

Freedom of speech

Our right to express our ideas and opinions



**IN THE
NEWS**



© 2025 Life Lessons Education Limited

This presentation is protected by UK copyright laws. Reproduction & distribution of the presentation is prohibited without written permission of Life Lessons Education Ltd.

Worksheet bank

- [This is where you can find an additional vocabulary learning sheet.](#) This can be built into the lesson before the vocabulary slide for all learners. Please see our SEND guidance on slide 4 (of the general guidance below) for more details on how to use this.

General notes

- [Link to general guidance: how to use Life Lessons learning resources](#)



Print out

Lesson specific notes for teachers






- This lesson is made in response to the killing of Charlie Kirk, and the conversations in the media around that, including the polarised reaction to the murder from various political camps.
- We have avoided naming Kirk by name, although it is likely that many students will have heard about him and the assassination itself. The aim here is to frame it as one of many examples of political violence.
- We recommend that you do not focus on the details of recent events, but use them as a catalyst for some healthy discussions about freedom of speech, tolerance and how to disagree with respect and with the aim of understanding other people better.

Key messages

- There have recently been murders in America, as people use violence to attempt to silence someone's ideas and opinions.
- Freedom of speech is essential if we are to listen to and understand each other.
- Disagreement is a normal part of life and we should learn to disagree with tolerance and respect.
- Finding common ground is essential if we want to understand and get along with other people.
- Hate-speech is not acceptable, and against the law.

Lesson ground rules

Do

-  Listen to others without interrupting
-  Be open and honest
-  Make sure everyone in the group has a chance to speak
-  Respect each others ideas and opinions
-  Encourage and support everyone

Lesson ground rules

Don't

- ☹️ Make others feel bad
- ❓ Guess or think you know something about your friends
- ⊖ Pressure others into sharing information if they don't want to
- 🚫 Make personal disclosures during the lesson

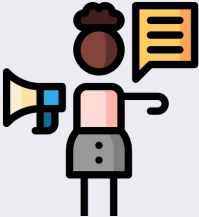




Respect

You will see this symbol throughout your lesson.
It is a reminder of the ground rules.

Key terms

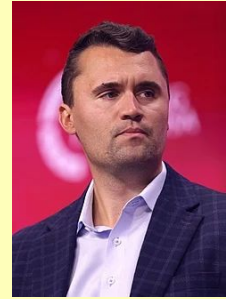


| Key terms | Picture | Definition |
|-------------------|--|---|
| freedom of speech |  | The right to share our views without fear of punishment or violence |
| tolerance |  | To be respectful of something or someone that you do not agree with or like |
| common ground |  | The ideas and opinions that we have in common with someone else. |

This Summer, two political figures in the United States have been assassinated.



A politician



An influencer

In both cases, they were killed by people who disagreed with their opinions. The murders were not related, and the two victims had very different political beliefs: one was 'left-wing' and one was 'right-wing'.

Is freedom of speech important to you?

What do we need to feel like we can speak freely?



Respect

Is **freedom of speech** important to you?

- *Answer*

What do we need to feel like we can speak freely?

- *Answer*

I disapprove of what you say,
but I will defend to the death
your right to say it



Evelyn Beatrice Hall, 1906

 Discuss

What do you think this quote means?
Do you agree with it?

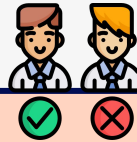
Disagreement

People have always disagreed - it's a normal part of life.

Disagreement becomes a problem when...



...people do not feel listened to and are angry or frustrated



...people believe that they are right and anyone who disagrees is wrong



...people believe that there are two sides: good/right and evil/wrong

This kind of thinking can lead to **intolerance**, hatred and trying to silence other people - taking away their free speech.

Threats to freedom of speech

Discuss

What threats to free speech can you think of?

