



EQUALITY & JUSTICE

AN EDUCATOR'S GUIDE

From *Black Lives Matter* to *Fridays for the Future* to *Decolonise the Curriculum*, young people across the world are responding to the issues affecting their futures. Many young people are seeking to learn more about equality and justice in our communities, yet most are struggling to know where to go for guidance, whilst teachers are being offered minimal support on how to welcome these conversations into the classrooms.

Schools have a responsibility to educate young people for the world they are living in. Whilst these subjects are complex, nuanced and deep rooted, we cannot simply avoid the conversations. It's time to create safe and brave spaces to offer young people the opportunity to talk about some of the biggest issues of their time. This programme exists to help you do so.

*Created for schools all over the world, ThoughtBox offers our **Equality & Justice** programme: a free discussion-based curriculum and resource pack for every school-aged child, from 5-18 years. All of programmes support UK Ofsted requirements for PSHE, SMSC & Global Citizenship.*

CURRICULUM OVERVIEW



EQUALITY & JUSTICE

PROGRAMME OVERVIEW

Aims and Objectives

Lessons will examine the meaning of equality, justice and 'fairness', helping pupils to understand these ideas in their own lives as well as in the wider world.

Discussions will explore examples of inequality in our communities and societies and understand how these can affect the wider communities, including exploring and discussing equality for the natural world. Discussions will encourage the skills of empathy to engage with how it feels when things are not fair. Lessons invite students to consider ways to practice fairness in their own communities, learning the skills and practices to support these ideas moving forward.

All of our programmes encourage the practices of critical thinking & questioning, deep listening, empathy building and thinking in systems (understanding how things connect) by engaging in a wide range of learning stimulus, discussion ideas and creative exercises.

Curriculum Content

Four downloadable PowerPoints (60 minute lesson plans) for Y1&2, Y3&4, Y5&6, Y7&8, Y9&10 and Y11-13.

LESSON 1 (IMMERSE) | What is equality?

LESSON 2 (UNDERSTAND) | It's not fair

LESSON 3 (EXPLORE) | Natural justice

LESSON 4 (EMPOWER) | A fair world

WHO CAN TEACH THESE LESSONS?

Our lessons are written by teachers, for teachers. We are writing specifically for non-subject-specialists, meaning anyone can pick these lessons up and teach them.

We are exploring topics which are human issues, not subject specific learning. As such, the lessons are not crafted to be 'taught' but instead to be facilitated explorations of ideas about equality and justice.

Lessons are created so that the lesson plan is the lesson (no pre-planning or preparation is required) with all content contained within the PowerPoint rather than in separate teaching notes. The idea is to welcome all learners into the teaching and learning experience – the teacher doesn't hold the information and release it to the children, instead all stakeholders in the learning space can read the slides together and even take it in turns to facilitate different parts of the lesson.

Full support and guidance on how to have these conversations is shared in this pack.

HOW CAN WE DIFFERENTIATE THE LESSONS?

Each topic contains four x 60 minute lessons taking students through a journey of immersing in the topic (lesson 1), understanding in more depth (lesson 2), exploring perspectives (lesson 3) and feeling empowered and activated (lesson 4).

Each 60 minute lesson contains a series of activities and discussions broken into short segments. Lessons explore the same issues in more depth as they progress through the learning levels, adding in deeper levels of nuance, complexity and skill development as the curriculum progresses from KS1 to KS5. You can choose which module to use with your students depending on their learning levels.

WHERE DOES THIS FIT INTO THE TIMETABLE?

All of the lesson plans and resources at ThoughtBox are targeted at Lifeskills lessons rather than subject specific teachers or lessons, as we are focusing on whole school ideas for all teachers to explore with their students. All of our programmes support UK Ofsted requirements for PSHE, SMSC & Global Citizenship.

Schools can also opt to take the whole school off timetable for a day and run the programme with every year group at the same time. Each year group is provided with lessons to fill a whole day's teaching time.

