43%	20%
Traditionally true but less applicable today	18%	4%	10%

Wong Ngan Ling, 'Communicative functions and meanings of silence, an analysis of cross-cultural views'

Non-verbal communication in Japanese business

BY ROCHELLE KOPP, MANAGING PRINCIPAL, JAPAN INTERCULTURAL CONSULTING

Western communication style relies heavily on words. We expect communicators to be clear, precise, and skilled in expressing themselves verbally. We value people who have good presentation skills and are good at discussing and debating. Much of the training we receive in education and in business is aimed at honing these skills for verbal self-expression.

In contrast, Japanese communication relies less on verbal manipulation, and more heavily on non-verbals. Words are important, but so are body language, gestures, tone of voice, facial expressions, posture, and 'non-word sounds' such as the hissing sound that Japanese often make when confronted with an unappealing proposal or situation. Japanese speak of haragei, the art of silently communicating 'belly to belly', through intuition rather than with words.

One reason that Japanese are able to rely more heavily on non-verbals for their communication is due to what scholars refer to as a high degree of shared context (background information). For example, think of

the communication style between you and your spouse, or with your parents or siblings. One raised eyebrow can clearly say 'You forgot to take out the garbage,' and a certain tone of voice can communicate volumes. This is classic high context communication that needs only a minimum of words in order to get the message across. Japanese tend to have this style of communication with everyone, not just their close family members.

Japanese often describe their communication style as *ichi ieba ju wakaru* (hear one, understand ten). The idea is that when the speaker says 10%, the listener will be able to figure out the other 90% on the basis of the non-verbals and the shared context. For the westerner used to hearing all ten from the speaker (if not 11 or 12!), this communication style can be puzzling.

In order to bridge this gap, westerners need to learn to draw out Japanese, gently prodding them to give further explanations and information. This means asking effective follow-up questions after a

Japanese colleague has given you the first 10%. For example, 'Please give me some more information about this,' 'I would like to know more background about this,' 'Just to check to make sure I understood you completely, you would like me to …?,' 'Is there anything else I should know about?,' 'Do you have any advice for me about this?,' 'Please help me understand why this is important,' and 'Please explain more about the situation.' If no such follow-up questions are asked, Japanese will tend to assume that you have grasped the other 90%; you need to signal if you want further information.

It is also important to sharpen your antennae and tune into the non-verbals of the Japanese you are working with. This will enable you to pick up more messages, and enhance your ability to read between the lines.

You should also be sure to leave enough silence and not overwhelm Japanese with a torrent of words. Too much verbosity will strike Japanese as not only difficult to understand, but also lacking in subtlety.

© Rochelle Kopp/Japan Intercultural Consulting

ACTIVITY

1 Use the secondary research method to compare and contrast Japanese society and culture to Australian society and culture. Answer the 'Compare and reflect' questions in Table 3.10 to further develop your understanding.

2 Outline the potential intercultural misunderstandings that may occur between Australians and Japanese people.

3   What impact do societal norms have on these misunderstandings?

4   What is cultural relativism and how does it apply to intercultural misunderstandings?

5   What are some strategies that could help deal with intercultural misunderstandings?

6   Read the article, 'Non-verbal communication in Japanese business'. Which methods do Japanese communicators use that Australians could take on board? Why?

7   How does Edward T Hall's 1976 theory of high-context and low-context cultures relate to the behaviours, customs and values of society?

**Table 3.10 Society and culture in Japan and Australia**

JAPAN	AUSTRALIA
Shutterstock/Nirdalart	Shutterstock/Julinzy
Population	
127.3 million	23.13 million
Population gender distribution	
Male 48.7% Female 51.3%	Male 49.8% Female 50.2%
Population growth for 2015 (predicted)	
−25 166	18 511

Compare and reflect: Predict what Japan and Australia might look like in 2020 and 2050 if the population growth continues along this same trend. What impact is migration having on Japan?

Gender distribution in the workforce	
Women hold almost half (46%) of all professional and technical positions. Women hold only 9% of legislator, senior official and managerial positions. This includes only 2% women on corporate boards and fewer than 1% on executive committees.	Women comprise 45.8% of all employees in Australia. Women hold 12% of chair positions and 23.7% of directorships. 17.3% of CEOs and 26.1% of key management personnel are represented by women. 33.5% of organisations have no key management personnel who are women, and 68.7% of organisations have only males holding positions of executive/general manager.

