

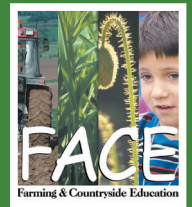
Handling controversial issues - Flooding





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This booklet has been produced to help young people:

This booklet has been produced to help young people:

- Learn about flooding problems in the UK
- Judge the bias and reliability of different sources of information
- Draw their own conclusions having analysed and reflected on their own current views

Make informed decisions When handling controversial issues teachers will need to employ approaches that meet the need for balance and objectivity and to ensure avoiding bias. The Oxfam Global Citizenship Guide on Teaching Controversial Issues (2006) contains helpful suggestions on appropriate ways of introducing controversial issues and of managing the responses that result.

These include:

- Setting ground rules e.g. showing respect for the views of others, using appropriate language and giving reasons for having a particular view
- Role of the teacher e.g. objective, devil's advocate or declared interest
- Teaching approaches e.g. group discussion, role-play and community of enquiry



1. Question time

Aim

To encourage critical analysis of articles and consider and discuss the consequences of flooding.

Resources

A selection of articles and film clips representing a variety of viewpoints

Instructions

1. In groups, pupils to consider the impact of flooding on their topic.
2. Find and discuss examples
3. Report back to the class on what they have found
4. As a class, pupils share their findings
5. This exercise can be extended into a debate in which the impact on two of the topics are considered against each other e.g. Which is most important to consider when thinking about the effects of flooding: food prices or transport?

2. Questioning a photograph

Aim

To encourage pupils to generate questions for research and discussion

Resources

Copies of images reflecting different aspects of the flooding situation

E.g. see images at the following links

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk/6917253.stm>

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-26119638>

<http://www.westerndailynews.co.uk/UK-farmers-unite-help-counterparts-Somerset/story-20594452-detail/story.html>

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/in-pictures-26152345>

<http://www.newburytoday.co.uk/2014/live-updates-flooding-to-roads-and-areas-in-west-berkshire>

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2555658/UK-weather-16-areas-South-warned-flooding-danger-lives-Armed-Forces-battle-save-homes.html>

Large sheets of paper

Instructions

1. In groups, pupils place an image in the centre of a large sheet of paper
2. Around the image pupils write questions about what can be seen. The questions may
 - Seek clarification e.g. why is this area...?
 - Probe reasons and evidence e.g. is there evidence that...?
 - Explore alternative views e.g. what would say?
3. Test implications and consequences e.g. if this took place what would happen next...?
4. Groups share their questions and observations with the rest of the class
5. Groups now highlight a significant question to research further and debate



3. Diamond Activity

Aim

To introduce some of the suggested causes of flooding and encourage discussion about most effective ways of reducing the problem.

Resources

On large pieces of paper or card draw a diamond shape with the words Most Important at the top and Least Important at the bottom.
Copy the key activities below and cut up into sets of individual cards.

Dredge rivers regularly

Pay farmers to store excess water on their fields

Businesses in threatened areas to pay more towards flood defences

Government to spend more on flood management

People who buy houses on a floodplain to introduce own protection measures

Environment Agency to be paid more to manage floods and less on wildlife measures

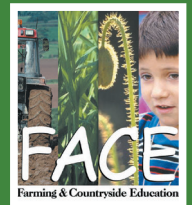
Encourage communities to develop self-help schemes

Refuse planning applications for building on flood plains

Concentrate on managing the upland environment to prevent excess water flowing downstream

Instructions

1. In groups, pupils rank the activities in a diamond nine [the highest priority at the top, the next two below and so on].
2. Pupils share decisions as a class, and discuss differences of opinion about what is most or least important.



4. Points of view

Aim

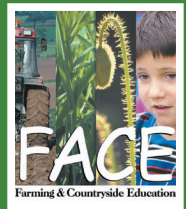
To raise awareness that there are different points of view about issues

Resources

Articles representing a range of viewpoints (see web links)

Instructions

1. Pupils draw two columns and head them 'Farmer' and 'City centre business owner.' (Both should be considered living in areas of heavy flooding)
2. Drawing on the source information, pupils list points of view from the farmer's perspective and repeat by listing those from the business owner's perspective.
3. Discuss the results as a class



5. Exchanging views

Aim

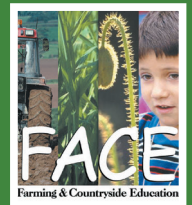
To generate discussion about a controversial issue and encourage listening to the opinions of others.

Resources

Pieces of card

Instructions

1. Read the following statement to the class: “The rights of homeowners are more important than the rights of wildlife.”
2. Pupils choose their position on this statement and on a piece of card write a number between one (‘strongly disagree’) and five (‘strongly agree’). Class results can be collated and represented as a table or block graph.
3. Pupils now find someone whose position is the same and discuss for three minutes. They should then repeat with someone whose position is one step removed from their own. And finally, someone with a very different view to their own.
4. As a class, gather information on how many pupils have changed their position and discuss what led them to change their mind.



6. Balloon debate

A balloon debate is a debate in which a number of speakers attempt to win the approval of the class/audience. The audience is invited to imagine that the speakers are flying in a hot air balloon which is sinking and that someone must be thrown out if everyone is not to die.

Instructions

Each speaker has to make the case why they should not be thrown out of the balloon to save the remainder.

The role of speakers can be allocated as:

Farmer

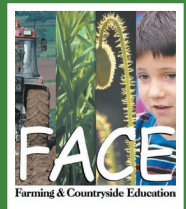
Owner of homes on floodplain

Wildlife activist

Local government representative

Senior official in Environment Agency

Plus any others you feel relevant



7. Useful Links

NEWS ITEMS:

Threat to farm animals

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-26077722>

Would river dredging solve floods?

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-25911391>

Environment Agency response to dredging and other measures

<http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20140328084622/http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk/news/151697.aspx>

OPINIONS:

12 reasons for flooding problems

<http://ampp3d.mirror.co.uk/2014/02/10/12-reasons-the-government-cant-get-to-grips-with-flooding/>

NFU Manifesto on flooding

http://www.nfuonline.com/flooding-report_final_low-res_v2/

The Wildlife Trusts' views on how to manage flooding

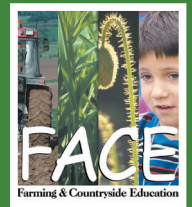
<http://www.wildlifetrusts.org/news/2014/10/21/dredging-trouble-government-urged-resist-playing-politics-over-winter-flood-measures>

Environment Agency's response to flooding in Somerset

<http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20140605090108/http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/ourwork/farming/slmfloodingfeature.aspx>

Effects of building on flood plains

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/earth/greenpolitics/planning/9716182/Thousands-of-homes-planned-for-flood-plains.html>



FACTUAL INFORMATION:

Flood risk management:

What are the issues?

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-25615378>

Flooding prevention measures explained

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-25929644>

An explanation of how flood risk is managed

<http://www.geography.org.uk/resources/flooding/floodriskmanagement/>

A variety of engineering options to manage flooding

http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/gcsebitesize/geography/water_rivers/river_flooding_management_rev5.shtml

How does the Thames barrier work?

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/magazine-26133660>

The impact of flooding on wildlife

<http://www.wildlifetrusts.org/floodsandwildlife>

Impact of tidal surges on wildlife habitats

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/science-environment-25778385>

VIDEOS:

Example of how flooding has affected people's lives

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-26111598>

A variety of news footage showing the impact of the floods

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-26117610>