

Oxford Primary Social Studies



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My Place in the World



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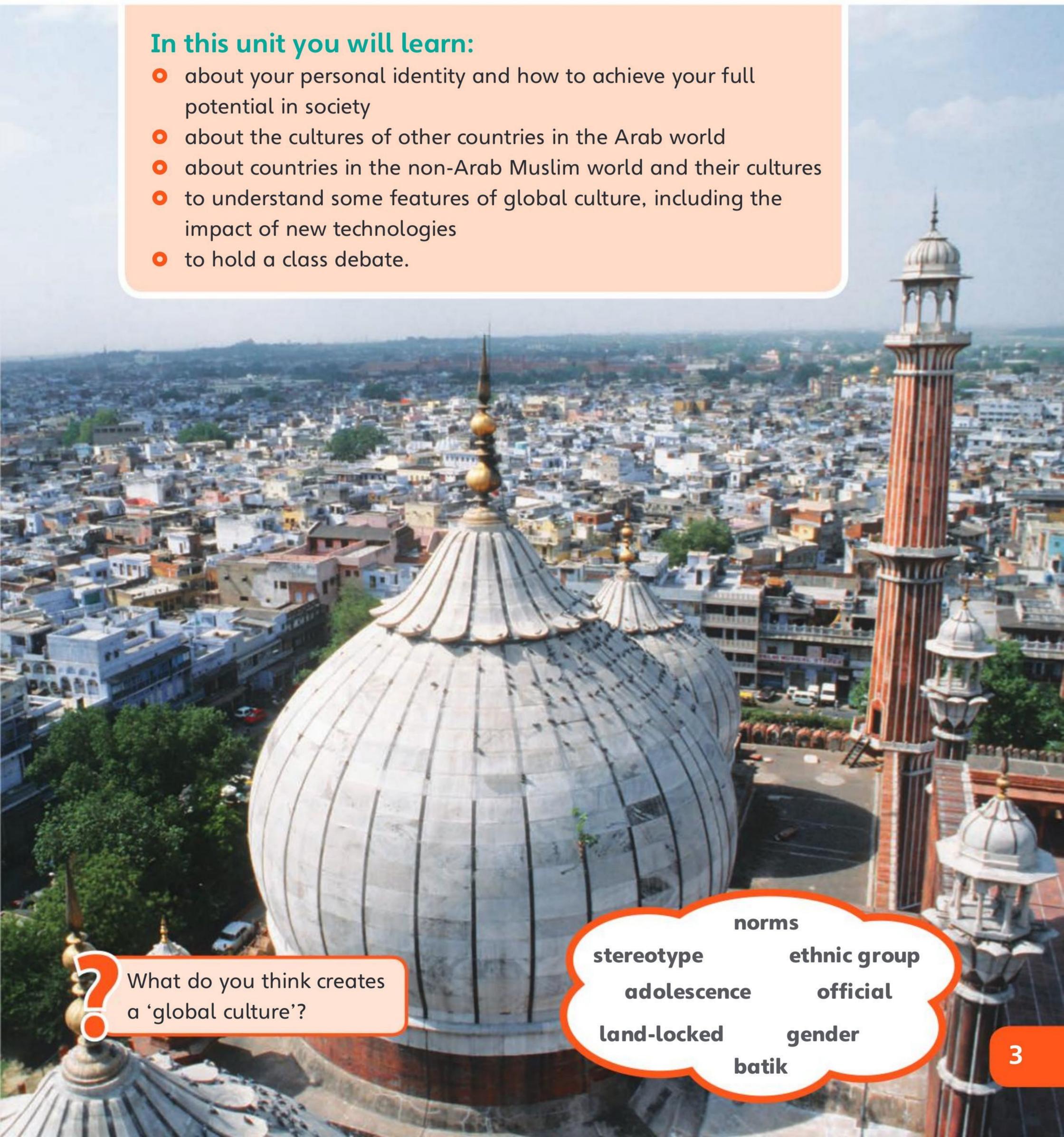
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1 Culture and identity

In this unit you will learn:

- about your personal identity and how to achieve your full potential in society
- about the cultures of other countries in the Arab world
- about countries in the non-Arab Muslim world and their cultures
- to understand some features of global culture, including the impact of new technologies
- to hold a class debate.



What do you think creates a 'global culture'?

norms
 stereotype ethnic group
 adolescence official
 land-locked gender
 batik

1.1 Personal identity 1

In this lesson you will learn:

- to identify some of the influences that help form a personal identity.

Identity and family

Our personal identity develops over time and many different factors contribute to the process. The way we think about ourselves is strongly influenced by the people with whom we have the closest relationships, especially our family. This is why good relationships within the family are so important. It is why parents should try hard to pass on to children from a young age positive values such as honesty, tolerance and respect.