ThoughtBox curriculum provide opportunities to engage, discover and develop the characteristics and skills learners need to thrive in the world. Our framework and process allows young people to develop key skills and practices to become reflective, resilient and compassionate global citizens.

Each lesson is a learning journey focused on social, emotional and environmental wellbeing, helping students forge deeper connections with themselves, society and the natural world. We call this *triple wellbeing*.



All of our lessons are discussion based, incorporating a wide range of skills and practices to support enriched learning. ThoughtBox programmes are all built around a unique *Triple Wellbeing Framework*.

Years 1&2 – Overview

LESSON 1: What is equality?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Introducing the meaning of fairness and equality - Exploring the feeling of fairness and unfairness - Exploring different ways we can help to make things fair in our world
LESSON 2: It's not fair	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Introducing how treating people differently because of their appearance is unfair - Exploring what fairness means when we are all different - Exploring how to further equality with a focus on gender
LESSON 3: Natural Justice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Exploring kinds of communication of and between different species - Exploring the idea of fairness in terms of the natural world - Introducing justice through taking care of the natural world and those who can't speak up
LESSON 4: A fairer world	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Introducing some inequalities in our world - Introducing human rights - Exploring discrimination, empathy and what we have in common with others - Engaging with practices that promote fairness in our schools and daily lives

Years 3&4 – Overview

LESSON 1: What is equality?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Introducing the meaning of fairness and equality - Exploring some of the feelings of unfairness - Exploring the nuances of fairness and equality - Thinking about some of the injustices and discriminations that exist in our societies
LESSON 2: It's not fair	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Introducing discrimination and inequality with a focus on gender, race and wealth - Exploring some of the ways that we can see inequality in our communities - Exploring how to celebrate diversity and our differences - Exploring discrimination, empathy and what we have in common with others
LESSON 3: Natural Justice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Exploring the idea of fairness in terms of the natural world - Exploring communication of and between different species - Introducing justice through taking care of the natural world and those who can't speak up
LESSON 4: A fairer world	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Introducing practices for supporting fairness in our world - Introducing human rights and fair trade practices - Thinking about how rules can help promote fairness - Engaging with practices that promote fairness in our schools and daily lives

Years 5&6- Overview

LESSON 1: What is equality?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Introducing the meaning of equality, equity and fairness - Thinking about types of inequalities that exist in our societies - Exploring the meaning of privilege with a focus on race - Introducing how to respond to discrimination and ways to support fairness
LESSON 2: It's not fair	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Introducing colonialism and some of the core motivations behind it - Exploring some of the ripple effects of colonialism across the world - Engaging with discrimination with a focus on identities, stereotypes and dominant narratives - Exploring the importance of telling alternative histories
LESSON 3: Natural Justice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Exploring the story of the separation of humans from the natural world - Introducing different ways that the natural world communicates - Exploring rules to support protecting nature - Thinking about how we can protect the natural world
LESSON 4: A fairer world	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Introducing some of the changemakers standing up for fairness in their communities - Exploring our roles in promoting fairness in our world - Introducing human rights and fair trade practices - Thinking about how rules can help promote fairness - Engaging with practices that promote fairness in our schools and daily lives

Years 7&8 - Overview

- LESSON 1:**
What is equality?
 - Introducing the meaning of equality, equity and fairness
 - Thinking about some of the types of inequalities in our societies
 - Exploring the meaning of privilege with a focus on race
 - Introducing how to respond to discrimination and ways to support fairness
- LESSON 2:**
It's not fair
 - Introducing colonialism and some of the motivations behind it, with a focus on the transatlantic slave trade
 - Exploring the long term ripple effects of colonialism with a focus on identities, stereotypes and dominant narratives
 - Exploring the importance of telling alternative histories
- LESSON 3:**
Natural Justice
 - Exploring the story of the separation of humans from the natural world
 - Introducing kinds of communication between different species
 - Exploring rules and laws to protect the natural world
 - Thinking about our role in standing up for natural justice through role play
- LESSON 4:**
A fairer world
 - Introducing some of the changemakers standing up for equality and justice
 - Exploring our roles in the path for fairer communities
 - Introducing human rights and practices for fair trade
 - Empowering with ideas for individual actions and responses moving forward in a fairer world

