

# Promoting Democracy in Schools

Practical resources to support teachers'  
initial and continuous professional  
development.

Edda Sant  
Jonas Thiel  
Paris Brown-Gardner  
Mackenzie Ferguson  
Emily Fox  
Aimee Griffiths

Emily Hudson  
Abigail Moran  
Paula Needham  
Haneefa Noor  
Zeba Tillat  
Chris Wimbury

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Education Departement  
Council of Europe  
Agora Building  
1, Quai Jacoutot  
67075 Strasbourg Cedex  
France  
E-mail: education@coe.int

Cover design and layout: Glorious Creative

Illustrations: Gemma Bennett

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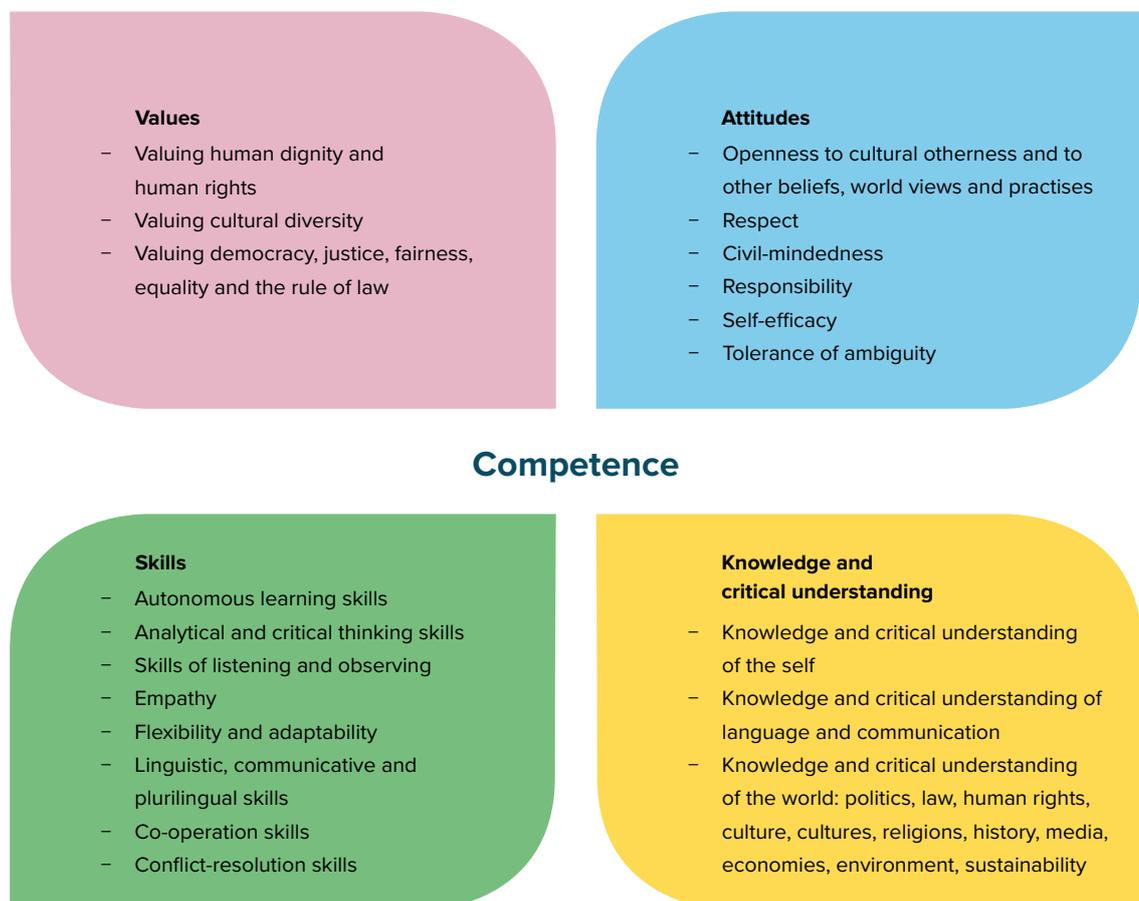
# Background



What kind of society do we want our children to live in? For many of us, democracy mirrors some of the ideals of a society in which we are all in an equal position to have a say. But in recent times, we have seen how democracy is in crisis: growing inequalities, rise of xenophobic and racist attitudes, increasing distribution of fake news and hate speech on social media, and high levels of frustration and alienation particularly among marginalised groups and young people.

To respond to these challenges, the Council of Europe developed the Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture (CDC) in 2018. The Framework defines twenty competences needed to appropriately and effectively participate in democratic and intercultural contexts. These competences are summarised diagrammatically in Figure 1.

Figure 1. The 20 competences included in the competence model of the CDC Framework



The purpose of the framework is to facilitate that schools, universities and other educational institutions are in a position to promote these Competences for Democratic Culture. As the Council of Europe clearly manifests, well-prepared, resourced and motivated teachers are essential to respond to this challenge. Education can open possibilities for building new, more democratic futures, and teachers have a unique opportunity and a responsibility to mirror democratic principles and to facilitate that new generations embrace democratic ways of life.

However, research suggests that teacher education courses do not always prepare teachers to consider a democratic culture dimension in their practices. The research project 'Embedding a Democratic Culture Dimension in Teacher Education Programmes (EDCD-TEP)' brought researchers, teacher educators, teachers and student teachers from three different countries (Spain, Portugal, and England) together to identify good practices and design teacher education resources that could facilitate that teachers are better prepared to promote democracy.

**Promoting Democracy in Schools.** *Practical resources to support teachers' initial and continuous professional development* aims to provide research-underpinned practical resources for teachers, teacher educators and others who wish to enhance teachers' subject, pedagogical, and practical knowledge in relation to the promotion of democratic values including democracy, justice, and equality.



# About us



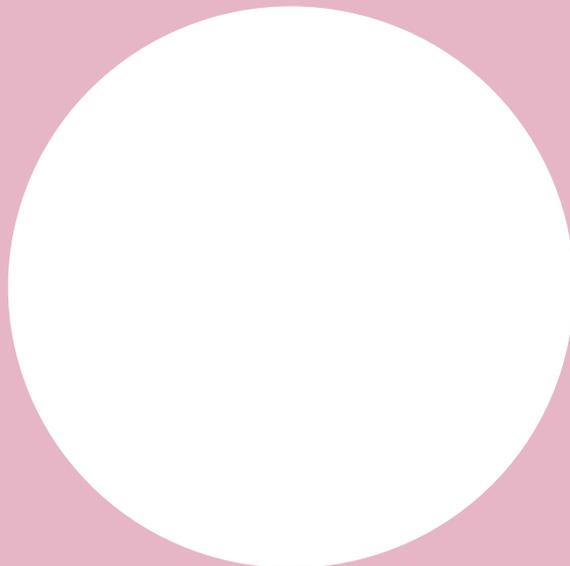
**Promoting Democracy in Schools.** *Practical resources to support teachers' initial and continuous professional development* have been designed in partnership with seven primary student teachers (Mackenzie Ferguson, Emily Fox, Aimee Griffiths, Emily Hudson, Abigail Moran, Haneefa Noor, and Chris Wimbury) and three in-service teachers (Paris Brown-Gardner, Paula Needham, and Zeba Tillat) by Edda Sant and Jonas Thiel.

