Pirates ahoy!!
Engaging teachers and students in exploring a controversial issue

Background
The origin of this work was something of a lighthearted challenge - to devise a Citizenship education activity about pirates to be used on September 19th International Talk Like a Pirate Day. The serious aspects however are those that ask about piracy today and explore deep ethical and values questions about the law, human rights and globalisation. The work is perhaps best defined as a toolkit for enabling exploration of a topical and controversial issue and is based around the revised Citizenship education curriculum in England and is aimed at Key Stage 3 students.

It is designed to provide a compelling learning experience in Citizenship; that is learning which builds students sense of agency - their belief that they can affect the public or political sphere by raising awareness or bringing about change. There are two things that must be in place for this to occur – students having a voice and students being able to take action. These must be present to characterise something as compelling in Citizenship and must involve the learning of knowledge, skills and action as one coherent experience. This work adheres to these principles.

However, this will require careful planning and organisation of the activities. Teachers should be aware of the need to manage discussion in exploring topical, controversial and sensitive issues and be minded of the nature of the young people they are working with in the context of the school setting. Further advice about exploring such themes can be found at http://www.citizenshipfoundation.org.uk/main/page.php?92 and also at http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/wholeschool/behaviour/tacklingbullying/racistbullying/preventing/controversialissues

Before beginning the work, teachers may wish to promote the theme by publishing copies of the Colgan poster announcing International Talk Like a Pirate Day across the school, drawing attention to the opportunity in Citizenship lessons to explore the pirate theme. The poster is with these materials or can be downloaded from http://www.yarr.org.uk/colgan-poster.pdf Teachers may also which to download the YouTube film clips so as to overcome school firewall problems.

Aims and Purpose
The aim of this work is to enable young people to explore deep philosophical, ethical and values questions framed in the topic of piracy. The purpose of the work is built around the following:

1. To provide a framework to explore aspects of modern day piracy
2. To research the impact of piracy on communities
3. To explore and discuss the moral dilemmas facing those who may consider piracy
4. To look at actions the learning might inform

In terms of Citizenship education, this work relates to the following concepts from the revised Citizenship Programme of Study.

Democracy and Justice
Considering how democracy, justice, diversity, toleration, respect and freedom are valued by people with different beliefs, backgrounds and traditions within a changing democratic society.

Rights and Responsibilities
Exploring different kinds of rights and obligations and how these affect both individuals and
communities.
b Understanding that individuals, organisations and governments have responsibilities to ensure that rights are balanced, supported and protected.
c Investigating ways in which rights can compete and conflict and understanding that hard decisions have to be made to try to balance these.
d Weighing up what is fair and unfair in different situations, understanding that justice is fundamental to a democratic society and exploring the role of law in maintaining order and resolving conflict.

The work also engages students with the three processes of the revised curriculum:

**Critical thinking and enquiry**
Pupils should be able to:
a engage with and reflect on different ideas, opinions, beliefs and values when exploring topical and controversial issues and problems
b research, plan and undertake enquiries into issues and problems using a range of information and sources
c analyse and evaluate sources used, questioning different values, ideas and viewpoints and recognising bias.

**Advocacy and representation**
Pupils should be able to:
a express and explain their own opinions to others through discussions, formal debates and voting
b communicate an argument, taking account of different viewpoints and drawing on what they have learnt through research, action and debate
c justify their argument, giving reasons to try to persuade others to think again, change or support them
d represent the views of others, with which they may or may not agree.

**Taking informed and responsible action**
Pupils should be able to:
a explore creative approaches to taking action on problems and issues to achieve intended purposes
b work individually and with others to negotiate, plan and take action on citizenship issues to try to influence others, bring about change or resist unwanted change, using time and resources appropriately
c analyse the impact of their actions on communities and the wider world, now and in the future
d reflect on the progress they have made, evaluating what they have learnt, what went well, the difficulties encountered and what they would do differently.

