

EXPLORING SECULARISM



FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION FACTSHEET



Exploring Secularism is all about questions which arise in a pluralist society where people have different beliefs. The resources advocate asking these questions; they are not a manifesto of answers. It is for students to explore a range of answers to these questions and come up with some of their own.

Freedom of expression is a key value in a pluralist society and in the development of secularism. Restrictions on free expression – both formal and informal – are common features of religious privilege and discrimination. The modern secularist movement in the UK first emerged in reaction to restrictions on critical speech about religion and the state.

Questions to explore in this theme:

Key question	Main subject area(s)	Other subject area(s)
What is free speech?	Citizenship Fundamental British Values SMSC	Religion and belief education Arts
What is blasphemy?	Citizenship Fundamental British Values Religion and belief education	Arts SMSC
What is hate speech?	Citizenship Fundamental British Values SMSC	Religion and belief education Art and design
Should there be limits to free speech?	Citizenship Fundamental British Values SMSC	Religion and belief education Art and design Philosophy

Tips for exploring this theme:

You can find a basic secularist perspective on the core questions raised in this theme in our guide for the teachers at exploringsecularism.org/why-explore-secularism

You can find further resources and exercises related to this theme at exploringsecularism.org/freedom-of-expression

Keep an eye out for news stories relevant to freedom of expression, which raise the key questions in this theme. Ask students whether they consider each story to be an example of free expression being used and/or restricted.