



**FRIDAY 15 MARCH**



**KEY STAGE 3 LESSON PLAN:  
PSHE OR ENGLISH**

# **TAKING A STAND**



# ABOUT THIS LESSON

Comic Relief's founders were Sir Lenny Henry, a comedian, and Richard Curtis, a comedy scriptwriter. They set up the charity in 1985 in response to a famine in Ethiopia. The initial idea was to get comedians to make the public laugh, with the aim of raising money to help people around the world facing tough times.

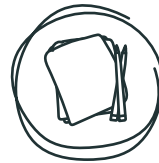
Lenny Henry and Richard Curtis were activists. They took a stand and used what they knew best – comedy – to change the world.

This lesson explores the theme of activism. Drawing inspiration from the stories of young activists, students work in groups to identify an issue on which they want to take a stand and prepare a short presentation to share their ideas.

## What do you need for the lesson?



**One hour**



**Pens and paper**



**Copies of worksheets**



**A3 copies of six case studies**

## Learning objectives

- To understand what activism is
- To learn how young activists are trying to bring about change
- To read, understand and summarise information
- To write soundbites
- To speak confidently and effectively in discussions and when giving presentations

**JOIN THE  
REBELLION**

**REBEL WITH  
A CAUSE**

# ABOUT THIS LESSON



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## Curriculum links include:

**English** – acquire a wide vocabulary, an understanding of grammar and knowledge of linguistic conventions for reading, writing and spoken language; use discussion in order to learn; elaborate and explain clearly their understanding and ideas; make formal presentations; participate in debate

**PSHE Association programme of study** – H1, understand how we're all unique and that recognising and demonstrating personal strengths builds self-confidence, self-esteem and good health and wellbeing; H2, understand what can affect wellbeing and resilience (e.g. life changes, relationships, achievements and employment); H6, identify and articulate a range of emotions accurately and sensitively, using appropriate vocabulary

## 1. INTRODUCING ACTIVISM (5 MINUTES)

- To begin the lesson, ask students if they know what 'activism' means. Give them one minute to write a definition.
- Share ideas as a class, and then introduce the students to the following definition from the Cambridge Dictionary:  
**"The use of direct and noticeable action to achieve a result, usually a political or social one."**
- Ask the students if they can name any famous activists (you could prompt them with people like Martin Luther King Jr., Rosa Parks, Emmeline Pankhurst, Mahatma Gandhi and Nelson Mandela).
- What type of action did these people take? What results did they achieve?
- Do the students admire them? Why?



# ABOUT THIS LESSON



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## 2. CASE STUDY RESEARCH (10 MINUTES)

- Divide the class into six groups, ensuring there is a mix of abilities to enable peer support.
- Give each group a copy of one of the young activist case studies included in this booklet and a copy of the worksheet 'Case study research'.
- Ask the students to read their case study together and fill in the worksheet. Tell them that they are going to use this information as the basis of a presentation to the rest of the class, so they need to make sure it is accurate and complete.

## 3. WRITING A SOUNDBITE (5 MINUTES)

- Hand out the worksheet 'Writing a soundbite' (one per group).
- Explain to the students that a soundbite is a short sentence or catchphrase that captures a message in a memorable, easily repeatable way. Soundbites are often included in speeches and then repeated in media coverage.
- Share the examples of famous soundbites at the top of the worksheet, then challenge the students to write a soundbite for their young activist.
- Tell them that the average human attention span is 8.25 seconds – can they make their soundbite shorter than this?

## 4. SHARING STORIES (15 MINUTES)

- Ask each group in turn to give a short presentation introducing 'their' young activist to the class.
- They have a maximum of 90 seconds! Use a timer to keep the presentations moving.
- Encourage students to use the case study summary on their completed worksheet, rather than the full case study.
- At the end of each presentation, ask the whole group to recite the soundbite they have written for their young activist.

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## 5. TAKING A STAND (15 MINUTES)

- Now it's the students' turn to take a stand themselves.
- As a class, talk briefly about some of the issues in school the students feel passionately about (e.g. school dinners, uniform rules, lunchtime activities, school start time, bullying).
- Back in their groups, hand out copies of the worksheet 'Taking a stand in school'.
- Ask the students to agree on an issue and complete the worksheet.
- Circulate the class as the students work, providing support and guidance as needed.

## 6. VOTING FOR CHANGE (10 MINUTES)

- Ask each group in turn to present their campaign idea to the class. What do they want to change? What actions would they take to achieve their goal? What would be their campaign soundbite?
- After each group has given their presentation, ask the class to vote for their favourite campaign idea (you could do this by hands-up or a secret ballot).
- Count the votes and announce the winning campaign idea!
- Could you take this forward as an extension to this lesson? See the ideas below...



