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# 1 Defining the Generations

**N**ow that we have the background on the historic fact of having four generations at work together, let's take a look at the characteristics of each.

First we have to ask, What is a generation?

Our best definition is that a generation is “an identifiable group that shares birth years, age, location, and significant life events at critical developmental stages” (Tolbize, 2008). Members of a generation share experiences that influence their thoughts, values, behaviors, and reactions. Individuals, of course, bring their own personalities, influences, and particular backgrounds from their race, class, gender, region, family, religion and more, but some broad generalizations are possible about those born in approximately the same years.

One important caveat in using a generational lens is that a precise definition of each generation does not exist. There is no single authority that says that Baby Boomers were born in the years 1946 to 1964. In fact, for example, some break the generation at 1960 and others even earlier, defining those born in a span of late 1950s to early 1960s as the “Jones Generation,” with its own unique set of characteristics.

Although sources vary the *exact* start and end years, and at times overlap a few years to allow those on the cusp of a generation to decide for themselves which they feel a greater affinity for, we have gone with a general consensus of the time span for each generation and chosen not to overlap.

In general, we believe, each of us shares a history and common experiences with members of a generation, and that collective consciousness creates our worldview.

The four generations are outlined in the following sections.

## **TRADITIONALISTS 1922–1943**

These elder statesmen and women who work in our schools have been with us in the profession the longest. And given their inclination to stay with one profession, you might find them retiring with 35 or more years in the field—dedication that might shock the Millennials. This generation has seen world wars, an economic depression, and a slew of technological changes in their lifetime.

Traditionalists are:

## **Loyal**

If you attend retirement parties and hear the number of years a Traditionalist has been with the same district or school, or has taught the same grade level, you will likely hear decades. Given an upbringing that had the specter of the Great Depression hanging over them, Traditionalists are content to stay put and soldier through the hard times. They may have not had the economic capacity or the will to move far from home, and they transfer that loyalty to their workplace and profession.

## **Respectful of Authority**

They came of age in an era of traditional authority, and they welcome the recognition they feel they have earned; they may want to be called “Ma’am” or “Sir.” They have always respected hierarchy and feel that, regardless of the individual, position has its due. They honor the roles others play and acknowledge them with formal language and gestures: handshakes and thank-you notes, punctuality and salutations all have an important place in their view. This emphasis on formal manners and traditions is not just generated by age. Boomers, when they arrive at a later life stage, may not expect to be addressed with a Mr. or Mrs. and be more open to being on a first-name basis with everyone from the grocery clerk to the doctor.

Jennifer had a superintendent from this generation that had a very Traditionalist way of handling issues that arose in meetings. When she noticed something occurring on the other side of the room that she disliked, she would quietly move to the individual and have a hushed moment of conversation rather than calling attention to the problem from the front of the room. As a Gen Xer, Jennifer might think nothing of just calling over, not uncomfortable in the least to speak up more loudly and address the issue from another side of the room.

## **Expect Delayed Rewards**

This group paid its dues, worked hard, understood what it meant to move up on the salary schedule, sit in all the chairs before expecting a promotion, and do what they call “The Right Thing.” This isn’t a group that imagined stepping over rungs of the career ladder was possible, never mind jumping to the next ladder. Experience matters to them. In their view, you wait your turn and you are rewarded.

## **Uncomfortable With Conflict**

Traditionalists deal with conflict behind closed doors. When someone asks a pointed question of a Traditionalist in an open, town hall-style meeting, we

can imagine the Traditionalist answering, “Why don’t we set up an appointment to talk about that?” Traditionalists don’t tend to share openly in large groups and are more conservative in their style. They look at the information some younger generations share so freely on Facebook and shake their heads at the perceived immodesty of it all.