Violence

*assassination, bodily
harm or threats*

Laws

*Governments might
make it illegal to
share certain opinions.*

Judgement

*People might judge
others, make fun of
them or exclude them
for saying certain
things.*

Intolerance happens when people are not willing to disagree with respect or allow someone to speak freely. Instead they try to silence others, who have different opinions. Examples include:

assassination

threats

discrimination

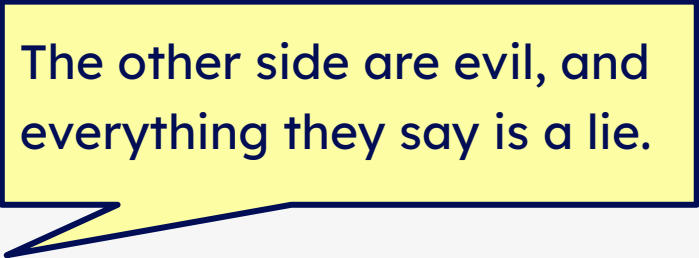
shaming

belittling
(making someone
feel small)

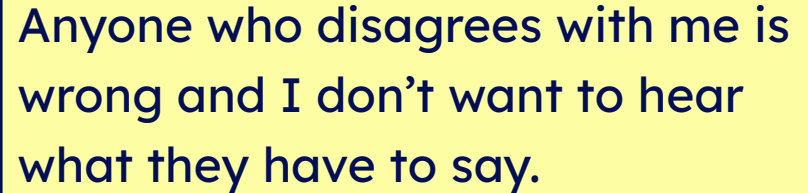
changing the law so
people cannot
disagree publicly

Intolerance in the news

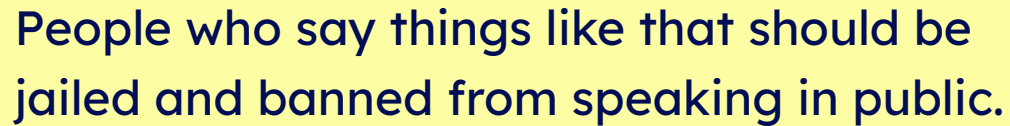
Some public figures push the idea that there are two sides: Us and Them. They might condemn the 'other side', accuse them of causing all of the problems, and try to stop them from speaking out by removing their **freedom of speech**.



The other side are evil, and everything they say is a lie.



Anyone who disagrees with me is wrong and I don't want to hear what they have to say.



People who say things like that should be jailed and banned from speaking in public.

Why might someone who is intolerant want to limit free speech?

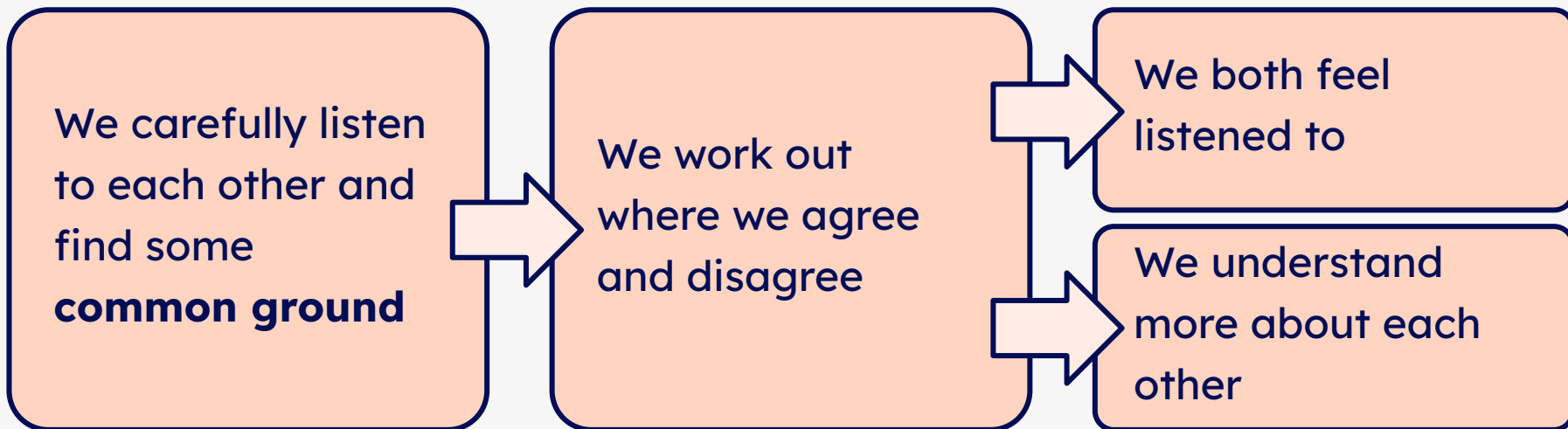


Why might someone who is intolerant want to limit free speech?