**Edda Sant** (PhD) is a reader in Education at Manchester Metropolitan University. She completed her PhD at the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona after having worked as Social studies (History and Geography) and Citizenship teacher, and Year and Key Stage Coordinator in different schools in Spain. Since then, she has published in numerous prestigious international journals including her 2016 co-authored article that was awarded Children's Identity and Citizenship European Association Best Publication Award (2015). She has written/edited five books. Her more recent book 'Political Education in Times of Populism' will be published in 2021 by Palgrave MacMillan. Edda is a key advocate of democratic and political education in schools and a current academic advisor for the UK's All-Party Parliamentary Group on Political Literacy.

**Jonas Thiel** (PhD) is a senior lecturer in Primary Education at Manchester Metropolitan University. After working as a teacher for several years, he began his academic career when embarking on his PhD at Manchester Met. Since, Jonas has published in international journals and is currently in the process of finishing his first monograph for Routledge. Jonas's practical and academic interests focus on competition in education, cooperative learning, arts education and democratic education.



# Orientation & Structure



**Promoting Democracy in Schools.** *Practical resources to support teachers' initial and continuous professional development* offers research-underpinned guidance to student teachers and teachers who wish to promote democratic values including democracy, justice, and equality in their practices. The document is designed to introduce some subject, pedagogical, and practical knowledge that can facilitate reflection over current teaching practices and possible alternatives.

### Structure

The document is structured into three different sections:

- Section one provides a very brief introduction to key concepts and ideas related to subject, pedagogical, and practical knowledge.
- Section two includes five activities for teachers to further reflect and enhance their understanding of how they can promote democracy in their practices.
- Section three includes links to further resources that can be used for teacher education orientated to the promotion of democracy.

### Orientation

**Promoting Democracy in Schools.** *Practical resources to support teachers' initial and continuous professional development* can be used in different contexts including initial teacher education courses and professional development activities. The content and activities have been designed by researchers and teacher educators in collaboration with both, student teachers and in-service teachers. "Promoting democracy in schools" can be potentially beneficial for initial and continuous professional development.

This document is a result of the project 'Embedding a Democratic Culture Dimension in Teacher Education Programmes (EDCD-TEP)' which primarily focused on the education of primary teachers. However, content and activities have been designed by primary teachers together with teacher educators/researchers who also have professional and academic experience in secondary education. Therefore, the resources may also benefit secondary teachers' practice.

Some of the activities are designed to be carried out by small groups of teachers. These group tasks are always accompanied by reflective questions. Individual teachers who wish to further enhance their understanding and practices will find in these resources a range of options to critically examine their existing practices and consider changes.

Finally, the content and activities have been created in 2021 England using this context as the background. Therefore, we expect this resource to be adapted to the local context where teacher education activities take place.

# Background knowledge

The background features a solid light blue color with a large, white, abstract geometric shape that resembles a stylized arrow or a large 'V' pointing downwards. The shape is composed of several overlapping triangular and quadrilateral sections, creating a dynamic, layered effect.

## Subject knowledge

The Council of Europe (2018) defines 20 Competences for Democratic Culture. At the heart of these competences are “democratic values” as these are considered necessary for a democratic culture. The Council of Europe defines values as “general beliefs that individuals hold about the desirable goals that should be striven for in life” (p. 39). Values motivate our actions and allow us to evaluate perspectives.



**Promoting Democracy in Schools.** *Practical resources to support teachers' initial and continuous professional development* focuses particularly on three of the democratic values defined by the Council of Europe:

**Justice**

Justice is often understood as a synonymous of fairness. There is not a single way to define justice. The way we understand justice depends on our historical, political and cultural context. Yet, we can think of justice as a combination of at least three inter-related dimensions: redistribution, recognition and participation. The redistribution dimension considers whether material (for example, savings) and non-material (for instance, right to education) resources are equally distributed. The recognition dimension considers whether norms, values, identities and traditions are equally valued or recognised. The participatory dimension considers whether people have equal access to influence their communities' decision-making. Whilst many of us will think of justice as a universal value over which we agree, we can see that the value and its dimension is differently understood when we apply it to concrete situations.

**Equality**

When we say something or someone is 'equal' to something or someone else, we can mean different things. Sometimes we can mean 'equality'. This is when the same treatment is applied to all. For instance, all children are entitled to a free place in a primary school. However, on other occasions, we can mean 'equity'. This is when different people are treated differently depending on their needs/abilities. For instance, pupils with special educational needs are entitled to educational adjustments.

**Democracy**

There is not a single way to define democracy. For instance, democracy can be understood as a system of institutions where there are regular, contested, free and fair elections, where all adult citizens can participate, and where the rule of the majority applies and the government is accountable to its citizens. Democracy sometimes is also associated with the rule of law or the laws that, in a democratic country, are expected to guarantee that everyone is treated justly, fairly, impartially and equally. However, democracy can also be understood as a culture or a mode of living that presupposes the equality of all citizens and their participation in processes of group decision-making.





## **Pedagogical knowledge**

There are different teaching and assessment methods that are particularly suited to facilitate the promotion of democratic values. In their guidance on the implementation of the Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture, the Council of Europe recommends that Competences for Democratic Culture should be considered both within existing subject areas of the curricula and also as a cross-curricular, integrated or transversal theme.



The Council of Europe recommends different pedagogical methods including:

- Co-operative learning
- Project-based learning
- Service learning strategies

One of the more common recommended pedagogical strategies is the **teaching of controversial issues**. Controversial issues are defined as “issues which arouse strong feelings and divide opinion in communities and in society” (CoE, 2016, p. 34) and there is a growing consensus that the use of controversial issues as a teaching method can promote Competences for Democratic Culture. There are different ways and approaches to consider controversial issues.

For instance, *agonistic approaches* to controversial issues aim to normalise political disagreement and destabilise rigid understandings of friendship/enmity. In agonistic approaches, participants are requested to rapidly express their opinion in relation to a range of different statements. There is no intention to reach agreement over the controversies.

*Deliberative approaches* to controversial issues aim to facilitate that participants gain academic knowledge, appreciate and respect different viewpoints and learn to build consensus. In deliberative approaches to controversial issues, participants are requested to research one or several viewpoints, communicate their ideas to others, and reach agreement.

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*To know more:*

Berg, W., Graeffe, L. & Holden, C. (2003). *Teaching Controversial Issues: A European Perspective*. London: London Metropolitan University.

CitizED (2004). *Teaching Controversial Issues: Briefing Paper for Trainee Teachers of Citizenship Education Teachers*. London: CitizED

Council of Europe (2016). *Living with Controversy. Teaching Controversial Issues Through Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights (EDC/HRE)*. Retrieved from <https://edoc.coe.int/en/human-rights-democratic-citizenship-and-interculturalism/7738-teaching-controversial-issues.html>

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Cowan, P., & Maitles, H. (Eds.). (2012). *Teaching controversial issues in the classroom: Key issues and debates*. Bloomsbury Publishing.

Hess, D. E. (2018). Teaching controversial issues: An introduction. *Social Education*, 82(6), 306-306.

