



Teachers' Notes

Holocaust Unit

Dehumanisation

Before the Lesson Begins

- Print out copies of Resources A & F
- Print out Resources B, C, D & E (only one or two of each is needed)

Resources not provided

- Pens
- Paper

Lesson Overview

The focus of this lesson is dehumanisation, how it comes in many forms, how it impacts on society and how we can put a stop to it.

Introduction

Discussion Guidance

1. Dehumanisation is a tactic used by prejudiced people that allows them to more easily express their prejudiced feelings. There are many ways to dehumanise someone.
2. Victims of the Holocaust were dehumanised on a mass scale in a variety of ways. From insults and name-calling, to having their hair shaved off and concentration camp guards refusing to speak to them.

Section 1: The Individual

NB: Dehumanisation strips an individual of their identity, so it's important to introduce the concept of 'identity' to the students to help them understand and empathise with the process. The purpose of the exercises involving The Identity Diagram is to encourage the students to explore their own identity.

Section 2: Dehumanisation

NB: Slide 4 is a video clip of Mrs Marmor – a Holocaust Survivor from Romania who is describing her experience of being dehumanized at Auschwitz-Birkenau.

Discussion Guidance

1. All emotional responses like lost, sad, lonely etc are right, but ensure the class understand that as well having emotional reactions, Mrs. Marmor would have felt less like herself – less unique; less like an individual.
2. Dehumanisation allows perpetrators to think/believe that they are not as important as others/themselves, and that they do not deserve the same treatment. In short, the perpetrators would have thought of Mrs. Marmor as 'less human'.
3. To make her feel less human – to break her spirit, so she does not interrupt the operation of the camp. Also, to ease their own conscience - when one physically or mentally dehumanises someone else, it makes it easier for the perpetrator to ignore the victim's human needs, or ignore/lessen their own emotional responses to the sight of this need.
4. The aim of this question is to help students realise that dehumanisation is a crucial element of every type of prejudice; bullying, victimisation, name calling, physical violence & disregarding people's emotional responses are all types of dehumanisation and any answer that falls under these categories would be acceptable.

Section 3: Dehumanisation in our Society

Resource List

- Resource B - Celebrities who suffer mental illness
- Resource C - Celebrities who suffer from addiction
- Resource D - Physical appearance of celebrities
- Resource E - Sexism in the media

NB: Encourage the students to look for the following evidence in their resource packs; language used, photographs, reporter's claims and their supporting evidence.

Discussion Guidance:

1. The aim of this question is to help the students understand that dehumanisation, like prejudice, has many different stages & seriousness and is part of our daily lives. Acting disrespectfully to others like using cruel names, bitching & violence are all part of the dehumanisation process, and create a culture in which more extreme levels of dehumanisation such as shaving people & tattooing them against their will becomes acceptable.
2. This question is to allow the students to be introspective & encourage empathy.
3. See question 2.
4. There are parallels – they come in different forms, but the meaning behind both forms is the same – the perpetrator lessen the human importance of the victim.

Section 4: Do we dehumanise others?

Discussion Guidance

NB: If the students laugh at the following examples, ask them why they find them funny, and if they still would find them funny if they were directed at themselves or a friend. Humour is one of the most successful dehumanising tools, and just because something may be funny on appearance doesn't legitimise the cruel viewpoint behind the humour.

1. The answer to this question will depend on the resource.
2. Yes. of varying degrees.
3. The language used is offensive and concentrates on one specific attribute of individual(s) – both the celebrities and Mrs. Marmor have faced this treatment – the latter in facing anti-Semitic propaganda and legal oppression in pre-War Europe. Additionally, the intention behind the language and physical treatment of Mrs. Marmor is the same; to make people feel unwelcome, irrelevant and less human within a particular society.

NB: Obviously the dehumanisation Mrs Marmor experienced in the Death Camp is not on the same level as the dehumanising tweets, but it's important to recognise that dehumanisation – like prejudice – is part of a process that has many levels/varying degrees.

4. The process would continue until it became acceptable within that culture to dehumanise people in a more extreme way.

Resource F: The Dehumanised Identity Diagram.