- *Answer*

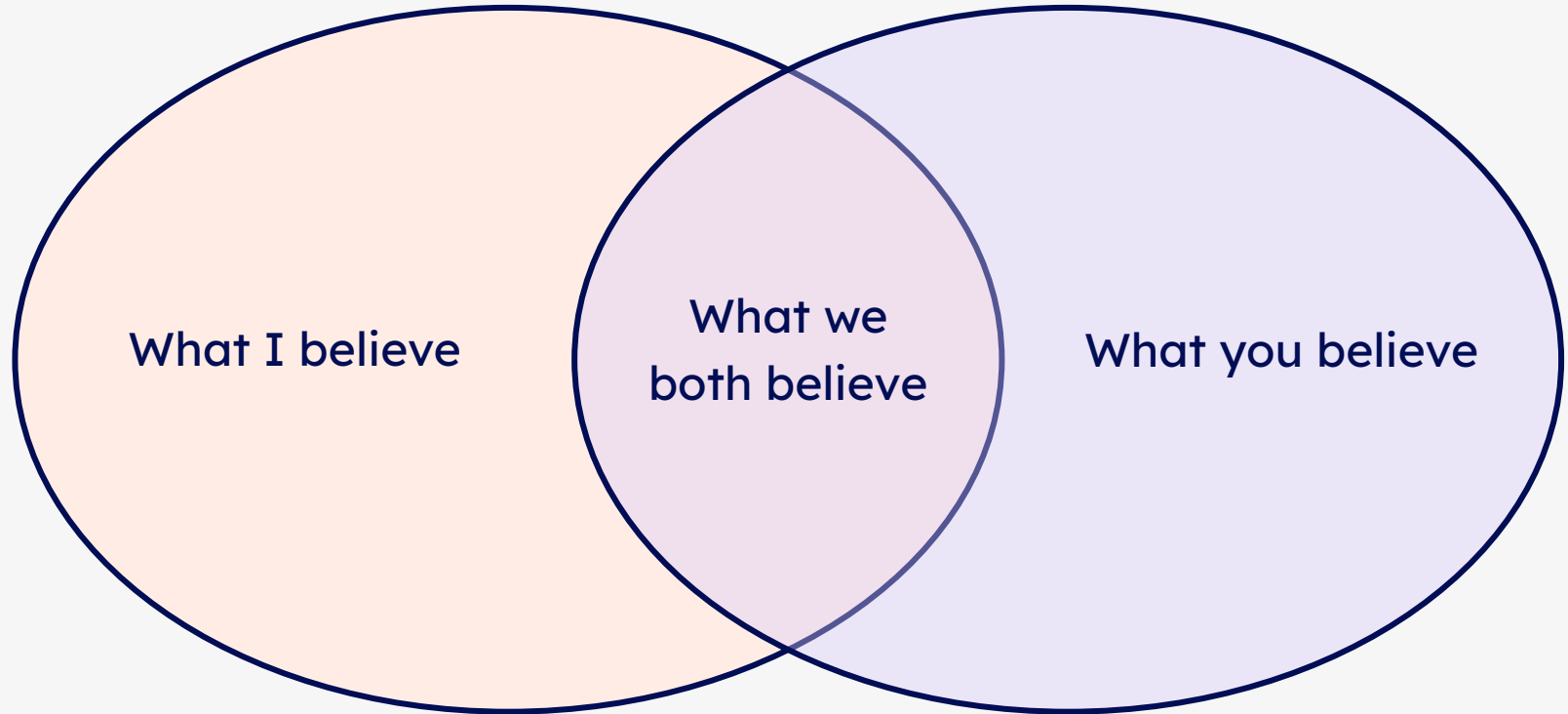
One solution to **intolerance** is to listen more: this means other people feel listened to, and we learn more about how they think too!