These concepts and processes are the keys to opening up the issues and exploring them in a rigorous way, meeting the criteria for the compelling learning experience outlined above.

**Starter and research**
Teachers may use starter questions below to initiate discussion

What is your opinion of pirates and piracy?
What have you based this on?

The *gold fish bowl* approach - sitting the students into two circles, initially pairing them up within the circles to exchange their thoughts about the questions – may prove an interesting activity. The inner circle rotates clockwise after a few minutes of discussion. When discussing the second question, rotate the outer circle anti clockwise. This should ensure that students get to exchange their ideas with different partners on all occasions. The teacher should provide an opportunity for the whole class to feedback their thoughts and perceptions. A *spider diagram* might be created for
each of the two questions so that a range of opinions can be recorded. Thoughts might be noted by scribes who travel around each of the circles and then produce a large display diagram for mounting on a wall and discussing afterwards. The key opinions of the class should be highlighted for reference later in the work. Alternatively teachers may choose to initiate the brainstorm starter in another way, one that is familiar to them and the class e.g. with the whole class sat in one large circle. Students might discuss both questions as a group, saying how they feel about each one.

Following on from the discussion activity, the students can begin to explore the issues in more depth. To aid this there is an opportunity to gain a greater understanding of this topic in one geographic area of the world; Somalia and East Africa. Use the information sheet Robbery on the high seas is not confined to the Eighteenth century. This could either be handed out to each student or cut into seven cards and shared. Students should be asked to consider the information. For background, a map showing the position of Somalia to the rest of the world would be useful at this point. A short YouTube video on the situation in Somalia can be found at this link http://uk.youtube.com/watch?v=ej4KskAuCNc or at the BBC via http://search.bbc.co.uk/cgi-bin/search/results.pl?go=homepage&scope=all&tab=all&q=somalia&Search=Search

Some of this material is quite difficult to watch and students should be warned of its content. As usual, teachers should preview the sites beforehand and may choose to download some of the video material.

Students might also look at the YouTube film from this link. It explores the situation regarding piracy off Somalia http://uk.youtube.com/watch?v=21m0X_AGK1s&NR=1 or research about piracy from this link http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/business/7280042.stm

The following are YouTube links to footage about ships attacked by pirates

http://uk.youtube.com/watch?v=fxoVKG6Jmf0

http://uk.youtube.com/watch?v=FbQHHoDSk_Q&feature=related

Students might work in pairs to produce short presentations about their findings. The students may well be asked to look at different aspects of piracy in the area; for example, contrasting myth and reality, looking at some of the most recent attacks, describing the background to the situation in Somalia. Their presentations might take the form of posters or diagrams that the whole class can ‘take a tour around’ in order to gain a greater insight into the complex issues in the region.

**Development of main activity**

The students need to be working in groups of three or four during the next two activities. Begin by using the sheet Pirate Diamond 9 cards. The Diamond 9 comments are about piracy off the coast of Somalia. Each one presents a different stance on the issue. Students should consider each one and then arrange in a diamond pattern, with the comment they consider to be most acceptable or that they most identify with to be placed at the top of the diamond. The other 8 then need to be ranked following discussion. There are in fact 10 cards so the students will have to discard one card in order to create the Diamond 9. The statements need to be printed onto card and then cut up and put into envelopes. Each group in the class gets an envelope. The diamond pattern is explained below

Top choice
Next two choices
The next three choices
Next two choices
Bottom choice

Each Diamond 9 is created on a table. The students should then visit each others patterns so that all have the opportunity to see the suggestions. Each group then takes its top choice and has to devise an engaging presentation about its statement. They may want to go back to the websites mentioned in the previous section for further research or conduct other web searches. They will need to consider how and why they justify the statement they have chosen; its implications. These may include

- The pirates
- Their potential victims
- For dependents
- For their nation
- For the rule of law
- For international law
- For what is ethically right – especially regarding how other trading nations should treat Somalia
- For what is morally acceptable – both by local people and the wider world

The presentation might take the form of

- An annotated poster
- A PowerPoint display
- A short film – perhaps made on a mobile phone
- Some form of interactive game
- A web page

The students will need to have time to prepare and present their findings to their classmates. As a final activity, they could then decide to collate the top choices from the class and then create a whole class Diamond 9 with the class perhaps voting on the top choice.