Lo, J. C. (2017). Empowering young people through conflict and conciliation: Attending to the political and agonism in democratic education. *Democracy & Education*, 1-9.

Oxfam (2006). *Teaching Controversial Issues*. Oxford: Oxfam. Retrieved from <https://oxfamilibrary.openrepository.com/handle/10546/620473>

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## Practical knowledge

To promote democratic values, teachers do not only need to teach these values, they need to mirror them. This is not an easy task, particularly when discussing controversial issues in class. Teachers and students are influenced by their opinions, experiences and feelings when they discuss political issues including democratic values. **Teachers are never neutral when promoting democracy.**



Educational research has long suggested that to promote democracy it is important to consider an **open classroom climate** or a “climate in which learners are able to raise issues that are of concern to them, are allowed to discuss controversial issues, are encouraged to express their own opinions and to listen to one another, and are allowed to explore a variety of different perspectives” (CoE, 2018, p. 117). In classrooms with an open classroom climate, students feel that the classroom is a safe, participative, respectful and inclusive space, where all perspectives are welcome. In an open classroom climate, teachers model democratic attitudes and behaviours and facilitate democratic and participatory processes. This is the opposite of authoritarian methods where the teacher’s perspective always prevail.

An open classroom climate requires tolerance of others’ perspectives and beliefs. But there are limits to tolerance. **Anti-democratic perspectives** (e.g. racism, misogyny, homophobia) perpetuate anti-democratic structures and can result in some students feeling harassed and marginalised. Teachers should respond to anti-democratic comments. However, it is usually recommended that, rather than responding to these comments via authoritarian methods, teachers should stop the class and focus on the anti-democratic issue as a topic of discussion. If young people feel blamed about openly manifesting their opinions, their opinions will likely be reinforced.

Situations teachers might encounter in classrooms when promoting democracy are impossible to predict, and teachers can never be prepared to address all possible challenges. Furthermore, there are different answers, many of them valuable and none of them perfect to each situation. In these cases, reflective practice or self-reflection can be helpful. If teachers consider how their theoretical and pedagogical knowledge, their personal beliefs and values impact on their teaching practices and experiences, this can facilitate that teachers are better prepared and feel more comfortable when promoting democracy.





# Activity



## **Using curriculum design to explore the values of democracy, justice and equality**

The following activity will explore ways in which the values of democracy, justice, and equality can be incorporated into different areas of the curriculum. Via these activities, student teachers and teachers will:

1. examine some of the complexities of the values of democracy, justice, and equality;
2. analyse how the values of democracy, justice, and equality can be brought to existing curriculum areas;
3. design teaching activities that bring democratic values into different areas of the curriculum; and
4. learn about practical examples as well as teaching and further resources that can be used in classrooms.

## Activity

### Introduction

Examining how democratic values can be incorporated into teaching can be a way to learn how democratic values can be expressed and to learn about examples of practical ways this can be done.

### Participants

- Student teachers as part of their teacher training. It can be conducted individually or in groups.
- teachers as part of their professional development. It can be conducted individually or in groups.

### Resources

- Language lesson plan 1;
- Science lesson plan;
- Language lesson plan 2;
- Examples of reflective questions

### Method

1. Participants examine the language and/or science lessons provided below.
2. Participants evaluate the lesson considering reflective questions.
3. Participants consider the teaching methods to implement democratic values by using reflective questions.
4. Participants consider how they can incorporate the promotion of democratic values within existing subject areas. They examine the programme of study for one of the core/ foundations subjects. Whilst there is often a tradition to consider democratic competences within certain subjects such as history, social studies, and Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE), all school subjects can be used to promote democratic values.
5. Participants think about the activities that can facilitate the teaching of the programme of study as well as knowledge and appreciation of democratic values.
6. Participants self-evaluate their own curriculum design.

## Supporting resources

Examples of reflective questions

### Questions about content

- What democratic competences are deployed?
- Which particular value is incorporated?
- Are the complexities of the value considered? And if so, how so?
- How is the value incorporated?
- Is the value incorporated in relation to what pupils know, feel or both?

### Questions about teaching methods

- What teaching method(s) is/are used?
- Is the content incorporated through democratic teaching methods recommended by the Council of Europe such as co-operative learning, project-based learning and service-learning?
- Does this/these method(s) promote this or other democratic competences?  
Does it promote a particular value?

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# Language Lesson Plan 1

Justice in the Language class

<b>Introduction</b>	In many countries, primary teachers are expected to teach children how to understand and recite poetry. For instance, in England, teachers are requested to teach Year 3 and Year 4 pupils (7-8 years old) to read and discuss poetry, identify and discuss themes and conventions, make comparisons within texts, learn poetry by heart, and prepare poems and read them aloud. Through the use of poetry and other literary forms, teachers can promote democratic values such as justice.
<b>Aim</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– to read, comprehend and compare sections of a poem</li> <li>– to understand and appreciate the values of justice</li> </ul>
<b>Participants</b>	Whole class of 8 year old pupils
<b>Resources</b>	Poem ‘Good Hope’ from Benjamin Zephaniah’s book ‘Funky Chickens’
<b>Preparation</b>	Divide the poem into different sections, for instance into five sections. Think of questions that can facilitate that pupils gain a good understanding of different dimensions of justice.
<b>Method</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Divide pupils into five groups. Then allocate a section of the poem to each group. Ideally, use co-operative strategies (e.g. Kagan) to facilitate mixed attainment groups.</li> <li>2. Ask each pupil to read one of the sections and circle words that they do not understand.</li> <li>3. Clarify the meaning of words.</li> <li>4. Tell pupils to discuss with the members of their groups what fairness means according to their section.</li> <li>5. Ask pupils to consider how they would feel if they experienced a situation of unfairness as described in their section.</li> <li>6. Re-organise pupils into groups (jigsaw strategy) so that in each group there is a pupil who has read a different part of the poem.</li> <li>7. Tell pupils to explain to the other members of their group what their section means, how fairness is considered in their section, and how they would feel if they experienced that situation of unfairness.</li> </ol>



8. Tell pupils to recite their section of the poem aloud, conveying their emotions through their tone of voice, together with others who have read the same section.
9. As a whole class, discuss different meanings of fairness. Consider the following questions to guide discussions: (a) is fairness connected to “what we have” or “what we can do”? (b) is fairness connected to the way others talk about our beliefs and traditions? (c) is fairness connected to our opportunities to have our voice heard? (d) can we experience fairness and unfairness in different ways? (e) how do you feel when you experience a situation of unfairness? (f) what can you do to contribute to a more fair world?
10. If possible, finish the plenary by discussing a particular example when someone who experienced injustice responded to it in a productive way (e.g. Nelson Mandela, the suffragettes, Rosa Park).

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## Science Lesson Plan

### Equality in the Science Class

#### Introduction

In many countries, primary teachers are expected to teach children how to identify and name a variety of common plants. For instance, in England, teachers are advised to organise activities with Year 1 pupils (5-6 years old) to plant flowers and vegetables and to observe and keep a record of how they grow over time. Through these activities, teachers can promote democratic values such as equality, facilitating that children understand and appreciate the difference between equality and equity.