### **Thorough and Hardworking**

Traditionalists often comment on what they see as a change in the younger generations’ “integrity” and “responsibility.” Traditionalists are concerned about giving the right impression and putting effort into getting a job done well. They might say, “If something’s worth doing, it’s worth doing right,” as well as “Waste not, want not.” They lived the expression, “Use it up, wear it out. Make it do, or do without.” They are all about punctuality and penmanship.

## **BABY BOOMERS 1944–1964**

This generation is represented by teachers with the most seniority who are anchors of the school, holding together their grade levels and providing institutional knowledge. They may be experienced principals or have moved to the district office, where they have been leading for the last decade or more. They are the most celebrated generation, largely because the generation is so large.

Baby Boomers are:

### **Optimistic**

This group remembers when Kennedy was elected and Martin Luther King brought his message of social justice to the world. In a critical developmental stage, they saw a man land on the moon. They saw that individuals could bring about change as they witnessed the era of Civil Rights, women’s rights, and peaceful war protests. Their idea of what the world is and can be was cemented by a sense of optimism and the idea that they could make a difference. They were there for “I have a dream.”

### **Team-Oriented**

With 80 million peers in their group, more or less, Boomers cut their teeth on the idea of “team.” Coming together as activists and community members, they created the Key Club and Parent Teacher Association, Little Leagues and block parties, happy hours, and Secret Santa. They marched, they wrote editorials, and they pushed for change for the whole. They cheered each other on as they learned to use consensus as a tool. Boomers remember the teachers union in its heyday.

Here's what one Boomer said, seeing Gen-X teachers in his school making demands he wouldn't dream of and Millennials asking for promotions with minimal experience: "We just trudge along following and enforcing the rules and regulations. Our out-of-school lives are quite limited. We put in the extra hours and give stability to the department. We're the first to arrive and the last to leave. We're cynical, yet we're the most loyal to the school" (Martin & Tulgan, 2006, p. 27).

## Service-Oriented

Boomers are willing to go the extra mile—to supervise the group on a Saturday, drive up to the state capital on a Sunday evening, go on the Washington trip, or get soaked at the school car wash fundraiser. They staff the booth and give directions in the parking lot. In addition to doing the job, they volunteer at home in their communities and in national organizations like the International Reading Association or the National Council of Teachers of English. They give back. A quote that defined their day was, "Ask not what your country can do for you. Ask what you can do for your country."

## All About Process and Relationship

Boomers are interested in preserving relationship and getting results. They check in and network. They understand icebreakers, orientation meetings, get-to-know-you parties, and coming-to-consensus protocols. Boomers value the hallway hellos, celebrations of big events, and ceremonies honoring retirees. They respect rituals and community-building work. They won't jeopardize a relationship just to get the job done. Boomers are aware of macro- and micro-needs in a more foundational way.

## GEN XERS 1965–1981

Born during the era of women's rights, the introduction of the birth control pill, and legalized abortion, they might be a smaller group compared with the generational groups on either side of them, but they leave an impression.

Xers are:

## Cynical

Many Xers started to experience life after *Leave It to Beaver* in their own homes. Divorce became more common, drugs became more prevalent, and TV began showing a less idyllic side of the world. MTV, now celebrating its 30th anniversary, exposed Gen Xers to more skin and sex. Cable television began showing views from all over the globe, both opening Xers' minds to what could be and graphically showing what is. Used to being on their own from their latchkey days, Xers are ready to question authority.

## Informal, Casual, Direct

Although Traditionalists had their work uniforms and suits, and female Boomers adapted with matching skirts and blazers, Gen Xers left the pantyhose behind. Their work wear introduced pantsuits and new protocols. They took casual Friday to casual every day. Xers don't rewrite the rules; they throw them away. Xers are less intimidated by authority and less interested in trying to be a part of it. Working groups became less hierarchical in response as communications flattened the traditional structure. Think of start-ups such as Google, Yahoo, and eBay, where workers are more entrepreneurial.

