

# 8 Media matters

## The news agenda

**Aim** To examine how the news agenda is created and to explore the power of the media in shaping people's opinions

# How powerful is the media?

With the development of the media, its power to shape our everyday lives has increased. Organisations such as the BBC – which controls many radio stations, a news channel, a website and bulletins on its other TV channels – can shape public opinion. Similarly, news groups such as Rupert Murdoch's News Corporation – which owns Sky News, *The Times* and *The Sun* newspapers, along with their corresponding websites – are able to shape the news agenda.

Strict rules govern the broadcast media to ensure it is politically neutral, but this is not the case for newspapers. On an average weekday, over half the adult population in the UK still read a national daily newspaper. The political party a newspaper supports in a General Election is therefore very important.

### In groups

Which do you think has more influence on public opinion – newspapers or TV? Give reasons for your views.

The BBC is required to be neutral, but is sometimes accused of left-wing bias. Is such criticism fair? Is the BBC sometimes guilty of bias in the way that it reports the news?

## Gatekeepers – people who control the news

There are many news stories that could be included in newspapers, on TV or on the radio. A news outlet, such as a newspaper or TV station, has to decide which stories to cover. On a 'fast news day' (one with a lot of news in 24 hours) there won't be time to cover some stories. On a 'slow news day' stories that are less important are more likely to be published.

A news outlet has to decide how much coverage to give to a particular story. A politician's speech may receive a front-page story in one newspaper, only to receive a brief mention inside another. The amount of coverage a story gets is known as 'column inches' – literally the amount of space a story gets in a particular publication.

A news outlet also has to decide what angle or 'spin' to give a story. This can be a positive, negative, supporting, challenging or critical angle.

These decisions are crucial because they influence how people think about a news story. News outlets are deciding what people should know, how important a story is, and how it should be interpreted. This is known as acting as a 'gatekeeper'.

The growth in the number of media outlets means that some media power is being diluted. With more text message and email alerts, along with blogs and Twitter, other forms of media have to compete for our attention. The more media outlets there are, the less influence an individual outlet has.

However, media corporations who own large sections of the media, means that they may be able to influence, or even dictate the news agenda.

### In groups

Discuss the role of gatekeepers. Imagine you are on the editorial committee of your school's weekly newspaper. List the issues that have arisen during the week. Rank them in order of importance, and decide which will be your lead story and which other two stories you will refer to on your front page. Compare your decisions with those of other groups. Discuss what this tells you about setting the news agenda.

### For your file

Study and compare three different newspapers' front pages for the same day. Do they all have the same lead story? Do they give different amounts of space to different stories? Do they report stories from the same viewpoint?

## Spin doctors

Governments, corporations and pressure groups also employ people to manipulate and influence the media. These people are known as 'spin doctors'. The term comes from America where pitchers try to give a spin to a baseball. The job of a spin doctor is to try to get the media to report a story from a certain angle.

Supporters of spin doctors claim that they are necessary to get an organisation's message across successfully. They also believe that spin doctors are useful because they can give additional information about a news story. Critics of spin doctors say that they distort stories. This leads to a managed news agenda, where it is difficult to see what is really going on.

## The British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC)

The BBC, which was started in 1922, is now responsible for providing the major TV channels, BBC1 and BBC2, and the news channel BBC24. It also provides radio stations such as Radio 1 (popular music) and Radio 4 (news and current affairs) and a network of local radio stations. The BBC World Service broadcasts information throughout the world.

The BBC is unique in that it is funded by the licence fee. Everyone who owns a TV, or a computer capable of receiving TV programmes, must have a TV licence. This costs around £140 per year. Supporters of the BBC argue that this means that non-profitable programmes, such as regional news, children's educational programmes and other local programming will be created.

However, critics of the BBC have argued that it is unfair that the BBC receives all of the licence fee, while its main competitors, such as ITV and Channel 4, do not receive any money from this source. Instead, they have to rely on advertising. As a result, in 2009, the Government announced plans to give a small share of the licence fee to the commercial TV companies in the future to help fund regional news services.



