



**What is speaking truth  
to power?**

Lesson 1

**Key stage 4 scheme of work:  
What tools can we use to challenge injustice in our communities?**

**Lesson 1 of 6  
What is speaking truth to power?**

<p><b>Context</b></p>	<p>This lesson is part of a scheme of work that comprises six lessons for teaching Key Stage 4 Citizenship in line with the requirements of the Citizenship national curriculum. The lesson is part of the ACT model Key Stage 4 curriculum, which can be used and adapted to fit with your school’s provision.</p> <p>Each scheme of work has an enquiry question as the focus and is then organised into smaller questions that provide a learning focus for each lesson.</p>
<p><b>Overview</b></p>	<p>As a starting point for this scheme of work, students are introduced to the concept of speaking truth to power. They begin by considering who holds power in our society and what its impact is. They then learn about the history of speaking truth to power, analyse examples of famous speeches, and explore their use as a tool to challenge injustice in communities.</p>
<p><b>Citizenship skills and concepts</b></p>	<p><b>Concepts:</b> advocacy, change, power, justice, fairness, raising awareness, rights, equal opportunities, discrimination</p> <p><b>Skills:</b> active participation, representing your views to others, collaborative working, informing others’ opinions, communication</p>
<p><b>Essential teaching guidance</b></p>	<p>This lesson begins with a keyword brainstorming showdown to excite and engage students with the concepts considered in this scheme of work. In preparation for this, please make sure you have a whiteboard or projector and chalk or markers available. You may also wish to give small rewards/prizes to the winners.</p> <p>Before you begin teaching, agree on ground rules to create a safe learning environment. You and the students should all agree to make positive contributions, listen without interrupting, respect each other’s views and agree that it is OK to make mistakes as this is how we learn. Use distancing techniques, such as case studies, rather than encouraging students to discuss their own or others’ situations in the lesson.</p>

	<p>If you are concerned by any comments or disclosures made by your students, please refer to your own school’s safeguarding procedures or your SLT/designated safeguarding lead.</p> <p><b>Timings for each task are given as guidelines. Please use your professional judgement when deciding how to deliver the tasks, depending on time available and your students’ needs.</b></p>
<p><b>Learning questions</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Who has power in our society?</li> <li>2. What does ‘speak truth to power’ mean?</li> <li>3. Can a speech be a tool for challenging injustice?</li> <li>4. Does speaking truth to power work?</li> </ol>
<p><b>Lesson resources</b></p>	<p>Slide presentation for the lesson</p> <p>Whiteboard/projector and chalk/markers (for the Starter Task)</p> <p>Worksheet: Robert F. Kennedy – speaking truth to power (for Task 4)</p> <p>Video: <a href="#">The Robert F. Kennedy Education Project</a> Play from 1:41 - 3:10</p> <p>Video: <a href="#">Martin Luther King – I have a dream speech</a></p> <p>Glossary of key terms</p> <p>Guide to tools for challenging injustice (teacher and student versions)</p>
<p><b>Differentiation</b></p>	<p>Use discussion before the written activity to support students’ writing.</p> <p>Play videos multiple times to help students locate information.</p> <p>Allow stretch through deliberative discussion.</p> <p>Encourage students to use the glossary of key terms and the guide to tools for challenging injustice (student version).</p>
<p><b>Assessment opportunities</b></p>	<p>Discussion activities allow for formative assessment of students’ progress.</p> <p>Written tasks provide an opportunity for peer marking or teacher-marked assessment.</p> <p>Deliberative discussion can be used for assessment of oracy and critical thinking.</p>

## Do now/starter/ entry task

*(10 minutes)*

### Keyword brainstorming showdown

*Slides 2 to 4*

The objective of this activity is to excite and engage the class about keywords that run through this scheme of work: power, truth, advocacy and change. Linking the keywords to real-life examples and tapping into students' creativity and collaborative skills will give them a strong foundation for the lesson ahead and a clearer understanding of the concepts of power, truth, advocacy and change.

Spend two minutes setting the scene. Begin by briefly introducing the keywords on slide 2. Explain that these words are central to the lesson and emphasise that understanding these concepts is crucial in today's world.

Then move on to spend three minutes on a **keyword relay race**. Divide the students into small groups and assign each group one of the keywords:

- power
- truth
- advocacy
- change

Explain that they have two minutes to brainstorm as many related words, phrases or examples as possible. Encourage creativity and collaboration within the groups.

