



The Deliberative Classroom: Religious Freedom

TOPIC BRIEFING

AND LESSON PLANS

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Theme 1: Religious Freedom

Teacher briefing paper

Introduction

This briefing is intended to help teachers think about the depth of conceptual knowledge students need as they learn about freedom and religious freedom. An overview of the key concepts explored across all six themes in these materials is in the General guidance.

Children have a right to voice their opinion, and just as importantly they have a right to develop an *informed* opinion. This means that teachers have to help them develop the knowledge required to explore complex issues and genuinely start to develop their own thoughts. The diagram below summarises the levels of knowledge addressed in this resource pack moving from specific and context-bound at the top, through to more abstract at the bottom.

Children need to know and make sense of their own circumstances and the world around them, as they think about freedom and engage with debates about freedom of religion and belief. But there is also an even more general and abstract form of knowledge – an understanding of what we mean by ‘freedom’. Whilst this is the most conceptually challenging form of knowledge, it is also potentially the most powerful because it provides young people with ideas they can use throughout their lives and in circumstances they have yet to imagine.

SPECIFIC: Personal & local knowledge e.g. how free am I to do X?
What opportunities are there for me to do Y?

MORE GENERAL: Different types of freedom, e.g. freedom of speech, freedom of association, and (in this topic guide) freedom of religion.

CONCEPTUAL: These earlier discussions can inform a broader consideration of the concept of freedom. What do we mean by freedom? What traditions of thought have emerged to help us think about freedom? How can this inform our appreciation of other aspects of life?

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When teaching about these topics, it is important to place them in historical and comparative perspective wherever possible, because this helps to reinforce what is unique about the nature of religious freedoms here and now. But it is also important not to over-simplify the historical development of freedoms in the UK.

Undoubtedly, citizens in the UK are more free to pursue their own religious beliefs now than at any point in the past, but that should neither be seen as inevitable nor result in complacency. Landmarks in our democracy are important but do not spell out simplistic narratives of unmitigated progress, for example in 1215 Magna Carta¹ established the principle of equality before the law, but this only applied to freemen (most people were not free) and in 1290 Edward I expelled all Jews from England. Similarly, in 1689 the Bill of Rights represented great progress in the recognition of individual rights but slavery was rife across the empire for a century and a half after this step forward. We can trace the development of ideas over time, but that should not impose a simplistic account of an inevitable or steady progress. Religious freedom in the UK is sufficiently developed now that it has arguably led to a multi-faith democracy², but this means new issues emerge as we seek to balance the rights of faith groups with others and with the general interests of society overall, and with the Christian heritage of the country and government. Different faith groups will experience more or fewer restrictions in practice, depending on their specific circumstances and contexts. New challenges emerge and invite us to reach a new definition of what counts as religious freedom.

The development of religious freedom

During the 16-19th centuries the state imposed a form of Protestantism on the population, and restricted the activity of other faiths. The prominent position of the Church of England

is still evident in some aspects of national life such as daily prayers in parliament and the places reserved for bishops in the House of Lords. Gradually through the 19th century, parliament became accessible to other religions and in the 20th century human rights frameworks have extended religious freedom. UK citizens have had access to the courts to protect such freedoms under the European Convention on Human Rights (1950) through the European Court of Human Rights since 1959.³ More recently the UK has passed domestic legislation protecting religious freedom (2010 Equality Act) and outlawing acts of religious hatred and intolerance (2006 Racial and Religious Hatred Act). Resources 1 to 3 help students explore the development of religious freedom over time.

