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# The Deliberative Classroom: Religious Freedom

STUDENT RESOURCES



# Resource 1

## Timeline of Religious discrimination and freedom in the UK

**1534** Act of Supremacy, established Henry VIII as the supreme head of the Church of England.

**1549** Act of Uniformity established the Book of Common Prayer as the only legal form of worship, which effectively makes any form of worship illegal outside of the Church of England.

**1555-58** Nearly 300 Protestants executed by Mary I.

**1642-1651** English Civil War, one of the triggers for the war was religious disagreements between the catholic monarch and protestants

**1656** Oliver Cromwell allowed Jews to return to England (having been expelled in 1290).

**1661** The Corporation Act prevented anyone who was not a member of the Church of England from holding any public office.

**1688** Glorious Revolution, the catholic monarch James II was replaced by the protestant William of Orange and his wife Mary

**1689** The Toleration Act allows Protestants who do not belong to the Church of England to have their own places of worship and preachers.

**1698** Popery Act declared that Catholic priests and those running Catholic schools could be imprisoned.

**1701** Act of Settlement, requires a monarch of the UK to be a Protestant, because they are the Supreme Governor of the Church of the England, and also forbids a monarch from marrying a Catholic.

**1778** Papists Act is the first Act of Parliament to reinstate some freedoms to Catholics, including the right to run their own schools and an end to the persecution of priests.

**1829** Roman Catholic Relief Act allows Catholics to become MPs and hold public office.

**1858** The Jews Relief Act removed barriers to Jews becoming MPs.

**1926** Roman Catholic Relief Act removed most remaining barriers for Catholics.

**1948** Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), Article 18 states "Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief, and... to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance."

**1950** European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR), Article 9 incorporates the UDHR right in a European agreement.

**1966** UN International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Article 18 repeats the UDHR right and adds “no one shall be subject to coercion which would impair his freedom to have or to adopt a religion or belief of his choice.”

**1976** Fair Employment Act (Northern Ireland) banned religious discrimination in employment in Northern Ireland (the first law in the UK to protect against religious discrimination – only applied in Northern Ireland).

**1976** Race Relations Act, this replaced earlier Race Relations Acts (1965 and 1968) and established the Commission for Racial Equality. Because it focussed on race and ethnicity, it was not clearly relevant to religion, although under the Act several court cases led to legal recognition of Jews and Sikhs as ethnic groups (and thus liable to protection under this law), but other religions were not classified in this way.

**1981** UN Declaration on the Elimination of Discrimination based on Religion.

**1989** UN Convention of the Rights of the Child, Article 14 recognises the “right of the child to freedom of thought, conscience and religion,” and also requires states to “respect the rights and duties of the parents... to provide direction to the child in the exercise of his or her right in a manner consistent with the evolving capacities of the child.”

**1998** Human Rights Act, Article 9 brings the UDHR (and ECHR) right to religious freedom into UK law. This means UK citizens can claim this right in a UK court.

**1998** Religious discrimination in the provision of goods and services is outlawed in Northern Ireland.

**2006** Racial and Religious Hatred Act, makes it illegal to use words, behaviour, written material, recordings or programmes which are threatening and intended to stir up religious hatred.

**2010** The Equality Act brings together 116 separate laws into one document. This Act recognises several ‘protected characteristics’ which cannot be used as the basis for discrimination. This means an individual cannot be discriminated against because of their “religion... including a lack of religion,” or their “belief, meaning any religious or philosophical belief and... a lack of belief.”

**2013** Succession to the Crown Act, allows a monarch to marry a Catholic, but the monarch must still be a Protestant (according to the 1701 Act).

## Resource 2

### Religious discrimination and freedom in the UK True / False Quiz

You should be able to work out the answers by reading the timeline.

	True / False
1. It was not until 2010 that UK law declared all forms of religious discrimination were illegal.	
2. Since the Second World War there have been a number of international agreements to recognise people's rights to religious freedom.	
3. A Catholic can now become King or Queen of Great Britain.	
4. After 1778 British governments began to extend more freedoms to religious minorities.	
5. During the 17th century Catholics were relatively free to celebrate their religion in Britain.	
6. Jews could not be members of the House of Commons until 1858.	
7. Before 1998 anyone could be turned away by a business because of their religion.	
8. Now everyone in the UK has the right to pursue their own religious belief without discrimination.	
9. Britain has always tolerated religious minorities.	
10. You can say whatever you want about a person's religion.	

