

One way of introducing the issue of ethnocentrism is to point out to participants that Said, with his dark skin and curly hair, provides a very good definition of a “contrario” – someone whom most people in Europe would not consider “normal”. It is also important that, through the discussion, you help participants understand that cultural differences do not make people “better” or “worse” than others. You should point out that it is hard not to judge others without prejudice because we take our own cultural perspective as being “the norm”. To appreciate this – our own ethnocentrism – is an essential step towards recognising it in others, and to being able to communicate successfully with people of other cultures.

Leave extra time at the end of the activity so you have the flexibility to discuss further the issues and ideas which were raised. For example, you may wish to go into an analysis of, or discussion about, history teaching and how much (or how little) we in Europe actually learn about other cultures.

## Suggestions for follow-up

If you wish to go further with ideas about the universality of human rights, you could use the “Act it out” activity on page 94, which involves creativity and drama.

## Ideas for action

Look in papers and on the Internet for different versions of a current or historical event that took place in your country / community, and compare reports from different sides / interest groups. The website of Presse Europe is a good place to find news presented in different newspapers in different countries, available in different languages. [www.presseurope.eu/en](http://www.presseurope.eu/en)

Another source is Indymedia, a collective of independent media organizations and hundreds of journalists offering grassroots, non-corporate coverage. It is available in different languages. <http://www.indymedia.org/en/>

## Handouts

### All equal – all different quiz

#### a) What is the source of the following text? What book or document is it an extract from?

“All people on earth from the East to the West, from the North and from the South, constitute a single group; (they) differ in three distinct traits: behaviour, physical appearance and language.”

Choose one of the following answers:

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| a) The UNESCO declaration on racism, 1958  | e) Said Al-Andalusi, 1029 AD / 420 AH  |
| b) Herodotus “Travel notes”, 198 BCE   | f) Marco Polo in The Travels, 1300, CE |
| c) The Vedas, India, c.a. 3.000 BCE  | g) None of the above                   |
| d) Report of the “All Different - All Equal” youth campaign, Council of Europe, 1996 |  |

#### b) Which country/region of the world does the author of the following text comes from?

“Those who live in the extreme North (of Europe...) have suffered from being too far from the sun. Their air is cold and their skies are cloudy. As a result, their temperament is cool and their behaviour is rude. Consequently, their bodies have become enormous, their colour turned white, and their hair drooped down. They have lost keenness of understanding and sharpness of perception. They have been overcome by ignorance and laziness, and infested by fatigue and stupidity!”

Choose one of the following answers:

- |          |           |          |           |           |                      |
|----------|-----------|----------|-----------|-----------|----------------------|
| a) China | b) Europe | c) India | d) Africa | e) Persia | f) None of the above |
|----------|-----------|----------|-----------|-----------|----------------------|

### KEY DATE



5 May  
Europe Day



### Note

The excerpts are taken from the “Book of the Categories of Nations – Science in the Medieval World”, by Said al-Andalusi, translated by Sema’an I. Salem and Alok Kumar, University of Texas Press, Austin, 1991.