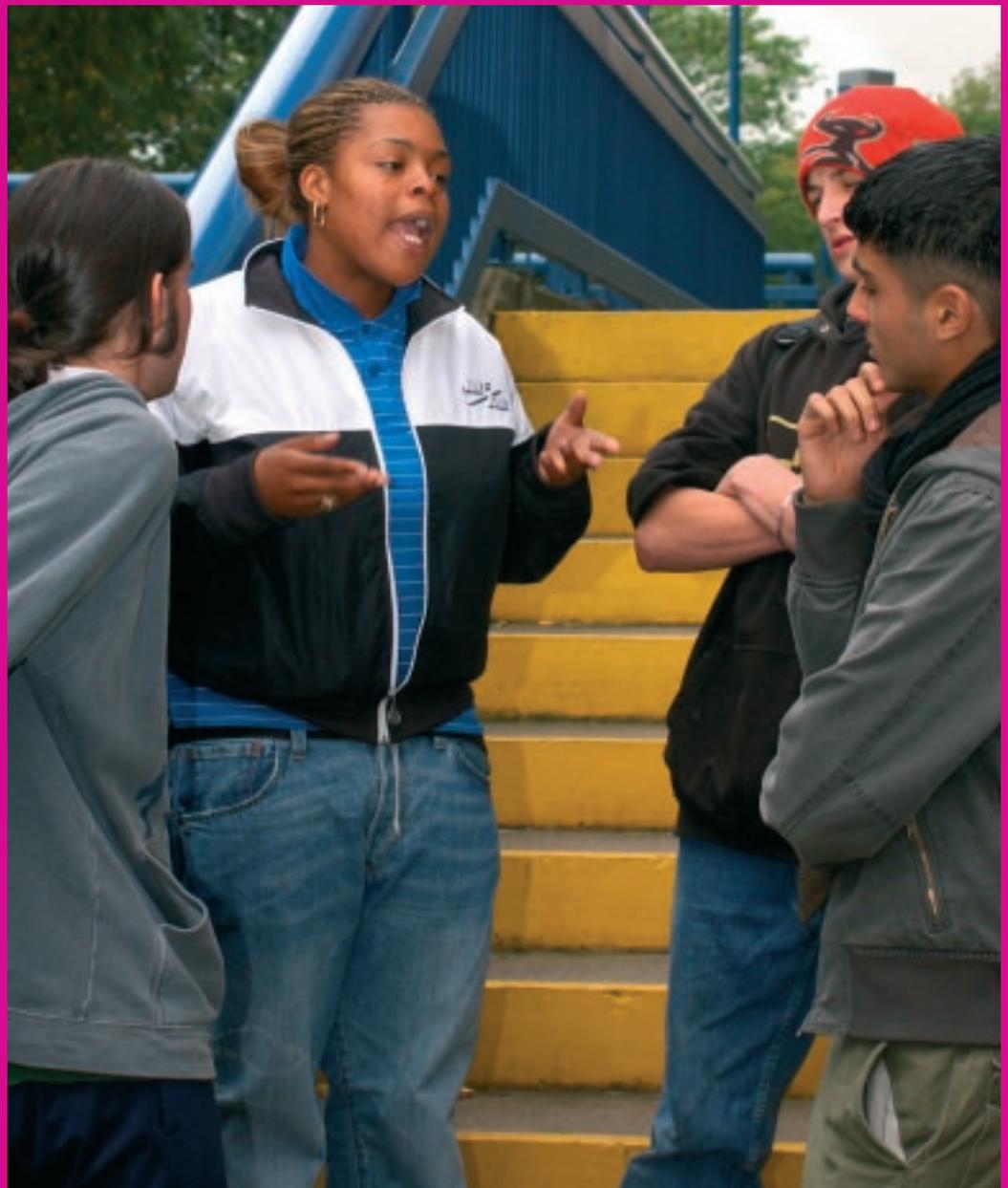


Agree to disagree

Citizenship and controversial issues

Julia Fiehn



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Introduction

The resource pack

The activities in this pack can be used with either staff, within a training and development session, or learners, as part of their citizenship programme. They aim to introduce participants to the meaning of 'controversy'; to provide techniques for dealing with controversy; and to build the knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary to use these techniques effectively.

The first section examines the nature of controversy, strategies for dealing with controversial issues and approaches to problems that could arise. The second section provides activities as examples of approaches to specific citizenship issues, with suggestions for ways they could be adapted for use with different issues.

Each activity has suggestions for assessment of citizenship learning, to be used with young people and focused on the relevant learning objectives.

Citizenship

Citizenship education is an important part of the development of young adults. It enables them to learn about their rights and responsibilities, and to understand how society works. It prepares them for dealing with the challenges they face in life. Through citizenship education, young people are encouraged to play an active part in the democratic process, thereby becoming more effective members of society. Effective citizenship education increases confidence, self-esteem and motivation for learning. Young people are encouraged to express their views, to have a voice and make a difference to the communities in which they operate.

Citizenship education can be delivered effectively in a variety of ways. Experience of the post-16 citizenship programme suggests that successful media for citizenship activities include: art, photography, music, video making, role play/simulations, websites, newsletters, radio stations, debates, conferences, exhibitions, graffiti walls, banners, dance, comedy, drama, surveys, and campaigns.

Whichever approach is used, learners and facilitators need to be clear about what is to be learned.