Whereas in the 17th century, any religious practices outside of the Church of England were severely constrained, in the latter half of the 20th century, as the diversity of religion and belief in UK society has increased, there has been a proliferation of organised religions and beliefs in the UK. These largely grew organically in faith communities and so the recent UK legislation may be seen as catching up with the religious diversity that had become a de facto part of contemporary UK culture. The same may be said for the extension of state funding to a wider range of faith schools than was traditionally the case. Historically state funding for religious schools was restricted to Christian and Jewish schools, but since 1997 Muslim, Sikh and Hindu schools have opened.⁴ This is seen as part of the recognition that parents and children have rights relating to being brought up in a religious tradition.⁵ There are also long established traditions of religious courts (Beth Din)⁶ being used by British Jews, which reflect the freedom of religious communities to organise their own community practices. This provides a useful historical precedent for contemporary discussions about Muslim Sharia courts.⁷ Whilst there are frequently heated debates about the operation of

¹ British Library teaching materials about the Magna Carta <http://www.bl.uk/teaching-resources/mc-introduction-to-magna-carda-does-magna-carda-matter-today> for an introduction, including a translation of the Magna Carta <http://www.bl.uk/magna-carda/articles/magna-carda-english-translation> and the 1689 Bill of Rights <http://www.bl.uk/collection-items/the-bill-of-rights>
² Television discussion hosted by Naga Munchetty considering the extent to which the UK has established a multi-faith democracy <https://youtu.be/iuy4txC08Xg>
³ Information on the court and Convention:: <http://www.echr.coe.int>
Overview of ECHR case law here: http://www.echr.coe.int/Documents/Research_report_religion_ENG.pdf
⁴ House of Commons Library Briefing Paper on Faith Schools: <http://researchbriefings.parliament.uk/ResearchBriefing/Summary/SN06972>
⁵ Interim report from the UN Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief, discussing the potential tension between parental rights and children's rights : <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N15/245/07/PDF/N1524507.pdf?OpenElement>
⁶ A BBC article on Religious courts including Beth Din <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk/7233040.stm>

separate institutions, such as schools or religious courts, these often relate to perceived clashes of religious rights with other rights, such as freedom of conscience, or gender equality. This introduces the idea that, whilst religious rights are seen as fundamental, they still have to be balanced with other fundamental rights, such as gender or sexual equality.

Resource 4 explores the distinction between religious beliefs and cultural practices and the need to strike a balance between these traditions and broader principles of equality.

Thinking about religion

Religion is a concept which is widely understood but notoriously difficult to define. Any discussion of religion will lead students to appreciate how complicated this concept is in reality. Because the law protects religious freedom, judges have had to engage with this challenge. Two important judgements indicate some of the elements of a definition. *Campbell and Cosans v UK* (1982)⁸ established that any religious belief needs to attain a certain level of ‘cogency, seriousness, cohesion and importance’ and must also be ‘worthy of respect in a democratic society and not incompatible with human dignity’. A case heard by the Supreme Court in 2013⁹ added that religion could be described as ‘a belief system going beyond sensory perception or scientific data, held by a group of adherents, which claims to explain mankind’s place in the universe and relationship with the infinite, and to teach its adherents how they are to live their lives in conformity with the spiritual understanding associated with the belief system’. These definitions raise as many questions as they answer and to demonstrate how difficult such definitions are in practice a group of activists have established Pastafarianism and the Church of the Flying Spaghetti Monster¹⁰ to test the boundaries of legal definitions. The key distinction for courts is often not what counts as a religion, but how one may manifest one’s religion through actions. According to the

European Convention on Human Rights (Article 9) religious belief is an absolute freedom but the freedom to manifest one’s religion is a qualified freedom due to the potential impact on others (see the discussion below on Mill’s harm principle). In another important court ruling in 2005¹¹ the House of Lords reflected this distinction when they argued ‘each individual is at liberty to hold his own religious beliefs, however irrational or inconsistent they may seem to some, however surprising’, but that when it comes to manifesting those actions they must meet some basic criteria: the actions must be consistent with human dignity and integrity, and they should be non-trivial, serious, important and coherent.

Thinking about freedom

Discussing religious freedom is also difficult because the concept of freedom is also a difficult one to pin down. Such debates will also help to develop students’ understanding of the deeper, more abstract, concept of freedom, or liberty, which plays a crucial part in conceptualising democracy. It has been important to theorists of democracy because it helps us think about the balance struck between the individual and the state and it also guards against the ‘tyranny of the majority’ within a democratic state. The liberal principle established by the philosopher J.S. Mill¹² is essentially that no-one should interfere with another person’s thoughts or action so long as they don’t harm others. The principle at the heart of liberalism is therefore that individuals should be permitted to pursue whatever goals they choose, regardless of what others think of their judgement. This requires tolerance¹³, as the essential partner to liberty, as we may well disapprove of the beliefs and actions of others, but we should agree to disagree, and tolerate their different lifestyle.