## Resource 3



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## Resource 4

### Case study 1: African Christian beliefs about witchcraft and child possession

**Key question:** People have rights to their own religious beliefs and practices, but what happens if those beliefs are dangerous, or if they lead to harm?

#### Introduction

Many traditional cultures retain beliefs in witchcraft or possession by spirits, indeed, the Church of England still provides guidance for Bishops on exorcism. In some African Christian Churches a number of cases have recently come to light where such beliefs have led to child abuse, although such practices are not only associated with this type of religion.

#### Case study: Kristy Bamu

Kristy Bamu was killed at the age of 15 by his older sister and her partner because they believed he was guilty of witchcraft. They tortured him over four days in 2010 while he was visiting them in London for Christmas, and then drowned him in a bath. The attackers were found guilty of murder. Albert Tucker, (Trust for London) argued that the belief in witchcraft should not be the main focus of the story, and that the real issue the authorities have to deal with is the violent child abuse. However, Jean La Fontaine (London School of Economics) has argued that in order to understand such crimes we must look at the links between Christianity and traditional African beliefs. In particular she criticises pastors of some independent African Churches who fuel these beliefs by charging fees to identify child witches and charging again for curing them.

#### Research

A report for the Department for Education and Skills in 2006 looked at 38 cases of children who were accused of witchcraft and abused. It noted that children were accused of possession or witchcraft within families claiming Christianity, Islam or Hinduism as their religion. In half the cases parents / guardians took children to religious establishments for 'treatment'. School was the most common organisation to spot the abuse and report it. The report recognised that the police and social workers could not change people's religious beliefs, and so action should focus on (i) early identification and intervention of children at risk; and (ii) ensuring adults in religious organisations were subject to police checks and had a child protection policy.

Another research report was completed by the Centre for Social Work Research into the work of the Trust for London in 2011. The report concluded that belief in possession and witchcraft was fairly widespread among African communities but that in the vast majority of cases this was harmless. The report argued that religious belief can never be used as an excuse for child abuse and must never take priority over children's rights. The authors recommended that the authorities, charities and churches should focus on promoting knowledge about children's rights, rather than focus narrowly on the beliefs about witchcraft.

#### Questions to think about:

1. Is it acceptable for religions to allow people to continue to believe in witchcraft and possession?
2. Can a religious belief in possession ever justify a violent exorcism?
3. How does this case study help you think about the limits on religious freedom?

#### Some sources of information:

Jean La Fontaine wrote a short article in the Guardian newspaper here: <http://bit.ly/2kqDdQd>

Albert Tucker wrote an alternative article in the Guardian newspaper here: <http://bit.ly/2kRwyfh>

The DfES research report is here: <http://bit.ly/2jvJbj2>

The Trust for London research summary is here: <http://bit.ly/2jURH7C>

## Resource 4

### Case study 2: Polygamy

**Key question:** Should UK law recognise the relationships valued within someone's own religious traditions?

#### Introduction

Polygamy means marrying more than one person, normally a man having several wives. In the UK it is not possible to be legally married to two people – this is a crime called bigamy. However, within some religions, it is possible to have officially recognised polygamous marriages. Whilst most people in the UK do not engage in polygamous marriages, there may be thousands of such marriages in the UK, mostly affecting families who have settled in the UK from countries where polygamy is recognised in law.

#### Case study

Changes to the UK benefits system mean the rules about polygamous relationships have been reviewed. Whilst the marriages themselves are not recognised in UK law, if a family is eligible for welfare benefits, the system had to decide how to deal with the reality of households with several wives. This has traditionally meant that second or third wives are not recognised as being legally married to their husbands, but they are eligible for benefits payments as a spouse.

The benefits system is in the process of changing and the move to a new set of rules is likely to treat these women as though they were single women, living in the same house as their family.