Identity and gender

An individual's identity is also strongly influenced by his or her **gender**. In many societies men and women have been

understood to have quite different roles and responsibilities. For example, in some traditional societies and religious groups women were understood to be responsible for managing a household and bringing up children. The role was revered and seen as having great importance. In many traditional societies it was important for the man to be the 'head of the household', to be a decision-maker and to be the main provider. Today, many of these ideas about gender are changing and it is much more common for men to be actively engaged with rearing their children and to see women in important positions such as doctors, professors, business owners and government ministers.



▲ The roles given to people of different genders are changing.

Identity and race

A person's **ethnic** background or 'race' also has an important influence on identity formation. The idea of ethnic groups may look quite simple but is really very complex. At one level it is an example of how people attempt to understand the world. We divide everything up into categories and give things a name.

Ethnic groups are, however, more than this. We may be able to identify similar physical characteristics, for example in skin colour or body shape. We may even recognise, on top of these characteristics, other distinctive cultural elements, such as language and customs. We must

remember that each person within the group is an individual

This is important because, while an ethnic identity can be positive by providing a sense of identity, there can be a danger that an ethnic group is **stereotyped**. This means that all individuals in a group are assumed to have the same characteristics. Such stereotyping can mean that individuals are treated in a way that is based on their membership of the group rather than on their own personality, character or attributes. When this happens it is easy for relationships between ethnic groups to break down and to become full of distrust and hatred. Attitudes such as these can have terrible consequences such as conflict and war.



▲ These people are from different races. How much does that really tell us about them as people?

1.2 Personal identity 2

Identity and nationality

Most people understand that their **nationality** is to do with belonging to a nation. They understand that the nation they are referring to is defined by national borders.

Issues of nationality and identity have become more complex in modern times as movements of people within and between countries have increased. A result of this movement has been to see a greater mix of ethnic groups living within one country and therefore sharing the same nationality.



▲ In many societies today people from a number of different ethnic groups live together.

While it is good to feel a sense of belonging to a particular country and to experience a certain amount of pride in having a national identity, it is important to avoid this becoming a feeling of superiority, looking down on other nationals as inferior.

Identity and social groups

Outside of the family the people who have the biggest impact on us are the ones in the groups to which we belong. The closest of these groups are probably those based around friendships. As we mature and begin to recognise the things about ourselves, such as our temperament and personality, it is understandable that we seek out others who are similar. Once we identify our interests it is again understandable that we want to be with others whose interests are similar.

Identity and social institutions

Identity formation is partly achieved through understanding how we fit in to the society in which we live. The five basic social institutions that influence this process are the family, government, the economy, education and religion. These are found in one form or another in all human societies. You have seen already the important role the family has.

The government has control over how a country is ordered and how it operates.

We understand who we are as individuals partly in response to the way in which we are governed.

The economy is a system that creates employment opportunities and enables people to contribute to society. For many people their working role is an important part of their identity.

Education is one way in which knowledge, skills and attitudes are passed on from

one generation to the next. As individuals within a new generation receive this input, they will be influenced in how they understand themselves.

Religion is an important part of life and acts as a guiding principle for many. In Muslim countries Islam is the focus and guide for all activities and an obviously important part of a person's identity.



▲ An important part of identity in Muslim countries is the adherence to the Islamic faith.

Activity

Write about some of the influences you think there have been on the way you understand your own identity.