One new Gen-X administrator caused some ripples among older generation coworkers when she regularly took Fridays or Mondays off to travel with her husband for his out-of-town bowling tournaments. In addition, she limited her hours in the building so she could be available to her extended family members. She worked hard while at work, but gave at least equal commitment to having a life outside of work.

## Self-Reliant

Many Gen Xers have been accustomed most of their lives to being self-reliant, either through living with single parents or being latchkey kids with two parents working. They have a strong sense of autonomy. Gen Xers are more likely to want to work solo. They can be trusted to do what they said they'd do. They may not wear the team sweatshirt or join the committee, but they will get the work done.

San Francisco writer Ethan Watters (2003) coined the phrase "urban tribe" to describe Gen Xers' close relationships, and writes: "These may be the people you turn to to discuss the absurdities of the day, share confidences, help each other define goals, fall in and out of love, and schlep couches and big-screen TVs from one apartment to the next." For many Xers, friends become like family—a community and closest source of support.

## Want Life/Work Balance

Gen Xers, perhaps a bit ungrateful to the Boomers who fought for union rights, women's rights, and civil rights, used their rights to create a better life-work balance. More than previous generations, Gen Xers want jobs, family, and friends—and will figure out how to blend their lives without becoming workaholics.

For an idea of how you may compare with your youngest coworkers, try this quiz: <http://pewresearch.org/millennials/quiz/index.php>.

## MILLENNIALS 1982–2000

The Millennials are the teachers and administrators who are around the age of 30 or under. As students, they benefited from all the research in the education

field during the last several decades. They grew up with adults more focused on and aware of how to meet their needs instructionally as well as biologically and culturally. Although Boomers listened to radio through a single speaker or selected from three network television stations, this generation chose television programming among channels dedicated just to them (Nickelodeon, ABC Family, the CW, Cartoon Network). They rode around in cars bearing signs “Baby on Board” and had federally mandated individualized education plans. They will continue to expect the supports and structures they grew up with to be there for them in the schools in which they work.

Millennials are:

### **Confident and Assertive**

In the media and at home, Millennials have been praised and pampered. They got trophies for participating on the intramural soccer team and a bumper sticker on the car to tell passersby that their parent was proud of having an honor student in the van. They have been videotaped, offered accolades, and publicly celebrated more than any other generation. Millennials believe that they are able to do it all—and their Facebook friends, magazines, and TV shows help bolster this belief, not to mention the businesses some of their peers have begun.

### **Accustomed to Praise, Supervision, and Structure**

This group didn’t go out to play kick the can in the street after school. With parents picking up milk cartons featuring missing children’s faces, this generation was forced into scheduled clubs, groups, teams, activities, and lessons. Structured interaction became the norm. Free play was out, and play dates became another note on the schedule. Millennials are accustomed to structure and adult supervision.

A new Millennial teacher worked excitedly to prepare her classroom with help from a few teachers in her grade level, her friends, neighbors, and her mother. She looked forward eagerly each week to her grade-level team meetings, and she regularly sought out her principal and others in her building for information and feedback. Alone in the classroom, though, she said she was overwhelmed by the “silence.”

One e-mentoring program a teacher participated in included a phone or Skype meeting at least once a week, along with additional e-groups with people doing the same job across the country. It was a great opportunity to receive support since she was in a rural town. Her supervisor suggested that many mentors texted and that, if she e-mailed or texted from her classroom when she needed help, she might get a quick response addressing her question. Used to immediate responses, the teacher found this program to be a natural fit.

### Progressive, Globally Minded, and Open to Diverse Views

This generation has been exposed to more rapid social change and a changing demographic in the nation. They are accepting of others who are not like them, shrugging off differences that caused riots in earlier generations. With the globalized economy and instant communications that connect people around the world, they view the world in the same way that Boomers once may have viewed the nation—a bit large, but easily navigable.