#### Research

A House of Commons research report on polygamy pointed out that the changes to benefits under the new Universal Credit rules would mean some polygamous families could be paid higher benefits overall, because the system no longer recognised additional wives as wives, and instead treated them as single women. It also pointed out that a husband could not sponsor an additional wife to join him in the UK as part of his family, even though the UK recognised such marriages are legal in some other countries.

Claudia Azevedo wrote about a 2015 meeting to discuss this issue at Oxford University. She argued the reality of polygamy was complicated and that husbands and wives had many positive stories to tell about having honest relationships which offered all the adults different forms of happiness. She acknowledged there were also risks and some unhappy wives, but she concluded it is not possible to dismiss such relationships as simply wrong or harmful.

#### Questions to think about:

1. Is it acceptable for religions to allow polygamy?
2. Should the UK government recognise polygamous relationships if the marriages happened in countries where this is legal?
3. How does this case study help you think about the limits on religious freedom?

#### Some sources of information:

Samia Rahman wrote a short article in the Guardian about this topic here: <http://bit.ly/2kRx28l>

Gianluca Mezzofiore wrote about changes to benefits in the Mail here: <http://dailym.ai/1K85ymc>

A House of Commons research report on benefits changes is here: <http://bit.ly/2jw7k97>

Claudia Azevedo wrote a blog for Oxford University about polygamy here: <http://bit.ly/1Ogbbig>

## Resource 4

### Case study 3: Hindu complaints about tallow in the new £5 notes

**Key question:** To what extent should government accommodate minority religious values?

#### Introduction

In 2016 the Bank of England introduced a new design £5 note, which was made using a form of plastic which would ensure the notes are less easy to forge and last longer. One of the ingredients for the plastic is tallow, which is a form of animal fat. This has offended many vegetarians and those whose religious values lead them to either follow vegetarian diets or to avoid animal products.

#### Case study

Most Hindus treat cows as special animals and avoid eating their meat. This grew out of the traditional way of life in India, where cows were prized as family animals, and as providers of milk and butter, and became seen as symbols of life. This means that for most Hindus products such as beef fat (used to make the tallow ingredient in the new £5 notes) are avoided.

The introduction of tallow in banknotes creates a problem for some Hindus, especially in their temples. Tarang Shelat, from the Hindu Council of Birmingham said "it is important to mention that in our place of worship, animal based products are strictly forbidden and this would have a drastic effect on our collection boxes as 5 pound will not be allowed as donation." By January 2017 over 130,000 people had signed a petition asking the Bank of England to remove animal products from the note.

#### Research

Professor David Solomon, who developed the first plastic bank note said the £5 notes contained "trivial" amounts of animal fat, and that this was derived from waste products. He said the complaints were "absolutely stupid". The animal fat is not an essential component of the plastic, it is present in small quantities in the pellet coverings, which contain the plastic powder.

#### Questions to think about:

1. Is it acceptable for a government to introduce animal products into an unavoidable product like money, when this offends the beliefs of vegetarians and some religions?
2. Is it reasonable to expect minority groups, such as vegetarians and Hindus, to make some allowances for such a small inclusion of an animal product?
3. How does this case study help you think about the limits on religious freedom?

#### Sources of information:

Zlata Rodionova wrote an article on the petition for the Independent here: <http://ind.pn/2fZjpn>

Morgan Harries has written a tongue in cheek article about this for the Vice website, calculating how much animal fat could be used in the notes: <http://bit.ly/2kRPuxP>

The Times of India has covered this story here: <http://bit.ly/2jYa91o>

## Resource 4

### Case study 4: Cults, sects and the freedom of religious choice

**Key question:** Is it ever acceptable to stop someone choosing to join a religious group?

#### Introduction

There is a long history of small religious groups being established to emphasise particular aspects of an established religion or even to start to a new religion. Over time these may become small established groups with their own identity within a larger faith tradition, for example, there are thousands of denominations within Christianity around the world, each with their own organisation and many with slightly different beliefs and religious practices. Some are recognised as part of the normal variation of religious belief, but others are seen as more problematic – these are often referred to as cults (where there is a focus on following a particular leader) or sects (breakaway groups who are seen as radical). However, the distinction between an acceptable denomination, a cult or sect is often a difficult judgement, and it can depend on who is making the distinction.