Once the brainstorming time is up, bring the students back together for a **keyword brainstorming showdown** (four minutes). Gather all the students in front of the whiteboard or projector and ask each group in turn to share one word, phrase or example related to their assigned keyword. Write their contributions on the board, for example:

- power – leadership, influence, authority, control, energy
- truth – honesty, facts, transparency, accuracy, knowledge
- advocacy – activism, support, speaking out, social change, awareness
- change – transformation, progress, evolution, innovation, adaptation

After all the groups have shared their contributions, briefly discuss how the keywords are interconnected and can drive social change and progress. Ask open-ended questions, such as:

- How can individuals use their power to advocate for

	<p>change?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Why is the pursuit of truth important for positive change?</li> <li>● What role does advocacy play in bringing about meaningful change?</li> </ul> <p>If you have small prizes or rewards, consider awarding them to the groups that made the most creative, thought-provoking or diverse contributions during the brainstorming and sharing phases.</p> <p>Share slides 3 and 4 and explain that in this lesson you're going to learn about what speaking truth to power means and consider whether it works.</p>
<p><b>Task 1</b></p> <p><i>(10 minutes)</i></p>	<p><b>Taking action against injustice</b></p> <p><i>Slides 5 &amp; 6</i></p> <p>Show the students the definition of injustice on slide 5. As a class, talk about examples of injustice that take place in society. For example, you could discuss:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● the gender pay gap</li> <li>● racial discrimination</li> <li>● LGBTQIA+ rights</li> </ul> <p>Use this discussion as the starting point for a think-pair-share activity. Show slide 6 and ask students to think individually about an injustice that affects individuals or groups of people in our society. What would they do if they saw this injustice taking place? Then ask them to talk about their ideas in a pair.</p> <p>Finally, ask the students to share and discuss their thoughts and ideas as a class. Prompt a discussion about who has the power to correct the different injustices that the students have identified.</p>
<p><b>Task 2</b></p> <p><i>(10 minutes)</i></p>	<p><b>Who has the power?</b></p> <p><i>Slides 7 &amp; 8</i></p> <p>Ask the students to write a list or create a mind map of different types of people in our society who have power. If they need prompts, you could give examples such as politicians, the police, banks, big corporations, judges, headteachers, religious leaders.</p> <p>Ask students for their ideas and create a shared list as a class.</p> <p>Show slide 8 and for each example the students have identified</p>

	<p>discuss:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What type of power they have (e.g. legal, political, other)</li> <li>• How far their power extends. Is it local? National? International?</li> </ul>
<p><b>Task 3</b></p> <p><i>(5 minutes)</i></p>	<p><b>What does speaking truth to power mean?</b></p> <p><i>Slides 9 to 13</i></p> <p>Ask the students if they have ever heard the phrase ‘speaking truth to power’? Does anyone know what it means?</p> <p>Show slide 9 and talk through the information. Explain to the students that once you’ve worked out who has the power to correct an injustice, you need to speak up to encourage them to bring about change.</p> <p>Then show the definition of speaking truth to power on slide 10. Draw students’ attention to the word ‘confront’. What does this suggest to them? Explain that confronting people in power can be difficult and sometimes involves great risk.</p> <p>Introduce the students to the African American civil rights leader, Bayard Rustin. Share the quote on slide 12 and discuss what it could mean. How does it link to speaking truth to power?</p>
<p><b>Task 4</b></p> <p><i>(15 minutes)</i></p>	<p><b>Robert F. Kennedy and speaking truth to power</b></p> <p><i>Slides 14 to 16</i></p> <p>Use the information on slide 14 to introduce the students to Robert F. Kennedy, then play the video about him urging students to create change and speak truth to power. The link is on slide 15, or you can access it at:</p> <p><a href="#">The Robert F. Kennedy Education Project</a></p> <p>Give students copies of the worksheet ‘Robert F. Kennedy: speaking truth to power’. Ask them to write short answers to the questions on the sheet.</p> <p>If students need support, you could discuss the questions before they start writing or play the video again to help them find the relevant information.</p>

<p><b>Task 5</b></p> <p><i>(10 minutes)</i></p>	<p><b>The power of speeches</b></p> <p><i>Slides 17 to 19</i></p> <p>Use the information on slide 17 to introduce the students to Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., then play his famous ‘I have a dream’ speech. The link is on slide 18, or you can access it at:</p> <p><a href="#">Martin Luther King – I have a dream speech</a></p> <p>Talk with the students about why this speech is so powerful in challenging injustice. Share the information on slide 19 and help them understand the meaning of ethos, pathos and logos. Can they identify how Martin Luther King used these three elements?</p>
<p><b>Plenary / reflection</b></p> <p><i>(5 minutes)</i></p>	<p><b>Does speaking truth to power work?</b></p> <p><i>Slide 20</i></p> <p>As a class, discuss what students have learnt in this lesson about speaking truth to power and, in particular, using speeches as a tool to challenge injustice.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How can speeches inform and inspire action against injustice?</li> <li>• Do the students think speaking truth to power works?</li> </ul>
<p><b>Takeaway task</b></p>	<p>Based on what they have learnt in this lesson, ask the students to write a short piece about how speeches can be used to challenge injustice.</p> <p>Ask them to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• what you need to consider when using a speech as a tool to challenge injustice</li> <li>• how speakers can use logos, ethos and pathos to good effect.</li> </ul>

# Robert F. Kennedy – speaking truth to power

Having watched the film about Robert F. Kennedy, answer the questions below.

What does 'ripple of hope' mean?

What did Robert Kennedy do for people during his lifetime?

Which groups of people did he protect?

How did he use power to do this?