

## Taking Liberties

### Topic

Gender equality and human rights

### Aims

- To reflect on gender stereotypes
- To read about human rights
- To practice speaking in a discussion about human rights
- To review vocabulary related to rights and freedoms
- To practice giving opinions

### Age group and level

Secondary and adult students at CEFR level B1 and above

### Time

60+ minutes

### Materials

Taking Liberties student worksheet

### Introduction

This lesson plan is adapted from the British Council publication *Integrating Global Issues in the Creative English Language Classroom*, which offers classroom activities that focus on the United Nations 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This lesson plan focuses on Goal 5: Achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls and is based on an activity from chapter 6 of the publication. In it, students will reflect on gender stereotypes, discuss human rights, review vocabulary related to rights and look at a timeline of women's rights in the UK. They will also develop their speaking skills in a discussion activity, and have the option to research their own timeline for another country.

**Procedure**

<p><b>1. Lead-in (10-15 mins)</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Without telling students what the topic of the lesson is, tell them that they are going to do a creative activity in which they will invent four characters. You want them to invent and write down a name, two or three adjectives to describe the person and to write a brief description of what they look like (hair, eyes, body shape). You will just tell them what the person does for a job, and they must invent the rest. Give them 2-3 minutes to make notes for each character</li> </ul> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fighter pilot</li> <li>Primary school teacher</li> <li>Nurse</li> <li>Scientist</li> </ol> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ask students to compare notes in pairs – monitor and correct any vocabulary errors. Then ask students which characters they made male, and which female. Why did they make those choices?</li> <li>Explain that this activity is taken from an experiment done with primary school students for a project called ‘Redraw the Balance’. The video is here - you might want to show this at the end of class if students are interested: <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qv8VZVP5csA">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qv8VZVP5csA</a>. In the experiment, primary students drew people doing jobs like firefighter, surgeon and fighter pilot almost exclusively as men. Gender stereotypes are defined between five and seven years of age. Ask if your students showed similar bias. Explain that in this lesson students will think about gender equality.</li> </ul>
<p><b>2. Discussion (10-15 minutes)</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tell students to look at the first discussion questions on the worksheet. First, read through them to check understanding. Help with any vocabulary problems. Students should work individually to choose the three that are the most important for them and think of reasons why.</li> <li>Then, put students into pairs or small groups and ask them to compare which rights they feel are most important -encourage them to discuss why. Then ask them to discuss the two questions on the worksheet. Get some feedback from the class.</li> </ul>
<p><b>3. Timeline (15 minutes)</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There are two options for this activity. Put students into pairs / small groups depending on class size. If you want to cut up the strips, you can make a set for each group. If you do not want to cut up the strips, give one worksheet to each group.</li> </ul> <p>NOTE: You may need to pre-teach some vocabulary here, for example: <i>healthcare, property, suffrage, earnings law, CEO, time off work</i>. To do this, you could write these words on the board after you have given out the strips or</p>

worksheet and read out definitions, asking students to match them. Alternatively, you could give students the sentences, and ask them to find words as you read definitions – e.g. “*find a word that means services for giving medical help to people*” (healthcare), or “*find a word which means the right to vote*” (suffrage).

**Suggested Definitions:**

Healthcare – *services for giving medical help to people*

Property – *objects or buildings that belong to someone*

Suffrage – *the right to vote in elections*

Earnings – *the amount of money you get for working*

Law – *rules made by the government*

CEO – *the boss of a company*

Time off work – *periods of time when you don't work because of holiday or illness*

- For the cut up option: Ask the students to put the papers in the order they think that women in the UK obtained each right. You could give them the first one to help. The focus here is not on the students getting the exact order, but rather on them talking about the rights and speculating when they were obtained.
- For the non-cut option: Write the following dates on the board and ask students in groups to match each right to the date that it was obtained in the UK. Again, encourage discussion here. You could also use this as an opportunity to practice the pronunciation of dates.

**DATES:** 1867, 1870, 1880, 1926, 1928, 1948, 1955, 1975, 1982, 1997, 2013, 2015

- Check answers together (on the worksheet) – encouraging discussion. Are students surprised by anything? Which rights do women have in their country? Are there any they don't have?

NOTE: feel free to choose which rights to include in this activity, depending on your students and context. You could choose 5-6 rights and just work with those.

**4. Discussion  
(15 minutes)**

- Put students into small groups of three or four and ask them to discuss the questions on the worksheet. Alternatively, you can choose the questions that you think will be most suitable / interesting for your students and write them on the board. Set a time limit of between five and ten minutes.



- Monitor the discussions, making a note of any errors or good language to focus on at the end of the discussion. Then you can regroup students to report back on what they discussed with different students, or do this as a whole class.

**5. Optional  
Extension**

- As an optional extension or homework activity, you could ask students to research a similar timeline of women's rights (or other human rights) for their own country or a country they know well. They could report back the following class, or make a poster detailing the most important rights gained.

**Contributed by**

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