Compare and reflect: Research male gender distribution in specific occupations in Australia and compare this with Japan (e.g. tradespeople, nurses, teachers, office administrators).

Table 3.10 *Continued*

Generational spread
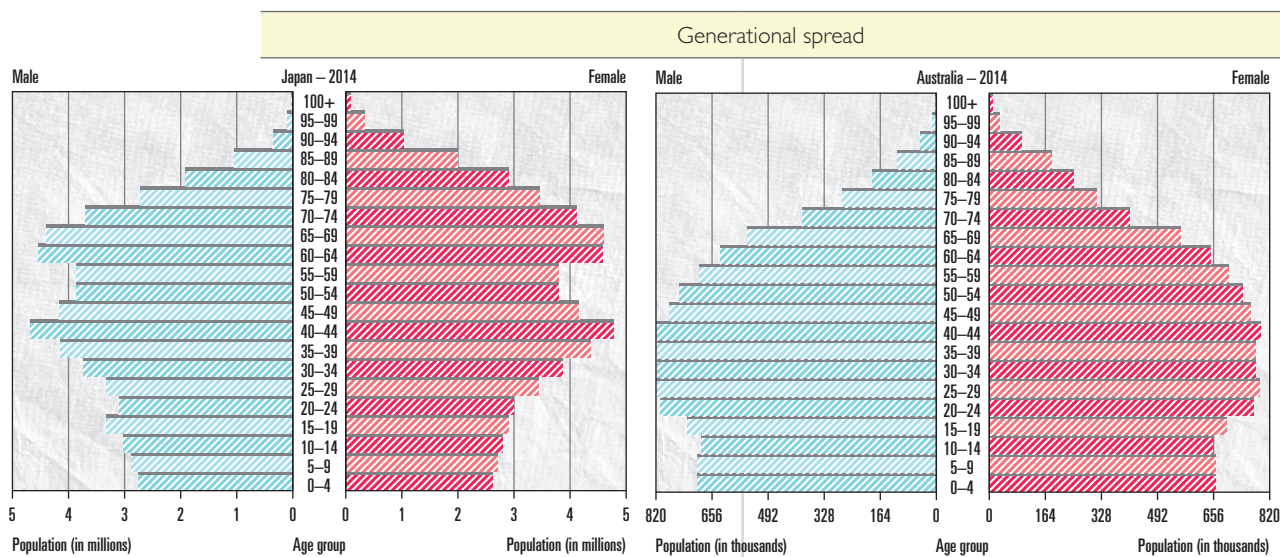
Compare and reflect: The two graphs above illustrate age distributions in Japanese and Australian society. Identify any similarities or difference in age distributions between Japan and Australia. What might be the social and cultural implications of theses differences?

Three values that are upheld within society	
1 Saving face 2 _____ 3 _____	1 'Fair go' 2 _____ 3 _____

Compare and reflect: Outline three significant values held by members of society in either country. Describe the specific value and give a detailed example of its custom.

Outline some subcultures that are relevant to adolescents and young adults	
e.g. Cosplay	e.g. skaters

Compare and reflect: How do these groups express themselves? What is the main mode of communication for the groups? Do they have a distinctive dress, language or custom?

Sources
Compile a list of sources and annotate them for their validity and usefulness.

The existence of group identity and commitment to cultural continuity

Japan and Australia have very different cultural traits. Australia is an individualistic culture where people often prioritise themselves over other individuals. We communicate in personal pronouns such as I, me and my. However, Japan is a collectivist culture where the communication mode is always from the perspective of 'we'. In the Japanese culture, prioritising oneself is at the expense of the whole group. The nature of a collectivist culture is to ensure that people belong in groups, and the belonging and sense of duty to those like-minded people is an exchange for loyalty. If you always look after the group, then the group will always look after you. While in many Western cultures this collectivism might exist at a family level, it is a cultural trait for the Japanese and stretches well beyond a family situation.

