

Ethnicity and achievement patterns - Teacher Guide and Answers

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

Lesson rationale

This lesson is deliberately evidence-led. It establishes the pattern before L020 and L021 move into internal and external explanations. The central disciplinary move is to prevent learners from treating an administrative ethnic category as a causal explanation.

Timing and Learning Cycle

Time	Stage	Purpose	Evidence of learning
0-8	Connect & Check	Retrieve pattern/explanation and variable thinking.	Corrected retrieval.
8-18	Share	Separate observation from inference.	Three-column evidence note.
18-43	Present	Teach disaggregation, intersectionality, data limits and official statistics.	Annotated data and model reasoning.
43-65	Apply	Learner route choice; all routes reach a common cautious judgement.	Analytical paragraph/plan.
65-80	Assessment	Mini-test plus 6- or 10-mark practice.	Marked response.
80-90	Recall & Review	AO self-assessment, exit evidence, next-step preparation.	Exit response.

Key teaching points

- Use “ethnic group” as the DfE data category; distinguish ethnicity from nationality and from race.
- Disaggregate before generalising. The detailed 2022/23 table is used because it exposes within-major-group variation clearly.
- Use 2024/25 major-group trends to reinforce that patterns change over time and evidence must be dated.
- Use gender/FSM intersections to show that ethnicity is not an isolated variable.
- Do not teach a deficit cultural explanation in this lesson. L020 and L021 develop mechanisms and competing explanations.

Expected responses and misconceptions

Likely issue	Teacher response
“Asian pupils are high achievers.”	Ask which Asian groups. Require at least two detailed-group figures.
“EAL causes higher scores.”	Stress association, heterogeneity and selection.
“Ethnicity causes the gap.”	Ask for the mechanism and evidence that distinguishes it from class/school processes.
“The average applies to everyone.”	Teach ecological fallacy and within-group variation.
“FSM explains everything.”	FSM is a proxy and its gaps differ across groups; it intersects with rather than replaces ethnicity.

Route guidance

Route	Support	Teacher questioning
Access	Definitions, one highlighted pair, sentence starter.	What does the statistic show? What does it not show?
Scaffold	Selected Black-group comparison plus FSM pair.	Why does this weaken a broad-group claim?
Core	Independent selection of three groups.	Which variable changes your interpretation most?
Stretch	Ethnicity as explanatory variable vs social marker; ecological fallacy.	What evidence would discriminate between rival mechanisms?

Assessment guidance

Use the separate six-mark and ten-mark guidance documents. For all responses, reward accurate dated evidence, precise application and explanations of inference limits. Challenge deterministic or racialised claims even when the statistical description is accurate.

WWW / EBI feedback bank

Development	WWW	EBI
Developing	You selected a relevant group comparison.	Explain why that comparison changes the conclusion.
Secure	You used disaggregation/intersectionality accurately.	Add evidence that would test the rival explanation.
Advanced	You evaluated the data source and causal inference precisely.	Make the final judgement conditional: state when the claim would be stronger or weaker.

Source notes

- AQA requires study of differential educational achievement by ethnicity in contemporary society and attention to evidence/research methods.
- Detailed 2022/23 Attainment 8 data are used for subgroup comparisons; recent 2024/25 DfE data are used for trend context.

- Progress 8 is not available for 2024/25 because the relevant KS2 baseline was unavailable following pandemic test cancellations.