

Unit 8: Staying safe and making choices

Active Citizenship



Lesson 3: Risks and making better choices

This lesson relates to the specific risks involved in joining a paramilitary-style organisation. It requires pupils to evaluate the impact that taking these risks can have on a young person. It also looks at how people could be encouraged to stop taking the law into their own hands. Pupils have opportunities to think about how they could make better choices and what the government can do to help.

Planning

Prior Learning	<p>Pupils should have gained prior knowledge and understanding of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• criminality and paramilitaries in communities; and• what citizenship is.
Learning Outcomes	<p>Pupils will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• identify specific risks associated with being involved in a paramilitary group;• evaluate the impact that risk-taking behaviour has on the life of a young person;• discuss alternatives to people taking the law into their own hands; and• identify specific ways in which young people can make better choices and evaluate how the government can help them to do this.
Thinking Skills and Personal Capabilities Focus	<p>Pupils will have opportunities to develop the following:</p> <p>Managing Information</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Use a range of methods for collating, recording and representing information <p>Being Creative</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Experiment with ideas and questions• Learn from and value other people's ideas <p>Working with Others</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Understand how actions and words affect others• Be fair• Respect the views and opinions of others and reach agreements using negotiation and compromise <p>Thinking Skills, Problem Solving and Decision Making</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Generate possible solutions, try out alternative approaches and evaluate outcomes.

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Attitudes and Dispositions	Pupils will be encouraged to develop the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Demonstrate independence• Openness to new ideas.
Resources	<p>Animation: <i>Staying Safe and Making Choices</i></p> <p>Unit 8: Lesson 3 Resource A – Letter format Unit 8: Lesson 3 Resource B – Sample letter to a politician</p> <p>Flip chart paper Pens Post-it notes</p> <p>British Council video on YouTube: What are Active Citizens? www.youtube.com/watch?v=kiZNO_Lca8k&t=5s</p>

Suggested teaching and learning strategies

Launch

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

- 1. Name ways in which young people can take risks.**
- 2. What impact do these risks have on the lives of young people?**

You may now wish to show the animation *Staying Safe and Making Choices*.

Possible answers and discussion points:

- By taking part in joyriding*
By taking drugs
By having unprotected sex
By abusing alcohol
By joining a paramilitary group
- People are putting themselves in danger of having their lives changed for the worse forever.*
If you take drugs, you could mess with your health.
If you got pregnant, you would have to look after a child and might not be able to finish school with your friends.
If you got involved in a paramilitary group, you would risk going to jail or being seriously hurt.

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Activities

Activity 1: Risk assessment

- Pose the following question: 'What risks do young people face by joining paramilitary groups?'
- Take suggestions from the pupils and write them on the board. Then ask them to work in groups of 4–5, and give each group a separate risk to focus on.
- Ask each group to evaluate, as fully as possible, the impact that their assigned risk would have on the life of a young person. Give out flip chart paper and pens so they can note their ideas.
- Each group should choose one pupil to stay by the flip chart paper and give feedback. Everyone else should move around the room, visiting the other groups and learning what they have said.
- Facilitate a discussion using effective questioning.

Possible answers and discussion points:

- **You risk being involved in crime:** Dealing drugs, money laundering and trafficking are all crimes, and these are things that paramilitary groups are involved in. If you are mixed up in a paramilitary group, you risk involving yourself in those crimes too.
- **You risk being attacked:** If you don't do what the people in the paramilitary groups want you to do, you are at risk of being hurt by them, for example shot or beaten.
- **You risk going to prison:** If you are involved in a paramilitary group, you will be doing things that are against the law like dealing drugs or selling counterfeit goods. If you are caught, you will go to prison.

Activity 2: Active citizens

- Show the video [What are Active Citizens?](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=...), available at www.youtube.com, to the pupils.
- Display the following question on the board: 'What needs to happen for young people to make better choices for themselves and their communities and become more active citizens?'
- Ask each pupil to write one suggestion on a Post-it-note and stick this on the wall.
- Read out the suggestions, highlight key ones, and ask those who wrote them to explain their ideas.
- Working again in groups of 4–5, ask the pupils to focus on one of the key suggestions and discuss it in more detail.

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Possible answers and discussion points:

- **There needs to be more community engagement:** More people need to be involved with their communities and encourage others to do the same. If people see their friends and neighbours getting involved, they will be more likely to join in.
- **There need to be more things for young people to do with their free time:** As young people are growing and developing, there should be more activities to stimulate and engage them and keep them active. Communities need to have more youth clubs, activity centres and fully equipped parks so that young people can use their free time wisely.
- **There need to be more training opportunities available:** As young people get older, they can start to engage with their communities in a more productive way – but they do need help and support with training to develop new skills. More training opportunities should be made available in the local community, so that young people can develop skills which they can then use to give back to their community.

Activity 3: Letter to a local politician

- Ask the pupils to compose a letter to their local politician to suggest how the government can help young people make better choices. Suggest that they include ideas from Activity 2 where possible.
- You may find it useful to provide copies of **Resource A** (to help them with the layout) and/or **Resource B** (an incomplete sample letter).

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Debrief

Discuss the following:

- 1. Why is it essential for the government to be involved in helping young people to make better choices?**
- 2. What can we as individuals do?**
- 3. What can we as a class do?**
- 4. How will it benefit you in the future to stop and think if you are in a situation where you are tempted to take the law into your own hands?**

Possible answers and discussion points:

- 1. The government can provide money, opportunities and resources to all young people to develop their skills.*
- 2. We could get involved in our local community groups or youth club to spend our time productively.*
- 3. We can look out for each other and, if someone is feeling vulnerable, we should be able to talk to each other and support one another.*
- 4. If you act without thinking, you may do something you really regret later on. You could also get hurt or you could hurt someone else, and you might end up doing something that would land you in prison.*

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Unit 8: Lesson 3 Resource A Letter format





Unit 8: Lesson 3 Resource B

Sample letter to a politician

Dear _____,

As a young person I would like to make a positive contribution to my community, but I recognise that I need help to develop my skills so that I can make a real difference.

I am writing to you today to ask for your support in equipping me, and many other young people like me, to better ourselves. There are a number of different practical steps that I think you could take to help us.

1. We need to have more training available to young people in communities.

I am aware of the government's apprentice scheme for young people, which is excellent, but I am thinking about training opportunities for younger people (aged between 12 and 15) so that we can develop skills at a young age and have a longer time to use them within our communities.

Gaining a certificate in something like 'Food Hygiene' would enable many young people to volunteer in a residential home, or a homeless shelter, and help serve meals. It would also be useful during community events or festivals, as young people could help to prepare and cook food for different celebrations.

2. ...

3. ...

I would like to thank you for taking the time to read my letter and hope to hear from you soon in relation to my suggestions.

Yours sincerely,