Group identity has been entrenched in Japan, a racially homogeneous country with small ethnic minorities. The people have a strong shared culture and adhere to the same religious values and national myths, which are passed down through the generations (cultural transmission). The Japanese language has power and is a valued force in creating the national

identity and is a means by which Japanese culture and history have been transmitted.

Various groups can be identified through their clothing. Historically, the samurai and geisha have been identified through elaborate costume, but more recently there have been movements towards the Harajuku and Urahara styles of dressing. The continuity of uniforms and dressing in unique styles is a way that the Japanese have communicated their commitment to cultural continuity.

The kimono first appeared in the Jomon period (the period of Japanese history before 300 CE), and was worn by both men and women. Kimonos are wrapped around the body (sometimes several times) and are tied together with a sash, called an obi. Western dress began to be worn in Japan in the 1850s, when officers of the Japanese army and navy began to wear uniforms similar to those worn by British sailors stationed at Yokohama. The Western style, thought to be more practical than the traditional, was gradually adopted by schools, universities and business from that time. Traditional clothing is still worn for ceremonies and events that require formal attire.

Figure 3.19 Communication through dress codes

Since the 1970s, the Harajuku area of Tokyo has been famous for its fashion subculture. This was a period of change that allowed freedom of expression through dress. Harajuku dressing has had several waves of inspiration, so it has changed significantly since its beginning. Dedicated followers of this subculture also follow other behavioural and cultural practices that go with the Harajuku culture, such as never catching a train while in Harajuku dress. Critics of the fashion have amended the style to reflect a more diverse subculture, based on Cosplay, Manga and Lolita.
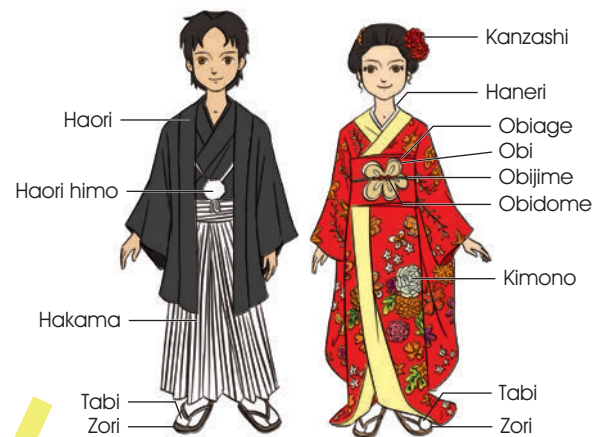

Figure 3.20 A Harajuku girl

Figure 3.21 Cosplay

Urahara is another area in the Harajuku district that has developed its own subculture and dress. The name comes from the Japanese *ura-Harajuku*, meaning 'behind Harajuku' – it is literally in the backstreets of Harajuku. Urahara fashion – also known as Karisuma – starts with a baseball cap, a T-shirt, a pair of shorts and sneakers. It is a highly sought-after fashion. The leaders of this fashion are DJs, professional skateboarders and other high-profile personalities. When a simple endorsement of an item of clothing is given by one of these

leaders, the value of the item increases and its appeal to potential owners is exaggerated. Although clothing items are sold in shops in Harajuku, most of the selling and promotion is done by word of mouth.

When discussing communication, the fixation with how it is evolving and changing often takes precedence over the aspects that have remained continuous.

Japan is a country steeped in tradition such as traditional clothing, tea ceremonies, music, instruments, food, samurai and many more. The continuity of this ancient culture has gained respect from other nations.

Getty Images/Universal Images Group

Figure 3.22 The leaders of Urahara fashion are DJs, skateboarders and other high-profile personalities. An endorsement by one of the leaders often results in the popularity of an item soaring.

HONORIFIC INDIVIDUALISM

'Honorific individualism' is a term coined by Japanese academic Eiko Ikegami. Honour and shame are quintessential ideas that infiltrate all layers of Japanese society, and have for centuries. Honorific individualism is apparent in the acts and lives of a samurai. This goes back to the role of the rich agricultural leaders and the feudal system in Japan up until the Meiji period (1868–1912).

The concept of honorific individualism is a tension between the Japanese originally finding honour in open displays of violence, such as sacrificing yourself for your Lord (Daimyo) – a very individualised act – as opposed to the Confucian influence where honour developed as a way of keeping social order.