▲ Alastair Campbell worked as a spin doctor for the former UK Prime Minister, Tony Blair.

### In groups

Do you think spin doctors are a good idea? Or do they get in the way of a free media? Give reasons for your views.

### For your file

Imagine that your school runs a Strictly Student Dancing event with individual entries from local schools. One of your school's entrants, calling himself Footloose Frank, reaches the semi-finals, where he is eliminated, following some harsh criticism from the judges about his performance. Write two versions of the story, one with a positive spin saying how well he did to get to the semi-finals, the other with a negative spin suggesting he did better in the competition than he should have done.

### In pairs

**"We shouldn't prop up the BBC by paying a licence fee. The BBC should have to pay for itself like all its competitors."**

**"The BBC provides a unique broadcasting service. The licence fee provides excellent value for money."**

**"Why should part of the licence fee go to ITV and Channel 4? They should have to support themselves like any other commercial companies."**

Discuss these statements. Say which you agree with and why.

## A free media?

The idea of freedom of speech is key to modern democracy. Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights states that “Everyone has the right to freedom of expression and opinion”. In other words, people should be allowed to contribute to a debate – to freely give and receive ideas. This means that the media, where possible, should have as much freedom as is reasonable.

In the USA, there is a completely free media. Anyone can publish or broadcast what they like. For example, if you want to set up a radio station and broadcast your views to the world, there is nothing to stop you from doing so.

In the UK, there are stricter controls. If you want to set up a radio station, you must get a licence from the government. In the USA, you have some radio stations that broadcast extremist views. In the UK, a radio station could be refused a licence if it was suspected of wanting to broadcast racist views.

Controlling the press by limiting information is known as ‘censorship’. Some people argue that there ought to be total freedom of the media. Here, people would be able to broadcast anything they liked. Others argue that there should be limits on what people can say in the media.

By contrast, the Internet is much more difficult to police, due to its size and international nature. The UK government can order a racist website to be shut down if it is based in the UK. However, if it is based in a country where there is freedom of the media, then there is nothing the UK government can do.

**Aim** To discuss freedom of speech in the media



## Should the media ever be controlled?

During the Second World War, the UK government assumed control of the media and decided what stories could and could not be printed. This was done to boost morale in order to help win the war. The government was acting in what is called the ‘national interest’. This is the main reason, or excuse, given when a government wants to withhold or release only part of the information that is available to them.

During the Second Gulf War, the UK government was able to influence the news agenda in several different ways. It decided on the timing of stories – when to release information, the amount of information it was going to release, and the angle or ‘spin’ the story was given.

### In pairs

Do you think there should be tighter controls when it comes to information on the Internet? Why? Give reasons for your views.

### In groups

Discuss the circumstances in which you think the government would be right, for reasons of national security, to control the information reported by the media.

## The Internet in the world – a case of inequality?

In order to use the Internet, people have to have access to it. One problem is that certain groups of people may have their access limited. In the UK, older people who are less familiar with new technology may have trouble accessing the Internet.

Other groups include people who are poor or unemployed. These people may not be able to access the Internet regularly, missing out on the best jobs or cheapest deals. Additionally, they may not be able to afford high-speed broadband when they do access it, so their use of the Internet may be restricted. Therefore, there is a danger of an information underclass being created.

## The global picture

In the UK nearly 90% of the population have Internet access and over 85% of the population in Germany and Japan. But worldwide the figure is only 30%, with some African countries such as Somalia and Sierra Leone having less than 2%. The lack of cable, broadband coverage or wireless Internet means that as technology improves in more developed countries like the UK, less developed countries like Senegal in Africa are left behind. In addition, 80% of the world's Internet sites are written in English, yet English is only understood by 25% of the world's population. This creates a huge language barrier.

### In pairs

Suggest measures that the government and local councils could take in order to prevent an information underclass existing.

## Case study: China

China is a key player in the media industry, as the country hosts 1 in 4 of the world's population.

There are over 620 million Internet

users in China, second only to the USA. However, although many people have Internet access, it is tightly controlled by the Chinese government.



