

What is discrimination and how can it impact us?



HOLOCAUST
MEMORIAL
DAY TRUST

*Learning from genocide -
for a better future*

Secondary lesson plan for Holocaust Memorial Day (HMD)

This is a flexible lesson plan aimed at 14 – 16 -year-old learners that works alongside a PowerPoint presentation.

It allows students to practice discussion, communication and writing skills as well as being introduced to the topic of genocide in an age-appropriate way. There are opportunities for the lesson to be adjusted for class needs throughout.

Learning objectives:

- to learn the definition of discrimination and recognise it in daily life.
- to recognise and challenge prejudice and discrimination.
- to discuss how discrimination can impact people and recognise shared responsibility in addressing such issues.

You will need:

- pen and paper

Overview

This activity aims to support learners in promoting a future free from persecution by teaching students about discrimination and how we can recognise and challenge it in daily life.

This resource encourages discussion and aims to create safe spaces for students to express their opinions and experiences whilst feeling respected and respecting others.



Slide 2: Start activity

When you hear the word 'discrimination' what do you think of?

When you hear the word 'stereotype' what do you think of?

Think, Pair, Share activity.



Slide 3: Definitions

Discrimination - to act unfairly towards a person or group of people.

Stereotype - a description or assumption made about a group of people without evidence.

Prejudice – when you judge someone unfairly without knowing them.

Racism – when people are treated unfairly because of their skin colour or background.

Sexism – when people are treated unfairly because of their perceived gender.

Disablism – when people are treated unfairly because of their disability.

Genocide – the intentional destruction of a group of people in whole or in part.

You could ask students to read these out or write them into their books to refer to as needed.

Teacher guidance

The full definition of genocide is:

any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group, as such:

- *killing members of the group*
- *causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group*
- *deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part*
- *imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group*
- *forcibly transferring children of the group to another group*

Slide 4

Discrimination means to act unfairly towards a person or group of people. It occurs because of prejudice and stereotypes, often leading to exclusion or bullying.

In pairs or small groups, ask students these questions. If further support is needed, these questions could be answered as a whole class.

Can you think of any examples of discrimination?

Racism, Sexism and Disablism are all examples of discrimination.

Examples could be used to indicate these categories such as: 'When girls weren't allowed to do certain jobs.'

Activity idea: Create a mind map of your definitions and examples to have up during this lesson or to use as part of a display.

Slide 5

A stereotype is a description or assumption made about a group of people that is applied to all of them, regardless of whether it is factual. Stereotypes can develop when the information needed to make a fair judgement about a person or situation is incomplete or missing. Often, these stereotypes are innocent but sometimes they are unkind and lead to discrimination and persecution.

In pairs or small groups, ask students these questions. If further support is needed, these questions could be answered as a whole class.

Can you think of any examples of a stereotype?

This activity is best kept short, you may wish to ask for 3 – 4 examples or you could make up some obviously untrue examples to demonstrate the definition. For example, 'People with brown hair love science'.

If your students raise any more serious examples that you wish to discuss, you may wish to pause the lesson and address them or have a follow-up conversation as needed.

Slide 6: How does discrimination and stereotyping affect people?

Discrimination can be very hurtful and affect people in many negative ways.

For example, people who experience discrimination can:

- feel scared or stressed
- have low self-esteem
- have poor mental health
- find it difficult to achieve highly

You may wish to give students the opportunity to add to this list if they have ideas.

Slide 7: Impact of stereotypes and discrimination

Throughout history, there have been times when stereotypes have been used to make certain groups seem less human. This makes it easier to treat these groups badly and commit violence against them.

One example of this is the Holocaust, when Jewish people were stereotyped as being 'criminal'. This stereotype was very dangerous as it made many ordinary people fearful and angry with the Jewish population which made it easier for the Nazis to persecute, imprison and murder Jewish people simply for being who they were. The Holocaust took place during World War Two when 6 million Jews were murdered because of who they were - years of discrimination and stereotypes led to this event.

Ann Kirk BEM, who survived the Holocaust by coming to the UK on the *Kindertransport*, spoke about the discrimination she felt as a Jewish person:

'As time went on I realised things were not as good as they should be. Mum and Dad were becoming increasingly worried. When I was about six years old, I noticed newspaper hoardings saying unpleasant things about the Jews... During this time Jews were not allowed to sit on park benches, go to swimming pools, the theatre or cinema and gradually Jews were deprived of their citizen rights.'



Ann Kirk BEM, Kindertransportee

The Kindertransport (Children's Transport) was a unique humanitarian rescue programme which ran between November 1938 and September 1939. Approximately 10,000 children, the majority of whom were Jewish, were sent from their homes and families in Germany, Austria and Czechoslovakia to Great Britain.