Honorific individualism is used to establish a distinct difference between the Japanese form of individualism, which helped to transform Japan's society, to the Westernised ideal of individualism. Ikegami's argument is that the Japanese had a very clear form of individualism, which was shaped by their culture, but didn't fit the mould of how we define individualism in a Western, modern, liberal democracy – in particular the celebration of individual independence through a Western intellectual tradition or concise political theory. There's an obvious tension between the traditional individualistic cultural of Japan and the modern collectivist nature of culture.

Potential intercultural misunderstanding

Misunderstandings can occur in all forms of communication, even between people of the same cultural and linguistic background. It is important to know how to deal with the issue and learn from mistakes.

Table 3.11 Possible misunderstandings between cultures

|	COMMONLY MISUNDERSTOOD SITUATIONS
Facial expressions	An uncommitted facial expression is typical during conversations with Japanese people. An expressionless face is used to hide emotions and to cover up any positive or negative reaction to the conversation. Sometimes a smile might be given as a nonverbal tool indicating that the person does not understand what is being said. The Japanese people strive for harmony and are dependent on the group; therefore they rely on facial expressions, tone and posture to indicate what someone is feeling.
Conversations	Even though the speaker might have strong feelings about a topic, they will usually avoid direct statements such as 'this is what I think' or 'my opinion is …'. The Japanese tend to use indirect phrases such as 'but what do you think?' or 'don't you think so?'. These questions leave room for the communicators to disagree with the idea without having to disagree with the person. This type of communication allows the sender and receiver to fine-tune their position while taking account of the other position. It is a cooperative way of communicating where the communicators affirm positions rather than investigate. Western societies, on the other hand, emphasise assertive and aggressive responses - often trying to 'get to the point' of the conversation. The Japanese people practise *tatemae* - to say what is appropriate and proper. This contrasts with *honne* - one's true feelings. These balances ensure that everyone 'saves face'.
Eye contact	In Western cultures, eye contact is expected and indicates interest and engagement. In Japan, importance is placed on respect and hierarchies and the social behaviours relating to communication reflect this. If an elder is talking, the younger person will not make direct eye contact; their eyes will focus on the ground or feet areas. This would be seen in a conversation between a Japanese father and his daughter, or a professor and a student. Eye contact between peers or in the same social status is acceptable; each participant would make eye contact in general conversations to show engagement.
Taking your shoes off	The removal of shoes dates back to the Heian Period (794–1185) and is still very important today. It is culturally significant to take your outside shoes off before entering a Japanese home, some public places, certain traditional business establishments, Buddhist temples and Shinto shrines. Some primary schools and kindergartens also have this tradition and the students bring another pair of shoes to wear inside. Most Japanese homes have an area near the front door, called a *genkan*, where you take your shoes off. You will either wear socks or be given a pair of slippers to wear inside. There are several reasons for the removal of shoes; religion, cleanliness of the house and foot hygiene are the most significant ones. This practice is not unique to Japan. It occurs in many other countries, including Arab and Middle Eastern countries (based on a religious value), Malaysia (hygiene), Indonesia (religious and hygiene), Thailand (cleanliness), Philippines (hygiene), Sweden and Turkey (cleanliness).

Table 3.11 *Continued*

	COMMONLY MISUNDERSTOOD SITUATIONS
Gift giving	The Japanese rules of gift giving can be complicated and it is recommend you research the correct etiquette before giving. Gifts are an important part of business protocol and the focus is on the ritual rather than the gift itself. The gift needs to be wrapped in a specific way, and the wrapping paper should not be brightly coloured – pastel colours are a good option. If flowers are given as a gift, they should not be white or be in a pot (white and potted flowers are associated with funerals). If giving flowers to a host, ensure an odd number but not the number nine. The gift will be opened in private to ensure no embarrassment and to limit the chance of 'loss of face'.
Dining	If you are dining at a restaurant and sitting on a tatami mat or on the floor, you are required to remove your shoes before sitting down, and ensure the shoes are placed away from the table. In Japan loud chewing, blowing your nose and burping at the table are considered bad manners. On the other hand, finishing your meal and leaving an empty plate indicates you thoroughly enjoyed the meal. It is customary for all member of the table to raise their glasses to the salutation *kampai* – much like saying 'cheers' in Western culture.

