

The end points for this unit are to know that:

- The UK justice system upholds the law.
- Justice often involves a judgement.
- Many Dharmic religions see justice as a consequence of actions.
- For many Humanists, justice is a human responsibility that means fairness for all people.
- The concepts of suffering and justice are linked.

This unit enables pupils to explore the concept of justice as a central moral and social idea across a range of religious and non-religious worldviews. Building on prior learning about fairness, authority, and the rule of law, pupils will deepen their understanding of how justice is defined, pursued, and applied in different contexts – from the UK legal system to the ethical teachings of major world religions and Humanism.

Through the study of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, pupils will examine the shared belief in God as judge, the role of divine law, and the importance of ethical living. In Hinduism, Buddhism, and Sikhism, they will explore the Dharmic principles of dharma (moral duty) and karma (cause and effect), understanding justice as a natural consequence of actions and personal responsibility. The Humanist perspective will provide a contrasting, non-religious approach, emphasising reason, empathy, human rights, and fairness without reliance on divine authority.

The unit also addresses the universal human experience of suffering, encouraging pupils to consider why it happens, how different traditions explain it, and the ways in which justice can be a response to suffering. This allows pupils to make connections between belief, moral action, and societal structures, and to reflect on their own values and responsibilities.

By engaging with sacred texts, real-life examples, and contemporary issues, pupils will develop critical thinking, empathy, and the ability to compare and contrast diverse perspectives. They will see that while beliefs about the source and nature of justice differ, there is a shared commitment across many traditions – religious and non-religious – to fairness, compassion, and the protection of human dignity.

This unit prepares pupils to participate thoughtfully in a pluralistic society, equipping them with the knowledge and skills to recognise injustice, understand varied responses to it, and consider how they themselves might contribute to a fairer world.

Lesson 1 – What is Justice?

This lesson introduce justice as fairness in how people are treated, and injustice as unfair treatment. Children learn about the UK justice system; police, courts, judges, juries, and the idea that laws are made by a democratically elected parliament. This lesson connects to earlier RE and PSHE study on fairness, rules, authority, and the rule of law. Children revisit the idea that rules exist to protect people and promote fairness and are encouraged to reflect on why justice matters in their own lives and communities.

Lesson 2 – Justice in Abrahamic Religions

Children will examine how Christianity, Islam, and Judaism understand justice and judgement. They will explore concepts such as God as judge, divine law (e.g., Ten Commandments, Sharia, Torah), and the link between justice, mercy, and compassion. This lesson shows how justice can be rooted in divine authority and moral codes. Children are encouraged to reflect on how belief in God's judgement might influence behaviour and decision-making.

Lesson 3 – Justice in Dharmic Religions

In this lesson, children explore Hinduism, Buddhism, and Sikhism, focusing on dharma (moral duty), karma (cause and effect), and personal responsibility. Children will learn how justice is often seen as a natural consequence of actions rather than a decision made by a God or Gods. Children will explore examples: Hindu karma, Buddhist Eightfold Path, Sikh seva (selfless service). This lesson builds on prior learning about these religions (Hinduism in Year 3, Sikhism in Year 4, Buddhism in Year 5). This lesson introduces the concept of justice based on moral law and personal responsibility.

Lesson 4 – Humanist Views on Justice

Children will learn that Humanism is a non-religious worldview focusing on reason, empathy, and human welfare. Children will explore how Humanists campaign for equality, human rights, and fairness without reference to a God. Teachers can share a real-life Humanist campaign (e.g., inclusive education, anti-discrimination work). This lesson builds on prior learning about Humanism from Year 5. This lesson provides a contrasting, non-religious approach to justice, highlighting shared values across belief systems. Pupils will be encouraged to reflect on how people can work for justice without religious motivation.

Lesson 5 – Suffering and Justice

In this lesson children will understand the concept of suffering (physical, emotional, social) and explore why it is a universal human experience. They will compare how different religions and Humanism explain suffering and respond to it. Teachers can use a case study (e.g., natural disaster) to explore practical and moral responses. This lesson connects to earlier discussions of compassion, charity, and moral action in different faiths. It links the concepts of suffering and justice, showing how beliefs influence responses to hardship. This lesson also encourages empathy and personal reflection on how pupils might respond to injustice or suffering.

Lesson 6 – Assessment

This lesson is an opportunity to review and compare the different perspectives on justice that have been studied. Teachers should consider the best way for children to show what they know and can do at the end of this unit. Teachers can check on understanding and see if children can identify similarities and differences in how justice and judgement are understood. Children will draw together knowledge from the whole unit and earlier RE learning. This lesson also gives pupils the opportunity to articulate and justify their own views.

Key Concepts: Justice, injustice, suffering, compassion, responsibility, judgement

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