The ten QCA learning objectives

- Demonstrate knowledge and understanding about citizenship issues
- Show understanding of key citizenship concepts
- Consider the social, moral and ethical issues applying to a particular situation
- Analyse sources of information, identify bias and draw conclusions
- Demonstrate understanding of respect for diversity and challenge prejudice and discrimination
- Discuss and debate citizenship issues
- Express and justify a personal opinion to others
- Represent a point of view on behalf of others
- Demonstrate skills of negotiation and participation in community-based activities
- Exercise responsible action towards and on behalf of others

(QCA 2004 p 21)

Citizenship is controversial. There is no escaping the fact that citizenship deals with issues about which people hold strong and differing opinions. Indeed, the question of whether or not citizenship should form part of the curriculum of education and training establishments is itself controversial.

Some staff feel anxious about introducing controversial, and more particularly, sensitive, issues to learners. They worry that emotions will run high, unacceptable views will be expressed, feelings will be hurt and conflict will result.

However, learning to manage differences of opinion in an acceptable way in a free and democratic society is the main aim of citizenship education. It is important that young people learn how to investigate citizenship issues, debate, negotiate action, form conclusions and express their considered opinions on the contentious issues of the day.

There are various strategies that staff can use to manage controversy among groups of learners. They are not tricks but tools, and are illustrated in the activities in this pack. However, the best approach to controversy is openness. We believe that citizenship education requires honesty between staff and learners. An open acceptance that differences of opinion are inevitable, acceptable and central to a democratic society can diffuse tension. Learners themselves will need to know how to handle controversy since they will be involved in negotiating action to bring about change. The strategies available to staff should also be practised by learners.

SECTION A: Dealing with controversy

Activity 1: What is a controversial issue?

Background, organisation and resources

This activity is designed as an 'opener' to the theme of citizenship and controversial issues. It encourages participants to consider what we mean by 'controversial' and whether some issues are more controversial than others. It is often the case that some issues are more sensitive and emotive than others. Participants work in groups of four, and each group will need a block of coloured stick-its. You will also need a white board or large wall to display the completed stick-its, and a copy of Handout 1 for each participant.

Aims of the activity

- To clarify the meaning of the word 'controversial'
- To encourage discussion of whether some issues are more controversial, or perhaps more sensitive than others.

Targeted QCA learning objectives

- Demonstrate knowledge and understanding about citizenship issues
- Express and justify a personal opinion to others.

Tasks

Stage 1

Put participants into groups of four and, after they have introduced themselves, ask each person to think of three citizenship issues that they consider to be controversial. They should write each issue on a separate stick-it.

Stage 2

Draw a line along the top of the white board and label the left-hand side of the line 'a bit controversial' and the right-hand side, 'very controversial'. Ask groups to discuss where they think each of the issues generated in their group should go on the line. When they have decided, they should place their stick-its on the white board.

Stage 3

Allow five minutes for everyone to look at the issues on the white board and then for each person to select one issue categorised as more controversial and one categorised as less, before returning to their group. Allow groups a further ten minutes to discuss whether they agree with the categorisation of the issues selected, and why they might have been categorised as they were.

Stage 4

Take feedback from each group and discuss the following questions:

- Which issues were seen as more and less controversial? Why?
- Did you agree with the way they had been categorised?
- What does it mean for an issue to be 'controversial'?

- *Can we think of any non-controversial issues?*
- *Is there a difference between 'controversial' and 'sensitive'?*

Stage 5

Summarise the views of the group and give out Handout 1.

Assessment opportunities (if activity used with learners)

- **Demonstrate knowledge and understanding about citizenship issues:** self-assessment of understanding of the term 'controversial' in logbook
- **Express and justify a personal opinion to others:** staff observation and feedback on stage 4.

References

Making sense of citizenship: A CPD handbook, DfES, 2004

Teaching about Iraq and other controversial issues: guidance for schools,
Citizenship Foundation, 2003

Make it happen: effective practice in post-16 citizenship, LSDA, 2005

'Controversy in citizenship is inevitable!' Alan Wilkins, in *Citizenship News*, LSDA, July 2003

Play your part: post-16 citizenship guidance, QCA, 2004

What are controversial issues?

Controversial issues are issues about which different groups disagree and hold strong opinions. They are issues that divide society and arouse strong feelings and/or deal with fundamental questions of value and belief – for example, war, immigration, abortion, gay rights, European Union.

However, our pluralist democracy has a set of values that define it. These are: social justice; political equality; tolerance; human rights; respect for the rule of law; and a commitment to negotiation and debate as the ideal way of resolving public conflict. Such values should be non-controversial.

It is inevitable that citizenship activities will raise issues that will be sensitive to someone or arouse strong feelings, views and differences of opinion. It is important to remember that:

- within a democracy, people can legitimately disagree
- there are acceptable ways of dealing with disagreement
- views should be expressed in ways that are respectful and non-intimidating.

Disrespectful and intimidating remarks should be challenged, but without alienating the person making the remark. There should always be the possibility of dialogue about the views expressed.

Activity 2: Facilitating controversial issues

Background, organisation and resources

In this activity, participants learn about the different styles that can be used by a facilitator of discussion groups when dealing with controversial issues. The activity could be used with both staff and young people who may be planning to run an event such as a conference or a debate. It is important to have considered the appropriate style to use in advance of facilitating discussions. The four styles are: neutral chair, balanced approach, stated commitment and challenging consensus ('devil's advocate') – see table below. Four chairs, each using a different style, will need to be identified and briefed in advance of the activity. Make a set of cards from Handout 2 for the facilitator using the balanced approach, and copies of Handout 3 for everyone.