Years 9&10 – Overview

- LESSON 1:**
What is equality?
 - Thinking of types of diversity and inequalities in our world
 - Introducing the meaning of equality, equity and fairness
 - Exploring discrimination and privilege, with a focus on gender
- LESSON 2:**
It's not fair
 - Introducing blind spots and unconscious bias
 - Exploring stereotypes and dominant narratives
 - Introducing colonialism with a focus on sugar and the slave trade
 - Exploring how the long term ripple effects of colonialism affect our lives today
 - Engaging with identity and silenced voices
- LESSON 3:** Natural Justice
 - Exploring the story of the separation of humans from the natural world
 - Exploring interconnection of all living beings and humans' relationship to the natural world
 - Introducing the rights of nature, ecocide and the voice of the natural world
- LESSON 4:**
A fairer world
 - Introducing changemakers and movements around the world and different roles for furthering justice
 - Introducing Restorative Justice and engaging with different ways to respond to injustice
 - Exploring self care within the path for justice
 - Empowering with ideas for individual actions and responses moving forward

Years 11-13 - Overview

- LESSON 1:**
What is equality?
 - Introducing the meaning of equality, equity and fairness
 - Exploring privilege
 - Thinking about types of social inequalities with a focus on wealth
 - Introducing intersectionality
- LESSON 2:**
It's not fair
 - Introducing colonialism
 - Exploring the long term ripple effects of colonialism on indigenous cultures, focusing on Australia
 - Introducing dominant narratives and alternative histories
- LESSON 3:**
Natural Justice
 - Exploring the story of the separation of humans from the natural world
 - Introducing ecocide and rights for nature
 - Exploring indigenous practices for nature connection and engaging with the silenced or oppressed voices
- LESSON 4:**
A fairer world
 - Introducing forms of justice
 - Exploring Black Lives Matter and Extinction Rebellion
 - Engaging with alternative practices for justice in our communities
 - Empowering with ideas for individual actions and responses moving forward

HOW TO TALK ABOUT BIG ISSUES

These ThoughtBox lessons are designed to offer a space for students to discuss, understand, explore and feel empowered when responding to inequality and injustices, rather than only learning about the facts. The curriculum gently introduces topics related to equality and justice, helping explore some of the history of these issues whilst appreciating their sensitive nature.

Even so, when thinking of exploring *Equality & Justice* in the classroom, some worries might spring to mind:

What if conversations become too personal?

How can I be sensitive to everyone in the class in these conversations?

How can we acknowledge privilege in a sensitive and responsible way?

What if I don't know the answers?

What if I find these conversations uncomfortable?

What if extreme views or biases exist in the classroom?

How do I create a safe space for all of us?

The good news is we are all learning together – ThoughtBox, teachers, students, parents, and people all over the world. No one has all the answers, but we are all trying and helping each other to navigate these subjects which are essential for a more just and fairer world. Some specific guidance and supportive advice is shared below.

Teachers don't need to be an expert on the subject and can instead focus on exploring and learning about our experiences and perspectives together. This means no pre-planning is required. However, considering the nature of these topics, you may choose to adopt certain guidelines.

- You may choose to look through the curriculum beforehand to see where you stand in the subjects presented. Whilst doing so, you may think about the demographics of your students, what they might be prepared to handle, and how you may be able to facilitate a more inclusive environment by taking the diversity of students into consideration.
- You may want to choose to adapt or omit particular activities in order to provide the safest, or most developmentally-appropriate experience, for your students, or perhaps use the lessons from other age groups which explore slightly different subjects and activities. All lessons contain a range of whole-class, small-group and partner discussions.
- You or your school may have methods already in place for navigating sensitive subjects. To support further, we'd like to share a variety of resources on the next slides that may assist you throughout this journey.