### Able to Multitask

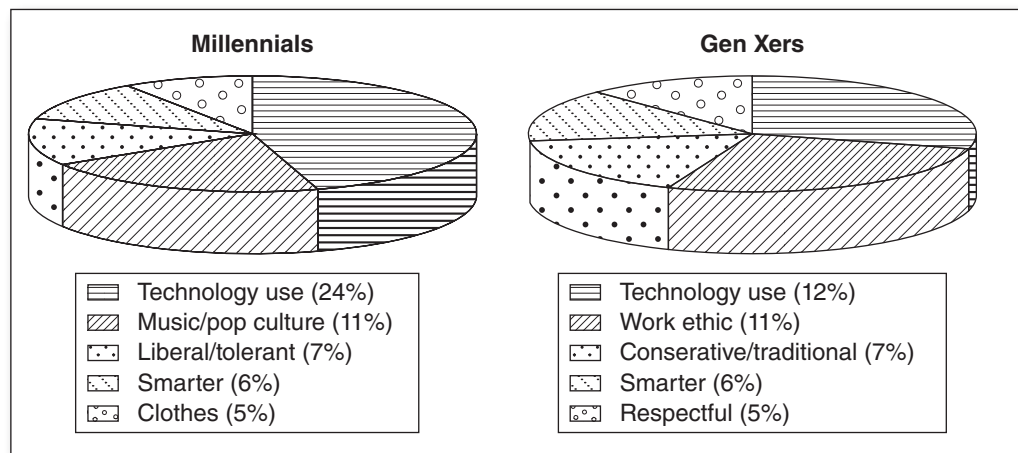
No matter what more recent research has to say about human capacity to multitask, this generation believes it can. They grew up watching television, doing homework, and talking to friends at the same time. They believe they can continue their own education, hold down a job, and have a social life—all at the same time. They are completely at home with technology and able to adapt to the latest innovations intuitively, without an instruction manual. Technology is a background element of whatever task is at hand. They play their iPod while instant chatting on Facebook as they answer texts on their cell while writing a lesson plan based on tweets that lead them to others' ideas on the Internet.

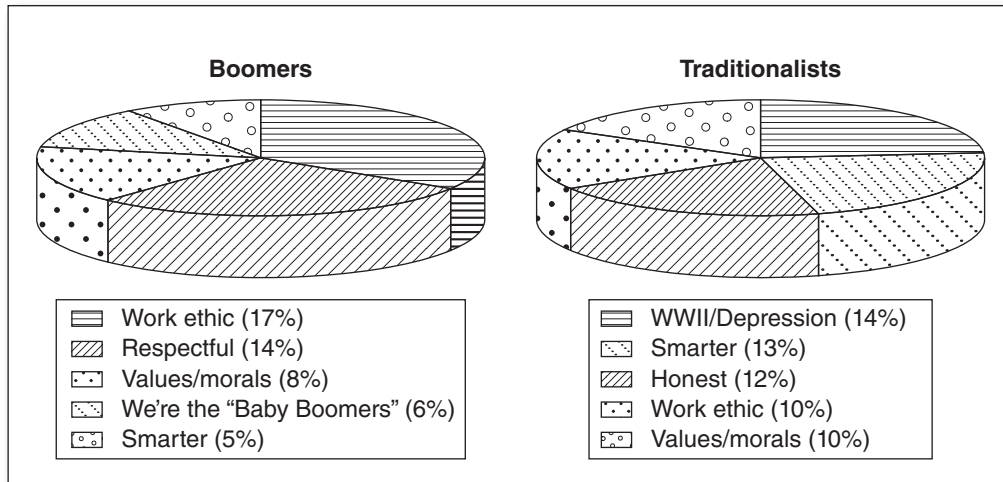
### Less Prepared Than Other Generations to Handle Difficult Situations

Used to structure and authorities giving them instructions of what to do, people in this generation may be challenged by new tasks that require independence, resilience, and resourcefulness. Many in this generation have not been allowed to fail before, and the possibility is frightening.

#### What makes your generation unique?

Here's what the generations believe sets them apart.