If you disagree with someone, these steps can help you to practise **tolerance**:



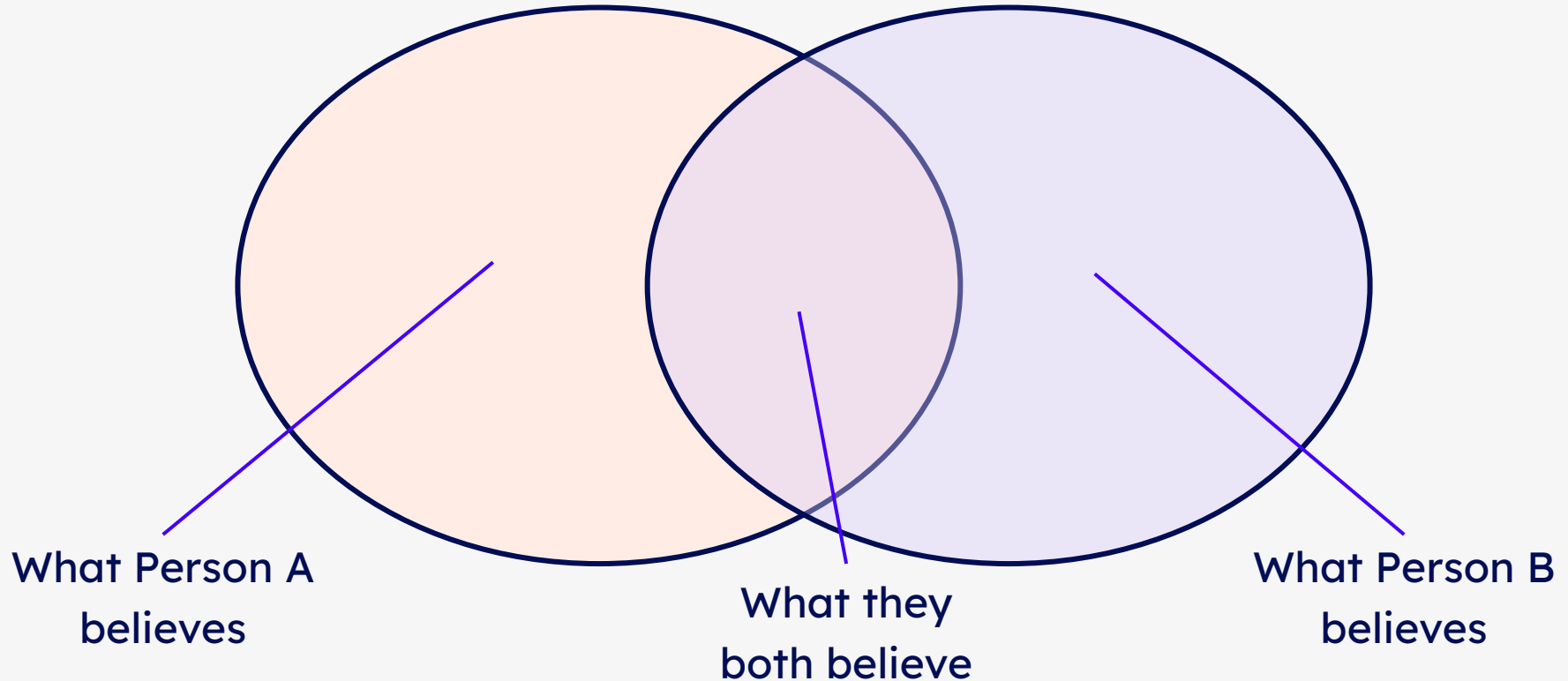
Finding common ground

There is always **common ground** between people, even if they are very different.



(Optional) activity

Step one: Draw a Venn diagram:



(Optional) activity



Step two: Read these two points of view and note down on your Venn diagram the main points that each person makes in the right box.

