

**RACE –CHANGING ATTITUDES**  
**TEACHER’S NOTES**  
**(By REWIND)**

“Race – Changing Attitudes” is a one-hour programme that has been broken down into six nine or ten minute sections. Each section poses questions to enable classroom discussion on various aspects of race.

Section 1 – Racism

Section 2 – Islamophobia

Section 3 – Discrimination

Section 4 – Institutional

Section 5 – Asylum Seekers/Refugees

Section 6 – Breaking Barriers

The sections can be used in either of two ways:

- Before viewing, the teacher can discuss the issue with pupils, allowing them to look at the pros and cons of attitudes and to express their own views. The film can then be shown and discussion carried on based on what the pupils have heard in the film.
- Alternatively, the film can be shown first and the suggested questions at the end of each section can be used as springboards for discussion. Other suggested questions are contained within this document.

**SECTION ONE – RACISM**

The aim of this section is to raise awareness of what racism is, to look at “race” differences and to explore what it is to be British.

The nature of racism is complex and has many forms. Here are four ways of describing racism

- Direct/indirect discrimination
- Institutional/individual discrimination
- Colour/Cultural discrimination
- Behavioural/attitudinal discrimination

The video can be stopped at points and broken down as follows:

### **IDENTITY**

- A discussion can be had about what identity is. The aim of the discussion would be to show that identity is complex and can be based on many factors including religion; nationality; ethnicity; culture and family relationships. Also that it is something that could change depending on circumstances. Identity is how we label ourselves to a certain extent but it is also how other people label us. We all also have more than one identity. It is important to explore the fact that although we have differences, we share a lot in common.
- Pupils can look at their own identities or the identities of famous people
- e.g. Ryan Giggs: Male, mixed parentage, labelled white by some, labelled black by others, English, British, Jamaican heritage, Welsh, European, able bodied, celebrity, sportsman etc.
- Pupils can look at what they share with someone who may look completely different to them

### **STEREOTYPES**

The aim is to give an appreciation of how stereotyping underpins racism. There have been stereotypes held about most ethnic groups, based on ignorance, lies, myths, selective amnesia or on exaggeration. Eg. There is a stereotype of Irish people as being thick and always drunk. Possible discussion points are:

- What is a stereotype?
- What are some of the stereotypes out there?
- What evidence can we produce to demonstrate they could be wrong?

It is important here to have prepared points to de-bunk the stereotypes, otherwise they may be further reinforced. Some background work on some of the common stereotypes (so you are prepared for what may be raised) and how you can challenge them will be needed. A popular one is often the stereotypes about asylum seekers and refugees. For this you could look at how we actually benefit from the input of people who have come here under difficult circumstances, e.g. ask who has ever shopped at Tesco's, Sainsbury's? Or knows someone employed by those stores which were set up by people coming here escaping Nazi persecution.

Other examples may include looking at the benefits that people actually get : how much money is it?

The idea that only particular racial groups get help can be challenged by looking at other groups in Britain who are supported by the welfare state

### **PREJUDICE**

A prejudice is a judgement we make about other people without really knowing them. Prejudices can be negative or positive. Discrimination is prejudice in action. Groups of people are labelled in a certain way and discriminated against. Possible discussion points are

- What does it mean?
- What kinds of prejudices are there?
- Where does the word come from? It comes from 'Pre-judge' (judging someone before you know them). Racial prejudice means jumping to conclusions about somebody, based on assumptions about 'race'.

Some groups experience prejudice more than others. This can be explored by looking at statistics such as unemployment figures educational attainment and positions in managerial posts for different groups, Prejudice may make it harder for some groups to achieve than others.

### **HISTORY**

Racism is the belief that one racial group is naturally superior or inferior to another. It has been used to justify slavery and genocide. This part of the programme aims to give an understanding of the historical and psychological causes of racism and to give pupils an awareness of the connections between the slave trade, Britain's imperial past and today's multicultural society. A possible discussion and research point could be:

- What does history have to do with the present? The legacy of colonialism is essential in understanding how the world's resources and power are distributed today History is exactly the reason why we are all where we are today. History gives us the reasons why poor people, women, BME groups, disabled people, gay people and others may experience inequality and oppression.

### **CONSTRUCT OF 'RACE'**

It was once believed, and still is by some people, that human beings were divided up into biologically distinct “races”. Each “race” had its own unique physical appearance and that some “races” were superior to others. The opinion of many scientists today is that there are no “races” – just one race – the human race.

Chris Stringer is one of the world’s leading advocates of the Out of Africa theory. Champions of the Out of Africa theory believe that modern humans evolved in Africa and that a small group ventured out of the continent 100,000 years ago. These gradually replacing all of the ancient groups which simply became extinct (e.g. Neanderthals).

- Our varying skin colour is to do with environmental and climatic factors and our different facial features due more to slight mutations of DNA. They are all part of human variation and no factor is more important than another.
  
- Debunk the idea that ‘race’ is real. We look different, but those differences are no more than the differences between a person with brown hair and a person with blonde hair. Or between a tall person and a short person. Approximately the same amount of genes control our differences in skin colour.

