

**TEACHER'S NOTES****SECTARIANISM****NEWSSTAND****ANALYSIS****INTRODUCTION:**

The primary objectives are to evaluate the meaning of sectarianism and what it means to be sectarian by using real life examples from Northern Ireland. It appears that the promotion of one religion and the cultural identity associated with it has caused deep divisions and sectarianism. However, what appears less clear is that many individuals and groups don't seem to recognise what sectarianism is and what it means to be sectarian.

**KEY QUESTIONS:**

- What is sectarianism?
- What does it mean to be sectarian?

Time: 2 hours (2 double periods)

**LEARNING OUTCOMES:**

This lesson will offer students opportunities to explore:

- Different understandings of what sectarianism is
- The alleged causes and consequences of sectarianism in Northern Ireland
- The challenges of diversity for Northern Ireland

Throughout the lesson students have opportunities to:

- Understand the importance of hearing and listening to different experiences / points of view
- Develop openness about accepting customs and practices different from their own
- Appreciate their own and others' uniqueness
- Improve their thinking skills, ability to manage information and work with others

**RESOURCE:** newspaper articles

Article A: 'It wasn't sectarian, honest your honour, the Taigs provoked me' Sunday Tribune 05/10/03

An irreverent critique of proposed legislation on crimes motivated by sectarianism.

Article B: 'Any threat to the majority is not welcome' Irish News 08/09/04

An opinion piece in which Brian Feeney argues that the Unionist community feels its majority is under threat from the changing cultural landscape in Northern Ireland.

Article C: 'Divide deepening since Agreement survey shows' Newsletter 05/01/02

Details from a University of Ulster survey which claims that sectarianism has risen in Belfast since the ceasefires and that there is evidence of a growing "society of fear".

Article D: 'Teenagers give verdict on Ulster's future' Newsletter 07/04/04

Article includes details from a survey which show that Northern Ireland teenagers aren't hopeful for the future of N. Ireland.

### **PREPARATION FOR SERIES OF 3 LESSONS:**

- Carry out some group building exercises on the theme of diversity. Allow time for discussion and feedback from students to acknowledge experiences and insight, eg how identities can change and are not always fixed.
- Allow students to list or draw some of the symbols or emblems of identity in Northern Ireland. (Useful website: <http://cain.ulst.ac.uk/>) It is likely that symbols or emblems may only relate to the two main traditions in Northern Ireland. This is perfectly acceptable at this stage.
- Teacher should summarise students' findings.
- In pairs or small groups students should identify symbols or emblems that cause conflict and explain the reasons for the conflict.
- Brainstorm what students believe sectarianism is and record findings for further development.

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### **LESSON PROGRESSION:**

#### **1. Read Articles A and B.**

- a) Identify three areas of cultural identity which can cause sectarianism
- b) List key words that may cause offence and result in tension Explain how each one might increase tension/conflict
- c) Use both articles to list any problems which may hinder the success of the law to stop sectarian crimes
- d) Using the information you have gathered so far write a paragraph explaining:
  - (i) the cause of sectarian tension
  - (ii) how language can make the situation worse
  - (iii) how despite laws to stop sectarianism it still exists

#### **2. Using evidence from Articles C and D.**

- a) Which group surveyed appears to have the deepest mistrust and divisions between them in Northern Ireland?
- b) Explain how sectarianism has impacted on life in Northern Ireland eg access to housing, education etc
- c) From the evidence presented evaluate whether or not 'the future is bleak for community relations in Northern Ireland'

**CONCLUSION:**

Teacher should remind students of the agreed definition of sectarianism prior to the lesson. Students should be asked to provide a more refined definition based on what has been learned throughout the lesson.

**EXTENSION ACTIVITIES:**

- Class design a questionnaire which is to assess individuals' perceptions on what sectarianism is and what it means to be sectarian
- Each student should find two respondents to complete questionnaire
- All students feedback to the class their findings and these could be displayed in the room