At the same time that facilitating allows for peer to peer and self-directed learning, the role of a teacher in modelling inclusive, compassionate and understanding behaviour is important.

- Many students may unconsciously have prejudicial and stereotypical thinking and may not be aware that certain attitudes are hurtful to others. Acknowledging that intolerant thinking may surface, and then moving through any discomfort together, can allow for deep and long-lasting learning. These lessons are not about answers but about exploration and empathy.
- If moments of bias or conflict arise, an instant non-defensive response may be modelled. Activities may be paused, students can be invited to take a collective breath, and a conversation based on questions, without anger or recrimination, may commence.

QUICK GUIDELINES

The following are some guidelines that can help in creating a safe space for talking about big issues:

- Have clear boundaries for each lesson, where students are given a safe respectful place for exploring emotional and controversial issues.
- Remind students that learning about empathy, compassion and emotional intelligence is just as important (if not more so) as learning facts and information and that this learning takes practice too.
- Accept and normalise mistakes.
- Check students' wellbeing throughout the lesson. Perhaps have a 'Thoughts & Worries Box' where students can write down anything they are worried about during or after the lesson.
- Be open to speaking to students beyond lessons if they need to or connect them with school mental health professionals.
- You may wish to consider creating a 'class charter' or agreement with the class – a shared agreement which everyone abides by when exploring the *Equality and Justice* curriculum. A good example can be found [here](#).
- Make sure you are aware of the school's safeguarding policy should any disclosures arise from these discussions.

CLASSROOM SETUP

The physical structure of the classroom can be conducive to facilitation and promote a more inclusive environment, especially important when exploring the topic of *Equality & Justice*.

Feel free to move seats so that you are in the same level as your students and everyone can see each other, making dialogue flow more freely and putting students and teacher in an equal place of learning.

A simple change of the classroom structure can support communication and the premise that all thoughts, feelings and experiences are valid.

As a teacher, it's perfectly okay to be humble in your knowledge of information and express that such topics are lifelong processes that everyone can learn about together.

To further support you in bringing these conversations into the classroom, ThoughtBox Director Rachel Musson has created a short CPD training video introducing some simple strategies and guidelines for creating *safe spaces* and *brave spaces*. Click on the image to access the video.



WIDER RESOURCES AND SUPPORT

Here is a selection of external resources that may assist you with questions and self-care. Furthermore, our ThoughtBox Community Forum offers a space for dialogue with other teachers, enabling us to learn together and create a community of support.

[5 ways teachers can challenge inequality in the classroom](#)

Article that exploring ways teachers can address educational inequalities from inside the classroom.

[Why Conversation About Racism Belong in the Classroom](#)

Reasons for and suggestions on how to talk about racism in the classroom.

[How Should I Talk about Race in My Mostly White Classroom?](#)

A short article with guidelines/suggestions about approaching sensitive topics like race in the classroom.

[Teaching Young Children About Bias, Diversity, and Social Justice](#)

Ways to use children's understanding of differences to teach social justice through age-appropriate literature, news stories, anti-bias lessons, familiar examples, and problem solving.

[Nonviolent Communication: Confronting Racism with Compassion](#)

An introduction to Nonviolent Communication (NVC) by exploring aspects of racism and constructive ways to talk about and confront it.

[Teach the Future](#)

An online library of free teaching materials for youth to think critically and creatively about the future and develop the agency to influence it.

[Adolescence is the gateway to gender justice](#)

Suggestions and resources on how parents and educators can work on gender equality with young people.

[Anti-Bias Tools & Strategies](#)

A rich collection of resources on inclusive classrooms with tips, tools, strategies and lessons for educators, administrators, students and family members to promote safe, respectful and inclusive learning environments.

[Black experiences hub:](#)

[Bringing black experiences to the classroom](#)

A rich selection of resources on black experiences so that young people can see themselves reflected in their education.