In thinking about the nature of liberty, it is generally understood that not all freedoms are equal. For example, my freedom to park my car where I want is less important than my freedom to follow my religious convictions. The

⁷ Example the House of Commons Home Affairs Committee enquiry: <https://www.parliament.uk/business/committees/committees-a-z/commons-select/home-affairs-committee/inquiries/parliament-2015/inquiry6/>

⁸ The judgement is available here: <http://www.worldlii.org/eu/cases/ECHR/1982/1.html>

A summary of the judgement is available here: <https://www.supremecourt.uk/cases/docs/uksc-2013-0030-press-summary.pdf>

¹⁰ See <https://www.venganza.org/>

¹¹ See: <https://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld200405/ldjudgmt/jd050224/will-1.htm>

¹² See the Sparknotes website (run by Barnes and Noble) summary of Mill’s book On Liberty here: <http://www.sparknotes.com/philosophy/onliberty/>

philosopher John Rawls identified the following freedoms as fundamental¹⁴:

- Political liberties – to vote, stand for election and hold public office.
- Freedoms of thought, speech, association and assembly.
- Freedom from physical assault, psychological oppression, arbitrary arrest or seizure.
- Freedom to hold personal property.

Whilst political philosophers search for an agreement about which freedoms seem to provide the foundation for a free society, public opinion may differ, between countries and over time.¹⁵

In reflecting on the nature of freedom at the heart of such a list, Isaiah Berlin introduced the distinction between positive and negative liberty.¹⁶ Negative liberty refers to the absence of constraint, whilst positive liberty addresses the realistic opportunity for realising a freedom. For example, a homeless person is free to dine at the Ritz in the sense that no-one is stopping him, but realistically his options do not include dining at the Ritz. On the negative view, he is free to do so, but on the positive view, he is not. This has been seen as influential, especially in relation to thinking about rights, which are often used as systems for encoding freedoms. Does my right to a family life simply require no-one should prevent me from having a family (a negative interpretation) or imply some access to resources, such as subsidised fertility treatment (a positive interpretation)? If teachers decide to use this terminology in class they should take care to explain to pupils that positive is not better than negative, i.e. that the terms refer to different conceptions of liberty rather than value judgements about them. Using more pupil-friendly language, Paul Smith¹⁷ has described negative liberty as being concerned with whether or not someone is ‘allowed’ to do something; whereas positive liberty refers to whether someone is ‘able’ to do something. Introducing these synonyms (negative/allowed; positive/able) may help to avoid misconceptions.

¹³ See the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy entry on toleration: <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/toleration/>

¹⁴ See the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy entry on Rawls (section 4.4): <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/rawls/#TwoGuildeJusFai>

¹⁵ See the World Economic Forum’s opinion poll data from 2015: <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2015/11/which-freedoms-are-most-important-to-you/>

¹⁶ See the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy entry on these concepts and the debate between Berlin and MacCallum: <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/liberty-positive-negative/>

¹⁷ See ‘Moral and Political Philosophy: Key Issues, Concepts and Theories’ Paul Smith, 2008

Dividing freedom into two categories like this helps us to think about the way in which freedom sometimes places negative duties on others not to interfere with our freedoms, and also whether we might justify some claim on others to act in a certain way or provide resources to facilitate our freedoms. However, critics have argued that the interpretation of freedom as meaning ‘ability to...’ is problematic because there are many things a person may be unable to do (go on a world cruise, win Mastermind, scale Mount Everest) but it is meaningless to imply this means they are not free to do them. Gerald MacCallum has argued that a better way to analyse freedom is to focus on what might count as a realistic constraint in the context we are analysing. On this view it is a question of political belief how broadly one wants to define an obstacle – am I free to hold public office just because no laws bar me, even though my education was poor, I have a disability, there are social prejudices against my ethnicity etc? MacCallum encourages us to reflect on whether it is reasonable to see these factors as obstacles, rather than simply categorising one set of factors as positive or negative.