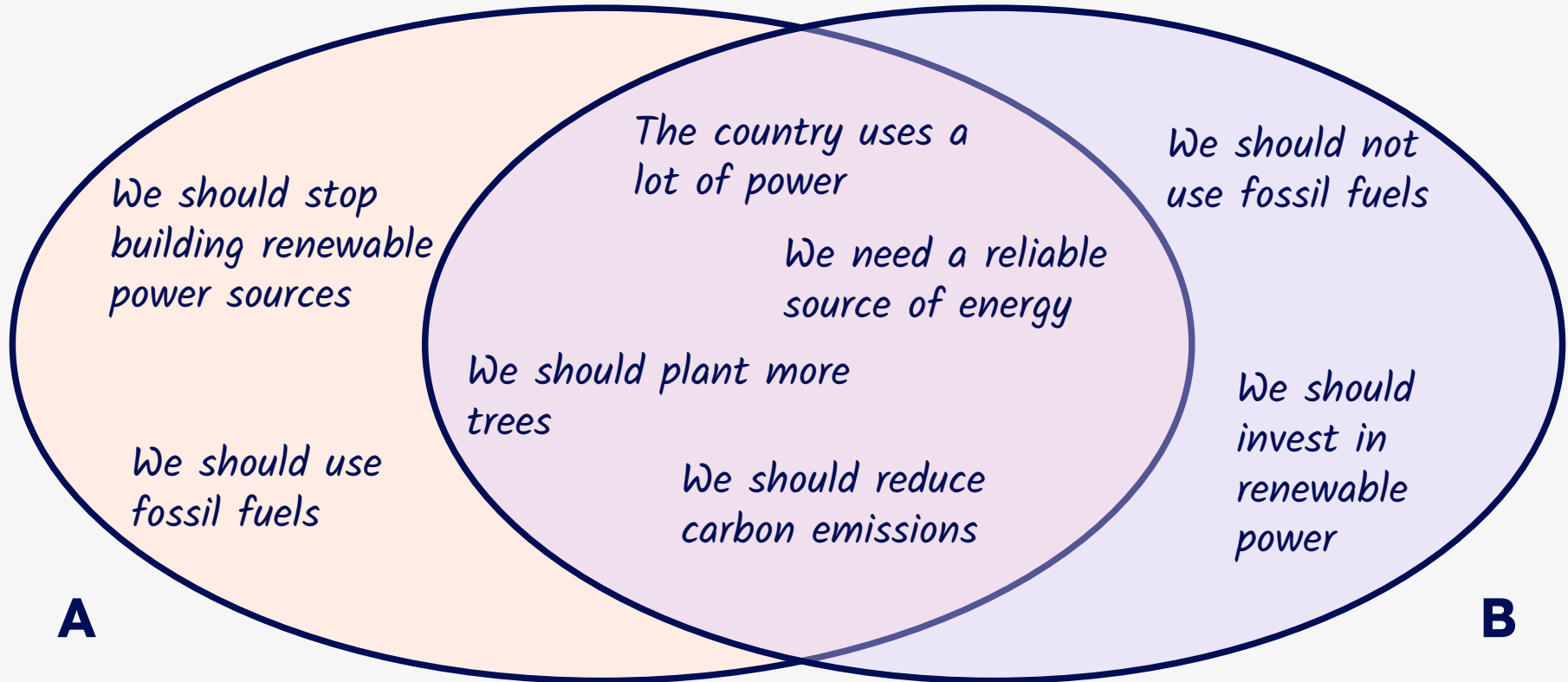
Person A: I think we need to stop building wind and solar farms. We need a lot of power to run the country, and I think we should generate electricity using coal instead because it is reliable. We can reduce our carbon emissions by planting trees instead.

Person B: I think we need to build more renewable energy, like wind and solar, and plant more trees. Our country use a lot of power and we need a reliable way of creating it, that doesn't rely on fossil fuels, which cause carbon emissions and will eventually run out.

