

 

**The Privilege Walk**

**Purpose:** The privilege walk is designed to help students understand the concept of privilege and how it can be connected with race, wealth, gender, sexual orientation and physical and mental wellbeing.

**Instructions:** Print and cut various characters and place them in a bag/ box. Ask students to randomly pick one and stand in a long horizontal line. Participants should then imagine that they are their character.

The facilitator of the activity (usually a teacher) will then ask a series of questions to the participants. The participants will be asked to move forwards if the question is associated with privilege and they will be asked to take a step back if the question indicates an obstacle associated with the lack of privilege.

After all the questions are asked students are asked to look around them and reflect on the position of all the participants. The facilitator asks some students in the front, middle and back about their roles and why they think that they are in this position.

Finally, the students are asked about their thoughts, whether they think that the walk represents life and whether they themselves associated with the privileges and/or difficulties described.

**General Tips:**

The facilitator should keep the last part (the association to self and the world) general if the students in question are younger and if the group is very big; personal questions in this case may evoke negative emotions in the students and put them in a defensive position which will have a negative effect on the activity.

A large space is needed so the participants can move around freely.

**Characters:**

1. You are a straight, white, middle class male
2. You are a divorced working class mother with two young children. Your ex- partner is not involved with the raising of your children
3. You are a straight, white, middle class woman
4. You are an orphaned Syrian refugee living in a camp
5. You are a homeless young man, 27 years old.
6. You are a Member of the EU Parliament
7. You are a 17-year-old Roma (Gypsy) girl who never finished primary school.
8. You are a mixed race successful businessman
9. You are a Muslim living in the UK. You own a small shop and make a decent living for you and your family.
10. You are the son of a Chinese immigrant who runs a successful fast food business.
11. You are the 19-year-old son of a farmer in a remote village in the mountains.
12. You are the daughter of the US ambassador to Spain
13. You are the president of a party-political youth organisation (whose “mother” party is now in power).
14. You are a wealthy distant relative of the Swedish royal family
15. You are an undocumented migrant who is unable to legally work. You have a job as a delivery boy but are afraid the immigration office could find out.
16. You are a gay student who attends a Catholic school and has been brought up in a religious family
17. You are a European citizen of Jewish descent. Your family is middle class.
18. You are a lawyer. Although your family was very poor you received a scholarship to study at Oxford University and then found a job at a law firm. You still had to work part time while studying to cover some of your expenses. You regularly help your family out financially.
19. You are a young man working for a mechanic. Your parents gave you up for adoption and you changed several foster homes growing up.
20. You are the daughter of a very poor family. You want to study at university but have delayed that decision to work and save money for university.
21. You are the son of an Iraqi migrant living in the UK. You are bright but receive average grades in school.
22. You are a young Latina from a middle class family living in the US. People are shocked to hear that you want to be an architect.
23. You are a lower middle class employee who just lost his job because the company went bankrupt
24. You are a former victim of human trafficking living in a safe house in Denmark.
25. You are a young woman studying biochemistry at university. Both your parents have prestigious, high paying jobs.
26. You are a Mexican migrant living in the US. Although you have a degree in psychology your English isn’t good enough to work there. You work in a restaurant as a server instead.
27. You are the child of an addict who is frequently unemployed
28. You are an artist who suffers from mental illness. Your insurance and country’s health system covers physical but not mental illnesses.
29. You are a programmer. Your parents paid for your private school, university tuition and paid your first rent until you received your first salary. The company you work for is owned by a family friend.
30. You are a drama graduate. Although your dream is to become an actor in the meantime you work at a clothing store. Your family helped you with your university fees but you still have a small student loan that you have to repay.
31. You are a talented, famous Bollywood actor
32. You are a mixed race girl from a lower middle class family. You are the only person of mixed heritage to attend your school.
33. You are a disabled young man who can only move in a wheelchair.
34. You are a famous athlete. You are wealthy and popular but have had to hide your sexual orientation
35. You are a famous actress that was sexually harassed in the beginning of her career
36. You are an ex convict arrested for drug possession. You are now living with a relative until you are able to find a job and afford to pay rent.
37. You are an African American boy living in Chicago. Your family is middle class but many of your friends are less fortunate than you.
38. You are a young man with down syndrome. You want to become a special needs teacher.
39. You are a 22 year old lesbian living in Sweden
40. You are the son of a multimillionaire. You are taking a gap year to travel and figure out what you want to do in the future.
41. You are a lesbian living in Cyprus. Your family is very religious. Hiding your sexual orientation has led to severe depression.
42. You are a successful doctor from Algeria working in France
43. You are a young man who has inherited a huge debt from his family.
44. You are a young woman who just graduated business school. Your family is very wealthy. They bought you a flat and gave you 200,000 euros to start your dream business
45. You are an adolescent in juvenile detention.
46. You are an asylum seeker from Somalia. You are currently in Cyprus. While your application is being processed you can’t work.
47. You are a middle aged woman who is a civil servant. The government announced salary cuts which left you unable to pay back your loans. The bank has now taken possession of your home.
48. You are a young boy living in a dangerous neighbourhood. You want to be a vet when you grow up so you spend a lot of time studying.
49. You are a war veteran who works in a hardware store. You frequently face depressive episodes and have been diagnosed with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder.
50. You are a middle aged man who works in a factory. You recently found out that your mother is suffering from dementia and needs to be taken to an old person’s home. You also have two children. Your youngest is autistic and needs to go to a special school. There are no public options so you must pay for a private school.
51. You are a survivor of physical abuse. As a child you were abused by members of your own family. You work two jobs to provide for your younger siblings who you have custody of.
52. You are a young Muslim living in France. Your school has forbidden the hijab which you wear.
53. You are a stay at home mom. You decided to stay home and look after your young children after realizing that you couldn’t afford day care for them.
54. You are the daughter of a refugee. Your parents both work two jobs.