The importance of religious freedom

Religious freedoms are generally seen as part of the fundamental rights that should be guaranteed to all citizens. Religious beliefs are fundamental to how believers perceive and make sense of the world. Often people live their lives according to the moral codes and religious teachings of their faith community, and believe strongly that other forms of belief and lifestyle are wrong. This is where toleration becomes an important partner to freedom, because it is logical for someone of faith to assume that someone of another faith or of no faith is wrong and possibly even damned because of their failure to follow what one perceives as the ‘true’ faith. Against this backdrop, when one is convinced that people are wrong, and possibly undertaking unnecessary or even harmful actions, tolerance becomes an important tenet. Whilst someone may find others’ beliefs and actions annoying,

insulting or even abhorrent, in a democracy they should generally be prepared to tolerate the others' actions. Of course some people are uninterested in these subtleties and simply seek to assert their own moral world view on others. A Christian may oppose gay marriage and abortion for anyone, even though others do not share their religious values. This represents a version of the 'tyranny of the majority' argument, where people ignore the fact of diversity of beliefs, and attempt to impose one set of values on others. For those who are more interested in reconciling diversity with moral principles, this is where Mill's concept of the 'harm principle' comes in to play, because the only reasonable argument against tolerating someone else's beliefs and behaviour is the argument that they do harm to others. Hence people who disagree with abortion may focus on the harm to the foetus (which requires arguing over the boundaries of the 'person' to whom harm is being done); or opponents of same sex marriage may oppose it on the grounds that it irretrievably changes the institution of marriage and therefore harms the interests of those already married (this requires stretching the concept of harm).

The concept of harm is also often stretched to include 'offence' and this is where it becomes particularly contentious.¹⁸ Given that offence is generally as much in the mind of the offended person as it is in the intention of the offender, we have to weigh offence carefully against the fundamental principle of liberty. Generally one might assume that where a group has strong moral objections to a practice, for example to pornography or blasphemy, that it would not be reasonable to ban the offending behaviour completely on those grounds. A reasonable compromise might be to ban these activities in public but tolerate them in private. The principles of liberty and toleration may require us to place some restrictions on offending behaviour, but one group's religious commitments (whether they are a minority or a majority) cannot cancel out others' freedoms to believe, say or do things which may be seen as offensive.

In the UK, where Christianity forms the backdrop to much of the legislation and underpins cultural norms for the majority (whether people consider themselves to be active adherents of the faith or not), it is important to recognise minority religious rights. The blasphemy law¹⁹ provides a case in point. For centuries the law only related to Christianity and there were prosecutions for blasphemy in England up to the 1970s. However, in 2008, the law was amended to abolish the offence of blasphemy (in England and Wales), after the introduction of a new crime of incitement to racial hatred²⁰ (2006). This effectively means a discriminatory law that only protected Christian sensibilities has been changed and the law can now be applied to all religions.

Whilst religious freedoms are important therefore, they do not automatically trump other fundamental rights. The definition of religious freedoms and the balance between them and the freedoms of others outside of a religious group are constantly being reviewed and revised. This is a feature of a democratic society and an important one to emphasise for young people. The nature of a plural multi-faith democracy is that everyone has to accept compromise in the public realm, in the interests of maximising their personal freedoms to pursue their own religious freedom. In essence, this is the focus of the resources in this topic pack and we hope teachers may guide students to reflect on some of these deeper matters of principle.

¹⁸ BBC Moral Maze programme: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b07jyw9f>

¹⁹ Briefing from House of Commons Library on the abolition of Blasphemy offences <http://researchbriefings.parliament.uk/ResearchBriefing/Summary/SN04597>

²⁰ Briefing from House of Commons Library on Racial and Religious Hatred Act 2006 <http://researchbriefings.parliament.uk/ResearchBriefing/Summary/SN03768>

Additional resources

1. The Council of Europe's Overview of the Court's case law on freedom of religion

<http://bit.ly/2kXtDV2>

One of the fascinating areas to pursue in relation to religious freedom is the complex case law developing around how to balance religious rights with other rights. A particularly fraught area concerns a religious community's rights to pursue beliefs which are at odds with other rights enjoyed in society. For example, one has the right to be divorced and to retain one's job, but this is complicated where one works for a religious organisation that upholds a particular belief about marriage or infidelity.