#### Case study

The Cult Information Centre is an independent charity based in the UK. It was started by Ian Hawarth, who had been a member of a cult in Canada. He joined the group voluntarily but then realised that group members had used a variety of mind control strategies to draw him in. He says such techniques include: peer group pressure to encourage you to drop your guard (everyone else finds the situation normal, why wouldn't you?); 'love bombing' through hugging, flattery and kindness (to make you feel special and eventually to rely on the attention); making people dependent on the group by encouraging them to sign over their money (you literally can't afford to leave); reducing individuality by requiring people to dress the same or follow strict rules (your identity becomes the group identity); verbally abusing people if they question what's happening (this makes you fearful of upsetting people and also makes you fear losing their love); focusing on how bad the world is and how the group members need each other (it's us against the world); social isolation by gradually replacing contact with friends and family from the outside world with cult members (there is no-one independent to help you see what is happening).

The charity helps to educate people about the risks of cults and supports family and friends of people who have joined a cult. They also help people who are in cults and want to leave.

#### Research

Alex Stein, from Birkbeck University, has defined cults as being led by a strong charismatic leader and having a strongly hierarchical structure, so there is a clear authority over members. They also have a total belief system, which explains everything. They use brainwashing techniques to keep people in and followers are exploited and controlled.

#### Questions to think about:

1. Is it acceptable for religions to apply pressure on people to try to convince them to join or stay (think about missionary activity here)?
2. Can you ever justify stopping someone from joining a cult, even if they say it's their own choice?
3. How does this case study help you think about the limits on religious freedom?

#### Sources of information:

There is an interview with Ian Hawarth in the Telegraph here: <http://bit.ly/2k2wHf6>

The Cult Information Centre lists mind control strategies used by cults here: <http://bit.ly/2l3C4uu>

Alexandra Stein has some information and video links here: <http://bit.ly/2kori2l>

## Resource 4

### Case study 5: Churches and same sex marriage.

**Key question:** Can religions continue beliefs and practices which discriminate against gay people?

#### Introduction

The Equality Act 2010 states that sexuality is one of the protected characteristics, and should therefore not be grounds for discrimination. The Marriage (Same Sex Couples) Act 2013 gives same sex couples equal rights to be married in law. However, the Church of England and other religions are exempt from the law because their religious teachings often specify that marriage should be between a man and a woman. Religious organisations can choose to offer and recognise same sex marriages if they want, but if they do not, then it is not illegal.

#### Case study

It is legal for the Church of England to refuse to perform same sex marriages, however one case emerged as a particular problem. A gay Church of England vicar, Jeremy Pemberton, married his same sex partner just before he was to start a new job as an NHS chaplain. His Bishop then refused him permission to work in his diocese, which meant he could not take up his new job. The Bishop argued that vicars must model the Church's teachings, and that the Church does not support same sex marriage, even though it is legal. Mr Pemberton took a case against the Bishop to an employment tribunal arguing that he has been illegally discriminated against.

He lost the case and the judge said "it was not for the Court to determine issues of doctrine [the agreed teachings of the Church], still less to take issue with the beliefs of the religion."

#### Research

The government created a 'quadruple lock' to ensure that same sex marriage did not threaten the rights of religions to control their own beliefs and rules about marriage. This means a religious same sex marriage would only be possible where the governing body of the religion and the individual minister agreed, and if the place of worship had been registered for same sex marriage. No one can force a religion to change their rules. The Equality Act 2010 was changed to ensure this was not illegal.

ACAS, which provides advice for workplace disputes, has published a summary of the legal position which makes it clear that all other employers (other than religious institutions) have a duty not to discriminate against anyone because they are married or in a civil partnership, whether that is a mixed or same sex relationship.

#### Questions to think about:

1. Is it acceptable for a religion to continue to hold discriminatory beliefs about same sex relationships?
2. Can a government ever interfere with a religion's beliefs?
3. How does this case study help you think about the limits on religious freedom?

