

Belonging & community: addressing discrimination and extremism

KS2, Y5–6 Lesson 4: Addressing extremism



Addressing extremism

This is the second of two lessons for upper key stage 2, within a series of lessons exploring respectful and cohesive communities, inclusion, belonging and extremism. This lesson focuses on how people can be influenced by those around them and helps pupils to recognise times when they or their friends might be more susceptible to prejudiced or extremist views.

No lesson should be taught in isolation, but always as part of a planned, developmental PSHE education programme. These lessons would work well as part of wider learning about recognising and challenging prejudice and discrimination, respectful relationships, managing risk and peer influence.

Learning objective

To learn:

- how attitudes and opinions can sometimes be influenced by being exposed to prejudiced or extremist views
- how to resist and challenge these viewpoints

Learning outcomes

Pupils will be able to:

- describe some of the ways in which people may be influenced by others
- explain what is meant by prejudiced or extremist views
- identify different ways to manage negative influences
- describe where, when and how to seek support for themselves and others because of worries about prejudice or extremism

Resources required

- Box or envelope for questions
- Large piece of paper [one per small group]
- Resource 1: *Dilemmas* [one per pair]
- Resource 2: *What's the impact?* [one per pair]
- Resource 2a: *Think, feel, do* [one per pair – support option as required]

Lesson summary

Activity	Description	Timing (Total: 60 mins)
1. Baseline assessment	In small groups, pupils brainstorm people and things that might influence someone's attitudes and behaviour.	8 mins
2. Introduction	Introduce the learning objective and outcomes.	2 mins
3. Different kinds of influence	Pupils complete a zones of influence activity to show the different influences in the life of a child their age.	10 mins
4. Negative influences	Pupils define 'prejudice' and 'extremism' and discuss how someone who holds extremist views might influence others.	5 mins
5. Dilemmas: Managing negative influences	Pupils work in groups to explore characters' feelings, thoughts and behaviours when exposed to extremist views.	10 mins
6. Class discussion: What to do in tough times	Pupils identify actions characters might take when they encounter extremist views.	15 mins
7. Reflection and signposting support	Pupils discuss networks of support when they are worried or afraid for themselves or others.	5 mins
8. Endpoint assessment	Pupils revisit the baseline activity to record their new learning.	5 mins

Climate for learning

Make sure you have read the accompanying teacher guidance notes before teaching this lesson, which includes relevant subject knowledge and guidance on establishing ground rules, the limits of confidentiality, communication and handling questions effectively.

It is possible that during this lesson a pupil may express biased or prejudiced views. If this happens, challenge the attitudes rather than the person, and remind pupils that attitudes which are prejudiced against, or stereotype, other people are unacceptable in school. Consider whether you need to report the views to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).

Key words

influence

persuasion

pressure

vulnerabilities

extremism

extremist

prejudice

Baseline assessment



8 mins

Baseline assessment activity [slides 9–10]

Establish or reinforce existing ground rules – add or emphasise any ground rules that are especially relevant to this lesson, such as listening respectfully and trying to use language that won't upset others.

In small groups, ask pupils to imagine a child about their age who lives nearby and goes to a school like theirs. They should draw an outline of the child in the middle of a large sheet of paper and, around the outside, mind map all the people or things that might influence that child's beliefs, attitudes or behaviour. Next to each person or thing, pupils should place a tick (for positive influences), a cross (for negative influences) and both a tick and a cross for anything that has a positive and negative influence. The purpose of this activity is to help you find out pupils' existing knowledge and beliefs, so, while they are working, do not prompt them in any way. Move around the class, noting any misconceptions or gaps in understanding that may need addressing through the lesson.

When you have a sense of groups' starting points, take feedback.

Pupils might suggest: family members, friends, teachers, celebrities, advertising, media (e.g. online content, newspapers, television), politicians, religious leaders/religious beliefs.



2 mins

Introduction [slide 11]

Introduce the learning objective and outcomes and explain that today's lesson will explore how a person's attitudes, opinions and views can be influenced (i.e., shaped or changed), particularly by prejudiced or extremist views.

Core activities



10 mins

Different kinds of influence [slide 12]

Ask pupils to think back to the child from the baseline assessment. Show the zones of influence on **slide 12** and ask them to draw this into their books, adding the people or things that will influence this child's beliefs, attitudes, or behaviour (those they thought of in the baseline assessment and any new ideas). They should place them on the zones of influence to show the amount of influence they think they have.

