

The Equality Act 2010

Protected characteristics

Age	Disability	Gender reassignment
Marriage and civil partnership	Pregnancy and maternity	Race
Religion	Sex	Sexual orientation

Overheard

1	"My union is just as valid as yours"
2	"They seemed keen on me on the phone, but as soon as we were face to face, the job was no longer available"
3	"I wasn't able to access the building because there wasn't a ramp"
4	"They turn away from me in the changing room showers, I know they think I am staring at them"
5	"They have said they don't want me in their café wearing my veil as it makes other customers feel uncomfortable"
6	"The females refused to allow me to share their changing room, I was made to feel like a freak"
7	"I really want this promotion, but as soon as they find out I am pregnant, I know they will offer it to someone else"
8	"They took one look at me and presumed I wouldn't know anything about social media advertising"
9	"I overheard the parents complaining that having a male nursery nurse was a concern"

Imagine you have overheard these words being spoken.

- What might the scenario be?
- Why might it be happening?
- How might the people involved be feeling?
- Have you ever witnessed anything similar?
- Could you imagine this happening in real life?

Once you have discussed the points above, decide which of the protected characteristics (Equality Act 2010) the statements might correlate to

Teacher tips:

Step 1 – Introduce the Equality Act 2010. It works to describe the Act as an umbrella that encompasses all the other Discrimination Acts that have come before it and that the Equality Act makes discrimination law clearer and simpler for all to follow. Ensure that students are aware that in the UK it is against the law to discriminate against people due to a protected characteristic regardless of personal moral or religious beliefs. There are many YouTube clips that explain this Act in a little more detail if needed.

Step 2 – Go through each characteristic briefly to ensure they understand what it means. Gender reassignment may be one that some students do not understand, Caitlyn Jenner (Kardashian fame) may be a cultural reference point that your students know of.

Step 3 – Hand out the overheard sheet, in groups students discuss each statement using the prompts provided, they should then try to link it to a protected characteristic.

Step 4 – Have a whole class discussion focussing on feelings and attitudes towards differences. Use the prompts below if needed

“My union is just as valid as yours”
Why might some people feel that a marriage between a homosexual couple isn't as valid as a marriage between a heterosexual couple? How might a gay person feel if their relationship was mocked just because of the gender of their partner?
“They seemed keen on me on the phone, but as soon as we were face to face, the job was no longer available”
Do you think racial prejudice still exists in this country? What could the person do if she felt she was being racially discriminated against? Why do you think racial discrimination still exists?
“I wasn't able to access the building because there wasn't a ramp”
Do you think all companies/organisations should have a duty to ensure there are lifts and/or ramps in place? How would you feel if you couldn't physically enter a building that all your friends could?
“They turn away from me in the changing room showers, I know they think I am staring tat them”
Why do you think some people might feel uncomfortable sharing a communal shower with someone that is gay? Is that feeling justified? Why do you think that?
“They have said they don't want me in their café wearing my veil as it makes other customers feel uncomfortable”
Why do you think some people are uncomfortable with facial veils? How might someone feel if their choice of dress was used to discriminate against them?
“The females refused to allow me to share their changing room, I was made to feel like a freak”
Why do you think the females in the changing rooms felt uncomfortable? What can/should society do to make people feel less uncomfortable? How might it feel to go through life feeling like a freak?
“I really want this promotion, but as soon as they find out I am pregnant, I know they will offer it to someone else”
Do you think its harder for women to get promotions? Why is this so? Do you know what the gender pay gap is? Why do you think there is a gap?
“They took one look at me and presumed I wouldn't know anything about social media advertising”
Do you think social media is just for young people? How would you feel if your grandparents were on snapchat? Why?
“I overheard the parents complaining that having a male nursery nurse was a concern”
Why do you think roles such as childcare are so female dominated? Why do you think some people might feel uncomfortable about having a male look after their child? What can/should society do about this?

Extension – students can cut out the squares from the grid and rank them in numerous ways, followed by a discussion e.g. rank the protected characteristics in order of how commonly they occur, rank them in order of what you think the government need to focus on the most, rank them in order of how passionately people feel towards this issue etc.