Questions you could discuss:

- *how do you think Ann felt when she started noticing what was happening?*
- *why do you think ordinary people let Ann and her family be treated this way?*
- *what does Ann mean by citizen rights?*
- *which of our key words are described in Ann's statement? Discrimination and persecution.*

For more information on the Kindertransport, see our [Secondary Kindertransport lesson plan](#).

Slide 8

Another example is the genocide against the Tutsi in Rwanda, when the Tutsi population was stereotyped as being dangerous and cunning or being like cockroaches. These stereotypes caused the Hutu population to mistrust the Tutsi population and this mistrust led to the murder of approximately 1 million Tutsis and moderate Hutus in just 100 days. The genocide in Rwanda occurred in 1994 when the Hutu government led a campaign of violence and murder against a group of people called the Tutsi.

Antoinette Mutabazi, a survivor of the genocide against the Tutsi in Rwanda described the impact of stereotypes and discrimination on her as a child:

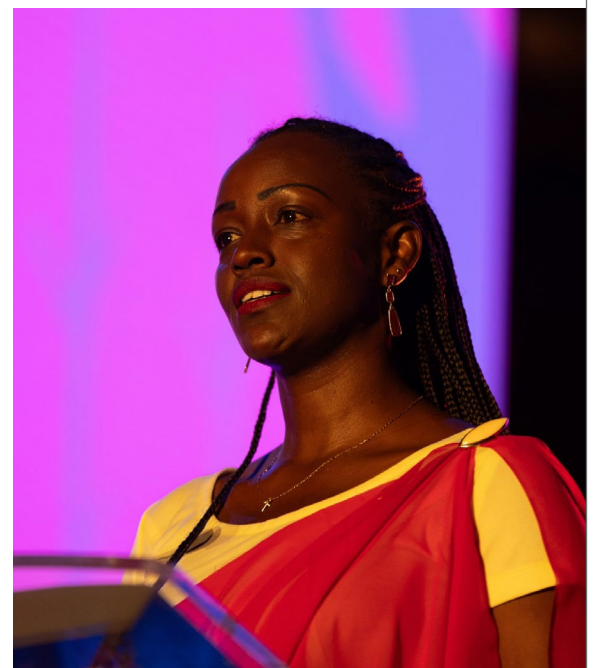
'I faced discrimination and was often called a cockroach, a despised insect in my community. Although my parents assured me that we were all created equal, this dehumanisation had a huge impact on my self-esteem: I felt vulnerable and hated going to school.'

- how do you think Antoinette felt when she started noticing what was happening?
- how might this have impacted Antoinette?
- why was Antoinette called a cockroach? What is this an example of?
- why did people use the word 'cockroach'? Where might they have learnt this?

[For more information on the genocide against the Tutsi in Rwanda, please see our information guide.](#)

Slide 9

Play our video, How can life go on?



Antoinette Mutabazi, a survivor of the genocide against the Tutsi in Rwanda



Slide 10: Discrimination and stereotypes – how can we stop them?

Discrimination can look like:

- being treated disrespectfully or unfairly
- bullying
- racial remarks or insulting names
- online bullying
- social media posts containing misinformation

This is a good opportunity to remind the class that not everything we see on social media is accurate and to be careful with any statements that have been made about the actions of a specific group of people. Remind the class that if they see something online (or anywhere else) that they do not trust or feel uncomfortable about, they should speak to an adult.

What can we do as a class to stop discrimination and stereotypes?

As a class, create a list of things that you can do to help stop discrimination and stereotypes. This could be done as an individual activity or class activity.

Examples:

- *celebrate everyone's differences*
- *tell a trusted adult if you think someone is being unkind or discriminating against someone else. This could be a moment to remind the class of who their trusted adults might be. Parents/carers, teachers, teaching assistants, family/family friends*
- *support anti-bullying policies*
- *follow the school rules*
- *report any posts on social media to an adult*

Activity:

Write a paragraph defining discrimination, persecution and stereotypes. Explain what they are, how they impact people and what we can do to challenge them.

Further activities:

- *create a poster showing what to do if you think you see discrimination.*
- *write a letter to a social media company explaining the dangers of discrimination, stereotypes and misinformation online.*
- *use our Take action for a better future resource to continue your work and help create a better future free from identity-based persecution.*



Important note for teachers - after the lesson

Please let us know that you and your group have marked HMD. We would love to hear about any follow up activities. Please contact us at enquiries@hmd.org.uk. This helps us to know how resources are used in prisons and other settings, and your activities may be featured as a case study when we talk about the range of activities taking place across the UK for HMD.

Take the learning further:

- learn more about the Holocaust and more recent genocides at hmd.org.uk/holocaustandgenocides.
- explore more resources such as life stories, films and activities at hmd.org.uk/resources.



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Discover resources for educators and other materials for your activities: hmd.org.uk/resources

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