The Chinese government censors information in three ways:

- 1 The publishers of all web pages in China must have a licence from the Chinese government.
- 2 The Chinese government controls the points where people can access the Internet.
- 3 There are strict rules about what political and religious information can be published and accessed in China.

For example, many overseas sites, such as the BBC World Service, cannot be accessed on the Internet in China.

Internet companies that provide web pages in China, such as Google, have been criticised for co-operating with the Chinese government in carrying out this form of censorship. This is because they are providing an Internet service only available under the Chinese government's conditions. Supporters of the Internet in China say that it is better to have some information rather than none at all.

In the last few years, the Chinese government has begun to crack down on teenagers' use of the Internet. Ways of doing this have included claiming that the Internet can be a dangerous addiction. In extreme cases, Chinese teenagers have been sent to military style boot camps, to cure them of their addiction to the Internet.

### In groups

Imagine if you could only access Internet sites approved by the British government. How much of an impact would this have on you?

Organise a debate on the motion: "This house believes that there should be total freedom of speech and access to the Internet."

## Privacy versus public interest

Everyone has the right to privacy. But if a person in public life does something immoral or indefensible does the public have the right to know? In what circumstances does the public's interest override a person's right to privacy? If a person in public life has an affair is it in the public interest for the press to publish the story or is that an intrusion into that person's privacy? What if the press discovers that an MP who is calling for a reduction of the number of illegal immigrants is employing an illegal immigrant as his cleaner? Where does the right to privacy end and the right of the public to know begin?

From *Private Lives, Public Concerns* by Derek Stuart

## Phone hacking

There was a public outcry when it was revealed that the *News of the World* had been paying people to hack into the phones not only of celebrities, politicians and members of the royal family, but also of the murdered schoolgirl Milly Dowler, relatives of deceased British soldiers and victims of the July 7 London bombings. As a result, the *News of the World* was closed and a number of arrests and convictions were made, most notably of the *News of the World's* former managing editor Andy Coulson.

### In groups

Study this list of methods that investigative journalists can use in order to obtain information. Which do you think are acceptable methods? Which are unacceptable and should be illegal?

- Hidden newspaper photographer
- Hidden video/television camera
- Hidden microphone
- Reporter impersonating someone else
- Intercepting post
- Recording phone calls where reporter identifies himself
- Recording phone calls where reporter pretends to be someone else
- Hacking into someone's phone
- Intercepting emails
- Interviewing family and friends
- Interviewing work colleagues
- Interviewing a person's children
- Doorstepping
- Searching through household/office rubbish for relevant documents
- Information leaked from anonymous sources

**Aim** To discuss the question of press intrusion, privacy and public interest and to explore the increased use of social media



▲ Milly Dowler, the murdered schoolgirl whose phone was hacked by journalists.

### In groups

Discuss the questions Derek Stuart raises in the paragraph above.

### In pairs

Discuss these situations and say whether you think they are an invasion of privacy.

- 1** A premier league footballer has been to a night club and is photographed leaving the club having had too much to drink.
- 2** A prominent politician tells a racist joke at a private party. Someone who was present leaks the story to a journalist.
- 3** A member of a boy band is killed in a car accident and a reporter is sent to his parents' home to interview friends and relatives.
- 4** A reporter sees a well-known actor leaving a hospital and finds out that he has been diagnosed with cancer. He tells his editor and they plan to run the story.

## Social media

The development of social media sites such as Facebook and Twitter means that people can not only communicate instantly with friends and family, but can comment on the news and post their views on any subject. Activists have been quick to realise that they can use social media to spread political and ideological propaganda and to attack their opponents.



### Campaign of Harassment Against US Airman

A member of the United States Air Force and his family were subjected to a campaign of harassment by ISIS supporters after he uploaded pictures of a bombing raid on an ISIS stronghold in Iraq.

The airman was sent threats and hateful messages online in a coordinated campaign by terrorist sympathisers to intimidate military members and their families. His teenage son also received threatening messages.

According to Fox News the ISIS supporters rallied round an Arabic Twitter account which orchestrated the 'flashmob-style' attacks.

