

3. RACISM, XENOPHOBIA, GENOCIDE

This unit will introduce students to the dreadful world of racism and xenophobia. A number of activities will be put forward for them to learn how these two phenomena can, at times, bring about fatal consequences and lead to genocide. At the beginning of the unit a number of new words should be introduced that will help the students understand the concept of the issue at hand.

The following definitions are from www.wikipedia.org:

Racism is the belief that members of one race are intrinsically superior or inferior to members of other races.

A **racial harassment** is an incident on racial grounds: any personal attack, threat, insult or damage to property might be considered so.

A **bigot** is a prejudiced person who is intolerant of opinions, lifestyles, or identities differing from his or her own. **Bigotry** is the quality noun.

The word **prejudice** refers to prejudgment: i.e. making a decision before becoming aware of the relevant facts of a case.

Xenophobia is a fear or contempt of foreigners or strangers and people. It comes from the Greek words ξένος (*xenos*), meaning "foreigner," "stranger," and φόβος (*phobos*), meaning "fear." The term is typically used to describe fear or dislike of foreigners or in general of people different from one's self.

Ethnic origin is the quality shared by a group of human beings whose members identify with each other, usually on the basis of a presumed common genealogy or ancestry.

Read the definitions and ask students to take notes on them. Read the UN Convention on racial discrimination and tell students to match words or expressions to definitions.

Contempt of foreigners or strangers - **xenophobia**

On the same conditions - **equal footing**

Invalidating - **impairing**

Destroying - **Nullifying**

Basic liberties - **Fundamental freedoms**

Origin - **Descent**

A group of people sharing some traits - **race**

Prejudicial treatment of certain groups of people based on some characteristics - **discrimination**



Group activity

Ask students to group up and make a list of questions they will want to ask other students from different national origins. Remind them to exercise good manners when interviewing other students as they may be oversensitive to this topic. Once the interviews have been done, discuss the results in class.

THE TIP OF THE ICEBERG



Group activity

Ask students if they have ever heard about *the tip of the iceberg* theory. Tell them that this idiom alludes to the structure of an iceberg, most part of which

is underwater. It essentially means that there is only vague evidence of a much larger problem. Ask students to come up with events (real or fictitious) or contexts which would be the “tip of the iceberg”. Expect such answers as real estate fraud, politicians' moral behaviour, economic crisis, etc.

RACISM

Read the introductory words along with the students and ask them if they know of any recent examples of racist or ethnic cleansing events. The teacher may want to them that, unfortunately, the world we inhabit has not evolved to the point so as to eradicate this hideous practice. A clear example the teacher may consider to bring forward is the present situation in Rwanda (war being waged between Hutus and Tutsis). This latter case would be a clear example of ethnic cleansing and, not only that, but also a digitally clear example of how the world easily forgets and genocidal scenarios are born again (the present-day conflict in Congo is a repetition of the genocide occurred in Rwanda in 1994).

Racism and Sport

The teacher asks students why they think that these two word go usually together. Expect various answers.

Next ask them to read the article and answer the questions below.

- What happened? What was the result? (**students' own answers**)
- What are the main objectives of the conference in Barcelona? **look at the problems of racism in Europe, bring up examples of good work and cooperate with campaigners and fan organisations**
- Who will take part at the conference? **Stars of Spanish football will join former players, leading administrators from across European football**

Picture description

The teacher asks students first to describe what they see in the pictures: *people of different races and national origins deploying anti-racist messages*.

Next students are to think of ways sport can unite all kinds of peoples. Ask them to think about their favourite football or basketball players and how they get on real well with the rest of the team members.

LOOK IT UP ON THE WEB (web quest)

This activity is based on the contents in the www.kickitout.org web site. The teacher is strongly recommended to visit the web site before covering the activity as the content is updated on a weekly basis. The questions, theretofore, might need to be revised as articles might no longer be available.

2. NEWS.

This activity requires the teacher to read a newspaper article (*Racist attack article*, to be found in the additional materials section) to the students. The students have a number of words that they will hear the teacher say. Before the first reading the students should try to make sense of the words, what they mean and, in groups, they will be asked to predict what the article is about. Ask the groups to justify their ideas (i.e. why do they think that? Can they justify that? have they based their ideas on any particular clue?). The groups could write down their ideas, so that they can refer back to them later. After reading the article, compare it with the students' predictions. Were they correct?

Questions on article: students' own answers

The teacher asks students to do the web quest activity (<http://www.guardian.co.uk/>) as homework. Webquests are among the most fascinating tools educators have to boost students' interest in a specific topic. Inquiry-based and centered on students, they challenge them to explore the web for information.

Online papers also constitute a very valid tool for educators who wish to energise the learning abilities of their students. The guardian site is rated among the best.

JUSTIFICATION AND EXPLANATION FOR RACISM?

