

Ethnicity and achievement patterns - Knowledge Organiser

RFTS-AQA-AL-SOC-7192-EDU-L019 • Independent study and retrieval

Essential concepts

Concept	Meaning	Exam use
Ethnicity	A socially constructed identity/category linked to ancestry, culture, history and belonging.	Name the exact category used by the evidence.
Disaggregation	Breaking a broad category into more detailed groups.	Use subgroup contrasts to avoid false generalisations.
Intersectionality	Analysing overlapping social positions such as ethnicity, class and gender.	Use class/gender comparisons to qualify claims.
Ecological fallacy	Assuming a group-level pattern describes every individual in the group.	Explain why averages do not define individuals.
Attainment 8	Average achievement across up to eight qualifications at KS4.	Describe the measure before interpreting it.

Evidence anchors

Evidence	What it shows	Caution
2022/23 detailed A8	Chinese 65.5; Indian 59.4; White British 44.9; Black Caribbean 40.0; Gypsy/Roma 20.3.	Describes outcomes, not causes.
Within broad groups	Black African 48.7 vs Black Caribbean 40.0; White Irish 50.7 vs White British 44.9.	Broad labels conceal heterogeneity.
Gender	Girls scored higher than boys in almost every detailed ethnic group shown.	Gender intersects with ethnicity.
FSM	All selected groups show lower A8 for FSM-eligible pupils.	FSM is an imperfect deprivation proxy and gaps differ by group.
2024/25 headline release	Recent major-group trends moved in different directions compared with 2023/24 and 2018/19.	Always date the evidence.

Reasoning checklist

1. Describe the pattern accurately.
2. Disaggregate before generalising.
3. Ask which other variables intersect.
4. Distinguish correlation from mechanism.

5. Identify evidence that would test rival explanations.
6. Give a qualified judgement.

Common misconceptions

Misconception	Correction
“Asian pupils do well.”	Detailed Asian groups have different average outcomes.
“Ethnicity causes attainment.”	Ethnicity is a social category; sociologists must identify mechanisms.
“EAL means low attainment.”	The 2024/25 headline data do not show this; EAL is heterogeneous.
“Averages describe individuals.”	Avoid ecological fallacy.