1 – Neutral chair	2 – Stated commitment
Facilitator adopts role of impartial chairperson of a discussion group	Facilitator always makes known his/her views during the discussion
3 – Balanced approach	4 – Challenging consensus
Facilitator presents participants with a wide range of alternative views and materials	Facilitator consciously and openly takes up an opposite position to that expressed by participants or resource material

Aims of the activity

- To enable participants to experience some of the different styles of facilitation
- To encourage discussion of the strengths and weaknesses of each style
- To allow consideration of the appropriateness of each style for different topics and circumstances.

Targeted QCA learning objectives

- Analyse sources of information, identify bias and draw conclusions
- Consider the social, moral and ethical issues applying to a particular situation
- Express and justify a personal opinion to others.

Tasks

Stage 1

Prepare four participants to take on the role of facilitators in a discussion on animal experimentation and allocate one of the facilitation styles to each one. Provide them with any resources that they may require – for example, the set of cards from Handout 2 to be given to the facilitator using style 3 (Balanced approach).

Stage 2

Put participants into four groups, one led by each of the four facilitators, if possible in different rooms. Tell everyone that the topic for debate is: *Is it morally acceptable to experiment on non-human animals to develop products and medicines that benefit human beings?* Allow

20 minutes for the debate, with each facilitator using the style allocated to him/her. The facilitators should not explain that different groups are experiencing different styles, so that group members concentrate on the topic being discussed.

Stage 3

Ask groups to return to a plenary and ask a member of each group to describe the way that their discussion had been facilitated. Ask for strengths and weaknesses of each style and capture the responses of participants on a chart, as follows:

Potential strengths	Facilitation style	Potential weaknesses
	Neutral chair	
	Stated commitment	
	Balanced approach	
	Challenging consensus	

(See Handout 3 for some suggestions)

Stage 4

Summarise the discussion and ensure that participants are familiar with the different styles and the appropriateness of each in different situations. Give out copies of Handout 3 if necessary.

Assessment opportunities (if activity used with learners)

- **Analyse sources of information, identify bias and draw conclusions:** facilitator and peer questioning during report-back in stage 3
- **Consider the social, moral and ethical issues applying to a particular situation:** self-assessment during stage 2
- **Express and justify a personal opinion to others:** facilitator listening in on discussion in stage 2 and offering feedback.

Animal experimentation – pros and cons

PROS	CONS
<p>Reduction of human suffering is always the first priority</p>	<p>Animals have the right to be treated as beings of equal worth to humans, not as means to human ends</p>
<p>It is possible to do experiments on animals without cruelty</p>	<p>Animals are not treated well by researchers</p>
<p>To ban animal experiments would be to paralyse modern medicine</p>	<p>Few breakthroughs have been made via animal research</p>
<p>Human beings share 99% of genes with chimpanzees – so they are a good guide to human reaction to drugs</p>	<p>Most animals that are experimented on are less like humans genetically – e.g. rats and mice</p>
<p>Some medicines, tested on animals, may later to be used to the benefit of other sick animals</p>	<p>Non-human animals are never able to give consent</p>

Strengths and weaknesses of the four approaches

Potential strengths	Facilitation style	Potential weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimises influence of facilitators' bias • Gives everyone a chance to take part in free discussion • Views may be expressed that the facilitator has not thought of • Participants can use communication skills • Works well if lots of background material available 	Neutral chair	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can be artificial • Depends on participants being familiar with the method – they need practice • May reinforce existing attitudes and prejudices • Difficult for less able
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Makes everything above board • Facilitators' views are open and so participants can judge bias • Facilitators seen as equal to participants – having strong opinions too 	Stated commitment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Could stifle discussion • Some participants may just enjoy an argument with facilitators • Could lead to accusations of bias • May confuse participants if facilitator gives both fact and opinion on the same issue
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is important for facilitators to illustrate that there are many opinions on citizenship issues, especially if a range of opinions is not present in the group • Useful when there is a great deal of conflicting information • Useful when the group is polarised 	Balanced approach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is there such a thing as a balanced range of opinions? • The approach can lead to facilitator-directed sessions – always chipping in to maintain balance • Is 'truth' a grey area between all the different opinions?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can stimulate participants to contribute to discussion • Essential when faced by consensus in the group • Useful when the discussion is beginning to dry up 	Challenging consensus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can lead to worries among participants and others who believe the facilitators to be biased • May reinforce participant attitudes

With acknowledgements to Stradling, R., Noctor, M., Baines, B., *Teaching Controversial Issues*, Edward Arnold 1984

Activity 3: What do I do if...?

Background, organisation and resources

In this activity, groups of participants discuss what they should do if problems arise when they are facilitating discussions about controversial or sensitive issues. The activity is primarily designed for staff development, but could be used with young people who may be planning to run an event such as a conference or a debate. The scenarios provided on Handout 4 cover a number of different issues. Participants work in groups of four/five to discuss the different scenarios. Each group will need a set of cards, made from Handout 4. If young people are preparing for an event on a specific topic, it would be necessary to change the scenarios so that they relate to the topic of the event.

Aims of the activity

- To enable participants to share a range of different concerns they may have concerning controversial issues
- To provide an opportunity for participants to consider some effective strategies to deal with any problems that may arise.

