

Unit 1: What is Citizenship?



Lesson 2: What is active citizenship?

This lesson relates to being an active citizen. It requires pupils to explore ways in which people participate in society, with particular reference to voting. Pupils are asked to question and review their ideas and consider the benefits of being an active citizen.

Planning	
Prior Learning	<p>Pupils should have gained prior knowledge and understanding of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • democracy and the rule of law; and • citizenship.
Learning Outcomes	<p>Pupils will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • discuss the meaning of citizenship; • identify and explain how people can actively participate in society.
Thinking Skills and Personal Capabilities Focus	<p>Pupils will have opportunities to develop the following:</p> <p>Working with Others</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respect the views and opinions of others and reach agreement using negotiation and compromise • Listen actively and share ideas and opinions <p>Self-Management</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manage emotions and use appropriate language when exploring the issues <p>Thinking, Problem Solving and Decision Making</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make and justify decisions • Offer ideas and give reasons to support them • Justify a personal viewpoint and offer a range of reasons to back it up.
Attitudes and Dispositions	<p>Pupils will be encouraged to develop the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moral Courage • Openness to new ideas • Concern for others.
Resources	<p>Animation: What Is Citizenship?</p> <p>Unit 1: Lesson 2 Resource A – Unsung heroes</p> <p>Unit 1: Lesson 2 Resource B – Unsung heroes worksheet</p> <p>Tablet or computer with internet access</p> <p>BBC News video: Australia election: Why is voting compulsory?</p> <p>www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-23810381</p>

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Suggested teaching and learning strategies

Launch

Lead a class discussion, using prompt questions and effective questioning techniques:

- 1. What does it mean to participate in society?**
- 2. What are different ways of participating in society?**
- 3. Can you think of any inspirational people who have participated in society and how?**

You may now wish to show the animation *What Is Citizenship?*

Possible answers and discussion points:

- 1. Playing an active role, for example doing something to improve the lives of others*
- 2. Vote; be part of a youth group; be a pupil leader in school*
- 3. Examples might include Rosa Parks, who fought for equal rights for African-American people in the USA; someone in the pupils' community who has made a difference; teachers they have built good relationships with.*

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Activities

Activity 1: Individual choice?

- Share this statement with the class: *'It is up to each individual to decide whether they participate in society or not.'*
- Ask your pupils to work in groups to discuss the statement. Encourage them to come up with at least three arguments both for and against the statement, before coming to a joint conclusion.
- Ask them to report their views back to the rest of the class.

Possible answers and discussion points:

For – *We are a democratic society. The government should not be given so much control over our decisions.*

Against – *People might just opt out of helping in their communities. If we all participate, we will create a better society for everyone.*

Activity 2: Through the looking glass

- Ask your pupils to consider again the statement from Activity 1. Then, ask them whether they would change their viewpoint if the person was:
 - in prison;
 - suffering from dementia;
 - a young single mum;
 - an elderly man; or
 - an 18-year-old who has the right to vote for the first time.
- Encourage the pupils to challenge their thinking and consider other people's views in society. For example, prisoners do not have the right to vote because the government has taken the right away from them. Invite your pupils to consider if they agree or disagree with this.

Activity 3: Compulsory voting in Australia

- Introduce this video from www.bbc.co.uk/news:
[Australia election: Why is voting compulsory?](#)
- Explain that registering to vote and going to the polls are legal duties in Australia for citizens aged 18 and over. Failing to do so can result in a fine and potentially a court appearance.
- Ask your pupils to consider these questions, reminding them that there is no right or wrong answer:
 1. Do you think voting should be made compulsory in Northern Ireland?
 2. Is it against people's human rights to make it compulsory for them to vote?

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3. According to the BBC news article, Australia had 94% voter turnout in their previous federal election, compared with about 65% in the UK's 2010 general election. Do you think this makes Australia a more democratic country than the UK?

Possible answers and discussion points:

1. **No** – because we are a democratic society, everyone should be able to choose whether they wish to vote or not.
Yes – if everyone was forced to vote, this would increase the number of people voting and therefore the outcome would be more representative as it would include the views of more people in society.
2. Human rights include freedom of speech and freedom of expression. This also includes the right to choose whether or not to express views.
3. **Yes** – 94% of the population have had their say, compared to only 65% in the UK.
No – Australians have not had the option to vote or not, and this is undemocratic.

Activity 4: Unsung heroes

- Every year in Northern Ireland, people receive praise for the work they have done as active citizens. This task encourages pupils to find out more about local unsung heroes and be inspired to become active citizens. It requires internet access.
- Split your pupils into groups to research one of the unsung heroes from 2018 listed in **Resource A**.
- Ask them to search online for the information they need to complete **Resource B**. They should search using full names and a link to unsung hero 2018, for example 'Emily Magee, Spirit of youth award, unsung heroes 2018'.

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Debrief

Discuss the following:

- 1. How do you think you could become more involved in society?**
- 2. What benefits would you gain from being more involved in society?**
- 3. Should it be up to the individual to decide to participate, or should government enforce participation?**

The third question is intended to provoke debate and allow pupils to express their views. Encourage them to argue their points thoroughly. You could provide an example as a prompt, such as 'In Switzerland you have to do a year's national service.'

Possible answers and discussion points:

- 1. Getting involved in a local community group; volunteering for a charity*
- 2. Learning new skills; developing confidence*
- 3. (Pupils' own answers)*

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Unit 1: Lesson 2 Resource A

Unsung heroes

Every year in Northern Ireland, people receive recognition for the work they have done as active citizens. Working in groups, research one of the following unsung heroes from 2018.



Emily Magee – Spirit of Youth Award

Peter Dolan – Overcoming Adversity Award

Paul Johnston – Spirit of Sport Award

Fiona Simpson – Charity Champion Award

Noel McKee – 999 Hero Award

Alex Mahon – Special Recognition Award

Pearl and Alistair Brown – Caring Spirit Award



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Unit 1: Lesson 2 Resource B Unsung heroes worksheet

Unsung hero:

1. How old are they?

2. What did they do to get the award?

3. What do you think inspired them to do this work?

4. How have their actions affected others?

5. How have their efforts made a difference across Northern Ireland?

6. What support did they receive and from whom?

7. Do they inspire you?

8. How do they inspire you?

