

# It All Begins With: You



## Overview

This lesson sets the stage for The QUESTION Project's 5-pillar journey with one central question: "Who am I?" Students develop an understanding of the changing nature of who they are, and make room for a deeper appreciation – that the extraordinary possibilities ahead are not just about *what we will do*, but also *who we will become*.

## Objective

- To engage students in exploring who they are.
- To realize that 'who we are' evolves and changes over time, and that we have agency in how this narrative unfolds.

## Materials Needed

- ✓ PRINT: copies of identity Chart handout at the end of the lesson plan (1 for each student)
- ✓ Student Notebooks and Glue Sticks
- ✓ Blackboard or Whiteboard (Note: most lessons require a blackboard; please have one available in the room for each lesson).
- ✓ Load "Who Am I?" video, to be ready in case you have time at the end.

## Set-up

- ✓ Chairs: in a circle
- ✓ Notebooks: Yes
- ✓ Write title on the board

## Lesson Outline



### Introduction

00:00–00:05

5 minutes

Welcome students and let them know that today we will begin our QUEST. The last four introductory sessions laid the groundwork for this course together. Today's class begins the pillar of Choice.

Express these main points in your own words:

- *The journey of this class begins with you. Today we are going to ask a big question: who are you?*
- *This is a difficult question – there are a number of different ways we can answer it. As we go forward today we will make room for many of these answers.*
- *Additionally, our exploration will take into account the fact that 'who we are' changes and evolves over time.*



## Video

00:05–00:15

10 minutes

Introduce and play the video, “Who Am I?” by Ted Ed, to paint a picture of this complex question. **Video Description** (Time: 04:58): This short video takes viewers on a journey into the question, who am I? Using animated characters, it traces the subject of identity through history – from ancient Greek philosophers to poets and modern-day thinkers.

After the video, summarize the main points in your own words (note: this video can be a little complex for some students). Explain that just as the wooden planks of the ship were replaced with new wooden planks, each of them (the students) will go through life with new experiences and opportunities that shape who they are. In a big sense, we are much like the Ship of Theseus.



## Notebook Exercise

00:05–00:15

10 minutes

Distribute the handout, Identity Chart, to each student. Pass out a few glue sticks and ask that they glue these into their notebooks (they can continue to do this as you move through the activity). Explain that we are going to fill these out in order to uncover a few aspects about who we are.

### Who Am I?

My citizenship, race, gender, age, group, belonging	
What I like, dislike	
What I think is important	
What inspires me	
My dreams	
Miscellaneous <i>(List any aspects of who you are that haven't already been covered by these 5 categories. These can be deeper aspects (i.e. personality traits, mysterious or “unknown” parts of yourself, etc.)</i>	

Fig. 1: Identity Chart

Guide students through each row of the table, one by one, providing examples of things they might list under each. Give students 2-3 minutes to fill in each row before moving on to the next.

As you conclude this exercise, explain that this Chart takes us from concrete ways of defining who we are (i.e. our race, gender, age) to the deeper, less concrete ones (our dreams, inspirations, and unknown parts of ourselves).



## Class Co-Creative Discussion

00:15–00:20

5 minutes

Tell students to choose one thing from their chart that they feel comfortable sharing. Ask one volunteer to share first, and then make your way around the circle so that each voice is heard.

Segue into the next exercise with a few main points:

- 🗨️ *'Who we are' is made of many different aspects; some may be deeper than others, but all are important.*
- 🗨️ *There are things about 'who we are' that we all share (give examples) and there are things about 'who we are' that are beautifully unique and diverse (give examples).*



## Notebook Exercise

00:20–00:30

10 minutes

Express in your own words:

- 🗨️ *'Who we are' is going to change and evolve over time. If you compare yourself today to who you were 10 years ago -- or the person you will be in 15 years -- there would be some pretty big differences!*
- 🗨️ *Think back to when you were younger, 5 years old, 8, 10 or 13 years old. Did you like to do the same things that you do now? Did you hang out with the same people? Did you think or feel the same way?*

Tell students that we are going to take our Identity Charts one step further by looking at the parts of who we are that may change over time and the parts that may stay the same.

Draw a Venn diagram on the board with the categories: "Has changed," "Stays the same," "Will change." (See the image below as an example of a complete diagram).

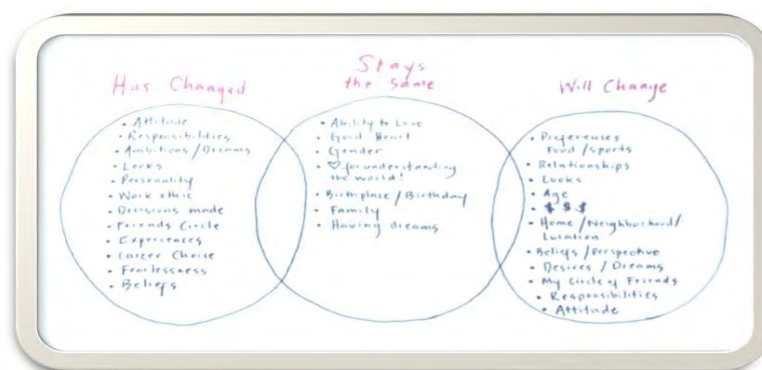


Fig. 2: Sample of completed exercise on the blackboard

As a class, fill in the diagram using points students wrote in their Identity Charts as well as new and original ideas. Guide the discussion so that students flush out their ideas and understand that who they are has changed – and will continue to change – as they grow and approach new life opportunities and obstacles.



## Class Co-Creative Discussion

00:30–00:40  
10 minutes

Facilitate a discussion based on the Venn diagram exercise, using the questions below as a launching point. Remember that discussions are co-creative and can develop into something greater, but should remain within today's theme on the complexity of who we are.

1. What does this Venn diagram say about who we are? What kind of conclusions can we gather?
2. Is there a core (constant thing) that makes us...us? If so, what is in this core?
3. If we are capable of changing over time, what kinds of things are possible?



## Wrap-Up

00:40–00:45  
5 minutes

Express these points in your own words:

- *Today we saw that there are different ways of looking at 'who we are.'*
- *You indicated that some were more important to you than others (give examples).*
- *Through our discussions today, we saw that 'who we are' is not fixed in stone. We have many choices, every day, to change, grow, and discover.*
- *...Which means that the extraordinary possibilities ahead are not just about what we will do, but also who we will become.*

If there is extra time in the class period, play this [TEDxTalk](#) (03:35 - end) by performance artist Hetain Patel, titled "Who Am I? Think Again." Collect students' notebooks and rearrange desks.