## **SECTION 2 – ISLAMOPHOBIA**

Racism is not only aimed at people with different coloured skins – it can also be cultural or religious. Islamophobia means a fear of, or dislike of Muslims and their religion. Although there are over one and a half million Muslims living in Britain today, many feel they are stereotyped. Possible discussion points raised by the film are:

- What is it?
- Why has it arisen?
- Is it right to blame all Muslims for the acts of some?
- Should we blame all white/black people for the acts of some?
- What role does the mass media play in perpetuating or challenging racist stereotypes?

Look at headlines where the word ‘Muslim’ forms part of the headline. E.g. Muslim man kills girl, Muslim extremist etc. Do we see other religions put into a headline in this way? ‘Christian man kills girl, Christian extremist? Do people who belong to other religions commit atrocities?

Does this type of labelling make us associate the crime with the religion instead of the person?

### **SECTION 3 – DISCRIMINATION**

Although black people have lived in Britain for hundreds of years, it wasn't until after the second World War that large numbers began arriving from the West Indies. Britain had a shortage of workers and West Indians, who were British Empire citizens, were invited to come and take up jobs. These immigrants met a lot of prejudice and discrimination. A colour bar took hold. This was a form of crude racism, which prevented people from finding housing and jobs. It was legal until 1976 when a Race Relations Act made it illegal to discriminate against anyone on grounds of race, colour, nationality or ethnicity.

- Are all groups discriminated against evenly? E.g. men, women, black people, the disabled, gay and lesbian people
- How does discrimination manifest itself towards each of these groups.

### **SECTION 4 INSTITUTIONAL**

- There are various types of racism: e.g. the racism of individuals, of groups and that practiced by organisations or institutions (health service; schools; the police; army etc). This does not mean that everyone in the institution is racist, it means that institutional racism is possible, if people with positions of power in that institution condone or carry out their discrimination. It can be conscious and unconscious. It can be the outcome of an organisation following its normal rule and procedures. The term “institutional racism” was coined in the United States in the 1960s, and became widely known in Britain following the publication of the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry report in 1999.
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- What is institutional racism?
- Can institutions also be sexist, homophobic etc... give/ask questions.
- Can pupils suggest any examples of how “institutional” racism is manifested?

Look at some institutions and organisations and see who the top managers are.

## **SECTION 5 – ASYLUM SEEKERS/REFUGEES**

If we go back far enough, we can say that everyone who lives in Britain today has origins somewhere else. Many of us can probably trace the immigrants in our own family histories, some of us will not know about it at all. Throughout history immigrants have faced discrimination and prejudice and the latest group to do are asylum seekers and refugees. This section aims to dispel some of the myths that have grown up around asylum seekers and refugees, to get the pupils to think about what our global responsibilities should be and to understand the positive benefits that immigrants can bring. In addition to the questions posed by the programme, other discussion points could be:

- Why do people leave Britain? Think of different reasons why people migrate.
- Give examples of positive things brought to this country by refugees, e.g. Sainsbury's, Tesco, Selfridges, Marks and Spencer and Barratts Shoes. Who has ever shopped in those?
  - Jobs not filled by people born and brought up here, drivers, nurses, doctors, cleaners.
  - Famous asylum seekers – Albert Einstein, Alex Issigonis (designer of the Mini), Sigmund Freud, Lou Grade, Joseph Conrad (novelist) Piet Mondrain (painter)
- What are the benefits of immigration – what do immigrants bring to the country?
- If you were in a situation where you and your family were in danger, would you take a chance at getting out to safety? Or would you take a chance of being killed?

If you did need to get out and the people that were after you were the police and politicians in your country, would you do it in a legal way, through a proper passport, airport etc. or would you have to try and do it in another way?

Give the pupils two minutes to write down everything they would take with them if their life was at risk and they had to leave immediately. How

it would feel? What would they miss? How it would feel if they thought they had got to a safe country and then experienced racist attacks or hostility in that country?

Examine the fact that people of all colours and religions seek asylum in different countries. E.g. Prince Phillip the duke of Edinburgh, is part of the Greek Royal family, when the monarchy was overthrown in Greece, he had to escape, was rescued by the Navy and given refuge in this country. How must his family have felt? What could have happened to him if we did not give him refuge? Is that any different to others escaping danger?

## **SECTION 6 – BREAKING BARRIERS**

The aim of this section is to give an understanding of where racist views come from and to show how effective people can be when they challenge or confront racist views. In addition to questions posed by the programme, other areas for discussion are:

- Why do some people hold racist views – what do they stand to gain?
- Why is it important to tackle racism?
- What are our personal responsibilities?
- What could happen if racism was not challenged?

**The following are useful web links where more information, fact sheets and useful resources can be downloaded.**

### **Web links:**

<http://www.pbs.org/race>

<http://www.refugeecouncil.org.uk>

<http://www.rootsforreal.com>

<http://irr.org.uk>

<http://cre.gov.uk>

<http://www.rewind.org.uk>