Source: Mail Online, 8 October 2014

### In groups

"Social networking is meant to be social and social implies fun and friendly. But this is not always the case. Online bullying and victimisation is on the increase and with the web being free and people having the right to freedom of expression, hurtful comments and trolling cannot always be monitored or stopped. Should Facebook and other networks try and rein in this behaviour? Some would argue yes because of the impact it has on victims and their families, while others would say people have the right to say what they like, regardless of how hurtful and disgusting it is."

Source: wearesocialpeople.com

Discuss this view.

## Dealing with trolls

However hurtful or untrue their comments, never respond. Ignore the trolls. Don't be drawn into a slanging match. Remember that trolling is not welcomed on most moderated sites. Bullying is a violation of Facebook policy and Twitter has rules about making threats. Report the trolls by clicking the Report Abuse button.

### In groups

- 1 "Trolls abuse the right we all have to free speech. Trolls should be exposed and silenced." Do you agree?
- 2 What do you think is the best way to deal with Internet trolls?



# 9 Challenging offensive behaviour

## Sexism and sexual harassment

### What is sexism?

Sexism is when we treat a person differently purely because they are of a particular sex. Imagine a man and a woman both applying for the same job. Both people have similar backgrounds and qualifications. An employer may want to employ the man because the office is full of men and he feels the man would fit in better. However, this is illegal, because it is sexual discrimination – treating someone differently because of his or her sex.



### Why is sexism damaging?

Sexism is present in our society in many ways. An example of sexism towards women is that women are often paid less than men who do the same job, and are often given less responsibility. In the UK, employers are also often accused of allowing women to progress to a certain level within a company, but no further – this is known as the ‘glass ceiling’.

Sexism is damaging because it doesn't allow people to fulfil their potential. In the case of sexism towards women, it can hold women back, deny them opportunities, and make it harder for them to assert their independence.

**Aim** To examine what sexism and sexual harassment are, and to explore how to challenge them

#### In groups

**1** Look at the examples below of sexism that you may have encountered. What other examples can you think of?

“Girls are better at languages, but boys are better at science.”

“Girls are brighter than boys.”

“Boys are better than girls at sport.”

“It's more important for a boy to have a career than a girl.”

**2** Make a list of attitudes that you think are sexist. Compare your lists in a class discussion.

#### In groups

Discuss the statements below. Which do you agree with? Give reasons for your views.

“Women are often judged by their appearance rather than their ability to do a job.”

“Even today, there are still some jobs that most people regard as ‘men's jobs’ and other jobs that people regard as ‘women's jobs’.”

“Why it is that when a man is looking after the children at home people look down on him?”

“We need stronger laws when it comes to sexual discrimination. And women should stand up for themselves – whenever you find sexual discrimination, report it!”

# Sexual harassment

Sexual harassment is another form of sexism. This is when a person repeatedly pesters or is a nuisance towards another person, through their behaviour. This behaviour could include making sexual advances. Although sometimes the behaviour may appear to be 'innocent', to the person on the receiving end it can be uncomfortable, off-putting, and even threatening.

## Case study: street harassment



Shouting at girls, is, in fact, an act of hostility. No one shouts sexual remarks at someone he or she loves or respects. Men and boys who do shout at women do it because they think treating women as objects is 'cool', and that it gives them the upper hand.

Sometimes a man will harass a woman as an expression of his own insecurity – dislike for himself, perhaps, and an inability to believe that any female could really like him. Other times the hostility is based on race or class. Some workmen, for example, seem to enjoy harassing women dressed in office clothing. The hostility can be disguised as flattery, but often it's right out there in the open.

Source: *Stand up for Yourself* by Helen Benedict

## In groups

- 1 Study the examples of behaviour below. Which do you think qualify as sexual harassment? Why?
  - Wolf whistling
  - Putting your arm around someone
  - Saying somebody looks nice, once
  - Asking somebody out once
  - Refusing to take 'No' for an answer when someone doesn't want to go out with you
  - Saying somebody looks nice, repeatedly.
- 2 Discuss what you have learned about street harassment. Why do you think some men shout sexual remarks at women?
- 3 Think about the situation of a group of women out drinking on a Friday night. Are there ever situations when women behave in a similar way to men?