#### Aim

- to identify and name different type of seeds and plants
- to understand the needs of plants
- to count the number of seeds, measure amounts of water and soil
- to measure plants growing in a growing chart
- to understand and appreciate the difference between equality and equity

#### Participants

Whole class of 6-year-old pupils

#### Resources

Plant pots, soil, water, rulers, growing charts, seeds, labels for plant pots

#### Preparation

Select three very different seeds to grow inside the classroom. For instance, squash and peas are both vegetables easy to grow indoors but they require different sowing and watering conditions (see, <https://www.rhs.org.uk/advice/grow-your-own/vegetables> ). Get all the resources needed above.

#### Method

1. Divide pupils into groups and give each group a growing chart, three plant pots and some seeds of the three different plant varieties.
2. Ask pupils to plant a type of seed in each of the plant pots, to use exactly the same amount of soil and the same amount of seeds in each pot.
3. Tell pupils to label the plant pots.
4. Tell pupils to water the plant pot with exactly the same amount of water.
5. Ask pupils to water the plant pots exactly with the same amount of water every two days.
6. After three or four days, ask pupils to write into their growing charts, how many seeds have become a plant and how large the plants are.

7. Ask pupils to continue watering the plant pots exactly with the same amount of water every day.
8. After three to four days, ask pupils to write into their growing charts again how many seeds become a plant and how large the plants are.
9. Repeat tasks 7 and 8 as many times as you wish.
10. In their groups, ask pupils to: (a) compare the plants considering their growing charts; (b) discuss why they think each type of seed has grown differently when provided with the same treatment; (c) think about whether what happened with the plants can also happen with people.
11. As a class discussion, discuss whether it is fair to give different plants the same treatment and what we can do to secure all plants have a chance to grow healthy? Ask pupils to consider whether the same can be said for people and link this to children's own experience of equity in the classroom.

**Further notes**

This activity could be preceded by a similar activity to explore justice where children water only one of the two types of seeds.

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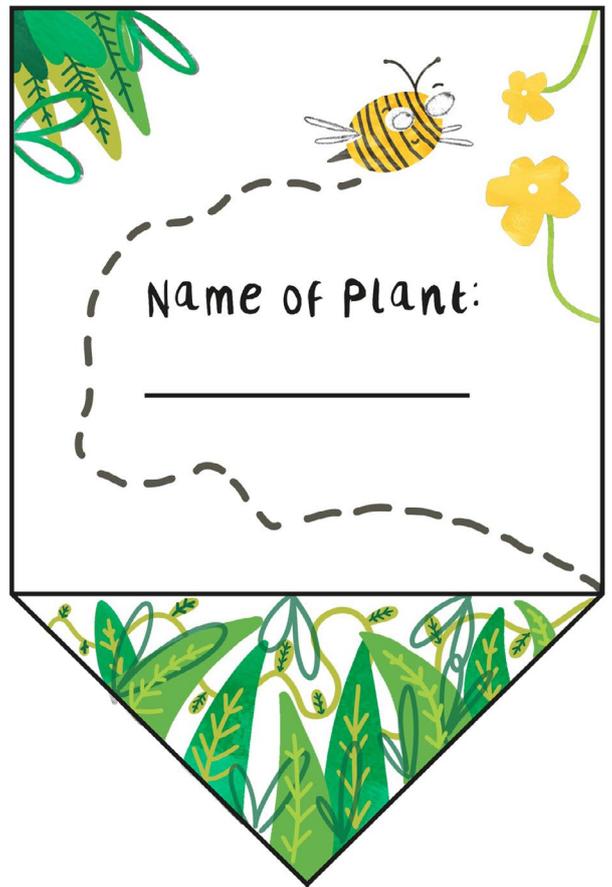
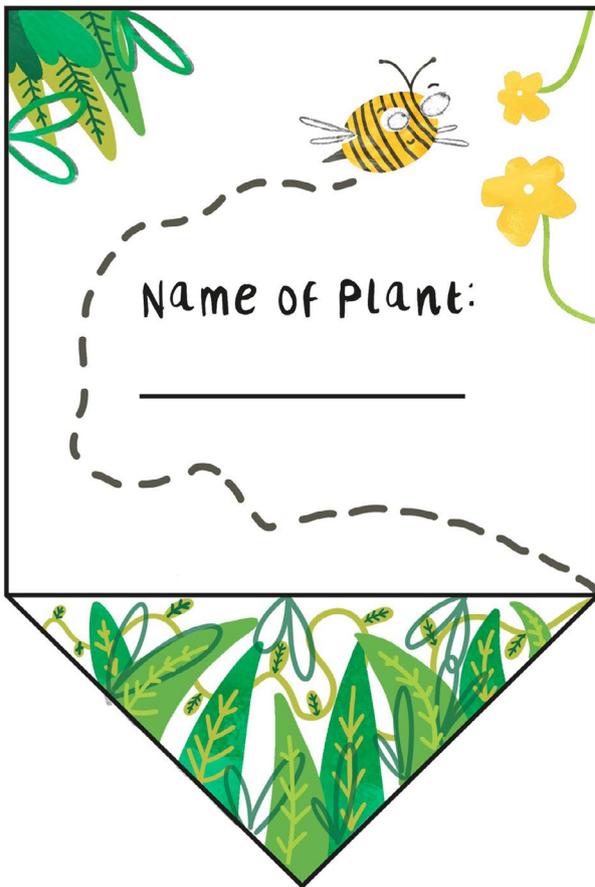
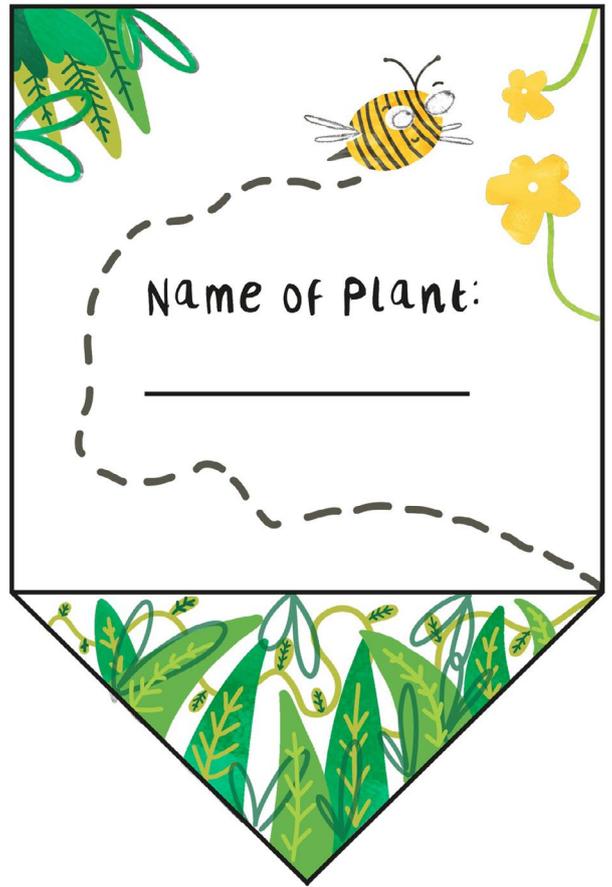
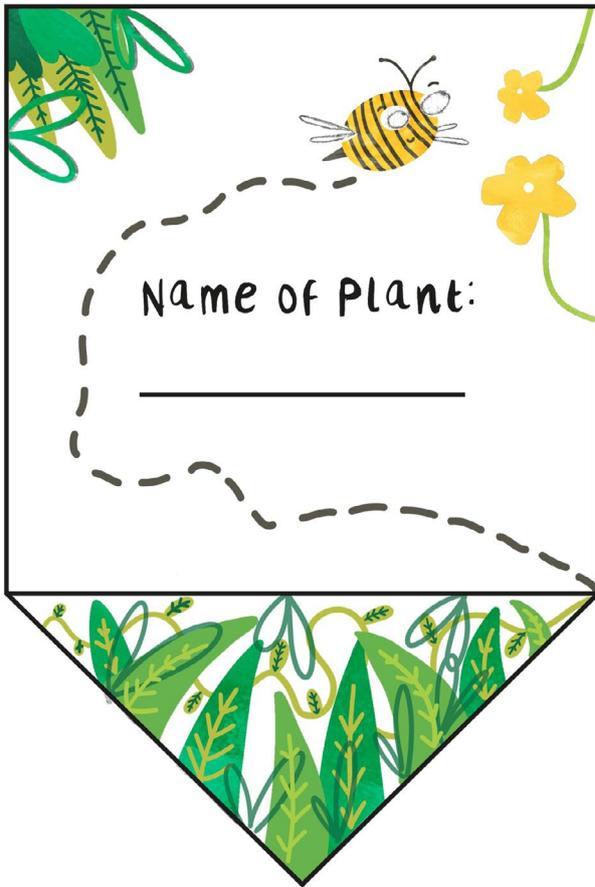
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### Labels for plant pots