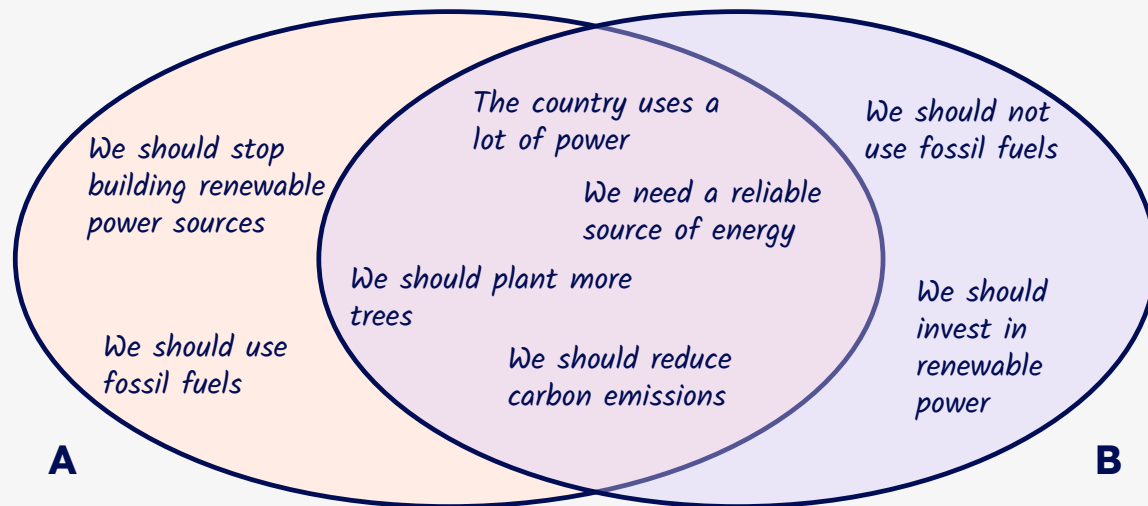
Possible answers - (Optional) activity



Draw a Venn diagram, and note down the opinions in the correct part.



Finding common ground



Discuss

Did they have more in common, or more that divided them?

What **common ground** could they start from, if they wanted to have a positive conversation or a respectful debate?

Hate-speech

There is a limit to free speech.

Although free speech is protected by the law, it is still illegal to say things which cause hatred, or encourage people to be violent.

“Any communication which is threatening or abusive, and is intended to harass, alarm, or distress someone is forbidden. The penalties for hate speech include fines, imprisonment, or both.”



(Optional) activity



- 1) Read the statement on the next page. Decide if you agree with it or not.
- 2) You have 3 minutes to find as many people as possible who **disagree** with you. Ask them to explain why they have that opinion and write it down.

(Optional) activity



Education should end at age 16, so young people can be free to spend their time however they choose.

- 1) Read this statement. Decide if you agree with it or not.
- 2) You have 3 minutes to find as many people as possible who **disagree** with you. Ask them to explain why they have that opinion and write it down.

state
ometh
et' (bu
nswere

upils
he sta
hey th
erson
have to
write d

Then th
people
own?' a
argume
ideas,

Maybe
would
disagre
not list
mind?

Finding common ground



Discuss

Education should end at age 16, so young people can be free to spend their time however they choose.

 Discuss

How can understanding both sides of the argument help us to better understand our own beliefs and ideas?

Should hate-speech be illegal, or should all speech be totally free?

Talk to the people around you. Share your opinion and listen to other people. Try to identify the common ground, as well as where exactly you disagree.



Respect

More questions for discussion (if you have time)

- What other options do we have if we feel angry or frustrated, other than trying to silence other people?
- How could we protect **freedom of speech**, so everyone can be heard?
- What causes people to feel too afraid to speak freely?
- What might make it hard to find **common ground**?
- Should hate-speech be illegal, or should all speech be totally free?

Video resources



Have you ever experienced prejudice? What did it feel like?
(2m 42s) [Watch the video](#)



Why do you care if someone different from you-is being discriminated against (1m 50s)
[Watch the video](#)



Respect

Where to get support

Childnet



Information on
online safety for
children and young
people

www.childnet.com

Childline



Helpline for children
to discuss personal
information

Call 0800 1111
www.childline.org.uk

The Mix



Helpline for people
under 25 and
website with
information on
different topics
Call 0808 808 4994
www.themix.org.uk



Credits:

This lesson has been created by Life Lessons Education Ltd as part of their weekly 'In the news' series.

To learn more about Life Lessons and how they support schools visit www.lifelessons.co.uk