## For your file

Design a poster as part of a campaign against sexual harassment. Think about the key messages you would like to get across.

## In groups

- Sexism in the workplace can be quite common. Discuss what action you should take in each of the situations below.
- One of your work colleagues, a boy with long hair, is told by the boss to get it cut, because he 'looks like a girl'.
  - A group of young men put a photo of a topless female model up in a staffroom and joke about it in front of the women who share the staffroom.
  - You are a married woman, and during a job interview one of the interviewers asks you whether or not you have children, or are planning to have them.



# Challenging offensive behaviour

## Homosexuality and homophobia

### What is homosexuality?

Homosexuality is when a person is attracted to members of the same sex. Men who are attracted to other men are called 'gay'. Women who are attracted to women are known as 'lesbians'. Sometimes, a person's sexual orientation may involve attraction towards members of both sexes. These people are known as 'bisexuals'.

Many myths have grown up about homosexuals. Here are some of them:

**MYTH:** "You can tell homosexuals from their appearance and behaviour." **X**

**REALITY:** Not true. Some people think that all gay men are 'effeminate' and that all lesbians are 'butch'. The fact is that there is as much variety in the appearance and behaviour of homosexuals as there is among heterosexuals.

**MYTH:** "Homosexuals dislike people of the opposite sex."

**REALITY:** Not true. Homosexuals may like and dislike people of either sex, just as heterosexuals do.

**MYTH:** "Homosexuals fancy everyone who is of the same sex as them." **X**

**REALITY:** Not true. Just because you like someone of one sex, doesn't mean you like everyone of that sex. It's the same for heterosexuals.

**Aim** To understand what homosexuality and homophobia are, and the different attitudes towards homosexuality that exist

▼ Homosexual couples are often discriminated against



### How society discriminates against homosexuals

A fear of homosexuals is known as 'homophobia'. This can lead to prejudice and harassment – where people treat homosexuals badly purely because of their sexuality. In the UK such behaviour is against the law. For example, you can't turn down a person for a job just because of their sexual orientation.

'Hate crimes' are when people attack homosexuals purely because they are homosexual. However, hate crimes are not just directed at people who are homosexual. The law imposes heavier penalties in recognition of this type of crime.

There are also more subtle forms of discrimination that occur every day against homosexuals in the UK. Because most people are heterosexual, the rules that govern our society have advanced to promote heterosexuality and discriminate against homosexuality.

#### In pairs

- 1 Discuss the myths about homosexuality (above). Can you think of any other myths?
- 2 Why do you think these myths might be damaging?

#### In groups

Do you think homosexuals are discriminated against in the UK?

# Different attitudes towards homosexuality

In the UK, there are different attitudes towards homosexuals and homosexuality. For instance, the Catholic Church disapproves of the act of two people of the same sex making love. Some Methodist Christians believe that a permanent relationship that includes love is an appropriate way of expressing sexuality, whatever the sexes of the two partners in the relationship.

Campaigning groups, such as Stonewall, believe that hatred of homosexuals is a social evil, equal to racism and sexism. Stonewall argues there should be equal treatment for all men and women, whatever their sexual orientation.



▲ A Stonewall demonstration

## WHY IS HOMOPHOBIA DAMAGING?

Preconditioned by things such as TV and advertising, it's assumed that every boy and girl is straight (heterosexual)...

There is tremendous pressure on us all to conform, to become objects of desire to the opposite sex, to get married and to have children...

The problem is intensified by the fact that in our culture there still exists a taboo against homosexuality. This taboo exists mainly because there is an old idea that 'sex equals reproduction' and as loving

someone of the same sex can't produce babies, many see it as 'unnatural', 'abnormal', or even 'perverted'.

Insulting words such as 'poofter', 'faggot', 'queer', 'bender' and 'dyke' have been invented to reinforce this prejudice and they cause a lot of harm. These prejudices make many homosexual people feel that if they are attracted to the same sex there must be something wrong with them and they end up feeling bad about themselves and their sexuality.

### For your file

Someone you know is being bullied because she is a lesbian. Write about how you would deal with this situation if it happened (a) at school and (b) outside school.

