Use this lesson plan and associated sources to develop historical research, analysis and presentation skills with your students.

Students will answer key questions about the introduction of the first Race Relations Act in 1965 and discover more about diversity and the history of race relations in the United Kingdom.

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Run a lesson or research project in five steps

1. **Introduce the task**: Explain that each student (or small group) will undertake research into the first Race Relations Act in the United Kingdom in 1965. They will be provided with evidence in a source pack from Parliament, including speeches for and against the Act, an image of the original Act and a short video of Lord Lester talking about the expectations and impact of the Act.

2. **Assign questions**: Either use the suggested questions included in this pack or create your own based on the skills, knowledge and age of your class. Alternatively, encourage your students to develop their own questions based on the sources they are presented with. The sub questions can be used as prompts for research, and key sources from the pack have been suggested.

3. **Distribute sources**: Print off and hand out copies of the source pack to the student/s and give them access to the video of Lord Lester which is available online. If you have limited internet access, you could watch the video as a class instead. You might want to allow students to find further evidence to support their research elsewhere, such as online or within the school library.

4. **Individual/group research**: Depending on the time and resources you have assigned to this project, you can either encourage students to use as many sources as they choose to form their argument or you can limit them – for example, by explaining that their final argument must use two sources from this pack, along with one other piece of evidence found through further research using online sources or the library. You can use the research prompts below to brief the students before they begin.

5. **Present Findings**: Ask students to present their findings to the class in a designated lesson. The presentation tips below can be used by the students to help them put together and present a clear argument. If some students have answered the same question, compare their arguments and evidence. If they are different, why? Which argument is stronger? Alternatively you can ask for research to be delivered in written form.
Research Questions (with optional sub questions):

- Why was it felt there was a need for a Race Relations Act?
  Which events led to the passing of the Act in 1965?
  What were the perceived benefits of the Act?
  Key sources: Video of Lord Lester, Newspaper extracts, Speech by Sir Frank Soskice MP
- Why were there differing arguments around the passing of the Act?
  What arguments were put forward to persuade the House of Commons to support the Act?
  What arguments were put forward to oppose the Act?
  Key Sources: Speech by Sir Frank Soskice MP, Speech by Peter Thorneycroft MP, Video of Lord Lester
- How did the intended impact of the Act compare with the impact in reality?
  Was the Race Relations Act 1965 a successful piece of legislation?
  What arguments might be used today for or against a Race Relations Act?
  Key Sources: Video of Lord Lester, Speech by Sir Frank Soskice MP, Newspaper extracts, Image of Race Relations Act, Race Relations Act banner

Sources
Sources provided by Parliament are:

Video:
- Lord Lester discussing the first Race Relations Act and what he thinks the impact of the Act was.

Speeches:
Transcripts from the House of Commons Hansard archives.
- Sir Frank Soskice MP arguing in favour of the first Race Relations Act
- Peter Thorneycroft MP arguing against the first Race Relations Act

Images:
- The original Race Relations Act 1965
- Race Relations Act 1965 Banner produced as part of Parliament’s 2015 commemorations celebrating key moments in the history of democracy

Newspaper extract:
- Extract from ‘The Times’ referencing the Bristol Bus Boycotts, May 1963
Research prompts:

- What information do I need to be able to answer the question?
- Which sources from my pack offer me that information?
- What are the gaps in my knowledge?
- Where could I look to find evidence to fill those gaps?
- Once research is complete – which pieces of evidence best support my argument?
- How shall I present my findings to create a strong argument?

Presentation tips:

- Begin preparing by listing the key points you want to cover
- You could write notes on index cards or using PowerPoint
- Use key words and phrases as prompts, rather than full sentences
- Be wary of time allocated for your presentation, ensuring you can cover all your key points
- Try to look up regularly from your notes to speak directly to the audience
- If you have a projector or interactive whiteboard, use it to display your evidence
- Suggested presentation structure:
  - Opening – introduce the question you are answering
  - Summary – summarise your argument in brief
  - Evidence – introduce each piece of evidence you have chosen, and draw out the specific points that best support your argument
  - Conclusion – sum up your argument in around three clear, short points.

Suggested Further Research:

Institute of Race Relations: www.irr.org.uk
National Archives: www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/cabinetpapers/themes/race-relations
House of Commons Hansard: http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/commons/1965/may/03/race-relations-bill
Source 1: The Race Relations Act 1965

This piece of legislation was the first to address the prohibition of racial discrimination and followed previously unsuccessful bills. The Act prohibited racial discrimination in public places and made the promotion of hatred on the grounds of ‘colour, race, or ethnic or national origins’ an offence.