Strategies for dealing with misunderstanding

Misunderstandings and awkward communication can be overcome by being aware of the broader social, political and religious factors involved and by being sensitive to the people involved. Here are some key strategies and ways to ensure you are able to overcome barriers and partake in effective communication:

- Read widely: be prepared and research the country before embarking on a holiday or a trip. Know the major cities, the sign for toilet and the emergency phone number. There are travel blogs, tourist information centres, online travel guides and other resources that will equip you with relevant information about the country you are visiting.

- Language: learn how to say 'yes', 'no', 'please' and 'thank you'. These are common phrases that you will need to use on any trip. If you can use the native language this will help to overcome misunderstanding and show the people you are communicating with that you are willing and trying to be culturally aware. It is also polite.

- Show respect: after conducting research about religion, politics and cultural values, you will be better equipped to show respect in specific circumstances. Be respectful of traditions and be knowledgeable of these situations. For example, it is important to remove your shoes when entering a Buddhist temple and to not make eye contact when conversing with business associates in high positions.

- Demonstrate patience: in situations with which you are unfamiliar, it is best to be patient, tolerant and relaxed. If you are tense, this can be perceived as rudeness and could make the host uncomfortable. Waiting patiently to be offered a seat at the table indicates a level of respect, rather than rushing ahead to sit down, which may be seen as rude and aggressive. Remember that Japan is a collectivist nation where the good of the group is to be placed before individual needs, so rushing ahead would be selfish and individualistic.
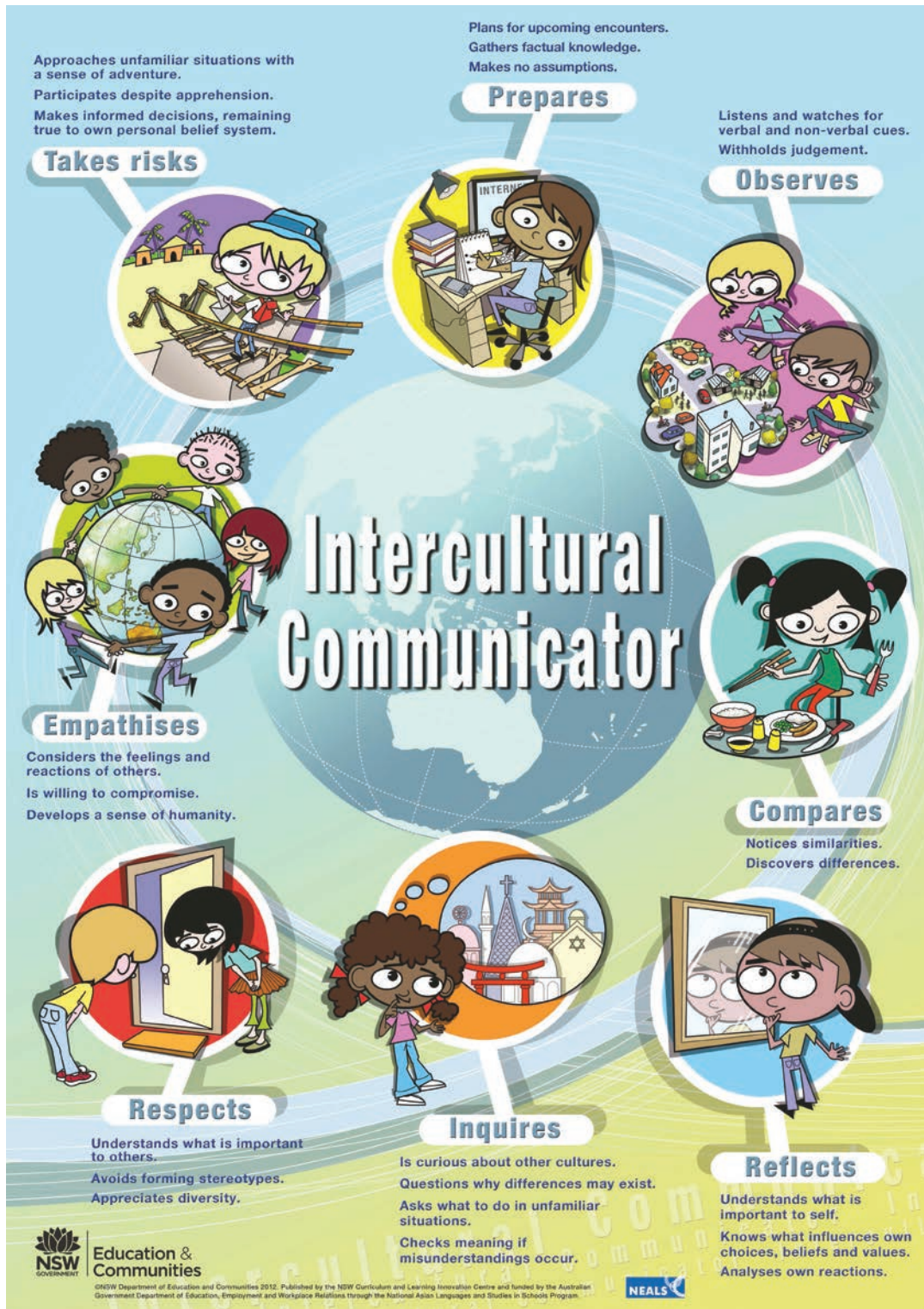
Figure 3.23 This poster identifies some other ways to prepare and avoid intercultural misunderstandings.