Source: *Homosexuality* by Rosalyn Chissick

### In pairs

Look at the statements below. Which do you agree with? Give reasons for your views.

**"Homosexuals should be entitled to exactly the same rights as heterosexuals, and be treated in exactly the same way."**

**"I'm all for homosexual rights. But some gay people go out of their way to emphasise their sexuality. In order to be treated equally, they should act exactly like other people and not make a big thing of it."**

### In groups

Discuss the situations below and what you should do in each case to challenge homophobia.

**One of your friends is getting bullied by a group of other teenagers, because they have discovered that he is gay.**

**You see someone spraying homophobic graffiti outside a flat where a lesbian couple live.**

## Wars, weapons and arms races

**Aim** To understand the arms trade, what weapons of mass destruction are and how they affect the world

### What is the arms trade?

The arms trade is the production and sale of all weapons and military equipment used by armies around the world. Almost £1000 billion a year is spent on arms, which represents around 3% of the world's production of all goods.

The UK is the world's fourth largest arms exporter after the USA, Russia and Germany. The government supports the arms trade in a number of ways: by giving grants to help the building of arms factories, by holding trade fairs and by helping arms firms to market their products.

Critics argue that the arms trade is damaging for three reasons:

- 1 It causes human misery through all the lives that are lost, people who are injured and the destruction that results from the use of weapons in wars.
- 2 It means that countries are more tempted to resolve situations by violence, rather than co-operating with one another.
- 3 It prevents money from being spent on other areas, such as education and health.

▼ Arms are bought and sold through trade fairs



## Arms races

An arms race occurs when one country starts to increase its military equipment and the size of its armed forces, then neighbouring countries get worried, so they in turn increase their military spending. As the problem spreads, countries spend more and more trying to outdo each other.

This has occurred in many regions of the world, particularly in parts of Africa. Arms races also took place between the USA and the USSR from 1960 to 1980, and between India and Pakistan in 2000.

In 2014, concerns about China's increased military spending fuelled an arms race in Asia, with India, Indonesia, Vietnam and Thailand all increasing their defence spending. In addition, there was also increased spending by countries in the Middle East, such as Saudi Arabia, due to concern about instability in the region.



**“Arms races are inevitable once one country in a region starts to increase its military spending.”**

Discuss why arms races occur and why you agree or disagree with this view.

## An ethical arms trade

Supporters of the arms trade argue that if the UK does not sell arms to a country, another producer of arms will do so.

Opponents of the arms trade, such as CAAT (Campaign Against the Arms Trade), argue that what is needed is an ethical arms policy. This would mean that governments in countries with arms industries would refuse to sell arms to dictators and to countries where arms may be used aggressively, rather than as a means of defence.



## Weapons of mass destruction

Weapons of mass destruction are weapons that can kill people in very large numbers. These weapons were invented or developed for widespread use in the 20th century. They are outlawed because of the extremely large number of people that they can kill indiscriminately. The list on the right shows some examples.

### In groups

“The UK should only manufacture arms for use by British forces or our allies.”

“Until other countries agree to stop manufacturing and selling arms, we should go on doing so.”

“The arms trade is immoral. We shouldn't sell arms to countries engaged in conflicts or where there are human rights abuses.”

**1** Explain why you agree or disagree with these statements.

**2** On what ideas should an ethical arms policy be based? Give reasons for your views.

### Biological weapons

These were the first type of weapon of mass destruction to be developed as they occur naturally. Biological weapons kill people by infecting them with deadly germs. Modern potential biological weapons include anthrax, botulism, and the Ebola virus.

### Chemical weapons

Chemical weapons involve the use of toxic chemicals to kill or disable. They were first widely used in the First World War when chemicals like chlorine were added to mustard gas. As a result of the horrific injuries suffered by people during the First World War, the Geneva Convention of 1925 banned all chemical weapons. However, the Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein used chemical weapons on his own people in the late 1980s in order to crush opposition to his rule. President Assad of Syria also used chemical weapons against his opponents in the Syrian civil war in 2013.

