



Freedom

Recommended year group: Year 8

Subject focus: History, English, RE, PSHE

Driving Question

What events in history defined the civil rights we are entitled to today?

Introduction

This theme explores how people across history have fought for freedom, fairness and equal rights. It begins with the **British Empire** and the **Triangular Slave Trade**, showing how enslaved Africans were taken across the Atlantic and forced to work. You then learn about the **Abolition movement**, where campaigners, petitions and speeches challenged this injustice.

The theme also looks at the long fight for **civil rights** in the United States, including segregation and the different methods used by **Martin Luther King Jr** and **Malcolm X**. It then moves to the **Chainmakers of the Black Country**, where working-class women demanded fair pay and safer conditions through trade unions.

You also study the **Suffragists and Suffragettes**, who used peaceful and militant tactics to win votes for women and shape modern democracy. Finally, the theme examines **modern-day slavery**, helping you understand how exploitation continues and how victims can be protected.

Overall, this theme shows how ordinary people have challenged injustice and created change. It reminds us that freedom is not guaranteed, and fairness must be protected by every generation.



Learning Checks

Lesson 3: Big Read – *Hollow by Vanessa Kisuule* - What message is Vanessa Kisuule trying to make about the slave trade and its links to Bristol and how has she achieved this?

Lesson 5: Extreme write – Abolitionist Speech: Persuasive speech.

Lesson 8: Suffragettes and Suffragists – Which factor was most important in women getting the vote.

👁 Watch *12 Years a Slave* tells the true story of Solomon Northup, a free Black man kidnapped and forced into slavery in the American South. He endures twelve years of brutal treatment before finally reclaiming his freedom and returning to his family.

👂 Listen [Short History Of... - The Suffragettes - BBC Sounds](#) stories of suffragettes and their contribution to female suffrage.

🖼 Look 8 Artworks of the Civil Rights Movement - [8 Artworks of the Civil Rights Movement That Exemplify the Struggle](#)

Key vocabulary

Abolition, Abolitionist, Activist, Auction, Campaigner, Chainmaker, Civil Rights, Coercion, Colonies, Colony, Compensation, Connotation, Controversial, Discrimination, Equality, Exploitation, Facts, Fogger, Forced Labour, Human Trafficking, Humanity, Inference, Intention, Jim Crow Laws, Legacy, Middle Passage, Militant, Monopoly, Opinion, Petition, Plantations, Point of View, Protest, Rights, Segregation, Semantic Field, Slavery, Strike, Suffrage, Suffragettes, Suffragists, Sweated Labour, Trade Union, Transatlantic Trade, Triangular Trade, Victim, Working Conditions

Extended learning opportunities

Students could use these ideas to explore different features of the theme.

Careers

These ideas can be used alongside the lessons in order to discover career pathways associated with key elements of learning from this theme.

Explore careers in Education

<https://nationalcareers.service.gov.uk/job-categories/teaching-and-education>

Explore careers in Law

<https://nationalcareers.service.gov.uk/job-categories/law-and-legal>

Places to visit

This section offers a selection of virtual trips which support knowledge of key areas and attractions from the lessons

[International Slavery Museum Virtual Tour](#)

[National Civil Rights Museum - Virtual Tour – Joy of Museums Virtual Tours](#)

Clubs

Set up or join a debating club. Check if your school is signed up with an organisation such as Debate Mate. <https://debatemate.com/>



People, Place and Time

The 'People, Place and Time' resources provide support to key knowledge throughout the theme. More specifically:

People: famous individuals who have fought for freedom

Place: places in the world where revolts and rebellions happened in 1968

Time: Major events in the Civil Rights movements in the USA.

Family learning opportunities

These can be used at home to spark conversations, build understanding and strengthen links between school learning and real-world experiences.

Museum Challenge - Choose one museum (physical visit or virtual tour) connected to the theme:

- *International Slavery Museum*, Liverpool
- *Black Country Living Museum*, Dudley
- *Museum of London* – Suffragette Collection
- *People's History Museum*, Manchester – Activism & Protest

One object that shocked us, one story that inspired us, one question we still have.

Ideas for discussion at home:

- "Does peaceful protest create more change than disruptive protest?"
- "Is breaking the law ever acceptable if the law is unfair?"

Books that link to this theme:

"Freedom" – Catherine Johnson

Story of an enslaved boy in 18th-century London.

"Copper Sun" – Sharon Draper

Follows a young girl taken on the Middle Passage

"The Slave Trade" (Young Reading Series) – Usborne

"Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry" – Mildred D. Taylor

African American family facing racism in the 1930s American South.