**Review, reflection and further work**

In this part of the work, discussion should begin by referring back to the spider diagrams created at the start of this work. Students should consider how their understanding has developed or changed. Following this the students should begin to consider how they are going to pass on their thoughts and feelings from the work above. Change can only happen when all affected are part of the process and therefore it is important to consider how to inform others. Issue the sheet *Roots and Fruits*. This provides a framework for each group to think about its chosen aspect and to develop a plan for further action. Issue the sheet *Action Planning*. On this teachers’ will find a list of the people, actions, potential supporters and skills that students may want to consider incorporating into their action planning. These can either be presented to the students on the sheet provided, or it can be cut into cards and shuffled so that each student can pick out and consider an individual action, skill, person or supporter.

The groups might consider tweaking their presentations from the above section or perhaps consider some of the ideas below. These might be useful in helping shape what action might be taken by each group in seeking to pursue its own aspect:

Creating a *PowerPoint* about their findings to share with a wider audience

Leading a school or year group assembly about their findings

Creating a booklet or short film about the issues discussed and the way forward

Reporting findings to a specific community organization for example one associated locally with
global issues - the Development Education Centre - perhaps through local media

Creating a lesson plan or workshop plan to run as a peer education activity

Initiating a school drop down day - off timetable day - to explore the issues in more depth or focus on Somalia as a global exemplar of the challenges that we face in this century

Some schools and teachers may also wish to consider a reflection or assessment activity to conclude this work. Such an activity might include the questions

- What does this mean to me personally?
- Who else can I tell about all these things?

This might initiate further work about the role of the UN, about international law, about the political and human rights situation in states like Somalia, about how the world community can confront the challenges that failed states provide, about why Somalia is not seen as a hot world topic at present, about the sort of support refugee children from Somalia need. Teachers might also take aspects of this work and develop learning in a UK context. For example, asking if the moral attitudes of Somalia pirates could be acceptable in Britain, if law and order could function in Britain if the same values or attitudes were predicated on the wider population. Some Diamond 9 cards might be adapted to explore non-pirate issues in Britain; justice, fairness and power. This is beyond the immediate scope and purpose of this work but is there for development by teachers.

Created by Chris Waller, Professional Officer, Association for Citizenship Teaching
chris.waller@teachingcitizenship.org.uk
www.teachingcitizenship.org.uk

Robbery of the high seas is not confined to the Eighteenth century!

1. Robbery of the high seas is not confined to 18th-Century history and literature or Hollywood films - it is still very much alive today. Ninety percent of the world's trade is still moved by sea, so it is not surprising that piracy against cargo vessels remains a significant issue.

2. A piracy attack is an attack against a vessel that happens in international waters. However, attacks that happen inside territorial waters, which are normally 12 nautical miles from the coast,
are deemed as acts of robbery. The laws that govern this distinction also determine the type of response that can be initiated.

3. For example, if a naval or coastguard vessel is a witness to an attack by pirates who manage to get into territorial waters, they are often forced to break off the right of "hot pursuit", as they do not have the permission of the relevant sovereign government to be in those waters.

4. Piracy peaked in 2003 with 445 attacks around the world and since then, they have more or less steadily come down. In 2006, there were 239 attacks. Last year, the number increased slightly to 249. Although attacks have decreased from the early 1990s, Rupert Herbert-Burns, a maritime security expert at Lloyd's Intelligence Unit, says piracy is still a worrying problem.

"Attacks rose by 14% towards the end of last year, largely due to attacks off the Horn of Africa, specifically in Somali waters or in the territorial waters off Somalia," he said.