#### Sources of information:

There is a government information sheet here: <http://bit.ly/1Gs5KLk>

The BBC story about Jeremy Pemberton's case is here: <http://bbc.in/1Tnx6pi>

ACAS guidance on employers' duties and employees' rights is here: <http://bit.ly/29duK9U>

## Resource 5

### Draft school resolution

A draft resolution relating to the topic of the importance of religious freedom, and respect for religious belief, in our school.

#### Preamble

- i. Affirming that “Freedom of religion or belief is not just an optional extra, or nice to have; it is the key human right. It allows everyone to follow their conscience in the way they see fit” (Baroness Anelay of St Johns, in the House of Lords, 16 July 2015).
- ii. Having considered that our school should promote human rights including the commitment that “Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief, and... to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance” (UDHR, Article 18).
- iii. Noting that “no one shall be subject to coercion which would impair his freedom to have or to adopt a religion or belief of his choice” (UN ICCPR, Article 18).

#### This meeting

1. Reminds members of the school that as a public body, the school is required by the Equality Act 2010 to ensure an individual is not discriminated against because of their religion or belief.
2. Notes that according to the Racial and Religious Hatred Act 2006 it is illegal to use words, behaviour, written material, recordings or programmes which are threatening and intended to stir up religious hatred.
3. Encourages the creation of a school ethos in which all students and staff have the right to enjoy their religion without fear, hatred, or judgement from others.
4. Condemns the rise of intolerance and hate speech in the UK.
5. Further condemns that there is still a legal requirement for schools to hold a daily act of collective worship of a mainly or broadly Christian character (DfE Circular 1/94).
6. Recommends that our school should provide assemblies to reflect the range of religious beliefs (and none) and allow students to opt in or out according to their conscience.
7. Recommends that the school should ensure that all students and staff can pursue their own religion, including adapting uniforms and wearing religious symbols to reflect their beliefs; and attending religious meetings at appropriate times.
8. Recommends that no-one should be allowed to offend others because of their religious beliefs, and that the definition of offence should be determined by the person who perceived the offence, not the person who spoke or acted in an offensive manner.

## Resource 6

### Debate Motion 1: This House Would ban the recreational use of alcohol

Another way to think about this motion is to ask the question:

#### Should we ban the recreational use of alcohol?

Look at the following two sections and think about the kinds of arguments that should be considered when debating this motion.

#### Some issues to bear in mind

- Drinking alcohol has a long tradition in Britain as part of people's relaxation and leisure activity.
- Some people who consume alcohol drink too much, and over-consumption and even addiction can have very serious health risks, contributing to liver disease, cancer and other illnesses. Some studies though suggest that moderate consumption might have some health benefits. Overuse of alcohol can also be a factor in crime and antisocial behaviour.
- Not all cultures and religions view alcohol in the same way, and some groups disapprove or abstain from drinking at all.
- Historically, bans and prohibitions on alcohol and other drugs have a mixed track record of controlling use, quality and the impact of crime.

#### Questions to think about

- If alcohol were newly invented today do you think it would be legal? Does this matter?
- Should people be allowed to risk their health in order to do things they enjoy?
- How should the beliefs of those who abstain from alcohol, and who may prefer alcohol-free public spaces, impact on those who choose to drink?

You will be assigned an argument to prepare for (for / against) and when preparing your arguments you should use the following advice.

#### Keeping your arguments REAL:

**R**eadon - a short statement or headline that is an important claim in your speech or argument

**E**xample - a statistic, case study or illustration that supports the Reason

**A**nalysis - an explanation of the relevance of the Example, and of the Reason, adding context and clarification

**L**ink - a connection back to the Reason and, where relevant, to the broader topic or theme of the speech as a whole.

## Resource 6

### Debate Motion 2: This House Believes that everyone should have the right to wear religious symbols at work and school? (E.g. crosses, veils, kippahs etc.)

Another way to think about this motion is to ask the question:

**Should everyone have the right to wear religious symbols at work and school? (E.g. crosses, veils, kippahs etc.)**

Look at the following two sections and think about the kinds of arguments that should be considered when debating this motion.