Source: Adapted from Pew Research Center (2010).

## ACTIONS

It's time to identify the characteristics you relate to in your own generation, to see whether you now can recognize characteristics of other generations, and to process your learning. Use the activities in this chapter to make sense of what you have read.



## CHAPTER 1 SUMMARY

	<b>Traditionalists (1922–1943) 52–62 million</b>	<b>Boomers (1944–1964) 80 million</b>	<b>Gen Xers (1965–1981) 50 million</b>	<b>Millennials (1982–2000) 70 million</b>
<b>Other definitions</b>	1922–1945 1930–1945 1900–1945	1946–1964 1943–1960	1961–1980 1965–1976 1965–1977 1965–1980	1977–1990 1977–2000 1980–2000 1981–1999 1981–2000
<b>Other names</b>	Veterans Radio Babies Silent Generation Matures Traditionalists The Greatest Generation	Baby Boomers The “ME” Generation	Baby Busters Latchkey Kids	Baby Busters Echo Boomers Generation Y Generation Why Generation Next Nexters Internet Generation iGeneration Mosaics
<b>Characteristics</b>	Patriotic, loyal, respectful of authority, formal, hierarchical, dedicated, risk-averse, detail-oriented, hard working, financially and socially conservative	Optimistic, idealistic, educated, competitive, diplomatic, loyal, high expectations, opinionated	Skeptical, resourceful, independent, entrepreneurial, pragmatic, straightforward	Technologically savvy, empowered, pragmatic, confident, collaborative, neotraditionalist, community-centered, versatile, very busy
<b>Need</b>	Respect, commitment, consistency, privacy	Privacy, validation	Flexibility, work-life balance	Fast rewards, instant feedback, sense of safety
<b>General description</b>	Their name says it all. They didn’t redefine the nation’s values—they just did their job of winning World War II. They are patriotic, civic-minded, frugal, and private. They	Growing up in a time of economic prosperity, they could afford to focus on their own goals and achievement. They are willing to sacrifice for success and	Less optimistic than Boomers, they were highly criticized as slackers. Their cynicism is born of witnessing corruption revealed and changing values.	This is a generation of multitaskers who value flexibility and freedom. They are socially conscious, highly educated, and tolerant of authority, having been

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<b>General description</b> (continued)	may struggle with diversity, having grown up in mostly homogenous groups. Life often revolved around family, school, and church.	are often viewed as workaholics.	They are highly independent and less committed to any organization than to gaining job skills that will take them to their next job. They are unimpressed by titles and authority. They want a life/work balance and are willing to sacrifice to attain it.	coddled and scheduled by parents. They are more inclusive and accepting than prior generations as their world has been increasingly diverse. They are overwhelmingly confident, public in sharing information, and optimistic. They are adaptable, having grown up with constant change.
<b>Defining events</b>	Great Depression Pearl Harbor and World War II GI Bill Korean War	Cold War Civil Rights Act Rock and roll Assassinations of J.F.K., M.L.K. Woodstock Vietnam War Chappaquiddick Watergate Energy crisis	Computers <i>Challenger</i> space shuttle Fall of the Berlin Wall AIDS Oklahoma City O.J. Simpson Chernobyl International Space Station	Internet Diversity Columbine 9/11 Darfur
<b>Technology</b>	Automobiles more common Radio Magazines and newspapers Party telephone lines Handwritten letters	Color TV Car-sized computers in institutions Typewriters Landline telephones	Cable TV Video games MTV	1,000 TV channels Internet Cell phones Instant networking with peers Digital information at their fingertips