Targeted QCA learning objectives

- Discuss and debate citizenship issues
- Demonstrate understanding of and respect for diversity, and challenge prejudice and discrimination
- Express and justify a personal opinion to others.

Tasks

Stage 1

Put participants into groups of four or five, sitting round a table, and give each group a set of ten cards cut up from Handout 4. Two of the cards will be blank. Each set should be shuffled and placed face-down in the centre of the table. Ask groups to start with the person whose surname is highest in the alphabet. This person should pick up a card, read it out to the group and make a suggestion about how to handle the situation. The rest of the group will decide whether or not they agree with the suggestion. If a blank card is picked up, the person should suggest a genuine worry he/she has in relation to facilitating discussions on controversial issues, and make a suggestion about how to handle it. When the group has finished discussing ways of handling the situation, they move to the next card, picked up by the person whose name is next in the alphabet.

Stage 2

Combine groups so that each group consists of 8–10 participants. Ask the larger groups to choose four of the scenarios that they found difficult to resolve. They should discuss these four scenarios and agree a strategy for each. A spokesperson should be nominated from each large group.

Stage 3

In a plenary session, ask the spokespeople to feed back the views and concerns of the participants. Facilitate a discussion of the following questions:

- *Are there any general rules about dealing with discussion of controversial and sensitive issues?*
- *Can 'ground rules' help manage difficult situations, or are they perceived as artificial?*
- *To what extent should facilitators allow participants to be completely honest about their views?*

Assessment opportunities (if used with learners)

- **Discuss and debate citizenship issues:** self-assessment in logbook
- **Demonstrate understanding of and respect for diversity, and challenge prejudice and discrimination:** facilitator listening-in and offering feedback at stage 1
- **Express and justify a personal opinion to others:** peer feedback in pairs at the end of the activity.

What do I do if...?



<p>A What do I do if... ?</p> <p>A group of learners suggest a topic for discussion that I fear may be thought inappropriate by the senior management of my organisation. It involves looking at the laws relating to the sale and distribution of pornography.</p>	<p>B What do I do if... ?</p> <p>Some learners who have been investigating low wages in their area, decide to plan and run a campaign directed at a major employer in the area. The campaign will involve distributing leaflets outside the company's headquarters.</p>
<p>C What do I do if... ?</p> <p>A discussion on refugees becomes very heated in my area of the country where the government has proposed to open an asylum seekers' reception centre, and there has been a lot of local media coverage of the issue.</p>	<p>D What do I do if... ?</p> <p>Learners in my group are planning a mock election and wish to invite all the local candidates, including some from the extreme left and right.</p>
<p>E What do I do if... ?</p> <p>A group of young black men wish to start a discussion group in my organisation about the circumstances in which they find themselves in this country. It is to be run entirely by them, with no facilitator present.</p>	<p>F What do I do if... ?</p> <p>A recent trade union strike by members of my organisation, including me, is criticised by learners who have missed classes as a result of the action. They accuse me of allowing my political views to affect their futures.</p>
<p>G What do I do if... ?</p> <p>Some learners show absolutely no interest in a topic that I consider to be central to their understanding of the political and economic future of the country – the pensions crisis.</p>	<p>H What do I do if... ?</p> <p>A group of learners have experienced difficulty with the local police and have raised the issue of police harassment, especially in relation to soft-drug use. They want to start a rights-awareness campaign in the institution.</p>
<p>I What do I do if... ?</p>	<p>J What do I do if... ?</p>

SECTION B: Some approaches

There are no 'right answers' for dealing with sensitive and controversial issues. It is inevitable that there will be situations within citizenship sessions when differences of opinion and strong views are expressed, and it is important that facilitators are armed with a number of strategies and have thought through which ones they could use and why. For post-16 citizenship, where learners may be planning and running activities themselves, these issues and strategies should be discussed with them at the start. They are all based on the assumptions that:

- within a democracy, people can legitimately disagree
- there are acceptable ways of dealing with disagreement
- views should be expressed in ways that are respectful and non-intimidating.

During any of these procedures, the facilitator may use different facilitation styles, as explored in Activity 2 of Section A:

- Neutral chair – where the facilitator is completely impartial
- Balanced approach – where a range of opinions is presented
- Stated commitment – where the facilitator is open about his/her views
- Challenging consensus ('devil's advocate') – where the facilitator takes a position deliberately different from the majority of the group.

1. Distancing procedures

When an issue is very sensitive within a particular place or time, a group can look at **analogous situations** or examine the history of the topic under discussion. For example, when looking at the situation in Palestine, an analogy could be Cyprus or Northern Ireland. The examination of the analogy can be carried out through the discussion of case studies, and learners can be asked how similar or different one situation is from the other.

2. Compensatory procedures

If learners are expressing strongly held attitudes based on ignorance, staff can use ways of introducing more information, requiring learners to **sift and sort the information** through card sorts and games, rainbow groups and 'for and against' lists. Learners can also be asked to formulate and make a strong case for an opinion other than their own. An example might be attitudes towards asylum seekers.

3. Empathetic procedures

When learners do not have any experience of the issue under discussion and their views are fairly simplistic, perhaps based on the opinions expressed in the media, they can be introduced to **role play and simulations**, in which they take on the roles of different actors within a situation. Through role cards they can be introduced to facts as well as other people's responses to the issue. An example of this might be the criminal justice system.

