

Skills for Democracy

Introduction

Welcome to CEWC-Cymru's new democracy resource. This pack has been produced with the aim of developing young people's skills to participate in democracy. Before we began developing the resource we asked 150 young people across Wales what they considered to be the skills they needed to **participate** in democracy. The results of this consultancy were very interesting and a full report is available on request from CEWC-Cymru (in English only).

This pack is designed to allow young people to explore and evaluate the skills that they are using in relation to democratic topics. To this end we have chosen the following topic areas:

- 1) The Perfect Candidate
- 2) The Role of Charities
- 3) Non-Formal Democracy
- 4) Fairtrade
- 5) The Role of the Media
- 6) Devolution

Whilst working on these topic areas, we aim to develop the following skills among students:

- 1) Decision Making – making informed and appropriate decisions
- 2) Listening – skills for better communication
- 3) Debating – taking part in informed and lively debates
- 4) Meeting – having meetings, behaving appropriately and using correct language in them
- 5) Compromise – listening to the opinions of other students in the class and modelling decisions around their suggestions

Each activity comes with a Lesson Plan (white sheet), an Information Sheet on the topic (yellow), and a Skills Sheet (blue) and a Self-Assessment sheet (green) for the students to complete at the end of the lesson, as well as any case studies and worksheets that may be required. In addition we have provided Information and Skills Sheets for teachers, and a Project Workbook for those students who find it difficult to work in groups.

We chose the model of the **Greek Parthenon** to be the connecting image for these sessions, so that the students recognise it as a democracy session and practise the self assessment in the same way throughout the course. In order to emphasise this, a large version of the Parthenon with the skills marked on the pillars is included in the pack along with a sheet of large-type session titles, one of which can be used for each lesson.

Ultimately, the message that we want to convey to students doing these lessons is that by using the five skills they can approach any democratic topic and explore it fully.

Further resources will be available soon on running mock National Assembly for Wales elections in your school. Please e-mail cewc@wcia.org.uk for further details.

Skills for Democracy – Lesson Plan 5

The Role of the Media

Objectives (taken from the PSE Framework for Wales)

- Pupils will “listen attentively in different situations and respond appropriately”; “use a range of techniques for personal reflection”; “critically evaluate others’ viewpoints and messages from the media”.
- Pupils could also develop knowledge of “how democratic systems work and understand how...the media can contribute and have an influence.”

Resources

- Paper
- Pens
- Case study – Freedom of the Press
- Photos on which to base news stories
- Newspaper template sheet
- Newspaper slant cards

Time

One hour

Room Layout

Students in groups

Introduction

Access to information is essential to the health of democracy. The media provide a link between the state and all parts of civil society*.

Introductory Activity (5 minutes)

Using the media to educate

- Ask students to write a media diary (using student workbooks or copy of the sheet).
- What did they watch?
- Was there any news?
- Was there anything educational?
- How can TV/magazines/radio/the internet be used better to pass on information?

Main Activity – What is it like to be a journalist?

Part 1 (30-60 minutes)

- Give each group one of the photos to use as a stimulus for their news story.
- Ask them to write a headline/first paragraph of the article on the newspaper template sheet.
(Alternatively, you can ask the students to focus on an issue around school – e.g. rubbish – and give them a slant on the story before asking them to take a photo and then complete as above.)
- Get the students to read out their stories. How did they choose their headlines and articles? Are all the finished articles the same? If not, why not?

- Explain that writing newspapers/making television news programmes is all about making choices that will make you watch them. Do they think news is fair? Does it give all sides of an issue?
- Mention independent media that try to combat these problems by getting lots of people to report independently on their point of view.

Part 2 (30 minutes)

- Give students time to read the case study, or read it to them.
- What do they know about the freedom of the press?
- Have they heard about that kind of story before? Do we hear enough about these issues?
- What do they think about this journalist?
- Should an organisation (like the UN) ensure that Sumi Khan, her family and her colleagues receive full protection while she is doing her job?
- Do they think we can write or show anything in the name of the freedom of the press?

Plenary – Assessment (10 minutes)

- Why are the media so important?
- Can we call a country a “democracy” without free media?
- What about media that are not impartial at all? Is it right for them to take sides?
- Complete self-assessment using the “Parthenon paper”.

Organisations with useful resources

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| • www.amnesty.org.uk/wales | Amnesty International (campaigns to help journalists in trouble) |
| • www.cpj.org | Committee to Protect Journalists |
| • www.indymedia.org.uk | IndyMedia |
| • www.undercurrents.org | Produces ‘counterculture’ videos |
| • www.hrw.org | Human Rights Watch |
| • www.unesco.org | UNESCO – organises World Press Freedom Day on 3 May each year |