

Regulation and Censorship: Key Stage 4 lesson plans

Lesson 1: Investigate and explore Ofcom's Programme Code.

Lesson 2: Consider the issue of violence on TV

Lessons 3 & 4: Continue discussion of violence and plan a documentary on a contentious issue

Regulation and censorship, and Citizenship objectives	1	2	3	4
1a: The legal and human rights and responsibilities underpinning society and how they relate to citizens	●	●	●	●
1b: The implications of the diverse national, religious and ethnic identities in the UK and the need for mutual respect and understanding	●		●	●
1c: The work of parliament and the government in making and shaping the law	●			
1f: the opportunities for individuals and voluntary groups to bring about social change nationally		●		
1g: The importance of a free press, and the media's role in society, in providing information and affecting opinion	●	●	●	●
1h: The rights and responsibilities of consumers, employers and employees	●	●	●	●
2a: Research a topical political, spiritual, moral, problem or event by analysing information from different sources	●	●	●	●
2b: Express, justify and defend orally and in writing a personal opinion about such issues, problems or events	●	●	●	●
2c: Contribute to group and exploratory class discussions	●	●	●	●
3a: Use their imagination to consider other people's experiences and be able to think about, express, explain and critically evaluate views that are not their own	●	●	●	●
3b: Negotiate, decide and take part responsibly in school activities	●	●	●	●
3c: Reflect on the process of participating	●	●	●	●

Moving image media objectives

See a range of FVT that both consolidates and extends existing viewing experience		●		
Investigate a topic using FVT text	●	●	●	●

Lesson 1: Investigate and explore Ofcom's Programme Code

Resources

General

Access to computers. You will need to have available the following URL:

http://www.ofcom.org.uk/tv/ifi/codes/legacy/programme_code/#content

Worksheet 1: 'Ofcom Programme Code' (PDF)

Starter

- Put students in groups of four and ask them to list five rules by which TV broadcasters and producers should abide.
- Discuss as a class what they have come up with; put main/best ones on the board.
- Hand out the 'Worksheet 1: Ofcom Programme Code'. These are the section headings of the Ofcom Programme Code. Discuss whether any of the students' rules would come under these headings. Do any of these headings surprise them? Are there any rules that they can't fit under a heading?

Modelling

- Again referring to the student sheet, look at the heading for Section 1 only. As a class, list on the board what main rules they think apply here and why.
- Look at the full version of Section 1 at http://www.ofcom.org.uk/tv/ifi/codes/legacy/programme_code/pc_section_one?a=87101. Are the pupils' rules there? Which haven't been included? What rules didn't they think of, and why? What surprises them? Are these rules reasonable?

Development

- Divide the class into five groups of three or four. Allocate each a section of the 'Ofcom Programme Code' (sections 4, 6 and 7 are short – so could be combined or given to a less able group). Allow 10 minutes for the groups to find out, and summarise briefly in their own words, the main rules of that section.
- Ask each group to report back to the class in the order of the sections.

Plenary

- Questions for discussion:
 - Is it important to have these rules?
 - Have they ever been offended by anything on TV? Did it violate these rules?

Extension

- Discuss the kinds of complaints that may be made against television. What types of complaints do students think are made the most and what genre of programmes do they think get the most complaints?
- To compare their ideas with the real figures, see analysis of complaints and findings on: http://www.bbc.co.uk/complaints/pdf/pcu_octdec2004.pdf

Lesson 2: Consider the issue of violence on TV**Resources**General

OHT 1 – 'Mary Whitehouse quote' (PDF)
TV and DVD player

Modelling

Worksheet 2: 'Mediawatch UK' (PDF)

Development

OHT 2 – 'Itchy and Scratchy' (PDF)
The Simpsons DVD (*The Simpsons's Film Festival*: C20th Fox. ISBN: 5039036008983*
Optional: A *Tom and Jerry* DVD (eg Classic Collection, Vol 1)

- The relevant section of the DVD, approx. 35 seconds long, is 13 minutes into the episode *Itchy and Scratchy the Movie*. The OHT is based on this section. You can select and use any 'Itchy and Scratchy' sequence from any episode of *The Simpsons* and create your own breakdown of the sequence.

Starter

- Show the OHT 1 – 'Mary Whitehouse quote'.
- Explain who Mary Whitehouse was – see the 'Regulation and censorship' chapter in the *Issues in television* section.
- Discuss the quote: Is it true?

