

Lesson

Monday

# Introduction to Programming

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### / Git, HTML and CSS (/introduction-to-programming/git-html-and-css)

### / Homework: Social Identities

Text

This lesson is part of our regular Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion curriculum. In fact, it's our very first lesson! This week, we will cover social identities.

## Social Identities and Diversity

Learning about social identities will help us understand what diversity looks like. **Diversity** refers to the traits and characteristics that make us different from one another. Traditionally, the tech industry has skewed heavily white and male. Bringing diversity to the tech industry means hiring and retaining people of color, women, LGBTQ, people with disabilities, and other marginalized populations. These groups also leave tech jobs at a much higher rate than white men, and diversity means addressing this higher attrition rate as well.

As we learn about social identities in this lesson, we ask you to reflect on your own social identities. This reflection will contribute to building personal self awareness and sensitivity to others social identities. This itself will lay the foundation with which we can hold space for ourselves and others in our DEI discussions.

# What are Social Identities?

According to this article from Northwestern University (<https://www.northwestern.edu/searle/initiatives/diversity-equity-inclusion/social-identities.html>):

An individual's social identity indicates who they are in terms of the groups to which they belong. Social identity groups are usually defined by some physical, social, and mental characteristics of individuals. Examples of social identities are race/ethnicity, gender, social class/socioeconomic status, sexual orientation, (dis)abilities, and religion/religious beliefs.

Our different identities have different impacts on our lives. For example, the article reports that:

Research... shows that students from less privileged and resourced backgrounds often face challenges academically and socially adjusting to college. Students who self-identify with lower socioeconomic groups report feeling less of a sense of belonging to the university culture and community, feeling less academically prepared, attend fewer office hours, and express more intentions of leaving school relative to their more affluent peers....

Finally, the article notes that:

Students have multiple social identities. Some students' social identities are attached to multiple privileged groups (e.g., heterosexual White male), multiple marginalized groups (e.g., bisexual Latinx gender non-conformist), or both privileged (e.g., upper-middle class) and marginalized (e.g., Black) groups. For most individuals, their multiple identities do not function independently. Rather, the two identities interlock and relate to the overall functioning of the self.

A separate article by Dr. Saul McLeod (<https://www.simplypsychology.org/social-identity-theory.html>) also notes that our social identities often lead us to "see the group to which we belong (the in-group) as being different from the others (the out-group), and members of the same group as being more similar than they are. Social categorization is one explanation for prejudiced attitudes."

Take a moment to think about your social identities. Which ones are more hidden (like class or religion), and which ones are more obvious (like race or gender)? If you're not sure where to start, consider your race, gender, age, class, ability, sexual orientation, religion, and immigration status.

## Ready to Write Your Reflection?

There is a reflective assignment for this lesson. If you are ready to write your reflection, head on over to Epicenter to find the prompt. If you are logged in to Epicenter, you can access the prompt by navigating to this link:

 **Reflection Prompt: Social Identities**  
(<https://epicenter.epicodus.com/journals?title=Social+Identities>)

Otherwise, you can find detailed instructions on accessing the reflection prompts in the DEI Reflective Assignments (<https://www.learnhowtoprogram.com/introduction-to-programming/getting-started-at-epicodus/dei-reflective-assignments#finding-the-reflection-prompts>) lesson.

## Do you have feedback?

At the end of each DEI lesson, you'll find this section. We want to hear about your experience of the DEI curriculum. We outline all of the ways you can give feedback in the student handbook

(<https://www.learnhowtoprogram.com/introduction-to-programming/getting-started-at-epicodus/student-handbook#giving-feedback>).

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