

Racial Inventory Quiz ANSWER KEY

1. Members of a race can be identified by their:

- A. Blood group
- B. Skin color
- C. Ancestry
- D. Genes
- E. All of the above
- F. None of the above

F. None of the above.

There are no traits, no characteristics, not even one gene that distinguishes all members of one so-called race from all members of another. The A, B, O blood groups can be found in all the world's peoples (Estonians and Papua New Guineans, for example, have the same frequencies). Skin color tends to correspond with latitude not race; sub-Saharan Africans, Dravidians and Tamils from Southern Asia, and Melanesians from the Pacific all have very dark skin. Ancestry is difficult to trace. Go back 30 generations, less than 1,000 years, and you have a billion ancestors.

2. Which species has the most genetic variation?

- A. Humans
- B. Chimpanzees
- C. Penguins
- D. Fruit flies
- E. Elephants

D. Fruit flies.

Fruit flies have been around for a very long time, but they also have a short life span, so lots of genetic mutations have accumulated over many generations. In contrast, modern humans are one of the most genetically similar of all species. This is because we are a relatively young species, and we simply haven't been around long enough to accumulate a lot of genetic variation. Also, humans have always moved, mixed and mated, so genetically speaking, we're all mongrels. Beneath the skin, we're all very similar.

3. Which two populations are most likely, on average, to be genetically similar?

- A. Italians and Ethiopians

- B. Senegalese and Kenyans
- C. Italians and Swedes
- D. Chinese and Lakota (Sioux)
- E. Saudi Arabians and Ethiopians

E. Saudi Arabians and Ethiopians.

Populations that live near each other geographically tend to be more alike than populations that live far apart. This is because they are more likely to have intermixed in the past and therefore share genetic similarities. Often when variation seems to follow racial lines, it is more accurately explained by geographic distance.

4. Which continent has the greatest human genetic diversity?

- A. Europe
- B. Asia
- C. South America
- D. Africa
- E. North America

E. Africa.

All modern humans originated from Africa, and we spent most of our evolution as a species together there. All the other populations of the world can be seen as a subset of Africans – every human trait found elsewhere can also be found in Africa, with the exception of a few recent variations favored by the environment or sexual selection – such as light-complected skin.

5. The characteristic that Greeks felt distinguished them from "barbarians" was:

- A. Religion
- B. Skin color
- C. Language
- D. Customs
- E. Hairiness
- F. Intelligence

C. Language.

The word barbarian comes from the Greek word "barbar," for stammerer, or unintelligible, or he who does not speak Greek. The Greeks, like most all ancient peoples, did not attribute much meaning to people's physical appearance. For

Greeks it was language that was the difference that made a difference. It is thought that those whom the Greeks first called barbarians were the Scythians, who lived north of the Black Sea and were fair complected. Race is a recent idea that did not exist in antiquity.

6. Today, the net worth of the average white family is how much compared to the average Black family?

- A. Three times as much
- B. Eight times as much
- C. Half as much
- D. Twice as much
- E. The same

B: Eight times as much.

Probably no one statistic better captures the cumulative disadvantage of past discrimination than wealth. Even at the same income levels, whites still have, on average, twice as much wealth as nonwhites. Much of this difference is due to the different rates of home ownership and the different values of homes in white and Black neighborhoods. But wealth is not only the end point, it's the starting line for the next generation – helping finance your children's education, helping them through hard times, or helping with the down payment of their own home. Economists estimate 50-80% of one's lifetime wealth accumulation can be traced to this head start.

7. According to a 1993 study, 86% of suburban whites lived in a community where the Black population was:

- A. Less than 5%
- B. Less than 10%
- C. Less than 1%
- D. More than 10%
- E. More than 15%

C. Less than 1%.

According to the 2000 Census, whites are more likely to be segregated than any other group. This is largely a result of past housing discrimination, but it is perpetuated today by unfair practices such as predatory lending, racial steering and a substantial wealth gap between Black and white families. Today, 71% of whites own their own home, compared to 44% of African

Americans. Black and Latino mortgage applicants are 60% more likely than whites to be turned down for loans, even after controlling for employment, financial, and neighborhood characteristics. On average, nonwhites who are approved for mortgages still pay higher rates. The accumulation of wealth in America has historically been tied to property ownership, differentially available to Americans of color.

8. Which is NOT an example of a government racial preference program?

- A. 1964 Civil Rights Act
- B. 1862 Homestead Act
- C. 1790 Naturalization Act
- D. 1934 Federal Housing Administration
- E. 1935 Social Security Act

A. 1964 Civil Rights Act.

The Civil Rights Act made racial discrimination in public places illegal. The other programs are all examples of racial preferences - for white people. Over a 40-year period, the Homestead Act gave away, for free, 270 million acres of land, formerly Indian Territory, almost all of it to white people. The Naturalization Act allowed only "free white persons" to adopt citizenship, thus opening voting rights and property ownership to European immigrants but barring Asians and other groups. Racial barriers to citizenship were not removed until 1952. The Federal Housing Administration made it possible for millions of average white Americans - but not others - to own a home for the first time. And the Social Security Act specifically exempted two occupations from coverage: farm-workers and domestics, both largely non-white.