ACTIVITY

1   List eight common misunderstandings that occur in Japanese culture.
2   Create a mind map of strategies to deal with misunderstandings.

The role of intercultural exchange in gaining cultural perception and values

A cultural visit is the best way to explore the culture and values of another nation, but it is not always practical to jump on a plane and visit another country. However, there are several options for gaining a greater cultural awareness and understanding.

Embarking on a real or 'virtual' cultural visit provides opportunities for:

- equitable interactions between cultures and peoples and the development of a mutual understanding and respect for each culture
- a deeper, first-hand understanding of cultural relativism while also learning the social intricacies of personal, group and national identity
- understanding how personal, group and national identities are shaped
- building your own self-concept
- understanding the attitudes and values that underpin racism and prejudice.

Here are some practical examples of ways to experience different forms of Japanese culture in order to gain a better understanding of Japanese values and traditions.

- Get a group of friends together and sing some karaoke
- Learn the art of shiatsu massage (traditional healing massage)
- Visit a bonsai nursery and attend a class on the art of bonsai and what it means in Japanese culture
- Arrange for a visit/tour of your city's Japanese Embassy
- Take part in a Japanese tea ceremony (*chanoyu*). Learn about the ceremony and practices associated with the *matcha*
- Contact the Australian-Japan Society of NSW and arrange a cultural visit or a speaker to come to your school
- Take a class in *ikebana* (flower arrangement), a disciplined art form steeped in the philosophy of developing a closeness with nature
- Connect with a Japanese school and arrange for an email pen-pal to learn more about each other's culture
- Enjoy a Japanese meal like sushi or teppanyaki (use chopsticks for a more authentic experience!). Take a cooking class to learn how to prepare miso soup and tempura
- Approach your local council and find out if they have any relationships with Japanese schools or councils. Find out what benefit this has for each area and what you can learn from this relationship
- Communicate with a Japanese sister school and arrange a discussion with one of its teachers using Skype.

The role of intercultural dialogue in effective intercultural communication

Communicating together in intercultural groups is a norm in society. The need for effective intercultural communication is essential to ensure that non-English speakers and bilingual members of our society are included. It is more than an understanding of the types of verbal and nonverbal language; we seek empathy and support for those from different cultural heritages. The role of intercultural dialogue in effective communication allows for:

- Overcoming obstacles and incorrect assumptions related to the concept that cultures are fixed or static entities

- Preventing rejection, violence, stereotyping and exclusion based on fear of the unknown
- Understanding each others' worldview and provides a chance to understand the origin of differences, but also to appreciate similarities.

> " Intercultural dialogue is an important step in overcoming the boundaries that separate people and groups. However, dialogue is only one element [to consider. Individuals] need to go beyond dialogue and take concrete actions that reflect an understanding and appreciation of cultural diversity. "
>
> 'What is intercultural dialogue?', Alliance of Youth Civilizations, http://unaocyouth.org/, accessed 7 April 2015.

