

Ethnicity and achievement patterns - Learner Workbook

RFTS-AQA-AL-SOC-7192-EDU-L019 • 90-minute lesson • Interpret heterogeneous attainment patterns and distinguish ethnicity from other variables.

Learning objective and enquiry

Interpret heterogeneous attainment patterns and distinguish ethnicity from other variables.

Enquiry: What can ethnicity patterns tell us - and what can't they tell us?

Connect & Check

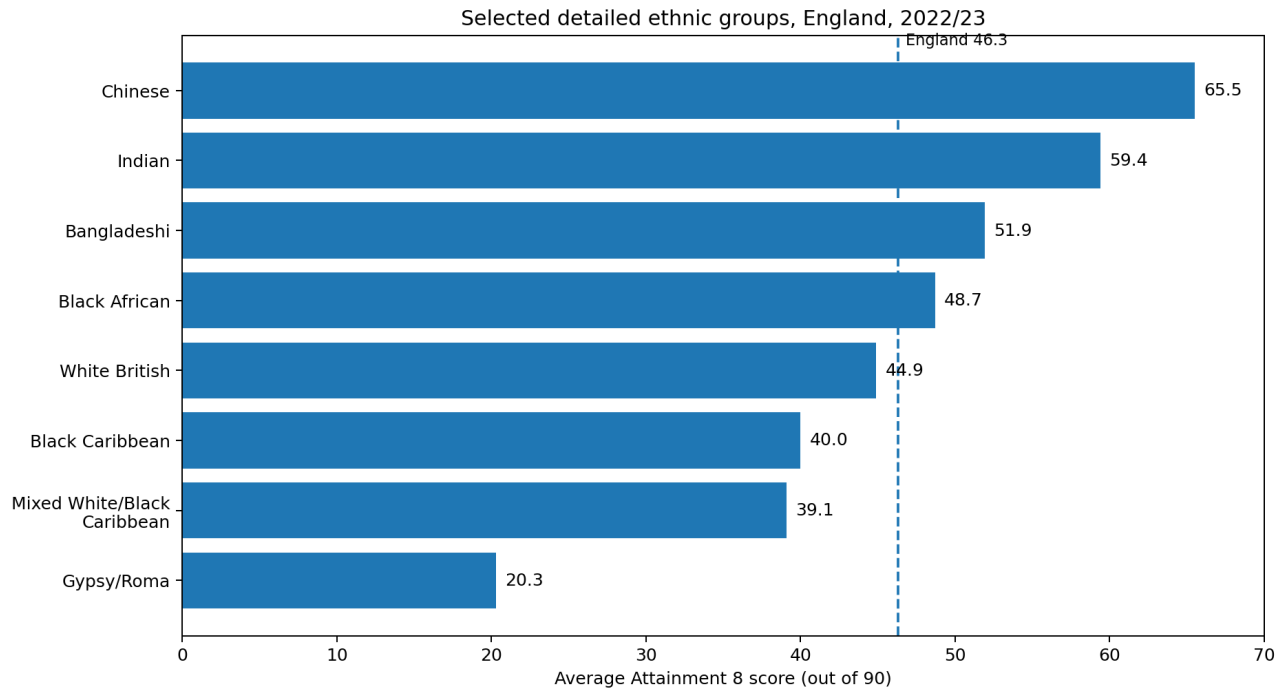
1. What is the difference between a pattern and an explanation?
2. Why can a group average hide important differences?
3. Define social class as a variable in education research.
4. Why should gender be considered alongside ethnicity?
5. What does attainment measure?
6. What evidence would be needed before claiming ethnicity caused an outcome?

Share: observation, inference, explanation

Complete the table using the official evidence display in the lesson.

What can you observe?	What would be an unsafe inference?	What evidence would test an explanation?

Evidence display: detailed Attainment 8 patterns



Source: GOV.UK Ethnicity facts and figures, England, 2022/23. Attainment 8 is scored out of 90.

Disaggregate the categories

Broad category	Examples of detailed groups	What changes when we disaggregate?
Asian	Chinese 65.5; Indian 59.4; Bangladeshi 51.9; Pakistani 47.0	
Black	Black African 48.7; Black Caribbean 40.0; other Black 44.3	
Mixed	White/Asian 51.7; White/Black African 46.4; White/Black Caribbean 39.1	
White	White British 44.9; White Irish 50.7; Gypsy/Roma 20.3; Irish Traveller 26.8	

Intersection 1: gender

Group	Boys	Girls	What does this add to your interpretation?
Chinese	63.6	67.6	
Black African	45.3	52.0	
Black Caribbean	36.0	43.8	
White British	42.8	47.1	

Intersection 2: FSM eligibility

Group	FSM	Not FSM	Gap
Chinese	60.3	65.9	5.6
Black African	44.7	50.7	6.0
Pakistani	42.2	48.9	6.7
Black Caribbean	35.3	43.1	7.8
White British	30.9	48.6	17.7

What can this table suggest? What can it not prove?

Pattern is not cause

Stage	Your wording
Describe the pattern	
Identify a rival/intersecting variable	
State evidence needed to test the explanation	
Give a qualified judgement	

Choose a learner route

Route	Task
Access	Use definitions and sentence starters to compare two groups, then add one class or gender variable.
Scaffold	Compare Black African and Black Caribbean attainment and one FSM pair; plan a cautious paragraph.
Core	Use three detailed groups and one intersecting variable to explain why broad categories can mislead.
Stretch	Assess whether ethnicity is an explanatory variable or a marker for other processes; specify an evidence test.

Six-mark classroom assessment

Explain two reasons why broad ethnic categories may conceal important differences in educational attainment. [6 marks]

Ten-mark item-based assessment

Item A: Official data show substantial differences within broad ethnic categories. They also show attainment differences within the same ethnic group by gender and by eligibility for free school meals.

Applying material from Item A, analyse two reasons why patterns of educational attainment by ethnicity should be interpreted cautiously. [10 marks]

Check	Your evidence
AO1 - accurate concept/statistic	
AO2 - precise application	
AO3 - analysis/alternative/judgement	
WWW	
EBI	
Next step	