The Merriam-Webster's Online Dictionary defines a syllogism as a deductive scheme of a formal argument consisting of a major and minor premise and a conclusion (as in "every virtue is laudable; kindness is a virtue; therefore kindness is laudable").

However, the wrong conclusion might be reached from faulty syllogisms. Consider the following:

Major Premise: Sixty men can do a piece of work sixty times as quickly as one man.

Minor Premise: One man can dig a posthole in sixty seconds;

Conclusion: Sixty men can dig a posthole in one second.

As students will infer from the example above, syllogisms have right conclusions but wrong evidences. Come this point the teacher should ask students if they use syllogisms in their everyday lives.

They certainly use syllogisms to make excuses: "why do you ask me to be quiet when everybody else (all the students) in class is talking? I am a student, too. I should also have the "right" to keep talking."

Tell the students that that is the strategy racists use to justify their acts.

DEBATE

(How to hold a class debate)

Before handing the debate assignments out the teacher should remind students that they might be supporting positions opposite to their beliefs. This is also an important skill for them to learn: how to debate, how to support an idea, however ludicrous this idea might seem.

Make two different groups: pro and con.

Begin the debate with the pro side speaking first. Allow them about 4 minutes to explain their position. Next do the same with the con side.

Next the teacher gives 3 minutes a side to rebut the opponents arguments.

EXPLANATION FOR RACISM

Over time experts have tried to find reasonable explanations for the existence of racism. The students will discover here some of the arguments the experts consider many people use to justify their actions.

The teacher tell students to group up and hands each group a "piece of argument" racists use to justify their phobia. Then they need to decide whether that would be sufficient

evidence for self-justification. Each group then fills in the grid based on the information provided by all the groups to the rest of the class.

Arguments:

Preservation and continuation of the species; survival of the fittest; independence and liberty. Some people claim that if races mix there will not be such survival. (*example in the grid*)

If things in a country are going badly (specially at the economic level) many people's natural reaction is to blame somebody else. If unemployment is rising or the national economy is very weak, many people will look for a scapegoat to blame, and in most cases they will choose the people that they do not know, such as those with a different ethnical or cultural background. (*other races are to blame for economy problems*)

Individualistic approach: people are scared that these strangers might take their jobs, their houses, their wives or children: everything they have been fighting for. (*social competence*)

Some people value the qualities of their own race as more desirable or more important than those of other races: they are more intelligent, gifted or more evolved. (*better racial qualities*)

Other people consider members of other races to lack leadership or experience to hold ruling positions. (*power issue*)

They think that these people are late comers and they came to invade their country and their intimacy. (*territorial issue*)

MARTIN LUTHER KING

The teacher first asks the students whether they have heard about Martin Luther King and whether they know about the events that made him famous. They should be able to say something regarding his anti-racism campaigns and his fights for freedom and equality of black people in the US.

Tell students to watch the slide presentation (in the *Additional Materials* section) and discuss the consideration points at the end of the presentation:
(students' own answers)

How would the world have been different if it had not been deprived of such a charismatic figure as King's?

Martin Luther King advocated non-violent direct action as a way to fight discrimination. Would he had been equally successful if he had used violent methods?

Students then read the **March on Washington** text and then listen to the *I have a dream* audio file (in the *Additional Materials* section). The teacher asks the students to write any key words they hear and, at the end of the speech, they share these words with the rest of the class.

Extra task

The teacher asks students to answer the following questions on Martin Luther king. This is a good task for them to do home or with the help of an encyclopaedia.

Martin Luther King

The Nobel Peace Prize 1964

Question: *When was Martin Luther King, Jr. born?*

Answer: Martin Luther King, Jr., was born on Tuesday, 15 January 1929 in Atlanta, Georgia.

Question: *When was Martin Luther King, Jr. married, and did he have any children?*

Answer: He married Coretta Scott on June 18, 1953. They had four children: Yolanda Denise (born 1955), Martin Luther III (born 1957), Dexter Scott (born 1961) and Bernice Albertine (born 1963).

Question: *What did Martin Luther King, Jr. study?*

Answer: Martin Luther King, Jr. was a very bright student and a talented speaker. When he was nineteen he graduated from Morehouse College in Atlanta with a BA degree in Sociology. In 1951, he graduated from the Crozer Theological Seminary with a BA of Divinity, which qualified him to become a pastor of the Dexter Avenue Baptist Church. King also received his Ph.D. in Systematic Theology from Boston University in 1955.

Question: *When did Martin Luther King, Jr. deliver his famous speech "I have a dream ..."?*

Answer: On 28 August 1963 Martin Luther King, Jr. organised a now historic march to Washington to show the importance of solving the nation's racial problems. About 250,000 people gathered and listened to Martin Luther King, Jr.'s speech when he uttered the immortal words: "I have a dream that my four children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the colour of their skin, but by the content of their character".