2. Liberty's briefing on religious rights

<http://bit.ly/2kXzLg5>

Liberty's website includes briefings on Article 9 of the Human Rights Act, the limitations that apply plus case studies.

3. The US Department of State's International Religious Freedom Report for 2015

<http://bit.ly/2lxajuL>

The US State Department compiles a set of reports about the state of religious freedom worldwide. The link above leads to the summary but there are also detailed national reports available. The UK report provides a relatively up to date summary of demographics and current issues and policy.

4. Can religious vilification laws protect religious freedoms?

<http://bit.ly/2l1DGby>

This thought-provoking piece in The Conversation, considers the pros and cons for a legislative intervention in Australia. It also discusses the tensions between legislation referring to race and religion.

5. Promoting 'religious freedom' does more harm than good

<http://bit.ly/2lzqKav>

This piece from The Conversation questions whether promoting religious freedoms may have the effect of promoting religion as a foundational building block of identity and community at the expense of other factors, and thus reinforce religious divides.

6. It's not just Islam – most religions are discriminatory

<http://bit.ly/2kQztW0>

This article in The Conversation considers the complicated balancing act required for religions to adhere to their core beliefs in a pluralist multi-faith democracy. It provides a good illustration of the tensions discussed in the briefing notes about the need for religious communities to think beyond their own religious beliefs in order to engage in debate with people of other faiths and none.



Photo courtesy of Robert Pani on Flickr, Speaker's Corner

Lessons: Activity instructions

The big picture

Freedom is fundamental to understanding the nature of plural democracy and this sequence of activities is designed to enable students to engage with the idea of freedom in general and then to reflect on the nature of religious freedom as a particularly significant aspect of democracy.

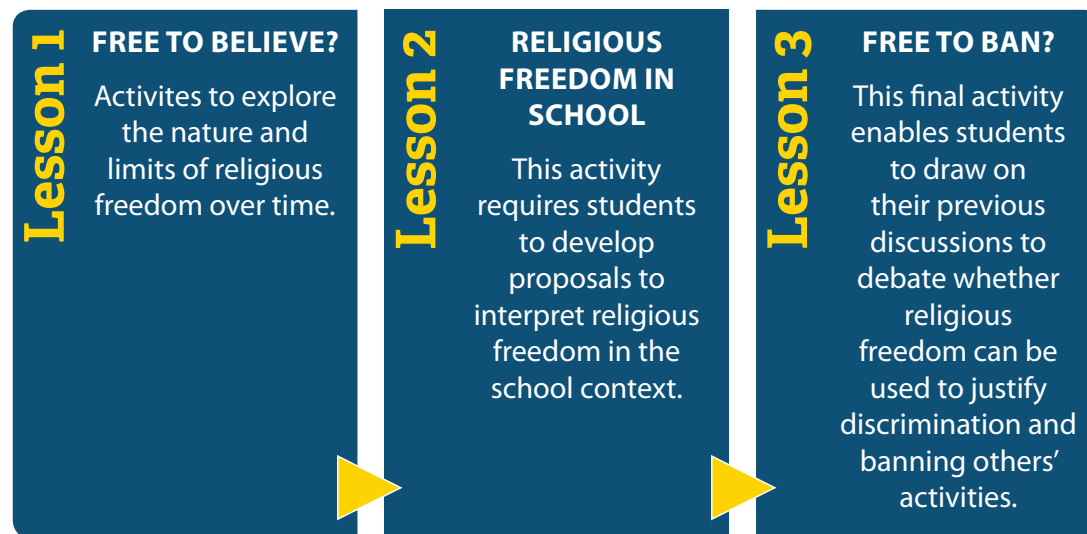
The first lesson starts with an historical overview of the development of religious freedom in the UK to establish that such freedoms have developed over time and are not set in stone or pre-determined. This sets the scene for a series of case studies, which focus on religious freedoms, considering

a range of contemporary examples. This sequence builds to a deliberative debate in lesson 2 where students apply these ideas to their own school. Finally, in lesson 3 students are invited to argue for or against a motion about freedom, in which they can use ideas from the previous activities to develop their own arguments and opinions.