# Growing Chart

Name of Plant: \_\_\_\_\_



Day	Watered (✓)	Sunlight (✓)	How many seeds were planted?	Draw your seed!
Day __				



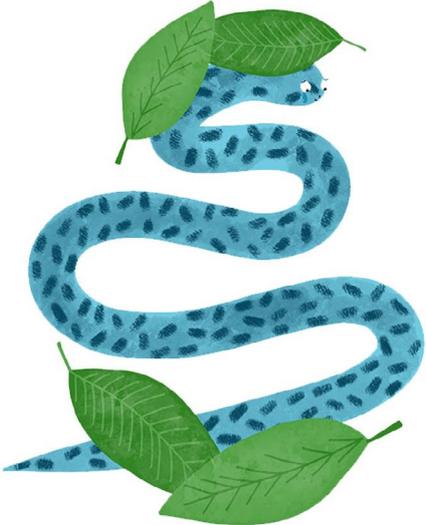
## Language Lesson Plan 2

Literacy - encouraging quality writing which includes emotions/feelings

<b>Introduction</b>	Children often find it hard to write about feelings and their writing can be just based on a series of actions (e.g. children may write “and then, and then, and then ...”). This lesson gives children the opportunity to consider what it is like to be disadvantaged as a group. There is also a big emphasis in teaching on introducing children to a wider range of vocabulary.
<b>Aim</b>	To experience unfairness and how it makes people feel and be introduced to appropriate vocabulary that they could use in their writing.
<b>Participants</b>	9 or 11-year old pupils
<b>Resources</b>	Outdoor or indoor games equipment (as in board games, drawing resources etc); vocabulary cards
<b>Preparation</b>	Split class into two groups
<b>Method</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Ask for eight volunteers. In private, explain to them that we are going to carry out a performance to talk about fairness. Half of the volunteers will be asked to be silence and quiet whilst the other volunteers will be allowed to play. As actors in the performance, they need to clearly demonstrate how they feel.</li> <li>2. Take all the children into the playground. Tell four of the volunteers to sit apart from each other and not to speak, legs and arms folded. Instruct the other four volunteers to play with anything they want in the other half of the playground. Tell the rest of the class to observe their peers and take notes about how they feel. The activity lasts about 5 minutes but no longer.</li> <li>3. Return to class and ask for contributions of ‘actors’ and ‘spectators’ on how they felt or the type of emotions they performed.</li> <li>4. Discuss vocabulary using vocabulary cards including: Shame, ignored, left-out, humiliated, guilty, compassionate, remorse, pangs of conscience, self-reproach.</li> <li>5. As a whole class, relate to where people may experience unfairness and why (for example, poverty, gender, cultural and racial discrimination).</li> <li>6. Ask pupils to write a paragraph on how it feels to be on the receiving end of unfair practices.</li> </ol>

## Vocabulary cards

shameful snake



shameful:  
a painful feeling  
when you think  
that someone  
has done  
something wrong



bored bat

bored  
a feeling of being  
tired because  
something is not  
interesting

remorseful rhino



remorseful:  
a feeling of guilt  
over having done  
something wrong

## Vocabulary cards



left out  
leopard

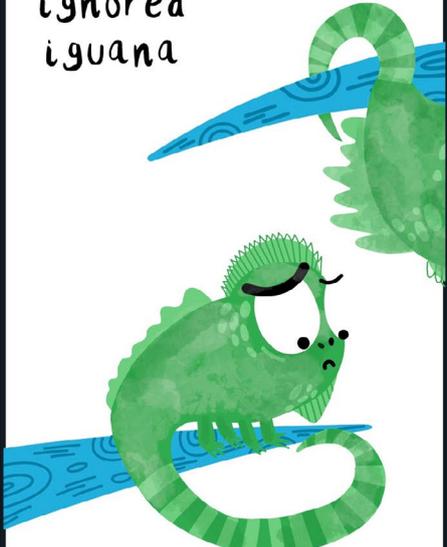
**left out:**  
a bad feeling  
when you are  
not included in  
whatever is  
happening

humiliated  
hippo



**humiliated:**  
an uncomfortable  
feeling when  
someone puts you  
down

ignored  
iguana



**ignored:**  
a bad feeling  
when you are not  
given attention

## Vocabulary cards

distressed dog



**distressed:**  
a feeling of being  
upset or worried

compassionate  
crocodile



**compassionate:**  
a feeling you have  
when you care about  
other people's  
suffering

guilty  
giraffe



**guilty:**  
a feeling when you  
know you have done  
something wrong

## Discussing justice

The following activities will explore the teaching of agonistic controversial issues as a way of promoting the values of democracy, justice, and equality. The activity has three purposes:

1. Identify, consider and reflect on the particularities of controversial issues as a teaching method;
2. Experience some of the complexities of the values of democracy, justice, and equality;
3. Practice situations of disagreement and experience how we can agree and disagree over things with the same people.

## Activity

### Introduction

This activity is based in agonistic approaches to democracy. In agonistic approaches, adversaries do not need to agree but they need to respect each other. This activity can be used as an icebreaker, as a way to familiarise student teachers with controversy or also as a repeatable activity to facilitate that teachers feel more comfortable when dealing with disagreement.

