

KS2 Lesson Plan 2 – Exploring Secularism

What is Free Speech?

Background	<p>If you think freedom of speech means you can say anything you like about whatever you like, you're not <i>quite</i> right.</p> <p>The right to freedom of speech relates to many ideas, including some that certain people find very offensive. However, there are responsibilities associated with free speech</p> <p>The state has a responsibility to address hate speech and when violence is encouraged against others, but these restrictions have to be enshrined in law and must be clear and transparent. Governments also have the responsibility to clearly demonstrate why such restrictions are necessary.</p> <p>This lesson will allow KS2 pupils the chance to consider the fundamental importance of free speech to a healthy society whilst supporting them in understanding the line between valid criticism and speech that breaks the law.</p> <p>“Our vision for a secular democracy is underpinned by the fundamental human right to free speech. Without this, democracy cannot exist.” – National Secular Society.</p>
Subjects	Citizenship
From the DfE Citizenship programme of study at KS2 - Pupils should be taught:	<p>1 a) to talk and write about their opinions, and explain their views, on issues that affect themselves and society</p> <p>2 a) to research, discuss and debate topical issues, problems and events</p> <p>b) why and how rules and laws are made and enforced, why different rules are needed in different situations and how to take part in making and changing rules</p> <p>h) to recognise the role of voluntary, community and pressure groups</p>
Key Question	Should there be limits on free speech?
Learning Outcomes	<p>Expected: pupils can give a simple explanation of what free speech means.</p> <p>Greater Depth: pupils can give a simple explanation of free speech and use a range of examples to explain why free speech is sometimes restricted.</p>
Stimulus	<p>What are the laws that limit free speech?</p> <p>In England and Wales, expressing hatred toward someone on account of the person's colour, race, disability, nationality, ethnic</p>

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	<p>or national origin, religion, gender identity, or sexual orientation is forbidden. The penalties for hate speech include fines, imprisonment, or both.</p> <p>Some of the same laws apply in Scotland and Northern Ireland. The Scottish government has held an independent review of hate crime laws which it intends to use as the basis for a wider consultation on new legislation.</p> <p>Discuss what you think about the social media comments below – discuss whether they fall into the hate speech laws category?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">a) “Anyone who believes in Gods is stupid – all religions are just made-up stories that primitive people made up to explain things they didn’t understand...”b) “I call on all of my followers to attack anyone who is doesn’t believe in our Gods – we must wipe them all from the face of the Earth”c) “Look at my comic I’ve done about god! I’ve made him wear silly clothes and clown’s shoes!”d) “Men shouldn’t be allowed to marry other men – we should make them suffer pain – who’s going to join me?”e) “I hate the Prime Minister – what a wally! I’m going to encourage all my friends to post comments about how useless he is on their Instagram pages...”f) “I think people wearing old fashioned religious clothes look ridiculous! They need to look in the mirror before they go out!” <p>Which of these statements might be against the law? What is the difference between the statements that might be classed as ‘hate speech’ and the ones that wouldn’t be? (b & d would be considered hate speech as they incite violence against other people)</p> <p>Some things people say might be considered rude, insensitive or very unpleasant, but that doesn’t mean they are against the law.</p>
Exercise	<p>Scenario:</p> <p>Imagine your school had a new Headteacher, Mrs Stern. In her first assembly, the Headteacher told everyone that children, parents and teachers were no longer allowed to criticise the school or Headteacher in any way. This included making jokes or doing drawings of the Headteacher.</p>

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	<p>She said, “I am in total charge – I will not allow any criticism about anything I do. If I hear of any criticism, the child or teacher will be told to leave the school immediately and never return!”</p> <p>In your pair or group, discuss how this could be bad for the school and its pupils. What things could happen if no one was allowed to speak out?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Write down 5 things that could change for the worse at school.• Why would it be unhealthy for a school not to allow free speech?• Why might someone in power <i>want</i> to limit free speech?• What if it wasn't a school, but the government that said this – what could happen to society?• In many countries, free speech is restricted – why is it important that we value freedom of speech in our country? <p>Discuss and feedback your thoughts to the class inviting questions.</p>
Take it Further	Make a poster about why free speech is important. In the middle of your paper draw a head, then surround it with speech bubble containing your sentences about the importance of free speech.
What do secularists think about free speech?	<p>Secularists believe that there cannot be a healthy, fully functioning democracy without the freedom of speech and expression. A secularist believes that society and the individuals within it can only progress and improve when people are free to receive and share their ideas, opinions and thoughts without fear of censure.</p> <p>Importantly, they also believe that freedom of speech must include allowing expressions that may shock or offend others within society.</p> <p>Secularists may disagree over the limits of free speech.</p>
Link to KS1 Study	There is a KS1 lesson on Free Speech which explores children's right to speak out on issues that are important to them.