Objectives

The three lessons in this theme are focussed on developing student knowledge, understanding and skills so that they can:

1. Develop understanding of the concept of freedom, considering freedom of speech and expression
2. Develop understanding of the limitations of religious freedom in society
3. Apply their knowledge and understanding of freedom and religious freedom to a range of real contexts and situations.



Each lesson has been designed to be addressed within about 60 minutes of teaching time with pupils in key stage 3.

Lesson 1: Free to believe?

Resources 1 to 4 and Resource 7

In this lesson, teachers may want to consider with students whether there can be any justifiable limits to religious freedoms and if so, how one might decide them. The lesson might start with a timeline activity (resource 1) to provide an historical briefing on the development of religious freedoms in the UK, from the Catholic Emancipation Act ²¹, through to the establishment of human rights standards and the Equalities Act (2010)²² establishing religion as a protected characteristic.

Activity 1: Religious discrimination and freedom in the UK

This is a simple timeline comprehension activity (resources 1 and 2). The true / false questions prompt students to use the timeline to think about the changes that have happened.

[Answers: 1. (T), 2. (T), 3. (F), 4. (T), 5. (F), 6. (T), 7. (T), 8. (T), 9. (F), 10. (F)]

The teacher should pull together the following conclusions to set the scene for the rest of this debate:

- The UK has had a history of religious discrimination and state intervention but the principle of religious freedom has gradually become established over centuries – both in domestic legislation and in international agreements.
- Although specific legislation came fairly recently, it is now illegal to discriminate against someone because of their religion in the UK.
- People in the UK are also protected against religious hatred.
- Do students feel that they are free to pursue their own beliefs?

The timeline could then be re-used to encourage students to organise these issues by theme or category, to encourage more analytical thinking. The items on the timeline are reproduced as cards to make this activity easier (resource 3). The teacher may choose to ask students to identify similarities and group items together, naming each category and testing them with others in the class to ensure they make sense to

others. Alternatively the teacher may choose to ask students to sort the items into the following categories. Each suggestion would be a separate sorting activity:

- Specific freedom to a named religion / general principle of religious freedom.
- Freedom from / freedom to.
- Removal of discrimination / protection of freedom / obligations on others.

Activity 2: Religious freedom case studies

To help them prepare for the deliberative debate in lesson 2 students will be given a series of case studies of religious / cultural freedoms (resource 4), which represent various degrees of controversy:

1. African Christian beliefs about witchcraft and child possession.
2. Polygamy.
3. Hindu complaints about tallow in the new £5 notes.
4. Cults, sects and the freedom of religious choice.
5. Churches and same sex marriage.

Each of the case studies includes a key question, information about the case study and links to further information, plus a series of follow up questions. The final question is the same for every card: How does this case study help you think about the limits on religious freedom?

There are five supporting resources in the form of cases studies for teachers to use with their classes. The key point here is to try to open up discussion about different perspectives on religious freedom. The following summary for each case study may help teachers to focus their questioning to ensure students have considered the relevant arguments:

1. *People have rights to their own religious beliefs and practices, but what happens if those beliefs are dangerous, or if they lead to harm? (resource 4; case study 1)*

This focuses on the distinction between beliefs / values and actions. The resources tend to the opinion that it is problematic to intervene in beliefs but legitimate to intervene

²¹ Information on Catholic Emancipation <http://www.parliament.uk/about/living-heritage/evolutionofparliament/legislativescrutiny/parliamentandireland/overview/catholic-emancipation/>

²² House of Commons Library briefing on the Equalities Act 2010 <http://researchbriefings.parliament.uk/ResearchBriefing/Summary/SN06093>

in what people actually do, especially where their actions cause harm to others. We may not share or condone beliefs, but we need to distinguish between someone's beliefs and their actions. Students may also discuss whether some beliefs are so inherently damaging that they need to be directly tackled, and how this might be done.