‘An Act to prohibit discrimination on racial grounds in places of public resort; to prevent the enforcement or imposition on racial grounds of restrictions on the transfer of tenancies; to penalise incitement to racial hatred…’
Source 2: Video of Lord Lester of Herne Hill

Lord Lester of Herne Hill was the founding member of the Campaign Against Racial Discrimination and a prominent campaigner for the 1965 Race Relations Act.

In this video Lord Lester talks about the first Race Relations Act, expectations of the Act and the impact the Act had in reality.

View this video on YouTube: www.youtube.com/watch?v=bqslXWttr70

Source 3: Secretary of State for the Home Department, Sir Frank Soskice MP speaking in favour of the Act - 2nd Reading of the Bill, 3rd May 1965

'It would be a tragedy of the first order if our country, with its unrivalled tradition of tolerance and fair play as between one man or woman and another and perfect respect for the rights and personal worth and dignity of the individual, should see the beginnings of the development of a distinction between first and second class citizens and the disfigurement which can arise from inequality of treatment and incitement to feelings of hatred directed to the origins of particular citizens, something for which they are not responsible…

The new arrivals are harmless, friendly people, and should be so treated. They have brought us their skills and labour, which we badly need in the building up of our economy and the development of our own national life. Parliament should now lay down the conditions for real future co-operation…Children of all races—one has only to look at any school—mix and play happily together. It is only in later years that they may be subjected to influences which make for unhappy relationships. It is to prevent the possibility, at the outset, of these influences getting under way, that we commend the Bill to the House.'
‘… I want to address the remainder of my remarks to what I regard as the other main provision of the Bill, which is Clause 3, which deals with the question of incitement. This goes beyond the question of race and colour. It touches upon matters concerned with the freedom of speech…

We should be careful how we amend the law affecting what people have a right to say. Free speech does not consist in allowing the Leader of the Liberal Party to wander up and down the country saying what he thinks. It is something more than that. Free speech, throughout the history of this country, has consisted in allowing people whom the majority of their fellow citizens considered to be very evil, or, at any rate, very misguided, to say things which that majority thought were very wrong, or evil, or misguided. That is what free speech is about. We certainly want to be careful before we alter the law in regard to it.’
Source 5: Extract from The Times newspaper

A cutting from 'The Times' newspaper about the Bristol Bus Boycott, one of the important moments in the campaign for race equality in post-war Britain, which may have contributed to the Race Relations Act of 1965.

BUS BOYCOTT BY WEST INDIANS

COMPANY'S REFUSAL TO EMPLOY MAN

FROM OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

BRISTOL, MAY 2

The refusal of the Bristol Omnibus Company to employ a West Indian as a conductor was "greatly deplored" today in a statement by Mr. H. L. Lindo, High Commissioner for Jamaica. The refusal has led to a bus boycott by the coloured community here.

Mr. Lindo said that the company's action had happened in an industry in which coloured workers had won for themselves a great reputation for courtesy and skill. There was a shortage of transport staff throughout the country.

It would appear that Bristol was now saying openly that it preferred to have inadequate transport services rather than employable and qualified workers from among its own Commonwealth citizens.

Today officials from the High Commission and from that of Trinidad and Tobago were in the city inquiring into the dispute. On behalf of Sir Leary Constantine, High Commissioner for Trinidad and Tobago, letters have been sent to both parties involved. An official of the High Commission in London said that Sir Leary would give all the help he could to reach a settlement.
Source 6: 1965 Race Relations Act Banner produced for Parliament’s 2015 commemorations

Artists Statement

‘I have long used textile as a metaphor for the interweaving of narratives, playing on its historical relationship to text, and as a channel for personal or collective identities and histories. I loved the image of all the Acts on scrolls in the Parliamentary Archives. Connecting these with rolls of fabric, conflating the written and the woven, is the key concept.

I wanted to embed an element of diversity in the image by covering the scrolls in fabrics produced across the world, including the UK. Mixing it up: being mixed myself, I revisited the Britain of my childhood through the adult lens of race relations and it was not an easy experience. However, the Acts stood as a statement of values for a future society. I wanted to contrast this with the complexity of applying these values in an atmosphere of racial tension, discrimination and social change; the formal, neat and ordered versus the tangled, evolving, enriching, human, lived complexity of striving for equality.’

Find out more: www.parliament.uk/race-relations-banner

‘1965 Race Relations Act’ banner produced by artist Alinah Azadeh