

Study Guide for the Australian Collaboration Fact and Issue Sheet

A MULTICULTURAL AUSTRALIA

FOR REVIEW

1. Multiculturalism: Meanings and definitions

1a. What is the meaning and origin of the term “multiculturalism”?

1b. Would it be accurate to describe Australia as a multicultural society? Why or why not? (Provide at least three reasons here.)

2. The development of multiculturalism in Australian history

2a. What was the White Australia Policy?

2b. What were the aims of this policy?

2c. What were some of the reasons behind the development of this policy?

2d. In what period was the policy active?

2e. In what decade(s) did multiculturalism, both as an ideal and a reality, begin to take hold in Australia?

2f. In what ways did this shift towards multiculturalism manifest itself?

2g. What are some of the principles of multiculturalism as it has been defined both during and since this period?

3. Recent developments in multiculturalism in Australia

3a. Name some of the ways in which multiculturalism, both conceptually and in practice, has been challenged in recent years.

3b. How have these strains been reflected in public opinion? Is there still a broad consensus about the desirability of multiculturalism in Australia or are there dissenting views? Similarly, is it widely held that multiculturalism has been successful in Australia?

FOR DISCUSSION

1. What are the positives and/or negatives of multiculturalism as you understand it, both as a set of values and as a set of practices? Has it, on the whole, been a positive influence in Australia, and should we continue to pursue its aims in the future?

2. In what ways can the ideals of multiculturalism be advanced and in what ways can they be undermined by various actors (for instance, by governments and by the media)? What role do historical events and circumstances play in setting the ground for changes in public attitudes and approaches to multiculturalism?

3. While many consider that Australian society is currently quite cohesive and relatively free of ethnic tension, the arrival of various waves of migrants since the end of World War II did not occur without varying degrees of controversy and consternation within the existing community. Are the anxieties surrounding Islamic immigration since September 11 simply the same as those that surrounded other waves of migration in the past, or are they different? In what ways? How might these tensions be resolved?

FOR RESEARCH

1. See if you can find two surveys examining the attitudes of Australians to multiculturalism and multicultural issues. Would you say that multiculturalism is working in Australia? Refer to specific forms of evidence in your answer.

2. The fact sheet refers to a number of both government and non-government bodies which work to promote multiculturalism or are responsible for managing multicultural affairs in Australia. Use the internet to find out more about these or any other relevant bodies. When were they founded? Who are they supported by? What do they do?

3. Use the internet or any of works listed in the Useful Sources section, plus the internet, to learn more about one other multicultural country. Is this country similar to Australia in terms of its diversity? Has multiculturalism in this country, as in Australia, been challenged in recent years? What have been the issues and problems faced by this country in terms of its multiculturalism, and how have people responded to these problems?