Question: *What sort of discrimination did he fight against?*

Answer: Martin Luther King, Jr. experienced segregation early in life. When he was six years old, two white playmates told him that they were not allowed to play with him any longer. His mother explained to him that it was because they now attended segregated schools, but assured him that he was as good as anybody else. His father told him the

story of the father of the Reformation, Martin Luther, and said that both of them now should have his name.

On 1 December 1955, Rosa Parks, an African American woman, refused to surrender her bus seat to a white passenger, and as a result she was arrested for violating the city's segregation law. Activists protested and organised a boycott of the buses for one day and chose Martin Luther King, Jr. as their leader. This protest continued until the buses became desegregated. Under this time, about a year, Martin Luther King, Jr. was constantly harassed with death threats and bombing of his house.

Question: *What were his dreams?*

Answer: That all people would someday be sisters and brothers in a world governed by equality, justice, and peace.

Question: *Why was Martin Luther King, Jr. awarded the 1964 Nobel Peace Prize?*

Answer: As Gunnar Jahn, Chairman of the Nobel Committee, said in his presentation speech: "He is the first person in the Western world to have shown us that a struggle can be waged without violence. He is the first to make the message of brotherly love a reality in the course of his struggle, and he has brought this message to all men, to all nations and races.

Today we pay tribute to Martin Luther King, the man who has never abandoned his faith in the unarmed struggle he is waging, who has suffered for his faith, who has been imprisoned on many occasions, whose home has been subject to bomb attacks, whose life and the lives of his family have been threatened, and who nevertheless has never faltered. To this undaunted champion of peace the Nobel Committee of the Norwegian Parliament has awarded the Peace Prize for the year 1964."

Question: *When did Martin Luther King, Jr. die?*

Answer: Martin Luther King, Jr. was assassinated on 4 April 1968, in Memphis, Tennessee, where he was trying to help the striking garbage workers.

FILM (optional – the film is not provided)

Mississippi burning is a film that clearly illustrates the status quo of the fights for civil rights, precisely in King's time. Read the film file in the *Additional Materials* section for more information. The working plan, as laid out in the file, requires students to watch four scenes at a time and then answer the questions on those scenes.

RESEARCH

Students go to the library in groups and carry out some research work on either Rosa Lee Parks or Nelson Mandela. Students then complete the Fact File.

XENOPHOBIA

The teacher tells students that racism comes close to xenophobia but, as UNESCO states, Xenophobia and racism are distinct phenomena. Whereas racism usually entails distinction based on physical characteristic differences, such as skin colour, hair type, facial features, etc, xenophobia implies behaviour based on the idea that the other is foreign to or originates from outside the community or nation.

Ask students to read the definition for *xenophobia*. Tell them about the different kinds of xenophobia. Show them next the pictures in the Additional Materials section. Students tick the words they think best describe the events portrayed in the pictures. Make sure they all know what the words mean.

VIDEO

Show students the video (make sure the link is still valid prior to that) and direct them to answer the questions immediately afterwards. There is a transcript of the video in the Additional Materials section.

Questions & answers

- Who are these people? **They are demonstrators**
- What are they demonstrating against? **Against the presence of Islam in Belgium**
Are they right to do so? (*Students' answers*)
- Would such a demonstration be possible in your community? (*Students' answers*)
- Would you support such a demonstration? Why or why not? (*Students' answers*)

ETHNIC CLEANSING AND GENOCIDE

Students read the definitions. The teacher writes the word HOLOCAUST on the board. Ask students whether they have ever heard about such a word and what meaning they think it has or what events they associate the word with. Come this point, the teacher may want to provide the class with some details on the Holocaust or may want students to do some specific research on it. Students do the task immediately afterwards using the information they may find on www.wikipedia.com (recommended website). Possible answers vary but they are expected to introduce feedback on the genocide in Bosnia or in Rwanda or on Armenia, or else, on the Holocaust.

DIALOGUE AMONG CIVILIZATIONS.

The Dialogue Among Civilizations is a theory in international relations. This term, first introduced by Mohammad Khatami, former President of Iran, became famous after the United Nations adopted a resolution to name the year 2001 as the year of Dialogue Among Civilizations.

What does this theory seek to explain?

The Year of Dialogue Among Civilizations was established to improve dialogue between two clearly defined groups of civilizations: one which sees diversity as a threat and another one which perceives it as an opportunity for growth. Its main objectives are conflict prevention and mutual understanding.

The unsung heroes of dialogue

The teacher tells students that along with the people who became popular devoting their lives and fighting for human rights (some of whom they have had the chance to learn about), there are the not-so-popular ones that have made untold efforts to improve human life. This activity offers students the possibility to get acquainted with some of them.

Activity: Students turn to the website and read about some of these unknown heroes to learn about their accomplishments.

Game: tell students to visit the website and play the game featured there.

KNOWLEDGE QUEST (in the *Additional Materials* section)

Students fill in the personal report