5. In Somalia, any merchant ship is a potential target and they are advised to stay at least 200 miles off the Somali coast. Somalia is a unique problem, because there is no effective central government and no navy to protect its territorial waters. The country has been at war for almost two decades and piracy has now become a way of making money.

6. Andrew Mwangura, who runs the Kenyan Seafarers' Association in Mombasa, thinks that piracy has become a way of life for many young Somali men, as they simply do not know any better.

"All my life, I don't know what life is, so if someone gives me a gun and tells me to go and make a living, they go and do that," he said.

Many young men have no education and no understanding of the rule of law.

7. As Mr Herbert-Burns of Lloyd's Intelligence Unit recalls "The idea is to seize the ships hundreds of miles off the coast, force the ship well inside Somali waters and then the hijackers keep the ship until the owners pay an agreed ransom for the return of the ship and crew.........No one nation has a responsibility for policing international waters. We are reliant upon countries which have an economic or strategic interest in maintaining the security of sea lanes of communication."

8. Without help from other countries, it is very difficult to imagine whether Somalia will have sufficient resources and infrastructure to deal with piracy itself.

Nick Rankin on BBC World Service March 2008

Pirates Diamond 9 cards
"All my life, I don't know what life is, so if someone gives me a gun and tells me to go and make a living, they go and do that," Is this attitude by a Somalia pirate one that we should accept?

If the ships didn’t sail there they would not get attacked then the pirates would be no problem. I think the ships should just stay away from there.

Pirate fisherman provide cheap fish for home markets, Somali pirates support their towns and villages. That raises a key question: is helping your own people good or bad? These pirates just want to help others.

These pirates are just like us, except that their lives are extreme and they need to behave like this in order to survive. There wouldn’t be pirates off Somalia if the world helped the people there. We all have a responsibility.

Someone should stop these pirates-like us of the USA. Only countries like that can really do anything.

The UN should deal with these pirates. This is a world problem.

Many young men have no education and no understanding of the rule of law. If no one explains the law to them, how can they be breaking it? Piracy is a last resort for these people.

All piracy is wrong. That's it. Simple!! They don't have to become pirates – they could do something else. I mean, not all people in Somalia are pirates are they?

The country has been at war for almost two decades and piracy has now become a way of making money. If this is the only way for people to make a living, it has to be better than starving doesn't it? There is no point in punishing these pirates – they need help not imprisonment.

The big insurance companies can afford to pay for the hijacked ships – its no bid deal really because they have so much money.

Illegal fishing costs Somalia £12m annually and around 800 vessels from around the world are involved. If the pirates frighten off the illegal fishermen, aren’t they doing the country a service? In a way these pirates keep order – they take the place of the police.

The idea is to seize the ships hundreds of miles off the coast, force the ship well inside Somali waters and then the hijackers keep the ship until the owners pay an agreed ransom for the return of the ship and crew. If the money goes to help poor villages, isn’t that a bit like Robin Hood?

Sourced from various, especially Nick Rankin, BBC World Service

---

### ACTION PLANNING WORD DOCUMENT

**Who**

| Teachers | Head teachers |
| Governors | School council |
| Students | NGO or media staff |
| Parents | Other members of the community |
### Skills

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Arranging meetings</th>
<th>Organising</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Listening</td>
<td>Letter writing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Note taking</td>
<td>Presentation skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Researching</td>
<td>Negotiating</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial skills</td>
<td>Communicating</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mediating</td>
<td><em>any other</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Actions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Creating a questionnaire</th>
<th>Holding a meeting</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Writing letters</td>
<td>Making a presentation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creating a lesson</td>
<td>Working out a budget</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identifying and telling supporters</td>
<td>Creating a media/ICT resource</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Potential supporters

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Other students</th>
<th>Teachers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Head teacher</td>
<td>Parents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Governors</td>
<td>Community groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policy makers and political figures</td>
<td>Local or other NGOs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>