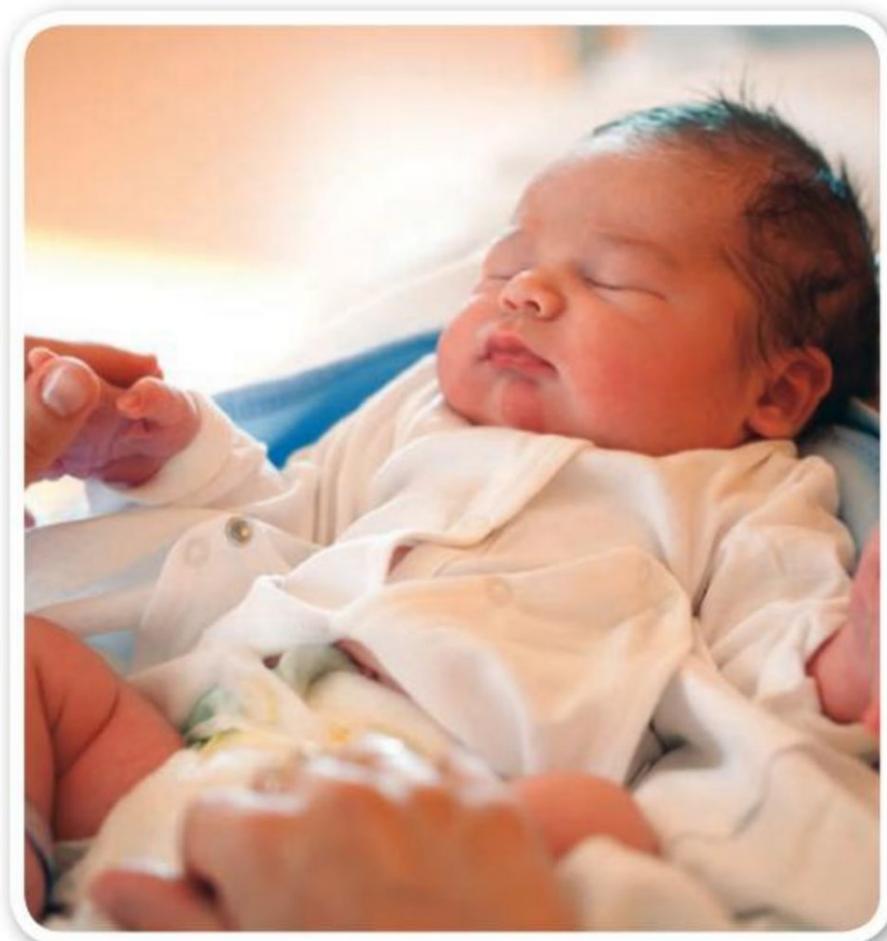
1.3 Achieving your potential

In this lesson you will learn:

- to identify personal gifts, talents and abilities
- to understand the importance of setting goals
- to understand the importance of self-esteem in achieving potential.

Potential is the name given to something that has a capacity to develop into something in the future. In physics, potential energy is the energy stored inside an object such as a charged battery. The potential energy is waiting to be released and to be used.

When we apply it to a person, it usually describes qualities and abilities that are 'stored' within that person. If a person hopes to achieve their full potential, they must use their natural gifts, talents and abilities.



▲ A human life contains a great deal of potential.

Knowing your potential

Making the most of your potential starts with identifying the gifts, talents and abilities you possess. Some of these will become clearer as you take part in different activities such as hobbies or sports. You may find that you have certain physical and mental skills that help you to carry out your chosen activity well. Your gift may be that you can analyse a situation accurately and act quickly. You may have the ability to critically assess what a person is saying, and determine whether or not you agree with his or her views. As well as skills or talents like these you may also find you have certain qualities such as perseverance or determination that help you to keep going with tasks even when things are difficult. You may have particular gifts in terms of dealing with people which allow you to make and keep positive and strong relationships, or that help you deal with situations of conflict.

Setting goals

Setting personal goals can sometimes help in achieving potential. These can be very long-term, as in a goal of becoming a doctor, or more short-term, as in achieving

good grades in an exam. Setting a long-term goal is helpful because the road to achieving that ultimate goal will be marked out with many smaller goals. Your long-term goal can motivate you to succeed in all the short-term goals along the way. The ultimate goal will also help to direct certain choices made, for example about which subjects need to be studied at different stages.

Self-esteem

To achieve your potential you need to have a strong sense of your own identity and of your value as a person. This will help you to understand that you also have a value to others and to society. You have the potential to make a contribution to creating a better and more positive world.



▲ Talent and practice are both important parts of achieving certain goals. The desire to achieve an ultimate goal can motivate us when we do not feel like putting in the practice.

Activity

Make a chart or diagram that shows the potential you have in terms of gifts, talents and abilities, the long-term and short-term goals you have and the way you feel about your ability to achieve your full potential.

1.4 Overcoming barriers

In this lesson you will learn:

- to identify barriers people can face as they try to fulfil their potential
- to identify ways in which people can overcome barriers and achieve their potential.

Did you know?

The person who holds the world record for the fastest-talking female spoke over 603 words in a minute.

There is a variety of possible barriers to achieving personal potential.

Barriers to communication

Relationships between people are at the heart of all we do and communicating is

an important part of good relationships. An obvious barrier to communication is when people do not speak the same language as one another. Another example is people who find talking difficult because they lack self-confidence.



Successful communication relies as much on listening as speaking. Barriers to listening include a lack of concentration and being easily distracted. People may also listen, but not hear what is being said. They may have set ideas or prejudices which stop them from being able to receive new or different ideas.

Barriers to learning

Learning is an essential part of achieving potential. This includes the informal learning from family and friends as well as learning that takes place in formal education. Barriers to learning can include a lack of encouragement from family and friends. A person's peer group may not have a positive attitude to learning and this can influence an individual's own views.

Some people have a low opinion of themselves and do not think they have much ability. Everyone should want to achieve all that they can, regardless of what other people are capable of doing.

In some cases people face physical challenges such as poor health or a disability. A person's diet and sleep patterns can also cause problems with learning.

It is also important for people to find out how they learn best. There are three main types of learning. Visual learners do best when using objects that they can see, such as graphs and illustrations, and the written words in front of them. Auditory learners do best by speaking and listening, answering the teacher's questions, working in discussion groups. Kinaesthetic learners do best with

practical activities and making things. Most people do best with a mixture of all three approaches.