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<b>Job prospects</b>	Options often were limited by race, gender, and family background. Women's career options were severely limited, and few pursued higher education. Strong unions supported skilled trades and provided good livings for the working class. Work often resulted in tangible goods, rather than services.	Many individuals were expected to follow their parents' career paths. Good jobs could be had with a high school diploma and on-the-job training. Company loyalty could lead to lifetime employment. Midcareer, they found that retraining became necessary and layoffs were possible—and traumatic.	Factory and labor jobs began to disappear, and this generation became more technologically savvy. Telecommunications became a field, and technology gave rise to new industries.	Knowledge is power, and this generation knows it will need to develop its own expertise to compete economically. Work is less about producing goods than working with information.
<b>Family life</b>	More families had both father and stay-at-home mother. Mixed race families were rare. Divorce was difficult and uncommon.	More women joined the workforce rather than staying home to raise families.	Increase in divorce led to more single-parent families.	Typical families may be single parents, never-married biological parents, blended families, multiracial, multigenerational, or same-sex partner parents.
<b>Organizational structures</b>	A civic-minded generation that fought in World War II. The government has focused on them throughout their lives, from the GI bill through Social Security and Medicare, and they have a better attitude toward government as a result. They are hierarchical, with slower communications through bureaucratic processes.	Structures still surround the workplace, and technology begins to exert an influence. Machines begin to change the nature of work.	Globalization and free trade start to force organizations to restructure. A flatter system often results, and formal hierarchies are loosened. Many jobs, especially middle management, are outsourced overseas or eliminated.	Instant communication allows for much different work relationships, with rapidly changing norms and more unpredictability.
<b>Heroes</b>	Superman Joe DiMaggio Walter Cronkite John Wayne Franklin Delano Roosevelt	John Glenn Martin Luther King Jr.	Someone they seek out.	Danica Patrick Jennifer Hudson Josh Groban

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<b>Pop icons</b>	Wheaties Mickey Mouse The Lone Ranger	Slinkies TV dinners The peace sign Mood rings Bell bottoms Brooks Brothers	Brady Bunch E.T. Cabbage Patch Kids	Barney Oprah X Games
<b>Literature</b>	<i>Daily newspaper</i> <i>The Bible</i> <i>Gone With the Wind</i>	<i>Catcher in the Rye</i> <i>Atlas Shrugged</i> <i>Lord of the Rings</i> <i>MAD magazine</i>	<i>The Stand</i> <i>Angels and Demons</i> <i>Wired magazine</i>	<i>Harry Potter</i> <i>Video games</i>
<b>TV shows</b>	<i>The Lone Ranger, The Cisco Kid, The George Burns and Gracie Allen Show, The Abbott and Costello Show, The Roy Rogers Show, The Jack Benny Program</i>	<i>Laugh-In, What's My Line?, I Love Lucy, Bonanza, American Bandstand, The Twilight Zone, Looney Tunes, Tom and Jerry, Maverick, Doctor Who, Star Trek</i>	<i>Little House on the Prairie, Dallas, Saturday Night Live, M*A*S*H, The Muppet Show, The Waltons, The Six Million Dollar Man</i>	<i>The Simpsons, Saved By the Bell, Full House, Star Trek: The Next Generation, The Cosby Show, Seinfeld</i>

## ACTIVITY 1

## My Generation

**Objective:** To encourage participants to understand how different experiences in their upbringing can help them identify with a particular generation and to identify that generation.

**Time:** 15 minutes.

**Materials:** Pens or pencils, a copy of the questionnaire for each group member.

**Directions:**

Circle the answer that most closely represents your formative years. The answers are meant to be representative rather than comprehensive.

The technology I can't remember living without:

- a. Radio
- b. Color televisions
- c. Pocket calculators, phone answering machines, video arcade, Sony Walkman, ATM, personal computer
- d. Fax machine, iPod, e-mail, CD, GPS

The phrase that resonates the most with me is:

- a. "And that's the way it is."
- b. "What was your number?"
- c. "Show me the money!"
- d. "Tweet it."