# ABOUT THIS LESSON



## Extension activities

### Putting a campaign into practice

Campaigning to bring about change in school is a great active citizenship project. Use the students' ideas for taking a stand on an issue in school as the starting point for your own class campaign.

### Debating an issue

Do any of the school-based campaigns that students have identified divide opinion? Identify a controversial campaign idea and give students an opportunity to debate the pros and cons. Encourage them to explain facts, express feelings, and justify their opinions. At the end of the debate, take a vote to determine whether a majority of students is 'for' or 'against' the campaign idea.

### Activism display

Use the case studies about young activists to create a classroom display about the difference that young people are making to our world.

### Inspiring artwork

Taking inspiration from the murals featured in our Circus Zambia film at [comicrelief.com/secondary](https://comicrelief.com/secondary) get the students to use bright colours, powerful words, crafts and images to represent something they believe in.



# ACTIVIST CASE STUDY: MALALA YOUSAFZAI (26)

66 **When the world is silent, even one voice becomes powerful.** 99



Malala Yousafzai was born in Mingora, Pakistan on 12 July 1997. Her culture did not celebrate the birth of baby girls and looked on them as a burden, but Malala's father, Ziauddin, was overjoyed to have a daughter and vowed to give her every opportunity that a boy would get.

Ziauddin ran a girls' school, which Malala attended. She loved school and learning, but after the Taliban took over the Swat Valley, where Mingora was located, girls were banned from going to school.

Between 2008 and 2012, Malala began speaking out against the Taliban regime. She published a blog for BBC Urdu and starred in a documentary that shed light on her life under the oppressive Taliban rule. In 2012, after speaking out publicly for girls' right to education, a masked gunman from the Taliban stopped her bus on its journey home, shot Malala in the side of the head, and injured other girls.

Malala was given immediate medical treatment in the city of Rawalpindi. She was then brought to Birmingham in the UK for further specialist care, where she eventually woke up 10 days after the attack.

After spending months recovering, Malala started her new life in Birmingham and reassessed her future. She chose to continue her activism and to fight for girls' education. With the support of her father, she continued her struggle and won the Nobel Peace Prize in 2014. At the same time she continued her own education, graduating from Oxford University in 2020 with a degree in philosophy, politics and economics.

Photo credit: Malin Fezehai



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# ACTIVIST CASE STUDY: GRETA THUNBERG (21)

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**“We can’t save the world by playing by the rules, because the rules have to be changed. Everything needs to change – and it has to start today.”**

Greta Thunberg was born in Stockholm, the capital of Sweden, on 3 January 2003. She has been diagnosed as having Asperger’s Syndrome and calls this her ‘superpower’, using her intense focus on things for good.

Greta’s activism is centred around environmental causes, specifically climate change. She began by trying to reduce her own family’s carbon footprint by changing their lifestyle choices, for example going vegan and reducing air travel.

Three weeks before the Swedish election in 2018, in an attempt to make greater impact, Greta sat outside the Swedish Parliament with a sign that stated: “School Strike for Climate”. Although she was alone on the first day of her strike, as the days went on more people joined her, and her story captured international media attention.

After the election, Greta returned to school but continued to strike on Fridays, calling it #FridaysforFuture. She vowed to strike every Friday until Sweden followed the 2015 Paris Climate Agreement. She inspired thousands of students to strike all over the world in the hope that their governments would follow the same path of climate consciousness. Strikes were held in the UK, USA, Finland, Denmark, Belgium, Canada, France and the Netherlands, among others.

# ACTIVIST CASE STUDY: ZANDER MORICZ (19)

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COMIC  
RELIEF

RED  
NOSE  
DAY

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“We are going to continue to speak out and be visible, because this law does not get to erase an entire community simply because some politicians wrote it that way. It is up to every single person in every single school to decide what this law actually means. And if we continue to fight, and we continue to push back, then we determine the extent of its impact.”

Zander Moricz from Florida, USA, has amassed a large following on social media after being vocal about equality.

Issues surrounding marginalised people, such as the LGBTQ+ community, lie at the centre of his campaigning. Zander was his school's first openly gay class president but was prohibited from saying the word 'gay' in his graduation speech in 2022 – this is part of Florida's 'Don't Say Gay Bill', which bans schools from discussing sexual orientation and gender identity. Zander used a metaphor in his speech and substituted words to shed light on the discrimination faced by the LGBTQ+ community.

Zander has also campaigned for equal access to quality public education in America, particularly in his home state. To work towards this, he founded the Social Equity and Education Alliance (SEE), which promotes educational equality throughout Florida and aims to motivate individuals to vote and speak up against a system that discriminates against poorer areas, where schools have extremely limited resources. The campaign's aim is to hold school boards accountable and focus on policy-based change.

Zander is currently at Harvard University, continuing his studies and his campaigning for LGBTQ+ and educational equality.