### Nuclear weapons

These weapons were developed during the Second World War. In 1945 the USA dropped two nuclear bombs on the Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in order to force the Japanese to surrender. A nuclear explosion causes a huge fireball that kills everyone nearby and makes an area uninhabitable for many years to come, due to radioactive contamination.

### New weapons of mass destruction

Following the events of 11th September 2001 in the USA (see page 79), terrorists proved that there were now new weapons of mass destruction. By using passenger aircraft as missiles, the terrorists were able to kill thousands of people as the chemical fuel in the planes exploded on impact with densely populated buildings.

### In pairs

Which do you think poses the greatest threat to humanity – biological, chemical or nuclear weapons? Give reasons for your views.

### For your file

Research weapons of mass destruction on the Internet, then write an article about them and the threat from them.

## What is terrorism?

**Aim** To discuss what terrorism is, what causes and maintains it, and how terrorism can be fought

## What is terrorism and how is it caused?

Terrorists are people who want some sort of change. What makes them different from politicians and pressure groups is that they use violence to achieve their goals. They believe that nothing will happen if they don't commit acts of violence and that the end justifies the means.

Many terrorist groups want freedom and independence for a particular group or region. For example, the Basque terrorist group ETA, which planted bombs in Majorca in August 2009, wants independence for the Basque country (seven provinces on the western edge of the Pyrenees in northern Spain and southern France).

Other groups, such as Al-Qaeda and Islamic State want to change the balance of power in the world. They have declared a holy war against the USA, with the aim of causing chaos in the Middle East in order to reduce America's power and influence in the region.

◀ Members of Islamic State



## What keeps terrorism going and how to stop it

Below are some reasons why terrorism continues and suggestions for ways to stop it.

**1 THE CYCLE OF VIOLENCE** One group decides to use violence to achieve its ends and another group retaliates. One way to stop the cycle of violence is the intervention of a third party to achieve conflict resolution. A ceasefire can be negotiated, but it may break down and the terrorist attacks restart.

**2 STEREOTYPING** Stereotyping is when people are identified only by the group they belong to. The assumption is that all people in that group behave in a certain way. An example of stereotyping is saying that in Northern Ireland all Protestants treat Catholics unfairly, or that all Catholics support the IRA. Stereotyping can be fought when people are treated as individuals and it is recognised that people behave in different ways.

**3 INJUSTICE** If one group can get away with crimes, its opposition will have no respect for the law. For example, if the government in Pakistan uses violence to stop its opponents from speaking out, it only helps the terrorists to justify their actions. A solution would be to create a rule of law requiring that everyone must be treated fairly.

**4 WEAPONS** If people have weapons, they are more likely to commit violence. Disarmament is a key way to reduce terrorism and violence.

**5 ECONOMIC CONDITIONS** People fight when they feel desperate. If there is economic growth and stability, people will have less reason to fight. There are fewer terrorist organisations in more economically developed countries that have a fair distribution of wealth.

### In groups

Using the points above, discuss what you think is the main reason for terrorism continuing today. What is the best way to stop terrorism? Give reasons for your views.

# wars, weapons and terrorism

## Case study: New York 11th September 2001



On 11th September 2001, the terrorist group Al-Qaeda managed to hijack several planes inside the USA. Two of them were crashed in New York, destroying the World Trade Centre. Thousands of people died in the attacks.

## Case study: London 7th July 2005



Three bombs exploded on tube trains simultaneously and another destroyed a nearby bus nearly an hour later. The suicide bombers killed 52 people and injured more than 700.

## The war on terror

In response to the 11th September attack on New York, the US President George W Bush declared 'a war on terror'. The UK government, led by Tony Blair, supported this. The US and UK governments authorised the invasion of Afghanistan where the Al-Qaeda leader, Osama Bin Laden, was hiding. The Afghanistan Government was overthrown, but Bin Laden escaped.

In 2003, the USA linked the leader of Iraq, Saddam Hussein, to Al-Qaeda. It was also claimed that Iraq was hiding weapons of mass destruction (see page 77). Iraq was invaded by a group of countries led by the USA and the UK. However, the weapons of mass destruction have never been found, and the links between Saddam Hussein and Al-Qaeda were proved to be minimal.