The comedian I most remember is:

- a. George Burns
- b. Carol Burnett
- c. Jason Alexander
- d. Adam Sandler

Your beverage of choice might be:

- a. Strong coffee, black
- b. Coke
- c. Half decaf, vanilla, no foam, extra hot grande latte
- d. 5-Hour Energy

One of the most famous athletes as I was growing up was:

- a. Babe Ruth
- b. Jackie Robinson
- c. Pete Rose
- d. Michael Jordan

The historical event that most deeply affected me is expressed by this phrase:

- a. "A chicken in every pot."—President Herbert Hoover
- b. "The president is dead."—Walter Cronkite
- c. "Mr. Gorbachev, tear down this wall."—President Ronald Reagan
- d. "On nights like this one, we can say to those families who lost loved ones to al Qaeda's terror: Justice has been done."—President Barack Obama

When I was young, I played with:

- a. Jacks, marbles
- b. G.I. Joe, the Viewmaster
- c. Pound Puppies, Rubik's Cube, Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles, Transformers
- d. Tomagachi, Polly Pocket, Care Bears

Which songs were popular as you were growing up?

- a. "Boogie Woogie Bugle Boy," "Sentimental Journey"
- b. "Homeward Bound," "Blowing in the Wind"
- c. "We're Not Gonna Take It," "Don't You Forget About Me"
- d. "Baby One More Time," "I Kissed a Girl"

Which show was a favorite of the kids of your generation?

- a. The Shadow
- b. Captain Kangaroo
- c. Sesame Street
- d. SpongeBob SquarePants

Which TV shows/characters did you relate to?

- a. *The Honeymooners*
- b. *Dennis the Menace*, *The Brady Bunch*
- c. *Friends*
- d. *Hannah Montana*, *Drake and Josh*

Which of these candies stocked the shelves when you were young?

- a. Black Cow, Slo-Poke, Chick-o-Sticks, LifeSavers, Mallo Cups, Red Hots, Zagnuts
- b. Atomic Fireballs, Candy Necklace, Pez, Wax Bottles
- c. World's Largest Gummy Bear, Airheads, Banana Runts, Big League Chew, Nerds
- d. Gobstoppers, Warheads, Hershey's Cookies'n' Creme

Add up the number of times you responded to each letter. If you have mostly As, you are a Traditionalist; mostly Bs, a Boomer; mostly Cs, a Gen Xer; and mostly Ds, a Millennial.

(For a Canadian version of this quiz, please go to [www.jenniferabrams.com](http://www.jenniferabrams.com).)

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## ACTIVITY 2

## Sounds of the Times

**Objective:** To help group members differentiate among the generations and understand the changes that have occurred in a relatively short period of history.

**Time:** 30 minutes, plus preparation time.

**Materials:** Computer with Internet access, tape recorder, paper, and pencils.

**Directions:**

1. In advance of the session, identify a facilitator who will review the article at [www.npr.org/blogs/krulwich/2011/11/28/142859563/what-i-still-hear-sounds-that-have-disappeared?ps=cprs](http://www.npr.org/blogs/krulwich/2011/11/28/142859563/what-i-still-hear-sounds-that-have-disappeared?ps=cprs), which offers recordings of once-familiar sounds that will be recognizable by different generations. The facilitator then may choose to add to “sounds of a generation” using a tape recorder. The facilitator may use information from this book or seek out members of the generations to ask about familiar sounds.
  2. As the group meets, play the sounds from the National Public Radio recording and/or the facilitator’s collected sounds.
  3. Ask participants to identify the sounds.
  4. Share responses.
  5. Discuss who identified the sounds and what changes have occurred in just a few generations.
  6. Consider:
    - What are the implications of the changes in technology for generational differences at work?
    - What changes have most affected your generation?
    - How have these changes shaped the way your generation views the world?
-

## ACTIVITY 3

## Generational Characteristics

**Objective:** To create deeper understanding of the differences among generations and what each can contribute, and to help other generations become more aware of and understanding of differences.

**Time:** 30 to 45 minutes, depending on number of generations.

10 to 15 minutes for generational group work; 5 minutes for a gallery walk; 20 minutes for discussion.