Equitable exchange and dialogue among civilisations, cultures and peoples, based on mutual understanding and respect (and the equal dignity of all cultures), is the essential prerequisite for constructing social cohesion, reconciliation among peoples and peace among nations.

In Japan the linguistic structure allows for separate female and male forms of speech. Feminine speech is soft, gentle, indirect, powerless and non-assertive, while masculine speech has abrupt and forceful nuances. Knowledge of this variance would ensure the differences can be explained and forewarning given before an intercultural dialogue takes place.

Cultural diversity has positive impacts on an economic, social and political level, and needs to be developed and adequately managed.

> " On the other hand, increasing cultural diversity brings about new social and political challenges. Cultural diversity often triggers fear and rejection [in society]. Stereotyping, racism, xenophobia, intolerance, discrimination and violence can threaten peace and the very essence of local and national communities. "
>
> 'The concept of intercultural dialogue', Council of Europe, accessed 7 April 2015.

The most significant step towards fully understanding intercultural communication is to experience it first-hand, by taking part in cultural exchanges and experiences that will broaden your understanding. A socially literate individual will avoid making judgements, work cooperatively in cross-cultural settings and use skills to achieve social inclusion. These key literacy characteristics will ensure effective dialogue within communication situations.

ACTIVITY

INTERVIEW

Apply ethical research practices and follow the steps of the research process to:
- develop a set of interview questions that includes both open and closed questions and is suitable for a person from a culture different from your own
- test the questions on your classmates to see whether they will yield suitable answers
- source and interview a person from a culture different from your own
- analyse and synthesise the results
- present the findings and conclusions about these findings to the class in an appropriate manner.

Note: Cultural difference may be based on gender, religion or ethnicity.

Possible interview themes:
- How are new communication technologies affecting social interactions within the micro world?
- Does travelling improve a person's ability to communicate effectively across cultures?
- How have communication technologies helped or hindered intercultural communication?
- To what extent are intergenerational misunderstandings a result of technology?
- How can cultural continuity be ensured?
- Which of the following tends to lead to greater intercultural misunderstanding: gender, religion or ethnicity?

REFERENCES

RE Axtell, *Gestures: The DO's and TABOOs of Body Language Around the World*, John Wiley & Sons Inc., USA, 1997.

ET Hall, *The Hidden Dimension*, Anchor Books, NY, 1966.

S Hall, 'Encoding/Decoding', in MG Durham & DM Kellner (eds), *Media and Cultural Studies*, Blackwell Publishing Ltd, Oxford, 2001, p. 171.

S Hall, *This Means This, This Means That: A User's Guide to Semiotics*, Laurence King Publishing, UK, 2007.

E Ikegami, *The Taming of the Samurai: Honorific Individualism and the Making of Modern Japan*, Harvard University Press, 1995.

S Jones, 'Speech is Silver, Silence is Golden: The Cultural Importance of Silence in Japan', *ANU Undergraduate Research Journal*, vol. 3, 2011. *See also* Brown and Levison, Politeness Theory, 1978.

T Lebra, 'The Cultural Significance of Silence in Japanese Communication', *Identity, Gender, and Status in Japan: Collected Papers of Takie Lebra*, Folkestone, Kent, UK, Global Oriental, 2007.

Só Siochrú, 'Assessing Communication Rights: A Handbook', CRIS Campaign, September 2005.

J Suler, 'The Online Disinhibition Effect', *CyberPsychology & Behavior*, vol. 7, no. 3, 2004, © Mary Ann Liebert, Inc., pp. 321–6.

J Roy, 'New Ad Campaign Uses Popular Search Terms to Show How the World Really Feels About Women', *Time*, 18 October 2013.

K Viswanath & P Arora, 'Ethnic Media in the United States: An Essay on Their Role in Integration, Assimilation, and Social Control', *Mass Communication and Society*, vol. 3, no. 1, 2000.

H Zhou & T Zhang, 'Body Language in Business Negotiation', *International Journal of Business and Management*, vol. 3, no. 2, pp. 90–6.

Masterfile