Next to each person or thing, ask them to list the different ways in which they/it might influence the child (e.g., their dad encourages them to hand in their homework on time, their brother dares them to do scary things, the gaming community influence them to spend more time indoors playing games).

Take some of their ideas (you could record these on a whole-class version of the zones of influence, to aid discussion) and emphasise that different people will have different influences in their lives – not everyone's zones of influence will look the same. Finally, ask:

- Is the child always influenced in a positive way?
- Can the people and things they have listed sometimes influence the child in a less helpful way?

Take feedback and highlight that influences can be positive (e.g., a parent or carer who reminds the child to hand their homework in, or a video online that makes them laugh) or unhelpful or negative (e.g., advertising that influences them to believe they need to look a certain way, or a friend who is always criticising them and damaging their self-belief). It is important to be aware of positive and negative influences, as this is the first step in being able to encourage positive influences and manage or challenge negative influences.



5 mins

Negative influences [slides 13-14]

Using **slide 13**, ask pupils to briefly recap on the key learning from the previous lesson relating to stereotypes and prejudice. Remind them that stereotypes can be harmful, and that sometimes stereotypes can lead to, or be linked to, prejudice.

If needed, remind pupils of this definition of prejudice (shared in the last lesson):

‘An unfair and unreasonable opinion or feeling about a person or group of people, especially when formed without enough thought or knowledge’ [adapted from the Cambridge English Dictionary]

Using this and pupils’ own ideas, agree a class definition of prejudice. Write the agreed definition on a class working wall and keep it on display throughout the lesson.

Then, in small groups, ask pupils to discuss what they think ‘extremism’ or ‘holding extremist views’ means. Ask them to feedback some of their ideas to the rest of the class.

Share the following definitions:

- *Extremism: Vocal or active opposition to commonly held values, particularly British values such as democracy, respect, tolerance and the rule of law.* [Adapted from the government’s Prevent Strategy]
- *Extremist views: Extreme political or religious views, that could include promoting illegal, violent, or other extreme action.* [Adapted from Oxforddictionaries.com]

Again, agree a shared definition to add to the working wall.

Finally, explain to the class that people can hold extreme views or beliefs (i.e. very strong and beyond what most people would consider acceptable) about things like animal rights, the environment, certain groups of people in society, religion, or how the country should be run. Many people who hold these very strong views or beliefs do not act upon them.

However, a very small minority of people hold views which are far beyond what most people think of as acceptable. Such views can be offensive and go against the values that the vast majority of people share (which, in the UK, are often referred to as ‘British values’). Expressing these views could also be against the law, for example if what they say encourages violence against a certain group. Sometimes people who hold these views use manipulation, persuasion, or violence to try and influence others to take on their views.



10 mins

Dilemmas: Managing negative influences [slide 15]

Explain that there may be times in people’s lives when they feel lonely, excluded, or unhappy, or they might feel a bit uncertain about the way their life is going or unsure about what to do next. When a person feels like this, it can make them more open to being influenced in a negative way by someone else’s views or opinions.

Using **Resource 1: Dilemmas**, allocate pairs of pupils to one of the scenarios.

Ask pairs to read the scenario and using **Resource 2: What's the impact?** record their thinking about:

- how the person may be feeling – how would they describe their emotions?
 - what the person might be thinking
- (Note that they should leave the 'Do' section on the sheet – they will think about this in the next activity.)

Take feedback for all four scenarios. After a pair has fed back on a given scenario, ask the rest of the class if anyone has any different ideas to add.

Pupils might suggest:

- **Taz: feeling** e.g. confused, lonely, scared, uncertain; **thinking** e.g. 'I want to get away from this situation', 'I want to fit in and impress the adult and these other children.'
- **Arden: feeling** e.g. intimidated, unsure, pressured, uneasy; **thinking** e.g. 'I'm too embarrassed to leave the group', 'I'm in a special group so I should just make the most of it.'
- **Jamie: feeling** e.g. worried, torn, pressured; **thinking** e.g. 'I don't want to miss out on what my friends are seeing', 'Some of the posts are really offensive.'
- **Zee: feeling** e.g. angry, frustrated, confused, passionate; **thinking** e.g. 'Maybe these people are to blame for the bad things that have happened to me and my mum', 'I feel angry, so I want someone to blame', 'I really want to help my mum, but I don't know what to do.'