**Materials:** Charting paper, markers, copies of the worksheet for each participant.

**Directions:**

1. Divide the group by generations. Allow individuals to select the generation with which they most identify based on reading the chapter.
2. Ask each group to designate a note taker. Ask each note taker to write the generation's name at the top of the chart page and to create three columns headed Characteristics, Values, and Contributions.
3. Ask each group to discuss and take notes in response to these questions:
  - What are the characteristics of your generation?
  - What do you value as a generation?
  - What does your generation contribute to our school/district?

Groups may refer to the summary chart in the chapter as a starting point for discussion. For example, Millennials might discuss characteristics in the chart and determine that they value opportunities to use technology. Boomers might find that they value the ability to work together to solve problems. Xers might discuss how their independence leads to innovations within the district.

4. Post the charts. Have participants do a gallery walk.
  5. Give each participant a copy of the worksheet. Have generational groups discuss and take notes in response to these questions:
    - What are the characteristics of each generation?
    - What does the generation value?
    - What can you learn from the generation?
    - What can you teach the generation?
  6. As a whole group, ask participants to report out responses from their worksheets. Encourage members to ask questions, share comments, and report on their own generation's views.
  7. Ask the group:
    - What did you learn about another generation that was unexpected?
    - What gave you greater insight into another generation?
    - How might your response to a situation change based on what you now know or understand?
    - How might we use this information to change or adapt the way we do things to better use the skills and abilities of different generations?
-



## WORKSHEET

	<b>Characteristics</b>	<b>Values</b>	<b>Contributions</b>
<b>Traditionalists</b>			
<b>Baby Boomers</b>			
<b>Generation X</b>			
<b>Millennials</b>			

## ACTIVITY 4

## Know the Four Generations

**Objective:** To begin to recognize the specific characteristics of different generations and deepen understanding that will lead to improved relationships.

**Time:** 45 to 60 minutes, depending on group size.

**Materials:** A copy of the worksheet for each participant, pens, or pencils.

**Directions:** Working individually or in small groups, depending on the group size, match the statement to the generation it describes. Compare answers with the answer key. Discuss the results that are different from the key and how those perceptions may affect working relationships.

Use these codes for your responses:

T—Traditionalist

B—Baby Boomer

X—Generation Xer

M—Millennial

1. They like consistency and uniformity.
2. They are confident.
3. They tend to be optimistic.
4. They are conformers.
5. They are skeptical.
6. They have a nontraditional orientation about time and space.
7. They are more comfortable with their parents' values and are more conventional than other generations.
8. Their spending style is conservative.
9. They believe in growth and expansion.
10. They are team-oriented.
11. Their approach to authority is casual.
12. They are used to being sheltered and being kept safe.
13. They are disciplined.
14. They have always believed in law and order.
15. They want balance.
16. They were the first to learn about teamwork both in school and at home.
17. They like informality.
18. They have searched their souls—repeatedly, obsessively, recreationally.

19. They are past-oriented and history-absorbed.
20. They feel pressured and pushed.
21. They are self-reliant.
22. They are high-achieving.
23. They have pursued their own personal gratification, uncompromisingly, and often at a high price to themselves and others.
24. They are seeking a sense of family.
25. They like things on a grander scale.
26. They think they are special.
27. They believe in logic, not magic.
28. They have always been cool.
29. They are attracted to the edge.
30. They think of themselves as stars of the show.

**Discuss:**

- Do you disagree with any of the statements about your own generation?
- How much do the statements about your generation reflect you individually?

**Answers:** 1. T; 2. M; 3. B; 4. T; 5. X; 6. X; 7. M; 8. T; 9. B; 10. M; 11. X; 12. M; 13. T; 14. T; 15. X; 16. B; 17. X; 18. B; 19. T; 20. M; 21. X; 22. M; 23. B; 24. X; 25. T; 26. M; 27. T; 28. B; 29. X; 30. B.

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