#### Some issues to bear in mind

- Religious symbols and dress can have a lot of meaning for believers and feel like an important part of their identity. However, not everyone feels the same way about obvious symbols and this can lead to tension and conflict.
- Many schools and employers have dress codes and uniforms. Some include restrictions on what religious dress their employees and pupils can wear. In France the government has even stepped in to ban some clothing.
- However, tolerance for others' cultures is also very important and the courts have decided that some rules were too restrictive.

#### Questions to think about

- If we have to decide between two people's comfort or preferences what factors should be most important? Who should decide?
- Some people might want to wear jewellery that has a personal meaning to them, is this different?
- Laws sometimes talk about everyone involved making 'reasonable' adjustments. What do you think a reasonable response might be?

You will be assigned an argument to prepare for (for / against) and when preparing your arguments you should use the following advice.

#### Keeping your arguments REAL:

**Reason** - a short statement or headline that is an important claim in your speech or argument

**Example** - a statistic, case study or illustration that supports the Reason

**Analysis** - an explanation of the relevance of the Example, and of the Reason, adding context and clarification

**Link** - a connection back to the Reason and, where relevant, to the broader topic or theme of the speech as a whole.

## Resource 6

### Debate Motion 3: This House would not allow people whose religious belief is that homosexuality is a sin to deny services to same-sex couples

Another way to think about this motion is to ask the question:

**Should people whose religious belief is that homosexuality is a sin be allowed to deny services to same-sex couples?**

Look at the following two sections and think about the kinds of arguments that should be considered when debating this motion.

#### Some issues to bear in mind

- In recent years the UK has seen a number of cases where the legal duty not to discriminate has come into conflict with individuals with strongly held beliefs about same-sex couples. For instance, one Northern Irish bakery refused to make a cake because they felt that the requested decoration was “at odds with our beliefs.”
- Tolerance of others can mean making difficult choices about our own beliefs. Religious groups sometimes have exemptions from laws that conflict with their beliefs and the law often places value on individuals’ conscience and closely held beliefs.

#### Questions to think about

- What might it feel like to be refused service because of who you are? How about being told your beliefs are secondary to the law?
- The government has a duty to stop discrimination, but how far should they go in this?
- Living in a diverse society, we often have to compromise, making small adjustments to our lives in order to accommodate the beliefs or preferences of others. Can you think of any examples? What might make a compromise a step too far?

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## Resource 7

### Useful vocabulary

#### Words to discuss freedom:

Liberty

Freedom of action

Freedom of thought

Freedom of speech

Freedom of choice

Free will

Free trade

Free speech

Civil rights

Emancipation

Liberation

Independence

Escape

Non-conformism

Uncontrolled

#### Words to discuss un-freedom:

Restraint

Control

Suppression

Repression

Coercion

Constraint

Prevention

Compulsion

Restriction

Authority

Censorship

Captivity

Inhibition

Banning

Conformism



<b>Liberty</b>	<b>Freedom of action</b>	<b>Freedom of thought</b>
<b>Freedom of speech</b>	<b>Freedom of choice</b>	<b>Free will</b>
<b>Free trade</b>	<b>Free speech</b>	<b>Civil rights</b>
<b>Emancipation</b>	<b>Liberation</b>	<b>Independence</b>
<b>Escape</b>	<b>Non-conformism</b>	<b>Uncontrolled</b>
<b>Restraint</b>	<b>Control</b>	<b>Suppression</b>
<b>Repression</b>	<b>Coercion</b>	<b>Constraint</b>
<b>Prevention</b>	<b>Compulsion</b>	<b>Restriction</b>
<b>Authority</b>	<b>Censorship</b>	<b>Captivity</b>
<b>Inhibition</b>	<b>Banning</b>	<b>Conformism</b>

These classroom resources have been written to accompany the teachers' pack 'The Deliberative Classroom: Religious Freedom - Topic Briefing and Lesson Plans.'

The materials were written by the Association for Citizenship Teaching, Middlesex University and the English Speaking Union for the DFE (June 2017).

Cover photo courtesy of Alice on Flickr, Check the eyebrow.