Modelling

- Look at Worksheet 2: 'Mediawatch-UK'
- Explain that Mediawatch (<http://www.mediawatchuk.org/mainsite.htm>) is the name of the organisation first set up by Mary Whitehouse, then called the 'Clean up Television Campaign'.
- Allow five minutes for pupils, in pairs, to analyse data on sheet and annotate with their thoughts and ideas.
- Discuss as a class: Are they surprised by the data? Do they think this is ok/or not ok?
- Discuss why Channel 5 has such a high incidence of violence?
- Discuss John Beyer's quote?

- Give out homework.

Development

- Present the OHT 2 - 'Itchy and Scratchy' sequence. Explain it is a short section of a programme shown on TV. Ask the pupils in pairs to make notes, identifying: type of programme and/or the name of the programme; target audience; violations of Ofcom Programme Code.
- Show the extract from the DVD.
- Discuss: Should it be on at 6pm? Should young children watch it? Could it affect young children? (Even if students guess that the extract is from *The Simpsons*, the discussion is valid.)
- If time, show a *Tom and Jerry* cartoon and note similarities and differences. Point out that complaints were made about the violence in *Tom and Jerry*.

Plenary

- Give each student a strip of paper (half A4 sheet split lengthways). Put the question on board: 'Does watching violence on TV make us more violent?'
- Ask them to put at the top of the paper: 'Yes, because...' and finish the sentence. They then fold over the paper to cover their sentence and pass it to the person sitting next to them. On the next strip of paper, they then write 'No, because...' and finish the sentence. Do this about three times. Then ask them to unfold the strips of paper and read them. Ask for any particularly good ones to be read out.
- Ask: 'How would you go about complaining about a TV programme?'

Homework

Ask students to conduct their own research on violence on TV, by watching a TV cop show (eg *The Bill*, *CSI*, etc) and record the number of incidents involving firearms, violent assaults, raising/causing explosions, knives/offensive weapons, other. Ask more able students to look at several British and American cop shows and compare the amount and use of violence.

Lessons 3 & 4: Continue discussion of violence and plan a documentary on a contentious issue

Resources

General

Students' research data from last lesson's homework.

Starter

Conduct analysis of students' research data:

- In pairs or groups discuss findings – noting the main points on a sheet of paper.
- Does the data show differences between UK & US shows?
- Optional: produce graphs or pie charts showing the data gathered by the individual students, groups or whole class and make a display.

Modelling

- Explain: In 2004 David Blunkett, then Home Secretary, proposed giving ministers the power to censor violence in films and television programmes because he believes it fuels 'a culture of violence.' Pose the question: On the basis of your research findings, is ministerial intervention needed?
- Develop this discussion by asking students to consider whether viewers' personal responses matter in deciding government policy. Have they ever viewed anything that seriously disturbed them? Do they think it shouldn't have been shown?
- Discuss if there is a difference between showing violence on television in fantasy or fiction programmes and in programmes about real topics, such as war or terrorism.

Development

- Divide students into groups of four or five. Present the following scenario:
You are a production company that has been commissioned to produce a documentary on euthanasia (for example). This documentary contains images that some may find disturbing, one being a woman dying because she has a degenerative terminal illness and has chosen to die by lethal injection.
- Discuss: have students seen images such as this on TV? Were they fictional or factual? How did they affect them? What do you, as programme makers, have to be careful about?
- The task (students need to do *all* the activities):
 - Make notes to justify producing this programme – why does it need to be made?
 - Note down what images will you show/not show? How might you film them?
 - Using bullet points, outline the programme.
 - Storyboard the euthanasia sequence. Think about how to use camera shots, angles, movements; sounds; transitions etc.
 - Mind map ideas: how will you market/advertise the programme sensitively?

Plenary

- Either ask all groups, or select one or two groups, to present their ideas to the rest of the class. Discuss their work after presentation.
- Discuss:
 - Was this easy to do?
 - Is it important that programmes like this get made?
 - Is it right to screen such things even though it may upset people?
- Finally: divide students into pairs, and tell them: You are now representing the TV channel screening the documentary. Write a press release to support and justify your decision to show it. (Allow four minutes only.)
- Listen to one or two of their efforts and discuss.

Homework

Ask students to find out how other cultures and different religions view euthanasia and whether the planned programme might be offensive to these groups. They should then change their press releases to reflect their awareness of these sensitivities.

Extension

Hold a debate on: Euthanasia / Violence on TV / Censorship