

Key stage 2

Lesson 8: Myth busting

Key Questions	Learning Outcomes	Resources
<p>What myths exist around 'race' and the histories and cultures of people of colour?</p> <p>What can we do to challenge them?</p> <p>Challenge questions: Where do you think these myths come from?</p> <p>Who benefits from these myths being believed?</p> <p>Key Vocabulary</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ethnicity • Race • Racism • Bias 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To understand the impact racial myths can have • To understand why each myth cannot be true 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PowerPoint • Myth statement cards for printing and sorting (slide 7) • Additional evidence to support pupil discussion <p>Further support for children</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide sentence stems for sharing ideas. e.g. I think... because... • You could provide emotion cards to help children identify emotions. <p>Extra resource</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unpicking stereotypes of African men https://youtu.be/qSEImEmEjb4

Activities and Content - TN: Teacher notes in blue

- Share the definition, a myth is a made-up story, idea or concept
- In this lesson, we will be looking at myths relating to ethnicity, race and racism

TN: Make links wherever possible with other lessons and topics around this subject.

E.g. For older children/to stretch and challenge: explore how racial socialisation influences our way of seeing others/shapes our thinking. Make links between racial socialisation and unconscious bias. Consider how racial socialisation perpetuates racial myths. Recap the terms race and racism from previous sessions.

TN: These definitions are subtle and can be confusing. Teachers should understand that the idea of people belonging to distinct 'races' is a social construct - an idea invented by humans rather than essential facts. For example, there is obviously variation in skin colour, eye colour and hair type; these things are real, but it is impossible to draw a distinct line between groups of people based on these characteristics. A spectrum would be a more useful way of describing differences in physical appearance.

Another example is that there is no clear way to divide humans up into separate 'races': Firstly, the spectrum of genetic heritage creates so much variety within humans that it would be impossible to define boundaries between these 'racial groups'. Secondly, there are and have always been many people with multiple heritage identities. See this article for further detail:

<https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/race-is-a-social-construct-scientists-argue/> - <https://centerforhealthprogress.org/blog/race-social-construct>

Split the class into groups of around four. Provide each group with a set of myth cards. Children read each of the statements and place them in a 'true' or 'false' pile. Children must explain why they have made their choices.

Allow time for plenty of discussion at this point. Did children all have the same idea about how to sort them within each group?

TN: Encourage children to justify their answers with explanations and evidence. If they put forward any stereotypes, note them down; at a later point, put these misconceptions on the board and discuss with class the reasons they are false.

Take each statement in turn and reveal the pile it ought to go in. Share contextual information with the class using the resources provided. Encourage children to ask questions and offer thoughts and opinions as you share the information.

TN: Ideally, your school's wider curriculum would also present a variety of evidence that supports the breaking of any stereotypes. For example, if children have covered the trans-Atlantic slave trade, they should already be aware of the long-term effects of this long period of history. Where possible, help children to make connections with their wider understanding of the world, to ensure that this lesson does not exist in isolation.

End the activity and feedback by asking children to now think about their own answer to the question, "What impact do racial myths have?". Encourage children to think about more than one perspective:

"What is the impact on a Person of Colour? What is the impact on a White person?"

Activities and Content Cont'd - TN: Teacher notes in blue

Big think

- Who benefits from these myths? Who is harmed by them?
- Why might these myths have been created in the first place? By who and for what reason?
- People in power/people attempting to justify racist attitudes.
- People in power/people attempting to justify historical events such slavery and colonisation.
- Fear of unknown people – ‘the other’.
- Trying to make sense of the world by generalising.
- Simple explanations are easier for people to get their heads around.

TN: Clearly, we all suffer whilst racist stereotypes still exist. However, they impact more strongly and personally on Black people and People of Colour. Some might use these myths to give preferential treatment to white people, who may benefit without even noticing it. For example, they might be more likely to get a job or be less likely to experience discrimination. Children might deflect from the issue of racism by suggesting that there are other forms of discrimination. This is true, but not what we’re discussing today. It doesn’t make racism any less harmful and shouldn’t distract us from being anti-racist.

“What can we do to dispel these myths?”

- Challenge them
- Educate ourselves
- Be anti-racist in our actions.

TN: Explore with the children the ways in which we can be anti-racist in our actions. Ask critical questions of the messages we see in TV and films. Educate yourself- research and read about the rich histories and contributions of People of Colour. Educate others- create myth-busting fact-files and lesson resources. Challenge myths and stereotypes when you hear them.

Plenary

Finally, provide children with a post-it note. Record one thing you have learnt, been surprised by or one myth you previously held. Ball up the paper and throw it into the middle of the circle. Choose a few to share anonymously with the class.

TN: Emphasise that it’s vitally important that we admit when we are wrong (especially to ourselves) and this is the work of becoming an anti-racist. You could use an example of how one of your own attitudes has changed since you were young to encourage a growth mindset in this area. Most of us have some kind of unconscious bias and no-one is completely free of prejudice, particularly if we have not fully examined our thoughts, feelings and opinions.

Glossary

- Glossary of terms: Ethnicity, Race, Racism, Bias, Prejudice

Further reading

- www.aperianglobal.com/debunking-common-myths-stereotypes-africa
- Black and British - A forgotten history by David Olusoga
- Documentary: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b082x0h6>
- Book: <https://www.waterstones.com/book/black-and-british/david-olusoga/9781529065602>

Links to other lessons

Each school’s wider curriculum should be richly populated with examples of diversity from around the world to give children accurate cultural understanding of many different cultures. For example, if children have adequately studied Islam and the history of Islamic artists, scientists and scholars then they would have a better understanding of the importance of Islamic people throughout history and appreciate the positive cultural impact that they have had across the world.