

Between two worlds

What's it like growing up in a mixed-race family? Watch 15-year-old Tillie talking about her experiences.

Tasks

Do the preparation task first. Then watch the video and do the exercises. Remember you can read the transcript at any time.

Preparation task

Match the definitions (a–h) with the vocabulary (1–8).

Vocabulary

1. PE
2. a skin tone
3. mixed race
4. a birth name
5. to embrace something
6. a complexion
7. to justify something
8. plantain

Definition

- a. a person whose parents are from different racial groups
- b. physical education; sports classes at school
- c. the colour of your skin
- d. to give a good reason for something
- e. the natural appearance of the skin on a person's face
- f. a tropical fruit similar to a banana with green skin
- g. the name you were given at birth, when this is different from your usual name
- h. to accept something enthusiastically

Task 1

Are the sentences true or false?

	Answer	
1. Tillie lives in Leeds, in the north of England.	True	False
2. Tillie's dad is English and her mum is Ghanaian.	True	False
3. It's impossible for Tillie to tie her hair up with a small hairband.	True	False
4. Tillie had to miss PE because she didn't have her sports clothes.	True	False
5. Some people don't believe that Tillie is mixed race because she has a light complexion.	True	False
6. Tillie likes eating plantain.	True	False
7. She likes the fact that Jamestown in Ghana is different from Leeds.	True	False
8. Tillie feels that she has the same problems as when she was six.	True	False

Task 2

Complete the sentences with words from the box.

culture	countries	originally	half
embrace	mixed race	skin tones	birth name

1. I'm Ghanaian.
2. Having two parents from different is really cool.
3. You get to experience two different cultures and create your own
4. I had to justify that I'm too.
5. Everyone comes in different
6. My grandad's from Jamestown.
7. In England a lot of people know me as Tillie, but my is Amatillie.
8. I want to where I'm from.

Discussion

Do you, or any of your friends, have parents who are from two different cultures?

Transcript

Hi, I'm Tillie and I'm from Leeds, which is in the north of England. I am half Ghanaian. This is my Ghanaian dad ...

Tillie's dad: Her father.

... and I am half English. This is my English mum.

Tillie's mum: Hello!

Having two parents from different countries is really cool because you get to go on holiday a lot. Er, and also you get to experience two different cultures and, kind of, create your own culture, 'cause you get to mix them both together.

Being mixed, I did realise I was different. For example, at the age of seven, it was a PE day, a normal day, I had my hair down and it was drying at its, like, full capacity. It was very big. We got changed in the cloakroom. Everybody was excited to do PE. So was I. Some girls had their hair down, some had earrings in, some had it up, and I remember being asked by a teacher, 'Can you tie your hair up, please, Tillie?' So the teacher give me a very, very tiny hairband. I just remember saying, 'I can't do that.' So I then got in trouble for not being able to tie my hair up and having to miss PE, which was one of my favourite lessons. And I had to sit on a hill and watch everyone else play PE, like I'd done something wrong, like I was bad for having big hair. And feeling really, really sad.

I remember being at primary school and having another friend that was mixed race and her being a slightly darker skin tone to me, and constantly having to justify that I'm mixed race too. People wouldn't believe me, and it still happens now. My complexion is naturally quite lighter anyway. Everyone comes in different skin tones.

In terms of food, I love to eat English and Ghanaian food. But these are some of the Ghanaian foods that I like to eat. There is some plantain here, but these are actually the chip form, the crisp form, which are really good. Um, and also there's some chin chin here, which I absolutely love. And one thing that's fun to make in the kitchen is, er, fufu. That's always good. Er, fufu is an instant plantain. You dip in, er, a sauce and it's like, kind of a doughy texture and it's really nice with your food.

I remember my first trip to Ghana, walking down Jamestown, where my grandad's originally from, and seeing lots and lots of magical things. Goats roaming the streets, dogs roaming the streets, children playing, music ... You never see a goat walking down the street in Leeds. In England a lot of people know me as Tillie, but my Ghanaian name and birth name is Amatillie. And when I got to Ghana I instantly felt welcome when there's about five Amatillies walking down the street.

Having parents from different cultures definitely means a lot to me. The problems that I thought were a problem when I was six, for example, have definitely changed. I feel like I've accepted that I've got big hair and it's made me tougher and stronger and want to embrace where I'm from even more.

Answers

Preparation task

1. b
2. c
3. a
4. g
5. h
6. e
7. d
8. f

Task 1

1. True
2. False
3. True
4. False
5. True
6. True
7. True
8. False

Task 2

1. half
2. countries
3. culture
4. mixed race
5. skin tones
6. originally
7. birth name
8. embrace