"The Watsons Go to Birmingham – 1963" – Christopher Paul Curtis

Civil Rights era seen through a child's perspective.

"The Lions of Little Rock" – Kristin Levine

Segregation and school integration in 1958 America.

"Girls for the Vote" – Linda Newbery

Follows a girl involved with the suffrage movement.

"Make More Noise!" – Various authors

Anthology of stories celebrating girls and women fighting for rights.

"Women in the Suffrage Movement" – Rosemary Rees

"Boy 87" – Ele Fountain

Themes of trafficking, escape, and children seeking safety.

Lessons

Lesson title	Subject	Essential knowledge/concepts	Competencies	National curriculum coverage
Lesson 1: Why do we remember the British Empire?	History	Identify what is meant by an empire Explain why Britain wanted an Empire Analyse different opinions of the British Empire	SE.HS.01: Structuring, organising and deploying historical knowledge, using historical vocabulary.	KS3 History: Ideas, political power, industry and empire. Investigate how people's lives have shaped this nation and how Britain has influenced and been influenced by the wider world.
Lesson 2: The Triangular Trade	History	Identify, describe and explain the main features of the Slave Trade Triangle. Create a portfolio of evidence against the slave trade.	SE.HS.03: Using historical sources	KS3 History: Ideas, political power, industry and empire. Investigate how people's lives have shaped this nation and how Britain has influenced and been influenced by the wider world.
Lesson 3: Big Read – 'Hollow'	English	Identify Kisuule's intention when writing the poem, 'Hollow'. Explain how the techniques used by Kisuule allow the reader or listener to understand her views.	RL.PV.02: Analyse the writer's main point of view and likely attention and summarise the key supporting details and ideas.	KS3 English: Read critically through: recognising a range of poetics conventions and understanding how these have been used.
Lesson 4: Abolition of Slavery in Britain	History	Describe reasons why the slave trade was abolished. Investigate the key campaigners who fought to end the slave trade.	SE.HS.02: Making historical connections (change and continuity, cause and consequence, significance / importance, similarity and difference)	KS3 History: Ideas, political power, industry and empire. Significance of individuals.

		Evaluate the reasons for the abolition of the slave trade.		
Lesson 5: Extreme write – Abolitionist Speech	English	Retrieve persuasive writing skills Collect vocabulary to oppose the slave trade Add tone and voice to create an effective speech	CL.WP.02: Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organisation, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience (Voice). CL.SL.03: Develop and adapt speaking skills and strategies in formal and informal contexts (speeches and presentations).	KS3 English: • Writing for a wide range of purposes and audiences, including scripts for talks and presentations. • Drawing on knowledge of literary and rhetorical devices from their reading and listening to enhance the impact of their writing.
Lesson 6: A never-ending story – American Civil Rights	History	Describe what life was like for black Americans during the 1940's – 60's Make connections between the experiences of Black Americans in the 1960's and life in modern day America.	SE.HS.02: Making historical connections (change and continuity , cause and consequence, significance / importance, similarity and difference).	KS3 History: Challenges for Britain, Europe and the wider world 1901 to the present day. Students can focus on continuity and change / cause and consequence / significance.
Lesson 7: Chainmakers and Women's rights	History	Describe chainmaking in the Black Country in the early 20 th Century Use sources to describe conditions for chainmakers in the early 20 th Century Create a placard to protest on behalf of the chainmakers	SE.HS.03 Using historical sources	KS3 History NC: Challenges for Britain, Europe and the wider world 1901 to the present day. Understand how different types of historical sources are used rigorously to make historical claims

Lesson 8: Suffragists and Suffragettes	History	Explain the difference between the Suffragist and Suffragette movements. Explore the role of key individuals who fought for women's rights. Evaluate the most important factors that led to women gaining the vote.	SE.HS.02: Making historical connections (change and continuity, cause and consequence, significance / importance, similarity and difference).	KS3 History: Challenges for Britain, Europe and the wider world 1901 to the present day. Students can focus on continuity and change / cause and consequence.
Lesson 9: Modern Day Slavery	PD	Define modern-day slavery Examine human trafficking in the UK Evaluate how to tackle modern slavery	PS.SC.02: Demonstrates examples of diversity, empathy, and equality from one's own life experiences.	KS3 Citizenship NC: The precious liberties enjoyed by the citizens of the United Kingdom. The roles played by public institutions and voluntary groups in society, and the ways in which citizens work together to improve their communities.
Lesson 10 – Careers in the United Nations	Careers	Describe the values that the United Nations expect their employees to have. Explain how you could identify these values in your life to apply for a job	PD.CA.02: Experiencing the world of work	Every student, and their parents, should have access to good quality information about future study options and labour market opportunities.