# ACTIVIST CASE STUDY: AMIKA GEORGE (24)

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**“Young people are starting to create the change we want to see.”**

Born in the UK, Amika is an activist who focuses on women's health and the stigma surrounding periods.

Amika's activism began when she read an article about how many British women miss school during their period, primarily because of stigma and the cost of sanitary products. At the age of 17, Amika started a petition about period poverty addressed to Westminster, which was signed by over 200,000 people. She has continued to campaign and protest against the lack of free menstrual products for girls in schools and has worked with a number of celebrities who have spoken out in favour of her cause, including Suki Waterhouse, Adwoa Aboah and Daisy Lowe.

Amika's campaigning included a call to action for men to learn about issues related to periods, so they are engaged in the conversation and can confront taboos and period poverty when they see it.

Amika saw results in 2019 when Philip Hammond, then Chancellor of the Exchequer, announced that secondary schools would be given a budget to provide free period products at school. This was a welcome move forward, which Amika and her movement would like to see replicated at primary school level.

Amika George has received many awards for her work, including the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation Goalkeepers Campaign Award in 2019. She was awarded an MBE in 2021.

# ACTIVIST CASE STUDY: JAYLEN ARNOLD (23)

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COMIC  
RELIEF

RED  
NOSE  
DAY

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**“The more we understand each other, the more we will love the differences we have and the similarities we share.”**

Jaylen Arnold is the only American recipient of the Diana Award – an award in memory of Diana, Princess of Wales, honouring young people who work to improve the lives of others.

Jaylen has Tourette’s Syndrome, Asperger’s Syndrome and obsessive-compulsive disorder. Initially, he went to a small school where there was a high level of awareness and an accepting environment. However, Jaylen decided he wanted to go to a larger school and soon experienced bullying by the other students.

With the help of his parents, at the age of nine Jaylen decided to take a stand and began an anti-bullying campaign. He launched a website called Jaylen’s Challenge, with the motto ‘Bullying No Way’. He focused on helping students accept themselves and prevent bullying wherever they saw it. His aim was to help people understand each other’s differences and love them for who they were.

He has since worked with several celebrities and high-profile individuals, including LeBron James and Anne Hathaway. He also has his own show on Nickelodeon and has starred in documentaries.

Jaylen has spoken to over 185,000 children across the United States and has become one of the most prominent anti-bullying activists in the world. He has also gained a large following on social media, which enables him to spread his message globally. Jaylen created the Bully Free Schools Ambassadors Club curriculum to help schools tackle bullying and raise awareness alongside affirmative action.

# ACTIVIST CASE STUDY: HELENA GUALINGA (21)

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**“The future is in our hands. Let’s come together, raise our voices, and demand the sustainable and just world we deserve.”**

Helena Gualinga is an activist born in Sarayaku, Ecuador in 2002. Part of the indigenous community of Kichwa Sarayaku, she is both an environmental and indigenous rights activist.

For Helena, the environmental fight against oil companies and their mistreatment of indigenous land and communities is central to her cause and action. Oil companies in Ecuador have systematically persecuted indigenous people and their land, with the permission of the Ecuadorian government as a result of mutual profit interests and corruption. This has led to several violent conflicts between the indigenous communities defending their land rights and the government and oil companies.

Helena focuses on empowering young people within her Sarayaku community and advocates for the protection of the Amazon rainforest. The rest of the women in her family are also indigenous activists who have first-hand experience of climate change. They have seen the deterioration of the forest in terms of more forest fires, desertification, floods and the spread of disease, along with the melting of snow-capped mountains.

Helena co-founded Polluters Out to protest against fossil fuel and oil corporations. She has spoken on various platforms, including at COP25 in Madrid, Spain, and has campaigned in front of the UN headquarters in New York.

# CASE STUDY RESEARCH



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Activist's name:	
Activist's age:	
Nationality:	
What is the focus of their campaigning?	
What are they trying to achieve?	
What actions have they taken?	
Quote:	

# YOUNG ACTIVIST SOUNDBITE

COMIC  
RELIEF

RED  
NOSE  
DAY

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66 **Ask not what your country can do for you  
– ask what you can do for your country.** 99

John F. Kennedy

66 **You must never be fearful about  
what you are doing when it is right.** 99

Rosa Parks

66 **Do not judge me by my successes, judge me by  
how many times I fell down and got back up.** 99

Nelson Mandela

Our young activist:	
Suggested soundbite:	

# TAKING A STAND IN SCHOOL



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Issue we want to focus on:	
What do we want to change?	
Why does this need to change?	
What five actions could we take to achieve this?	<div>1. _____</div> <div>_____</div> <div>2. _____</div> <div>_____</div> <div>3. _____</div> <div>_____</div> <div>4. _____</div> <div>_____</div> <div>5. _____</div> <div>_____</div>
Our campaign's soundbite could be:	