4. Exploratory procedures

When the issue is not at all clear and staff would like to develop learners' **investigative skills**, they can carry out interviews and field work in the local community, or research a topic on the internet. Making a presentation on the findings of their research can then sharpen the focus of the issue and what the surrounding arguments are. One version of this can occur where some

learners feel strongly about an issue that affects them and wish to find out more. In this case they can be encouraged to investigate the issue themselves. However, it is important that they understand their own biases and have considered any implications of their actions. An example of this could be a discussion group set up by a young black male with his peers to examine the role of black youth in their community.

5. Engaging procedures

Far more common may be the situation where young people appear to have no opinions at all. In this 'under-heated' environment, learners need to get more engaged and the topics need to be **fun** and/or **personally relevant**. This can be achieved by letting them choose the topic (as long as it is a citizenship topic), using role play, using audiovisual stimuli or good visiting speakers to bring the issue home. An example might be the European Union.

(With acknowledgements to Stradling, R., Noctor, M. and Baines, B., *Teaching Controversial Issues*)

In this section, three examples of approaches are provided, using commonly-discussed controversial issues. The approaches can be adapted for use with other issues, since they rely on well-used and tested 'frames'.

Activity 4: The truth about asylum seekers

Clock card game (compensatory procedure)

Background, organisation and resources

This activity requires participants to arrange 12 cards into a clock face pattern by correctly answering the questions on the cards. The cards test participants' knowledge of the facts relating to asylum seekers, using information provided by Oxfam (www.oxfamgb.org) and the Refugee Council (www.refugeecouncil.org.uk). Participants work in pairs or threes, so each pair will need one set of the cards.

Aims of the activity

- To transmit information about a controversial issue
- To provide an example of a technique that can be adapted for other issues.

Targeted QCA learning objectives

- Demonstrate knowledge and understanding about citizenship issues
- Analyse sources of information, identify bias and draw conclusions.

Tasks

Stage 1

Ask participants what they have heard about asylum seekers and collect their suggestions on a white board. Do not ask them what their own views are. Categorise the statements into groups.

Stage 2

Reproduce and cut up sets of the cards on Handout 5, one set per pair/group of three. Put the participants into pairs/groups of three and give them a set of cards. Tell them that they have to arrange the cards to make a clock face and to put the card marked '1' at the one o'clock position on a table. Explain that they have to read the statement on each card and decide whether it is true or false. Depending on their answer – true or false – they are directed to the next card. That card is then laid at the two o'clock position and the 'true' or 'false' decision directs participants to the next card, and so on. The right answer to the twelfth card should lead them back to card 1. The correct positions of the cards and the answers to 'false' statements are given on Handout 6.

Stage 3

Tell the participants that they will only be able to complete the clock face by answering all the questions correctly. You can run the game as a competition: the first group to get all the cards in the right position wins. Or you can go round checking how they are doing and help out groups that have got the answers wrong, using Handout 6 to make a quick visual check.

Stage 4

When all groups have finished the activity, or when you stop them because there is a winner, discuss with them the answers that were wrong. In particular, discuss the following:

- *Were some answer wrong more often than others, and if so why?*
- *Where do we get information about asylum seekers from?*

- *Where do we get our attitudes about asylum seekers from?*
- *How accurate are these sources of information?*
- *Does having accurate information influence our attitudes or not?*

Assessment opportunities (if used with learners)

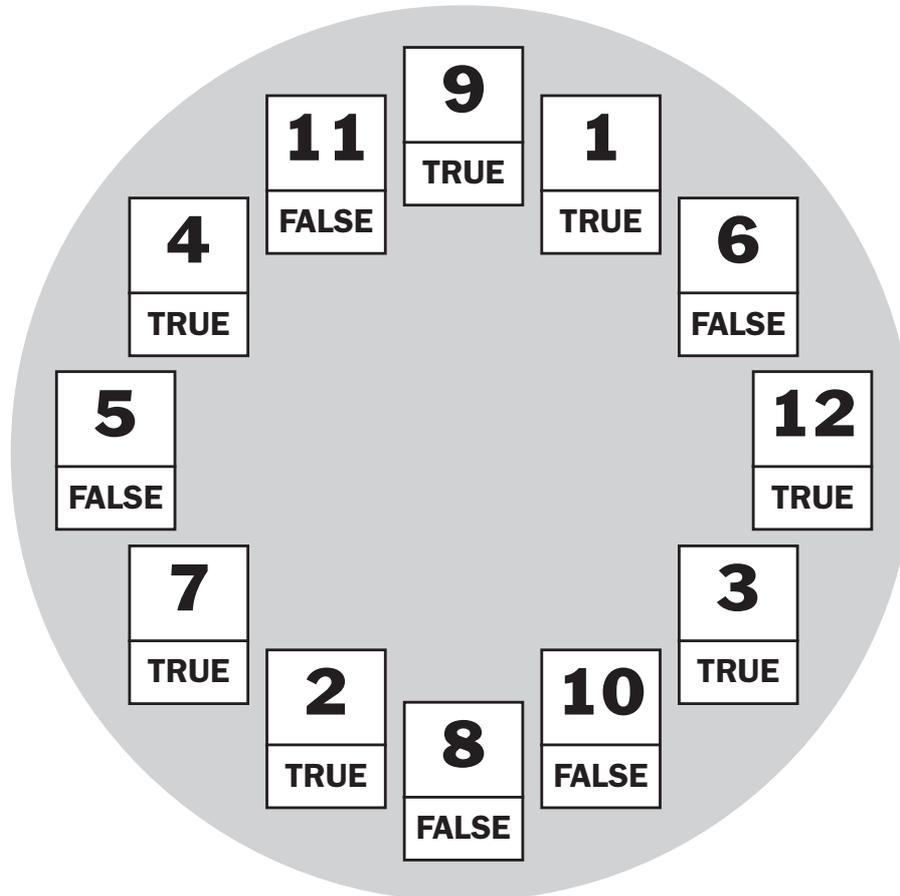
- **Demonstrate knowledge and understanding about citizenship issues:** learners to keep a record of which answers they got right and which they got wrong
- **Analyse sources of information, identify bias and draw conclusions:** facilitator to give feedback during discussion in stage 4.

