



# Teachers' Notes

## Holocaust Unit

### Language

#### Before the Lesson Begins

- Print out copies of FYFT Pledge Cards

#### Resources Not Provided

- Pens

#### Lesson Overview

The focus of this lesson is language and the impact it has on people/society.

#### Introduction

#### Discussion Guidance

1. The use of negative or positive language has an effect on the culture it's used within. Negative language is one of the first chapters of the story of prejudice, and can lead to further negative treatment of those who the language is directed at.
2. Language was used during the Holocaust to victimise/bully and isolate people and it can still be used for those purposes today.

## Section 1: Language in Pre-War Germany

**NB:** The aim of this section is to explain the effects of language during the persecution of Jewish people in pre-war Germany, and to explain how such persecution eventually lead to the Holocaust.

#### Translation of Slides:

- Slide 4:
  - *Wirtschaft und Judentum* – **The Economy and Judaism.**

- *Ohne Lösung der Judenfrage keine Erlösung der deutschen Wirtschaft – No salvation for the German economy without a solution to the “Jewish question”.*
- **Slide 5:**
  - *Die Juden sind unser Unglück! – Sausage-Jew Friend of the Peasants- he swindles the poor people out of cheap meat and the state out of their debits. The Jews are our misfortune!*

*[NB: Friend of the peasants is an insulting word for communists.]*
- **Slide 6:**
  - *Jüdlischer Mordplan gegen die nichtjüdlische Menschheit aufgedeckt – Jewish Murder plan against gentile humankind discovered.*

## Discussion Guidance

1. These headlines present Jewish people negatively as vermin/murderers/evil – they are presented as an ‘enemy’ to Germany & the world.
2. They start to believe it and are more likely to look for or ‘find’ those characteristics in the Jewish people they encounter. They would then be more likely to accept and/or desire negative actions taken against Jewish people as a protective measure.
3. Manipulation of language is a very simple but effective way to perpetuate and communicate ideas. Negative language is used by prejudiced individuals/ organisations, especially in propaganda, to demonise the victims and persuade others to share their views.
4. In this case, negative language used in propaganda spread to civilians to such an extent that anti-Semitic views became a distinctive part of Nazi culture. The intensity of this anti-Semitism grew until it manifested into violent acts against Jewish people (Kristallnacht). When violence is an accepted part of a culture, it leads only to further violence and oppression.

## Section 2: Language in Our Culture

**NB:** It is important to note that FYFT acknowledges the fundamental differences in the Nazi persecution of Jewish people and many modern examples of prejudice. These differences are based on factors such as the history of anti-Semitism in Europe and the fact that the persecution of Jews and other minorities were organised by the State. FYFT also is not arguing that the language used in anti-Semitic propaganda is the same as prejudiced language used today. That being said, we are interested in the methods that the Nazis used to persecute their victims and in this case the method of prejudiced language is being used today by media

outlets. For FYFT that makes language an issue that we can relate both to the Nazis and modern bigots and something that we can all learn from.

*You may use Slides 9-12, or your own current examples, if you wish.*

## Discussion Guidance

1. *FYFT believes that these headlines are offensive as they generalise and target entire groups based on the actions of few.*
2. These headlines are saying that immigrants and Muslims are a danger to the UK and to British values. It is then assumed that they believe that these two groups are problems that need to be dealt with.
3. Those who read positive/balanced articles are less likely to form negative viewpoints of the groups reported on.
4. This question is to allow the students to process the negative language they have just encountered.

## Section 3: Language and Us

**NB:** The important issue in this section is to bring the effects of language back to the students' personal experiences, the importance of language used by the individual, and the effect it has on individuals.

### Activity Guidance

- It may be controversial asking students to write down offensive words they know but it is very important to allow students to honestly assess the language that they use/hear every day. If they can properly identify prejudiced language as well as the reasons they are offensive with the understanding of why language can be dangerous, then they will be able to understand the correct language choices to make.
- It is important that the students understand that they should implement the values of today's lesson in their daily lives. The FYFT Pledge Card with the prejudiced phrase and explanation is to act as a permanent reminder to the students about the power of language.