

## Multicultural society

*A multicultural society has a lot in common with migration. For years people have been moving from one part of the world to another to find a better place to live or reach their goals. Due to the migrations of different cultures and races, we now have our modern multicultural societies. The United States, Canada, Australia and the Netherlands, Britain, Spain and France in Europe are the biggest multicultural societies.*

A multicultural society is a society where people of different races, cultures, traditions and religions live, work and communicate with each other with mutual respect for the benefit of all of them. There are many multicultural societies all over the world where communities live in peace with each other, but in some countries this is sometimes not the case. There are different types of multicultural societies. We can divide them into ones where different groups of people live together in the same neighbourhood and societies where different groups live in the same country but live in a neighbourhood with their “own kind of people.” The United Kingdom has welcomed newcomers for centuries. It is a mixture of diverse ethnic groups, each with their own distinct culture and sometimes their own language or religion. Many British Muslims celebrate, for example, Ramadan. Today about two million Muslims live in Great Britain, and their growing number has resulted in the establishment of more than 1,500 mosques. The term “Asian” refers to all people with roots or family connections in the former British colonies of India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka. Some are Hindus and others are Sikhs. These two groups celebrate the festival of Diwali on November 6th. With such a great variety of inhabitants coming from different parts of the world, London is considered to be a cosmopolitan city. However, it is a little bit different in New York. New York is also cosmopolitan but not so mixed. Nationalities stay in their own areas, for example, the Russians in the Russian section, and the Polish in the Polish section. The area where many Chinese people live and where you can find many Chinese shops and restaurants is called Chinatown. America has

always been a “melting pot” in which many diverse cultures are mixed together and have been transformed into a single great American culture in the end. The USA prefers the process of assimilation or social integration, and so they encourage immigrants to take pride in America and become “Americanized.” Living in a multicultural society has some advantages. Multiculturalism gives members of the cultures that are brought together a taste of what the others have to offer. As people come together, different ideas are shared and people can learn things from cultures that they would not have known about at all if there had not been more than one culture in their society. People can get to know new traditions, cuisine, music and fashion as well. As with most things in life, there are positives and negatives to multiculturalism. Social, ethnic and religious tensions, prejudice, discrimination, racism and ethnocentrism are among the most prominent negatives.

In Slovakia we live with different cultures as well. Out of a total population of 5 million, there are over half a million Hungarians living in the south of Slovakia, and minority groups of Ruthenian and Ukrainian origins live in the East. The Gypsy minority group are spread throughout Slovakia, and their numbers are rising rapidly. The Gypsy minority groups get a lot of attention as they often say that they are treated unfairly. Unfortunately, this causes tension between Slovaks and Gypsies, but we also have to mention that there are a number of projects to help integrate this ethnic group into our society.

**Answer the questions:**

1. What is cultural assimilation?
2. Do you live in a multicultural environment?
3. What are the problems resulting from multiculturalism?
4. How can you benefit from multiculturalism?
5. Are you and your family tolerant and open to other cultures? In what ways?