Asylum seeker clock cards



<p>1</p> <p>An asylum seeker is someone who wishes to be defined as a refugee in order to be protected by the 1951 United Nations Refugee Convention.</p> <p>If TRUE: go to card 6</p> <p>If FALSE: go to card 7</p>	<p>2</p> <p>Asylum seekers have a right for their cases to be heard in any country that has signed up to the 1951 United Nations Refugee Convention.</p> <p>If TRUE: go to card 7</p> <p>If FALSE: go to card 9</p>	<p>3</p> <p>Asylum seekers are more likely to be the victims than the perpetrators of crime.</p> <p>If TRUE: go to card 10</p> <p>If FALSE: go to card 2</p>
<p>4</p> <p>The 1951 Refugee Convention explicitly excludes those who have committed a serious crime from claiming asylum.</p> <p>If TRUE: go to card 11</p> <p>If FALSE: go to card 9</p>	<p>5</p> <p>There are no asylum seekers in detention in this country.</p> <p>If TRUE: go to card 9</p> <p>If FALSE: go to card 4</p>	<p>6</p> <p>There are more asylum seekers per head of population in the UK than any other European country.</p> <p>If TRUE: go to card 8</p> <p>If FALSE: go to card 12</p>
<p>7</p> <p>Asylum applicants have ten days to prepare and submit their case in English.</p> <p>If TRUE: go to card 5</p> <p>If FALSE: go to card 11</p>	<p>8</p> <p>The number of asylum applications has gone up over the last five years.</p> <p>If TRUE: go to card 5</p> <p>If FALSE: go to card 2</p>	<p>9</p> <p>Asylum seekers are sent around the country under the 1999 'dispersal scheme' to relieve the burden on the south east.</p> <p>If TRUE: go to card 1</p> <p>If FALSE: go to card 3</p>
<p>10</p> <p>Europe looks after more refugees than Africa.</p> <p>If TRUE: go to card 9</p> <p>If FALSE: go to card 8</p>	<p>11</p> <p>Some of the 143 countries that signed up to the 1951 United Nations Refugee Convention have now withdrawn from it.</p> <p>If TRUE: go to card 2</p> <p>If FALSE: go to card 9</p>	<p>12</p> <p>An adult asylum seeker receives 70% of basic Income Support per week in addition to accommodation and utilities.</p> <p>If TRUE: go to card 3</p> <p>If FALSE: go to card 4</p>

Answers to 'The truth about asylum seekers' clock card game



The statements are true on cards 1, 2, 3, 4, 7, 9 and 12.

The statements on the following cards are false:

- 5** Asylum seekers are detained in 'reception' centres and, if unsuccessful in their applications, also in 'pre-deportation' centres.
- 6** At the end of 2004, the UK was 11th in the league of European countries for the number of asylum applications per head of population.
- 8** Asylum applications are down by half since 2002 and still falling.
- 10** Africa and Asia between them host over 60% of the world's refugees. Europe looks after just 25%
- 11** None of the countries that signed up to the 1951 UN Refugee Convention has withdrawn from it

Activity 5: Making good

Simulation (empathetic procedure)

Background, organisation and resources

In this activity, participants take part in a 'sentencing circle', an experimental approach to sentencing that has been tried out in Canada. Once a defendant has been found guilty of an offence, all the people who have been affected by the offence take part in decisions about the sentence. The process in reality may take six or seven hours. Sometimes, sentencing circles recommend to a judge novel forms of sentence. Prison sentencing is much reduced. One offender, whose drunk and dangerous driving had caused the death of his father, had to spend the next year or so explaining his crime and waywardness to public meetings of young people as part of his punishment. There are 10 roles in the activity, which aims to mirror the sentencing circle process. The activity could be run as two separate circles in different rooms so that decisions can be compared at the end. Or it could be run as a 'fishbowl' if some people would rather observe than take part. The activity is an illustration of a technique to enable participants to empathise with someone else's point of view.

Aims of the activity

- To enable learners to consider and understand a range of viewpoints in relation to crime
- To provide an example of a technique that can be adapted for other issues.

Targeted QCA learning objectives

- Demonstrate knowledge and understanding about citizenship issues
- Show understanding of key citizenship concepts
- Express and justify a personal opinion to others.

Tasks

Stage 1

Explain that the activity will involve participants taking on the roles of people affected by a criminal act. Their responsibility will be to take part in the decisions about sentencing the offender. Read out or give out copies of the scenario (Handout 7).

Stage 2

Ask participants to volunteer for the roles, give out the role cards copied and cut up from Handout 8, and allow participants time to consider their attitudes towards Jason's crime. Ensure that the role of the judge goes to someone capable of chairing the meeting. No one plays the role of Jason, but everyone has a copy of his role card (on Handout 7). Place an empty chair where Jason would sit.