### Participants

- Small groups of student teachers and a facilitator
- Small groups of teachers and a facilitator

### Resources

agree/disagree cards; list of statements; reflective question

### Method

1. Divide participants into small groups of 4-6. Select a facilitator in each group.
2. Provide all participants in each group with an agree/disagree card. In addition, provide facilitators with a list of statements.
3. At each table, facilitators are expected to read aloud the first statement. Participants are expected to rapidly show their agree/disagree card in relation to their statement.
4. At each table, participants discuss their views with those who have the same opinion. Then, they exchange perspectives with those with different opinions.
5. The facilitator reads aloud the second statement. Tasks 3 and 4 repeat as many times as possible in approximately 20/30 minutes.
6. Participants are then requested to reflect on their experience by considering different reflective questions.
7. Participants are then told to prepare a similar activity to discuss another democratic value with primary pupils. They need to prepare the rules of the activity, the statements and the questions for reflection.

**Support material:**

agree/disagree cards



# Agree



# Disagree



## List of statements

### It is/would be fair that...

- Young people could vote from age of 16
- All adults who live in a country could vote/be elected
- People who smoke pay more for healthcare
- There are quotas in parliaments for woman and ethnic minority groups
- Parents can opt-out of school lessons for their children that go against their beliefs
- Wealthier people pay a higher percentage of taxes
- Standardised tests are used in school
- People have the right to assisted euthanasia
- Children are held back a year if they do not progress
- Children are seated and work with those of similar gender/faith/culture//background
- Crime committed by teenagers are treated on par with adults
- Schools prioritise the increased representation of male teachers
- Schools' term time is expanded and summer holidays are reduced

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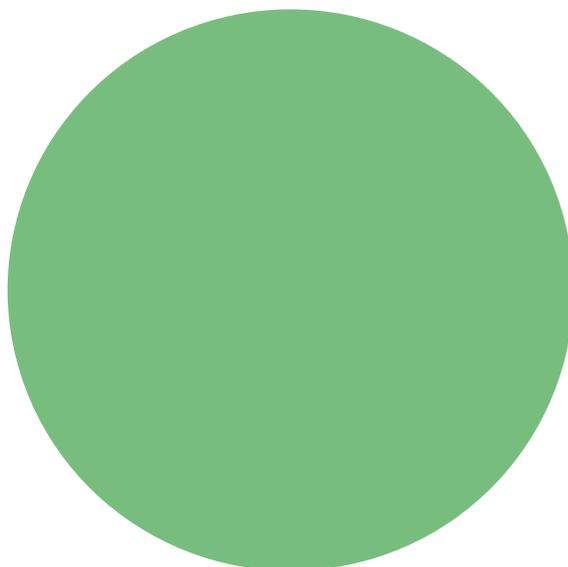
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## Examples of reflective questions

### Questions about the activity

- What do you feel when showing your card?
- Are your opinions based on your own personal experiences?
- Do the justifications differ within both groups?
- Do the same people always agree with you?
- In relation to the previous question, why do you think that is?
- How do you feel in relation to those who agree with you?
- Do you think you can talk about anything to justify your viewpoint?
- How do you feel about those who disagree with you?
- Have the perspectives of others helped you to see things in different ways?
- Have you changed your mind on any occasion? Why do you think that is?
- Do you now feel differently about “controversy” in comparison to the beginning of the activity?

### Questions about controversial issues

- In which ways do you think this activity would be/would not be helpful to be used in the classroom with primary pupils?
- What could be the potential benefits and drawbacks of using this activity?
- What role should the teacher take? Why?
- As a teacher, what should you be prepared for?

### Questions about justice

- Do you think the members of your table agree on the importance of justice?
- Why do they disagree when thinking about justice in the specific cases of the statements?
- What different approaches/dimensions to justice have emerged in the discussion?
- Given the discussions, do you think justice is always the same as equality?
- Given the discussions, do you think justice is always the same as democracy?

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## **Getting to an agreement: what shall we do with statues?**

The following activities will explore the teaching of deliberative controversial issues as a way of promoting the values of democracy, justice, and equality. The activity has three purposes:

1. Identify, consider and reflect on the particularities of controversial issues as a teaching method;
2. Experience some of the complexities of the values of democracy, justice, and equality;
3. Consider different perspectives;
4. Practise situations of disagreement and processes to reach consensus.

# Activity

## Introduction

This activity is based on deliberative approaches to democracy. In deliberative approaches, the aim is to create a safe and inclusive space so students can learn about a particular issue and decide on a resolution for this issue. This type of activities can be used to explore any form of controversy and are particularly suited for project-based learning.

## Participants

- Small groups of student teachers and a facilitator
- Small groups of teachers and a facilitator

## Resources

picture/videos introducing the controversy; list of electronic resources to support different perspectives

## Method

1. Begin the activity by showing a picture of the removal of Edward Colston's statue in Bristol and briefly introduce the life and controversy associated with Edward Colston's and Cecil Rhode's statues.
2. Divide participants into three (or multiple of three) small groups of 4-7 participants. The provided resources outline three positions (public history academics, Black Lives Matter activists, and heritage protection body<sup>1</sup>).
3. Allocate a specific perspective and a set of electronic resources to each group. Each group needs to select two spokespeople and a secretary to take notes.
4. Tell the group to read the resources. Each group to prepare a detailed, but specific, summary of their allocated position to present to others. The group is also expected to keep an open mind to listen to other groups and contribute to the discussion.
5. During the first part of the University Committee meeting, spokesperson A of each group will present their allocated perspective and will raise questions for the other groups. The secretaries from the other groups will take notes of the questions.

<sup>1</sup>Please, note that for the purpose of the activity, perspectives have been simplified. However, we wish to emphasise that not all historians, activists or heritage protectors have the same opinion over the matter. We also wish to emphasise that the perspectives presented here are to represent a range of perspectives. This does not mean endorsement.

6. Ask the groups to consider the questions posed to them and prepared answers.
7. During the second part of the University Committee meeting, spokesperson B of each group will respond to the questions.
8. Ask the groups to reunite and, given the debate, recommend a resolution to the issue.
9. During the first part of the University Committee meeting, spokesperson A/B or C of each group will present their suggested resolution.
10. Open debate and agreement by consensus or vote.
11. Participants are then requested to reflect on their experience by considering different reflective questions.
12. Participants are then told to prepare a similar activity to discuss another democratic value with primary pupils. They need to prepare the rules of the activity, the statements and the questions for reflection.