**Questions:**

1. If you never lived through a war take a step forward
2. If you can study and follow the profession of your choice take a step forward
3. If you are not afraid of being harassed or attacked in the streets because of your gender, religion or sexual orientation take a step forward
4. If you have a physically visible disability, take one step back.
5. If you have an invisible illness or disability, take one step back.
6. If you were ever discouraged from an activity because of race, class, ethnicity, gender, disability, or sexual orientation, take one step back.
7. If you have never had to worry about where your next meal came from take a step forward
8. If you can afford to buy new clothes once every 3-4 months, take a step forward
9. If you can an afford to go out for coffee with a friend at least once a week take a step forward
10. If you Enjoy full political rights in the country that you currently live in take a step forward
11. If you have always had a roof over your head take a step forward
12. If you are Are able to work in an area that you are interested in take a step forward
13. If you were forced to leave your home because of war or violence take a step back
14. If you Are able to afford to go on holidays at least once a year take a step forward
15. If you have debt, take a step back
16. If you ever worry that you won’t be able to pay your bills take a step back
17. If you’ve ever struggled to pay for basic necessities, take a step back
18. If you ever considered not going to the doctor because of financial difficulties take a step back
19. If you were able to get a job or position because of your family connections take a step forward
20. If you had financial support from your family take a step forward
21. If You feel your language, religion and culture are respected in the society where you live take a step forward
22. If You feel that your opinion on social and political issues matters and your views are listened to take a step forward
23. If You can show affection for your romantic partner without fear of violence or verbal harassment take a step forward
24. If The neighborhood around your home is safe take a step forward
25. If the neighbourhood around your home is dangerous take a step back
26. If you had to contribute your own money to family bills growing up, take a step back
27. If you have to support your siblings or parents financially as an adult take a step back
28. If you feel good about how your identities are portrayed by the media, take one step forward.
29. If you feel respected for your academic performance, take one step forward.
30. If you ever tried to change your appearance, or behavior to fit in more, take one step back.
31. If you ever relied on charity or depended on food stamps take a step back