Stage 3

Run the activity for 45 minutes or until a decision is made about the sentence. The judge should chair the meeting and ask each person to speak briefly without interruption from anyone else.

Stage 4

Ask each participant in turn how they feel, in role, about the process that has just taken place. If the activity has been run in two groups, bring both groups back together at this point to compare

the decisions made in each circle. If it has been run as a fishbowl, ask observers for their views on what has taken place. Facilitate a discussion on the following questions:

- *What do you think about sentencing circles? Are they better or worse than the system where the judge decides on the sentence?*
- *Should victims and others affected by a criminal offence have a say in the sentence? Why or why not?*
- *Did the simulation enable all participants to understanding the points of view of others involved?*

Assessment opportunities (if used with learners)

- **Demonstrate knowledge and understanding about citizenship issues:** facilitator observation of stage 3 and feedback during stage 4
- **Show understanding of key citizenship concepts:** self-assessment in logbook of concepts such as justice, rule of law, power and authority
- **Express and justify a personal opinion to others:** peer assessment during stage 4.

Making good scenario

Jason Ross has been found guilty of stealing a car and driving it dangerously. He crashed it while being chased by the police. His girlfriend, Beverley, who was injured, has also been found guilty of being an accessory to the crime. Jason has admitted to the crime and the sentencing circle must now reach a decision about his sentence.

The people involved in the sentencing circle are:

Alison Jones, the judge

Beverley Johnson, Jason's girlfriend

Jo Ross, Jason's mother

Robert Johnson, Beverley's father

Bertie Ahmed, the owner of the car that Jason stole

Constable Ferguson, the police officer who arrested Jason

Ms French, Jason's solicitor

Mr Humphrey, the solicitor for the prosecution

Rehanna Subham, a witness to the crash

Kylie Roberts, a neighbour of Jason's family

Angus Brown, Beverley's employer

The sentence can be unusual, tailored specifically to fit the crime.

Jason Ross

EMPTY CHAIR

Jason Ross – 22 years old, unemployed, from a large housing estate in an inner city. Has admitted to stealing a car, driving it without insurance and crashing it into a tree. Has stolen cars before, but never crashed them. Worried that he might go to prison.

Making good role cards



<p>Alison Jones</p> <p>You are the judge in this case. You know that Jason could qualify for a custodial sentence, especially since this is not his first offence, and his girlfriend, a minor, was injured. You chair the meeting, hearing from everyone in turn, but leaving Jason to the end.</p>	<p>Beverley Johnson</p> <p>You are Beverley Johnson – 17 years old, Jason’s girlfriend, employed in a department store. You have admitted to helping him steal the car and being a willing accessory. You were in the passenger seat, and received cuts to your face and a broken jaw.</p>
<p>Jo Ross</p> <p>You are Jo Ross, Jason’s mother, who he lives with. You are very worried about him and want him to stop stealing cars. You think that Beverley is a bad influence on him.</p>	<p>Robert Johnson</p> <p>You are Robert Johnson, Beverley’s father. You blame Jason for the injuries your daughter has sustained and want him to receive a harsh punishment to get him away from Beverley.</p>
<p>Bertie Ahmed</p> <p>You are Bertie Ahmed, the owner of the car, which you bought very recently. It was your pride and joy. You only had third party insurance, so you may not be able to afford to replace it.</p>	<p>Constable Ferguson</p> <p>You are the police officer who pursued Jason after the report of the theft by Bertie, the owner of the car. You had to assist at the scene of the crash and call the ambulance for Beverley.</p>
<p>Ms French</p> <p>You are Ms French, Jason’s solicitor. You will argue for a non-custodial sentence because he has admitted his guilt.</p>	<p>Mr Humphrey</p> <p>You are Mr Humphrey, solicitor for the prosecution. You will stress Jason’s previous record and the need to deter him from more car crime.</p>
<p>Rehanna Subham</p> <p>You are Rehanna Subham, a witness. You saw the car being driven erratically and you witnessed the crash. It was terrifying.</p>	<p>Kylie Roberts</p> <p>You are Kylie Roberts, a neighbour. You are fed up with car crime on the estate and know that Jason is a ring-leader. You want to make an example of him.</p>
<p>Angus Brown</p> <p>You are Angus Brown, Beverley’s employer. You have come to the meeting to say that she is a good worker, liked and trusted by her work colleagues and she gets on well with customers in the department store where she works.</p>	

Activity 6: When I'm 65

Decision-making activity (engaging procedure)

Background, organisation and resources

In this activity, groups of participants consider the issue of old-age pensions. This is a topic that, although highly controversial among working adults, often generates no interest at all among the young. The aim of the activity is to engage participants in the topic by placing them in the position of UN advisers to the governments of two very different countries. They need to decide which approach to the provision of pensions for the elderly would be appropriate. Participants work in groups of four/five. Each group will need copies of Handouts 9 and 10.

Aims of the activity

- To engage participants in a topic which they often find uninteresting
- To provide an illustration of a technique that can be adapted for other issues.

Targeted QCA learning objectives

- Demonstrate knowledge and understanding about citizenship issues
- Consider the social, moral and ethical issues applying to a particular situation
- Discuss and debate citizenship issues.