[Gender, Sexuality, & Inclusive Sex Education](#)

A comprehensive guide about the importance of inclusion in sex education, information and tips to include LGBTQ+ youth in the classroom.

[Moving from Safe Classrooms to Brave Classrooms](#)

Article exploring the reasons for “brave classrooms” – considering aspects like inequality and power – and guidelines to set up them up.

[Black Teachers Share Their Stories](#)

Video where three Black educators reflect on their successes—and their challenges – in U.S. public schools where black teachers remain underrepresented.

[Nonviolent Communication Skills and Education](#)

Introduction to Nonviolent Communication (NVC), its uses in education and resources

[Classroom Discussions on Race: Hear What 5 Black Students Say They Need](#)

Students from the United States share through videos about their experience in schools in terms of race and racism

[Resources on Self Care](#)

Various tips, links, reflections, and mindfulness practices to help teachers cope with the common challenges faced by educators and other helping professionals.

[Four Ways to Start Self Care](#)

Why it is so hard for teachers to take care of themselves and suggestions on how to start.



Whilst we believe tackling the complexities of equality and justice is essential learning in our schools, we acknowledge the challenges in doing so with respect and sensitivity, as well as the danger of oversimplifying very complex issues, movements and communities.

ThoughtBox recognises just how deeply fragmented perspectives are in society, and a strong top-down narrative continues to hold significant sway. We wish to communicate that we are not just replacing the source of oppression in this curriculum by sharing a better set of beliefs, but are truly committed to supporting open-mindedness and critical thinking, allowing young people to listen, reflect, learn and unlearn accordingly. However, whilst inviting inquiry and reflection in our lessons, we are clearly, openly challenging the status quo.

In recognising the enormity of this subject, the need to approach it with integrity, and the importance of allowing all voices to be heard, we created a peer-review panel of organisations working in the fields of social and ecological justice to review and reflect on the curriculum in its final stages.

This curriculum is built on a foundation of empathy and openness to encourage diversity of thought and the practice of unlearning, guiding students through different discussions, perspectives and explorations.

The result is a programme which provides a space for conversation, reflection and empowerment - offering young people the opportunity to better understand themselves and some of the complexities of the world they are growing in.

DISCLAIMER

We wish to share our sincere gratitude to the individuals who joined our peer review panel and offered reflections and guidance on the curriculum, helping to shape the programme into its final form. Their wisdom was priceless and our gratitude is heartfelt.

Jozette Khimba | Earth Protectors

Georgia Prasad | Greenpeace UK

Shade Omisholo | TES

Prof. Alberto Gomes | Global DEEP Network

Ruth Taylor | Common Cause Foundation

Damien Hewitt | Plant the Seed

Joy Warmington | brap

Jo McAndrews | Climate Psychology Alliance

Marisol Bock | DEEP Germany

Anita van Rossum | Stop Ecocide

Secondary Educator team | TES

Dr Kim Polgreen | Leadership in Global Change

Peter Williams | Curriculum for Life

John Fellowes | Full Circle

Sonali Sathaye | Post-Development Academic-Activist Global Group

Dr Pramod Parajuli | Annapurna Pluriversities

Deb Manjit | Post-Development Academic-Activist Global Group

Wibke Gehringer | DEEP Germany

Ashish Kothari | Post-Development Academic-Activist Global Group

Clare Milne | Starter Culture

Janosch Sbeih | Full Circle

Prof Israr Qureshi | Australian National University

How can you continue helping your students learn how, not what, to think?

ThoughtBox develops inquiry-based learning programmes that explore the big issues young people are talking about. This *Equality & Justice* curriculum is one of our free membership programmes from the *Teaching for a Better World* course. Subscription memberships give full access to our *Think & Thrive* curriculum, designed to explore many of the issues covered in this programme in much more depth.

Here's three things you can do today to help you and your learning community explore the world and find your place within it:



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