2. *Should UK law recognise the relationships valued within someone's own religious traditions? (resource 4; case study 2)*

In order to avoid stereotyping, it is probably useful to stress here that the vast majority of people do not engage in polygamy, and most do not condone it. The purpose of the activity is to encourage students to think about the legitimate limits on the state's accommodation of religious diversity. The principle established in UK law is that marriage is a relationship between two people, and therefore other religiously condoned relationships (such as polygamy) are not recognised in law. This is largely accepted in the UK, even though it seems to deny legal recognition to minorities. Why is this acceptable? The story about welfare benefits potentially complicates matters but is useful to reflect the pragmatic approach adopted by the state.

3. *To what extent should government accommodate minority religious values? (resource 4; case study 3)*

This case study opens up the distinction between a non-religious values system (vegetarianism) and a religious values system (Hinduism). Students may focus on whether the religious justification makes a difference. This is also a question about the extent to which the state should accommodate minorities, i.e. does respecting others' beliefs require us to change our behaviour, rather than simply leave them to believe as they wish.

4. *Is it ever acceptable to stop someone choosing to join a religious group? (resource 4; case study 4)*

This opens up the difficult territory of how one judges what kind of belief / organisation is liable to protection under legislation about religious freedom. The examples of cults provides an extreme example. Other examples might be introduced here, such as the Church of Scientology, which was only recently recognised as a religious organisation following a Supreme Court ruling in 2013 even though it became prominent in the UK from the 1950s. This case study examines the extent to which individual freedom of choice might be curtailed. The teacher may draw on prior knowledge of the

Christian missionary work in British colonies as an example to consider in parallel. When does missionary work become mind control?

5. *Can religions continue beliefs and practices which discriminate against gay people? (resource 4; case study 5)*

This illustrates the fine lines that have to be drawn in order to balance different rights. On the one hand, same sex partners' rights to be married, and on the other hand, religious institutions' rights to uphold their own beliefs and moral teachings regarding sexuality. The case study is a subtle one because it focuses on a man's rights to be married to another man and his employment rights within the Church (as a vicar). The balance shifts because of his employment, but his situation would be different if he worked somewhere else.

The final question in all of the case studies is 'How does this case study help you think about the limits on religious freedom? This may help students to compare the case studies, and the key issues the teacher may want to elicit include:

- Religious rights may have to be balanced against other rights.
- Many issues are open to judgement, such as what counts as a religion, what counts as a free decision to join a religion?
- Toleration requires us to live alongside beliefs we disagree with, but there is an important distinction between beliefs and the actions informed by those beliefs.
- There is a debate about the extent to which religious freedom simply requires religious people to be left alone to follow their own beliefs, or requires others to act in ways which are respectful of their beliefs.

These points set the scene for lesson 2.

Ideas for developing vocabulary

- Hand out the vocabulary sheet (resource 7) and dictionaries so students can use these as they prepare to contribute.
- At the end of the lesson, ask students to add definitions to a topic glossary on the wall, for future use in this topic.
- At the end of the lesson, share vocabulary cards with one term on each and ask students to pick two and devise a meaningful sentence using both terms correctly.

Lesson 2: Religious Freedom in school

Resource 5

This lesson is based on a proposal which sets out the principles of religious freedom and toleration and outlines the criteria for limiting such freedoms. A draft resolution is provided (resource 5), which the teacher may want to alter to provide more or less controversy, or to reflect the religious diversity (or lack of it) in the school. Students should then have an opportunity to debate the proposal and table amendments to seek a consensus or at least to maximise the majority supporting the final proposal.

1. Initial phase

Students should have time to devise responses to the draft resolution. They may speak in defence of sections they feel strongly about. They may also make proposals to strike out some text, amend it, or add new text. Each group should be able to table amendments and speak to them. The teacher may want to provide large post-it stickers or note cards for amendments to be tabled. At this stage the teacher may need to intervene with questions or prompts to stimulate initial engagement. It may be helpful to think about the ideas and voices that are not represented here e.g. how would a member of the majority / minority group feel about this? How about someone of no faith? An advocate of free speech? Someone who feels oppressed by a religious belief?