Tasks

Stage 1

Put participants into groups of four/five and tell them that they are consultants employed by the United Nations to give advice to the governments of those countries in the world that are considering setting up pension schemes. Give out copies of Handout 9, which outlines the situation in two different mythical countries – Medishu and Rungaria. Give out Handout 10, which provides options on pension provision. Allow time for reading and any questions.

Stage 2

Give groups 20–30 minutes to make decisions about their advice to the governments of the two countries. They may wish to devise options of their own instead of the ones offered.

Stage 3

Bring all the groups together and discuss which of the pension options have been recommended by each group for each of the two countries. Facilitate a discussion of the following questions:

- *Should everyone have a right to an old-age pension?*
- *How should the pension be funded?*
- *How can the government in our own country solve the problem of providing a state pension for increasing numbers of old people?*

Assessment opportunities (if used with learners)

- **Demonstrate knowledge and understanding about citizenship issues:** self-assessment at end of the activity – placing self on a continuum of confidence in understanding pensions
- **Consider the social, moral and ethical issues applying to a particular situation:** facilitator feedback in stage 3
- **Discuss and debate citizenship issues:** peer assessment at stage 2.

When I'm 65

MEDISHU

Medishu is a country in Africa that is quite poor, but developing. About two thirds of the people live and work in the countryside, although there is some light industry, some mining, and recently an increase in textiles manufacture because of the siting of a jeans factory by a trans-national corporation near the cotton fields. The tourism industry is in its early stages, but is strongly supported by the government. There are three major cities with modern centres and slums on the outskirts, with registered unemployment of about 40%. Traditionally, older people are cared for by relatives. There is no state provision at all and people with no children have a very hard time.

The government has been considering the introduction of some kind of support for older people, but needs advice on the best system for their country.

RUMGARIA

Rumgaria is a small eastern European country that has recently become a democracy, after having been under Communist government for 50 years. The government is the first to have been democratically elected since before the Second World War, and is keen to move the country as fast as possible to being a modern welfare state. The country is not rich and average earnings are about half of those in Western Europe. The unemployment rate is currently 13%. Under the old system, everyone received a small state pension, which was sufficient since the cost of living was low. With the current levels of unemployment, and the increase in the numbers of old people living longer, the system will have to change.

The government has been considering changing the funding of pensions, but needs advice on the best system for their country.

When I'm 65

PENSION OPTIONS

OPTION A – No support

There is just not enough money in the government's coffers to fund any kind of pension scheme. Income levels are too low to expect workers to pay more tax or private contributions. So there can be no support for the elderly at present. They will have to continue to depend on their families.

OPTION B – Higher taxes to fund substantial pensions

The working population could pay more in tax. If every person over the age of 65 is to receive a substantial state pension, tax for working people earning more than the average wage would have to rise to 45% of income. This option would mean that people could look forward to a more secure old age and be less dependent on their families, many of whom are moving away for work.

OPTION C – Earnings-related pensions

On current rates of tax, and with bigger contributions from those who earn more, the government could provide pensions that are earnings-related. Those people who earn more during their working lives and pay more in pension contributions would receive higher pensions when they are older. Those who earn the lowest wages would receive a pension equivalent to about a third of average income.

OPTION D – Compulsory private pension scheme

The government could remove itself entirely from the provision of pensions and make it compulsory for everyone to pay into a private pension fund. Employers would also be required to pay into the funds selected by their employees. The money invested in these private funds would form the pot of money out of which people would be paid on retirement.

OPTION E – Low state pensions and voluntary private scheme

On current rates of tax, everyone could receive a very small pension. But people could opt into a private scheme and boost their pensions depending on how much they chose to pay in. If people decided not to pay into the private schemes, they would have to survive on what they got from the government. It would be their choice.

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For information on obtaining LSDA publications email to **enquiries@LSDA.org.uk**

Also see the LSDA citizenship website: **www.post16citizenship.org**

Appendix

Staff development PowerPoint presentation. This document can be downloaded from the LSDA citizenship website: www.post16citizenship.org

Approaches to controversial issues in citizenship



- What do we mean by controversial issues? If a number of people disagree with statements made about a social/political/economic issue and there is insufficient evidence to settle the matter, then it is controversial. So all citizenship issues are controversial
- But some issues are **sensitive**, more so at different times in history, at different places in the country, with different groups of learners.
- Both staff and young people need to be aware of the potential pitfalls when dealing with both controversial and sensitive issues.

What is the disagreement about?



Some or all of the following:

- what has happened
- the causes of the present situation
- the desirable ends to work towards
- the appropriate course of action to be taken
- the likely affects of that action.

Groundrules



Everyone needs to accept the following:

- ✓ within a democracy, people can legitimately disagree (e.g. the state funds an official opposition party)
- ✓ there are acceptable ways of dealing with disagreement
- ✓ views should be expressed in ways that are respectful and non-intimidating.

Facilitator roles



Staff and learners may need to be aware of a variety of roles that facilitators can take:

- Neutral chair
- Balanced approach
- Stated commitment
- Challenging consensus.

Procedures



- Distancing procedures

Use case studies of an analogous situation if very close to home

- Compensatory procedures

Inject information into a group where there is ignorance of an issue

- Empathetic procedures

Use role play/simulation when learners have no experience of the issue

- Exploratory procedures

When feasible, learners can carry out some research to clarify an issue

- Engaging procedures

Sometimes a need to inject some enthusiasm when no interest at all.

Whole institution policy



- Staff involved with delivery need some training to build their confidence
- Senior management need to understand that there will be controversy
- Learners should be involved in the process of developing a policy.