## Support material:

resources to investigate perspectives; resources to introduce debate; reflective questions

### Electronic resources

#### Introductory resources

- <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/jun/09/protesters-rally-in-oxford-for-removal-of-cecil-rhodes-statue>
- <https://www.bbc.co.uk/newsround/52965665>

#### Resources for the 'public history academics'

- <https://inews.co.uk/news/uk/statues-uk-history-edward-colston-slave-traders-pulled-down-removed-protests-443543>
- <https://www.qeh.ox.ac.uk/content/rhodes-must-fall-dignity-honour-values>
- <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2020/06/09/cecil-rhodes-statue-should-moved-oxford-college-museum-council/>
- <https://theconversation.com/history-is-not-a-morality-play-both-sides-on-rhodesmustfall-debate-should-remember-that-53912>

#### Resources for the 'Black Lives Matter activists'

- <https://inews.co.uk/news/uk/statues-uk-history-edward-colston-slave-traders-pulled-down-removed-protests-443543>
- <https://theconversation.com/statues-the-uks-plan-to-retain-and-explain-problem-monuments-is-a-backwards-step-156430>
- <https://rmfoxford.wordpress.com/2016/07/27/oxford-university-has-no-regard-for-black-life/>
- <https://www.qeh.ox.ac.uk/content/defence-rhodes-must-fall-and-struggle-recognition-oxford>

#### Resources for the 'heritage protection body'

- <https://inews.co.uk/news/uk/statues-uk-history-edward-colston-slave-traders-pulled-down-removed-protests-443543>
- <https://historicengland.org.uk/whats-new/statements/contested-heritage/>
- <https://www.theartnewspaper.com/news/uk-culture-secretary-controversial-monuments>
- <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-oxfordshire-52990860>

## Examples of reflective questions

### Questions about the activity

- How did you feel about discussing a controversial issue?
- Did you feel the classroom was a safe space to openly discuss all perspectives? Why?
- Do you feel the debate was inclusive for minority groups and/or viewpoints? How so? Why?
- What sort of arguments were more welcomed by the participants? Why do you think this happened?
- If you represented a perspective that was not your own, how did you feel?
- How did you feel about the role of the moderator/facilitator/teacher educator?

### Questions about controversial issues

- Do you think the classroom is a good place to discuss these controversies?
- In which ways do you think this activity would be/would not be helpful to be used in the classroom with primary pupils?
- What could be the potential benefits and drawbacks of using this activity?
- What role should the teacher take? Why?
- As a teacher, what should you be prepared for?

### Questions about democracy, equality and justice

- What questions related to democracy, equality and/or justice emerged in the debate?
- How do you feel about the process of discussion? Do you think it was fair? Was it democratic? Did it challenge or reproduce inequality? Why?
- How do you feel about the final resolution? Do you think it was fair? Was it democratic? Did it challenge or reproduced inequality? Why?

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## **Justice and a role play/scenario**

This activity will provide a scenarios for student teachers/ teachers to reflect on how they can practices the values of democracy, justice, and equality in their everyday practices. The activity has three purposes:

1. Examine practical challenges teachers might encounter;
2. Perform the way teachers and students might feel in a particular situation;
3. Reflect on teaching practices that could better mirror the values of democracy, justice, and equality.

## Activity

### Introduction

This activity is based in a real situation a primary teacher encountered in a classroom. This activity can be used by teacher educators to facilitate that student teachers experience practical challenges to democratic values. It can also be used by student teachers and in-service teachers who wish to reflect about their own professional practice.

### Participants

- Small groups of student teachers and a facilitator
- Small groups of teachers and a facilitator
- Student/teachers or teachers by themselves in their professional development

### Resources

dialogue cards; reflective questions

### Method

1. Divide participants in small groups of 4-5. Allocate a role to each member of the group and give each member a dialogue card with their own background information and some initial dialogue.
2. Ask participants to perform the scenario, beginning with the initial dialogue and continuing with an improvisation of the scenario.
3. Tell participants to swop roles and cards and to perform a different role in the scenario.
4. Task 3 can be repeated as many times as possible in approximately 15/20 minutes.
5. Participants are then requested to reflect on their experience by considering different reflecting questions.
6. Participants are then told to prepare a similar activity to discuss another democratic value with primary pupils. They need to prepare the rules of the activity, the statements and the questions for reflection.

## Support material:

dialogue cards

**Role:** Teacher

### Background information

Mr Khan teaches a group of 30 eight-year old pupils. They are committed to promote democratic values in their classrooms.

### Dialogue at the beginning of the scene

[teacher and pupils are in the middle of an English classroom. The teacher finishes providing feedback from a previous activity and then begins to a new activity in which they asks pupils to read aloud a text]  
- Well done Fatima, excellent Noah, brilliant Olivia and super Clara. You have really done a great job here! So let's go to read...

**Role:** Clara

### Background information

Clara is from Romania and she is doing very well at school, although sometimes she struggles with English.

### Dialogue at the beginning of the scene

[teacher and pupils are in the middle of an English classroom. The teacher finishes providing feedback from a previous activity and then begins to a new activity in which they ask pupils to read aloud a text]  
- "Little Jack Jelf  
Was put on the shelf  
Because he could not spell 'pie'.  
When his aunt, Mrs. Grace,  
Saw his sorrow..."  
[She struggles to pronounce sorrowful]

**Role:** George

**Background information**

George is a high attaining child who does not like going to school and is often struggling with behaviour

**Dialogue at the beginning of the scene**

[teacher and pupils are in the middle of an English classroom. The teacher finishes providing feedback from a previous activity and then begin to a new activity in which they asks pupils to read aloud a text, Clara reads aloud the text]

- Hahahaha! Clara can't say sorrowful!

**Role:** (Optional) Grace

**Background information**

Grace is a popular child in class. She always gets work done on time. Recently, some children complained about that Grace does not want them to join in during playtime.

**Dialogue at the beginning of the scene**

[teacher and pupils are in the middle of an English classroom. The teacher finishes providing feedback from a previous activity and then begin to a new activity in which they asks pupils to read aloud a text. Clara reads aloud the text and George starts laughing at her]

- [Grace is laughing at George's comments.]

## Examples of reflective questions

### Questions about the scenario

- How did you feel about taking different roles?
- If relevant, how did you feel about taking the role of the teacher?
- If relevant, how did you feel about taking the role of Clara?
- If relevant, how did you feel about taking the role of George?

### Questions about teaching practices

- In which different ways did teachers respond to the scenario?
- How did the different teachers react to the anti-democratic comment?
- Which of these ways contributed to maintain an open classroom climate?
- What could the teacher have done differently?

### Questions about scenarios as a pedagogical activity

- In which ways could scenarios be helpful/not helpful to promote democratic values in the primary classroom?
- In which ways could role plays be helpful/not helpful to promote democratic values in the primary classroom?

### Questions about justice, equality and democracy

- Do you think teachers' practices mirror the values of democracy, equality and/or justice? How so?
- What else could the teacher have done to mirror these principles? What would be the potential benefits and drawbacks of these alternatives?