Barriers to participation

People need to be able to take part in things if they are going to reach their potential. There can be barriers to participation for some people because of physical difficulties or cultural practice. There has been a great deal of improvement in recent years in helping more people participate fully in many aspects of life.



▲ In recent years, people with physical and mental impairments have been able to participate more fully in ordinary life.

Activity

Write about some of the barriers you think you face when it comes to achieving your potential and how you will overcome these.

1.5 Socialisation

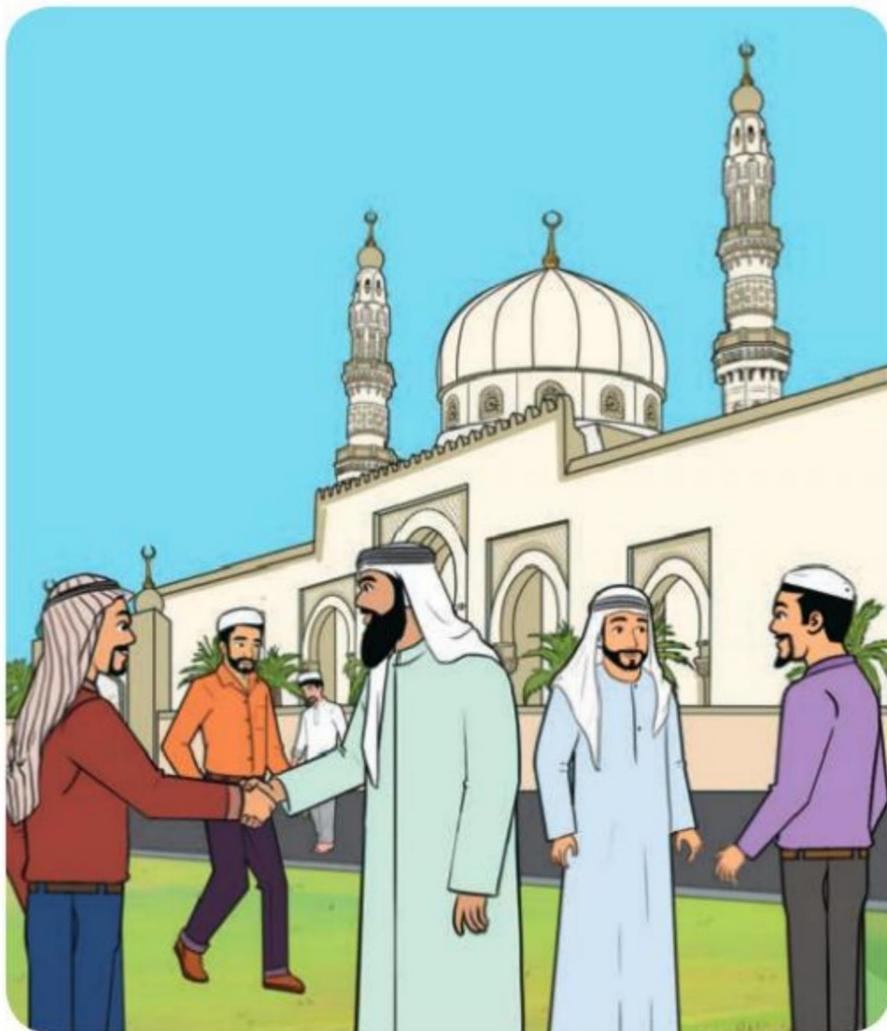
In this lesson you will learn:

- to identify aspects of the process of socialisation.

Socialisation

People usually grow up in one particular culture within a certain society. Everyone needs to learn about what guides the way people live in that culture. This learning takes place through a process known as socialisation, in which **norms**, customs, ideas, values and beliefs are passed on from one generation to another.

Socialisation also teaches children about the behaviours that are acceptable in society and about the idea of negative consequences of unacceptable behaviour.



▲ All societies have special features which people need to learn about.

Families and socialisation

Most socialisation takes place in families where parents and older siblings teach young children directly about the values and ideas that are important in the family and society. Views expressed by adults and elders can have a powerful effect on the formation of an individual's own views and opinions.

Adults and older family members pass on values, attitudes and behaviours indirectly through their own behaviour. Children witnessing kindness, respect and tolerance in the interactions within a family are more likely to adopt these attitudes themselves.

Peer groups

Socialisation also happens outside the family and a particularly important influence comes from an individual's peer group. A person's peers are those who are of a similar age and social position and who share similar interests. Children in peer groups can explore their own thoughts and feelings and form relationships away from the direct influence of their parents.

Peer groups become increasingly important as children grow and reach **adolescence**. This is a period when young people are establishing their own identity. They also