2. Presentation of initial responses

As each group takes turns to present their ideas to others they can gauge the opinion in the classroom. Others should engage in discussion to explain if they agree, disagree, or have questions to ask about amendments or speeches.

3. Consolidation phase

After the initial round of discussions and presentations, each group should re-consider their responses and suggestions. Are there other groups with similar issues, and if so, can these groups agree on a shared amendment to take to a vote in the final phase of the debate? Are there some amendments which, on reflection, need to be withdrawn or changed to accommodate others' opinions?

4. Final presentation and vote

The final proposals are made and votes taken on each. At this stage there should be little need for full discussion, and amendments may be tabled, and questions of clarification taken, before voting on each. It would be useful for the teacher or a nominated student (with fast typing skills) to keep track of these amendments on a computer, so students can see the new proposal taking shape. The class can take a final vote on the amended resolution.

5. Plenary

The teacher may want to end the lesson by reflecting on the extent to which the resolution strikes a balance between religious freedom and other rights; and the extent to which it places positive duties on others to accommodate religious beliefs they may not share. In particular it may be worth reflecting on the balance students have struck between religious freedom and free speech; and implicit here is the distinction between being offended because of one's beliefs and being humiliated or attacked for one's beliefs. Lynn Davies has argued that children need to be inducted into a culture where they can be offended safely rather than expect to never experience offence – how do students balance these issues here?



Photo courtesy of the ESU

Lesson 3: Free to ban?

Resource 6

This final lesson in the sequence frames the issue of freedom within a competitive debate. There are three suggested motions, the teacher may select one or ask students to vote for their preferred topic. The purpose of this debate is to enable students to draw on some of their earlier exploratory thinking to build and critique arguments about freedom.

- Should we ban the recreational use of alcohol? (motion 1)
- Should everyone have the right to wear religious symbols at work? (motion 2)
- Should people whose religious belief is that homosexuality is a sin be allowed to deny services to same-sex couples? (motion 3)

The teacher may choose to follow the approach below when setting up the debate or tailor the debate preparation / substantive debate in a way that meets the needs of the class. The teacher may also want to split students up in groups of 3-5 with equal numbers of groups allocated either 'for' or 'against'. Teachers may wish to adapt the following to suit their context/needs.

1. Individual brainstorm

Students would, working alone, come up with as many ideas as they can. They might write these down using the mind map technique. During this stage, it's important that students do not worry about developing their ideas, but simply write down as many ideas as they can, drawing on the knowledge covered in previous lessons.

2. Group mind map

The whole group might then discuss the ideas that each individual student has generated, and put them onto one mind-map. This might stimulate a group discussion on where ideas are the same, similar and different and use this to produce a mind-map that represents all of their individual work.

3. Identify the best points

The group might then look at all the ideas on their mind-map, and select, for example, the 6 ideas that they think are the best and/or identify ideas that most have identified as important to this debate. If the teacher has allocated students to a side in the debate (for / against the motion) they can select the points that seem best suited to their argument.

4. Make the points REAL

The students might create a REAL argument for each of the selected ideas and might use the group mind-map to find ideas that will help in this, and discuss arguments as a team where needed.

Student prompts:

Reason - a short statement or headline that is an important claim in your speech or argument

Example - a statistic, case study or illustration that supports the Reason

Analysis - an explanation of the relevance of the Example, and of the Reason, adding context and clarification

Link - a connection back to the Reason and, where relevant, to the broader topic or theme of the speech as a whole.

5. Expression and Delivery

Students should think about how they are going to deliver their speeches and which of the techniques they have learned that they will use. This might include tone, body language and eye contact. They should also consider if they know any adjectives, synonyms or other language that can make their REAL points even more persuasive.

6. Final preparations

Finally, every student should have one or two REAL arguments, and prepare to deliver these to the class.