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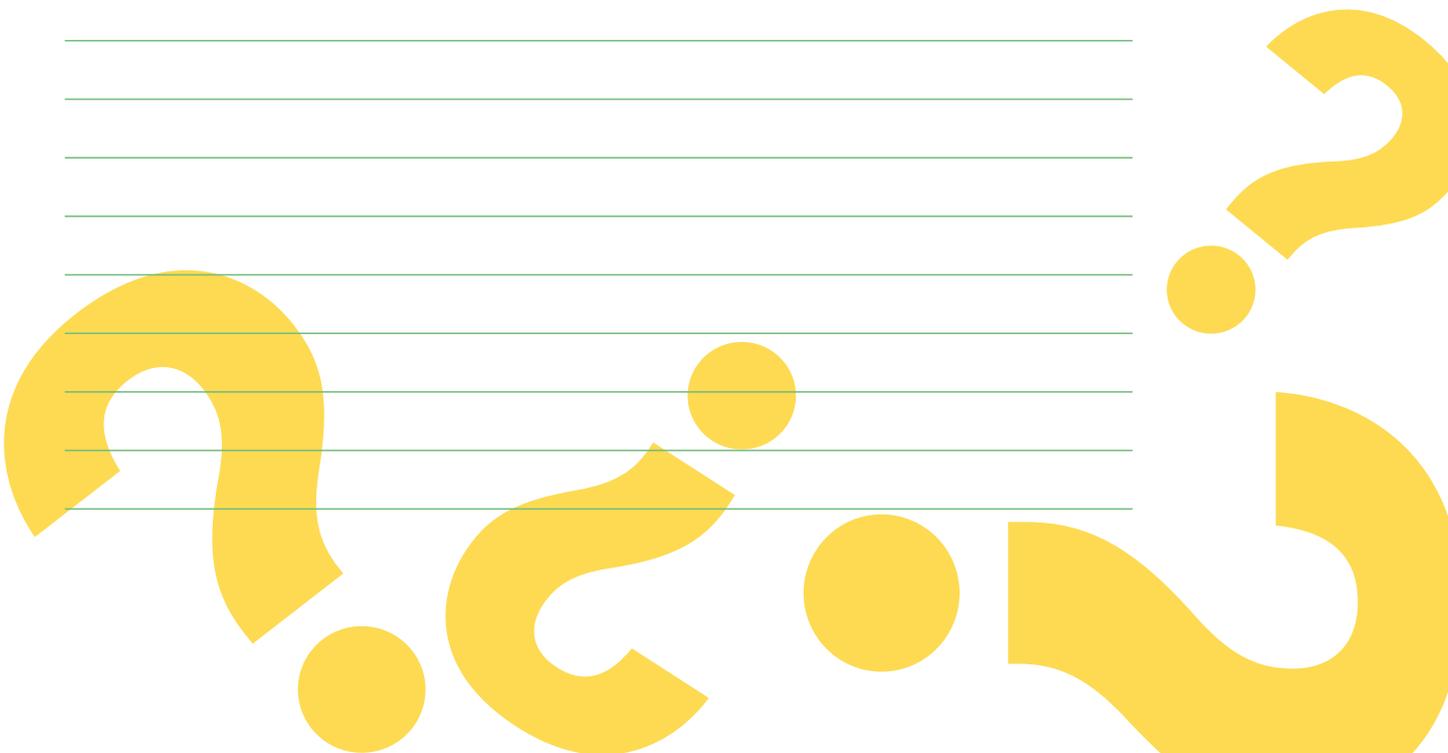
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## Democratic values and Forum Theatre

This activity will provide a set of different scenarios for student teachers / teachers to reflect on how they can practice the values of democracy, justice, and equality in their everyday practices. The activity has three purposes:

1. Examine practical challenges which teachers might encounter (e.g. racism in the classroom);
2. practise different ways to react to complex scenarios;
3. reflect on teaching practices that could better mirror the values of democracy, justice, and equality.

# Activity

## Introduction

This activity is based on real situations a primary teacher encountered in a classroom. This activity can be used by teacher educators so that student teachers experience what a practical challenge to democratic values may feel like, such as racist incidents. In this activity, we will use an adaptation of the Forum Theatre a type of theatre created by Augusto Boal. In Forum Theatre, actors perform a scene in front of an audience (or 'spect-actors') and a facilitator.

## Participants

- Groups of student teachers and a facilitator
- Groups of teachers and a facilitator

## Resources

scenario settings; reflective questions

## Method

1. Ask 4-5 volunteers to act as performers. There is also a need of a facilitator who know the rules of Forum Theatre (it can be the teacher educator or not).
2. Provide performers with a scene and some time to discuss the scene with the co-actors.
3. Performers then perform the scene in front of the 'spect-actors' and the facilitator.
4. When the scene is finished, the facilitator tells the spect-actors that the performers will now perform again the scene but the spect-actors can shout "stop" at any moment and (1) either take the role of the performer; (2) or tell the performer to behave in a different way/ change the situation to reach a different outcome. The rest of performers continue improvising, given their roles.
5. Task 4 can be repeated as many times as desired.
6. Participants are then requested to reflect on their experience by considering different reflective questions.
7. Participants are then told to prepare a similar activity to discuss another democratic value with primary pupils. They need to prepare the rules of the activity, the statements, and the questions for reflection.

## Support material:

### Scenes

#### Scene 1

A child in your class is Muslim. They want to go to the prayer room during Ramadan so that they can pray. Another child says that this is not fair because they are missing some of the lesson, some even feel like this child is getting special treatment.

#### Scene 2

You have a child in your class who is Chinese. Another child starts calling the child names and saying it is their fault coronavirus started. When you speak to the child's parents, they say, "Well, it's true. It is the Chinese fault that Coronavirus started."

#### Scene 3

A new child has started in your class. They have moved from Bangladesh. At lunch time they begin to eat their food using their hands, as they have never used a fork and knife before. Another member of staff says, "I cannot believe that so many children cannot use cutlery properly." Other children start to laugh at the child for using their hands.



# Further resources



- Association For Citizenship Teaching (na). Resources. Retrieved from <https://www.teachingcitizenship.org.uk/resources>
- Children's Identity & Citizenship European Association (nd). Guidelines. Retrieved from <http://www.cicea.eu/index.php/publications/guidelines>
- Council of Europe (2018). Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture: Volume 3 Guidance for implementation. Retrieved from <http://rm.coe.int/prems-008518-gbr-2508-reference-framework-of-competences-vol-3-8575-co/16807bc66e>
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- UNICEF United Kingdom (nd). Resources for rights respecting schools. Retrieved from <https://www.unicef.org.uk/rights-respecting-schools/resources/>
- UNREST (2019). Where the Forest Thickens: Tools for engaging with memory questions through aesthetic experiences. Retrieved from [http://www.unrest.eu/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/Where-the-forest-thickens\\_proofv4.pdf](http://www.unrest.eu/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/Where-the-forest-thickens_proofv4.pdf)
- Young Citizens (nd). Free teaching resources. Retrieved from <https://www.youngcitizens.org/pages/category/free-teaching-resources>

What kind of society do we want our children to live in? For many of us, democracy mirrors some of the ideals of a society in which we are all in an equal position to have a say. But in recent times, we have seen how democracy is in crisis: growing inequalities, rise of xenophobic and racist attitudes, increasing distribution of fake news and hate speech on social media, and high levels of frustration and alienation particularly among marginalised groups and young people.

***Promoting Democracy in Schools. Practical resources to support teachers' initial and continuous professional development*** aims to provide research-underpinned practical resources for teachers, teacher educators and others who wish to enhance teachers' subject, pedagogical, and practical knowledge in relation to the promotion of democratic values including democracy, justice, and equality.



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The Council of Europe is the continent's leading human rights organisation. It comprises 47 member states, including all members of the European Union. All Council of Europe member states have signed up to the European Convention on Human Rights, a treaty designed to protect human rights, democracy and the rule of law. The European Court of Human Rights oversees the implementation of the Convention in the member states.

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The Member States of the European Union have decided to link together their know-how, resources and destinies. Together, they have built a zone of stability, democracy and sustainable development whilst maintaining cultural diversity, tolerance and individual freedoms. The European Union is committed to sharing its achievements and its values with countries and peoples beyond its borders.

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