Finally, ask the class if they can identify either stereotypical, prejudiced or extremist thinking in any of the scenarios.

For example, pupils might suggest:

- **Taz:** The adult may be voicing views that are prejudiced and possibly extremist, as what they are saying is 'scary'. They could be encouraging extreme or even violent action against certain groups.
- **Arden:** The group that Arden has joined seem to want everyone to share the same religious beliefs as them. This doesn't align with 'British values' (like individual liberty, which allows people to choose what they want to believe, and tolerance and mutual respect, which means respecting others' different views and beliefs), and could be a sign of extremist thinking.
- **Jamie:** This online profile is stereotyping people and promoting prejudiced views about certain groups of people.
- **Zee:** The people at the bus stop are stereotyping immigrants (people who move to the UK from other countries) and showing prejudice towards them.



Support: Using **Resource 3a: Think, feel, do** ask pupils to draw a circle around the thoughts and feelings they think best match their character or add their own ideas.



15 mins

Class discussion: What to do in tough times [slide 16]

Looking at the same scenario from the previous activity, ask pairs to consider:

- What could the person do to manage the situation?
- What choices are they faced with?
- From whom or where could they get help and support?

They should record their responses on the 'Do' section of **Resource 2: What's the impact?**. Use follow-up questions to help expand pupils' thinking if needed, e.g.:

1. What might the impact of them thinking or acting this way be for their future lives?
2. Who could help or provide support for the characters?
3. What could happen if they didn't get help?

Take feedback, ensuring that these, or similar strategies, are drawn out in the discussion:

- **Taz:** could stop spending time with this group; could speak to Dad, or another trusted adult; could find other places to go for a while – a different park, sports centre, friend's house.
- **Arden:** could leave the online forum; could speak to a parent, teacher, or other trusted adult; could show the content to a trusted adult.
- **Jamie:** could speak to their friends about how they are feeling about this profile or content; unfollow or block the account; follow someone positive instead; speak to a trusted adult at home or at school – and show them the content.
- **Zee:** could check the facts by speaking to Mum about why she lost her job; talk about the worries and feelings about Mum losing her job with Mum, a teacher, or another trusted adult.

Support: Using **Resource 3a: Think, feel, do** ask pupils to circle the best three actions they think their character could take to manage the situation.

Challenge: Ask pupils to compare two possible decisions a character could make and explain which they think would be better and why.

Reflection and signposting support



5 mins

Reflection and signposting support [slide 17]

Reiterate that although there may be times when they feel lonely or angry about the things going on in their lives, there are always trusted people they can talk to and who can offer support and advice. Adopting prejudiced or extreme views about people or situations will not help and can be dangerous.

Ask pupils to think quietly about their support network of people. Note that this is a private reflection, and they should not share their ideas with others. Can they identify at least one adult they trust at school or at home who they could speak to if they were worried or afraid

about prejudice or extremism? Ask them also to consider who they could talk to if they were worried about a friend or somebody else.

Remind them about the adults in school whom they can go to for help and also about children's websites/helplines such as:

- **Childline** 0800 1111 and www.childline.org.uk/kids to speak to a counsellor online
- **ThinkuKnow** www.thinkuknow.co.uk/8_10/worried features advice for 8–10-year-olds if they are worried about something they have experienced online.

Endpoint assessment



5 mins

Endpoint assessment activity [slide 18]

Briefly refer pupils back to the learning outcomes and ask them to show thumbs up/middle/down to self-assess how confident they are on each outcome. Asking them to close their eyes while doing this, so they can't see their peers' responses, can help with a more accurate self-assessment. Next, give pupils two minutes to revisit their group baseline activity about who and what might influence a person's attitudes or behaviour and add any new learning in a different coloured pen. They may also want to qualify some of their previous ideas – for example, can they say any more about how some of these influences might affect a young person now?

In the final two minutes, ask them to use a different coloured pen to add any actions that young people could take to challenge those influences. You may wish to end the lesson by asking pupils to share one or two of these ideas with the rest of the class.

Extension activity

Advice booklet [slide 19]

Ask pupils to create a mini advice booklet about the signs to look out for if someone is being left out or excluded. They should include actions someone could take to support others who may be going through unhappy times. If time allows, pupils could share their booklets with the class, or they could be displayed in the classroom (e.g., in the book corner).