

DataHaven

Classroom Materials

Title of Material: Generations: How We Differ

Topics Discussed: Generational differences, generational values

Skills Utilized: Reading skills, annotations, graph analysis, reflection questions

Format: Individual or in small groups, discuss as a class

In Person or Online: Either

Procedure/Instruction Suggestions:

Students can also draw what their generation generally looks like, which can be a fun and relaxing closing to an activity. It's also interesting to discuss why they drew their generation a certain way, and compare it to the other conclusions they made about characteristics, beliefs, and values of each generation.

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2020

Generations: How We Differ

Part I

We as people love to label ourselves and others; one way that we do that is through the idea of **generations**. Depending on the year you were born, you are considered a part of the Silent Generation, the Baby Boomers, Generation X, the Millennials, or Generation Z. These groups are not only in the same age group, but they have **common experiences**. This is how we define what generation someone is a part of!

After you finish reading about the other generations currently alive in the United States, fill out what you think defines the “Generation Z” generation and continue onto the next page.

“The Silent Generation”: born between 1925 - 1944. Their common experiences include growing up during the Great Depression and World War II. During this time, children were expected to be respectful to everyone and many had jobs and responsibilities very early due to the economic troubles and the war. Their common values are respect, hard work, and never being wasteful.

“The Baby Boomers”: born between 1945 - 1964. Their common experiences include being a part of the population “boom” that took place after World War II, hence the name. They are largely associated with having the privilege of growing up in the stable economy after World War II and the Great Depression ended and benefitting from the new social programs. They were teenagers and young adults during the hippy era, the Civil Rights Movement, the Vietnam War, the Cold War, and other major social changes and historical events. They value American traditionalism and hard work.

“Generation X”: born between 1965 - 1974. Their common experiences include growing up with less restrictive parenting trends; their mothers held jobs at a higher rate than past generations, they saw increased divorce rates, and enjoyed things like MTV and music like hip hop and grunge. They also grew up during a health (HIV) and drug (crack cocaine) crisis. They also value hard work and often find themselves lost between the Baby Boomers and the Millennials; think middle child syndrome.

“Millennials”: born 1975 - 1996. Their common experiences include having technology but not growing up with it, remembering events like 9/11 and the beginning of the 2000’s, and being held to high work expectations. They are commonly seen as lazy and the “snowflake” generation that gets offended over everything. They face rising costs of living without an increase in wages and issues like student debt and concerns of affording to start a family at the traditional age. They are concerned with self building, common in generations that are poorer than their parents’ generation. They are known to be critical of the Boomers.

“Generation Z”: 1997 - present day. Common characteristics/experiences include...

Part II

According to the Pew Research Center, “an individual’s age is one of the most common predictors of differences in attitudes and behaviors. On issues ranging from foreign affairs to social policy, age differences in attitudes can be some of the widest and most illuminating. Age denotes two important characteristics about an individual: their place in the life cycle – whether a young adult, middle-aged parent or retiree – and their membership in a cohort of individuals who were born at a similar time”

Read through [this article](#) on generational divides. Pick one of the graphs that show the differences in the American generations. Then, answer the questions below.

1. Chosen graph: _____
2. What can you conclude about the different generations based upon the data your chosen graph shows?
3. What decisions or observations could potentially be made using this data?
4. Why is collecting data like this important?