

Comparison chart

	Ethnicity	Race
Definition	An ethnic group or ethnicity is a population group whose members identify with each other on the basis of common nationality or shared cultural traditions.	The term race refers to the concept of dividing people into populations or groups on the basis of various sets of physical characteristics (which usually result from genetic ancestry).
Significance	Ethnicity connotes shared cultural traits and a shared group history. Some ethnic groups also share linguistic or religious traits, while others share a common group history but not a common language or religion .	Race presumes shared biological or genetic traits, whether actual or asserted. In the early 19th century, racial differences were ascribed significance in areas of intelligence, health, and personality. There is no evidence validating these ideas.
Genealogy	Ethnicity is defined in terms of shared genealogy, whether actual or presumed. Typically, if people believe they descend from a particular group, and they want to be associated with that group, then they are in fact members of that group.	Racial categories result from a shared genealogy due to geographical isolation. In the modern world this isolation has been broken down and racial groups have mixed.
Distinguishing Factors	Ethnic groups distinguish themselves differently from one time period to another. They typically seek to define themselves but also are defined by the stereotypes of dominant groups.	Races are assumed to be distinguished by skin color, facial type, etc. However, the scientific basis of racial distinctions is very weak. Scientific studies show that racial genetic differences are weak except in skin color.
Nationalism	In 19th century, there was development of the political ideology of ethnic nationalism -- creating nations based on a presumed shared ethnic origins (e.g. Germany, Italy, Sweden...)	In 19th century, the concept of nationalism was often used to justify the domination of one race over another within a specific nation.
Legal System	In the last decades of the 20th century, in the U.S. and in most nations, the legal system as well as the official ideology prohibited ethnic-based discrimination.	In the last decades of the 20th century, the legal system as well as the official ideology emphasized racial equality.
Conflicts	Often brutal conflicts between ethnic groups have existed throughout history and across the world. But most ethnic groups in fact get along peacefully within one another in most nations most of the time.	Racial prejudice remains a continuing problem throughout the world. However, there are fewer race-based conflicts in the 21st century than in the past.

Examples of conflict	Conflict between Tamil and Sinhalese populations in Sri Lanka, or the Hutu and Tutsi people in Rwanda.	Conflict between white and African-American people in the U.S., especially during the civil rights movement.
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