Supporters of this military action say that the terrorists need to be taught a lesson. Also, they claim that terrorists no longer have the support of the governments of Afghanistan or Iraq.

Critics of the war say that all that the USA and the UK have done is to create a stronger ground for terrorism. This has led to continuing terrorist attacks in Iraq and the emergence of Islamic State.

### For your file

#### Can terrorism ever be justified?

During the Second World War some groups undertook terrorist activity in order to fight Nazi atrocities. Do you think there is ever a case where terrorist activity can be justified? Write a short statement expressing your views.

### In pairs

- 1 Were the USA and the UK right to respond to the events of 11th September by taking military action?
- 2 Say why you agree or disagree with each of the statements below.

**"We were right to hunt down the terrorists. We were not right to start a war in Iraq. That has only encouraged more terrorists around the world."**

**"I wish we spent as much money on solving conflict and promoting peace as we did on the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. Then, perhaps, there would be fewer terrorists in the first place."**

## Fighting terrorism

**Aim** To understand what Islamic State is and the difference between freedom fighters and terrorists

The civil war in Syria led to the emergence of a terrorist army, Islamic State (ISIS), which is prepared to kidnap and murder western aid workers and slaughter civilians in order to impose its rule in parts of Syria and Iraq. It claims it is fighting a holy war or jihad against the West. In response, a coalition of more than 20 countries, including Britain and led by the United States, began a bombing campaign against ISIS in 2014. The coalition is also providing support for the Kurdish and Iraqi armies fighting Islamic State on the ground.



## notinmyname

The terrorist group occupying parts of Syria and Iraq call themselves Islamic State, but Muslims all over the world have spoken out against them saying that they do not represent Islam, which is a peaceful religion. Imams across the world have condemned them and Muslims have organised social media campaigns such as #notinmyname to make it clear that they do not support the actions of the terrorists. Young men and women from European countries, including Britain, who have been radicalised by extremists, have gone to join the terrorists in Syria.

“We know there are young men and women within our communities who have gone over and committed atrocities. What we are saying is that we value and cherish the values of peace, democracy and human rights. That’s why we reject Islamic State. We also believe they’re distorting the name of our faith. It’s what we stand for as British women and Muslim women.”

Sara Khan, co-founder of *Inspire*, a counter-extremism organisation

### In groups

Young men and women from European countries, including Britain, who have been radicalised by extremists, have gone to join the terrorists in Syria.

Should British people suspected of holding extremist views and of wanting to join the jihadists have their passports confiscated?

Should British people who have been to Syria to fight but who want to return to the United Kingdom be denied entry or be detained on entry and questioned before a decision is made whether to allow them to return?

Should there be a law preventing people from expressing extremist views in support of jihad?

What effect has the bombing of Islamic State had? What else do you think governments should do to stop the advance of Islamic State?

Should British jihadists be charged with treason and given life sentences if they are found guilty?

## Terrorists or Freedom Fighters?

Whether a person is a freedom fighter or a terrorist can depend on your point of view. The state of Israel was created in 1948 and takes up 78% of the land originally known as Palestine. Since 1967 Israel has occupied the other 22% which the Palestinians claim is their homeland. There have been violent clashes between the Israelis and the Palestinians in the uprisings or intifada that took place between 1987–1993 and 2000–2003. Attempts to negotiate a peace settlement continue, but so too does the conflict between the Israelis and Palestinians which led to the Israeli bombardment of Gaza in 2014, resulting in over 2000 deaths.

The Israelis' aim was to destroy tunnels which had been built on the border between Gaza and Israel and used by the militant Palestinian group Hamas to store weapons, shield its supporters and to launch attacks on Israel. Hamas has also launched rocket attacks and sent suicide bombers into Israel.

From the Israeli point of view, members of Hamas and other Palestinian militant groups are terrorists who threaten Israeli civilians. They are also regarded as terrorists by the USA, Canada, Australia and by the United Kingdom and the other members of the EU. From the Palestinian point of view they are fighting for freedom. They are also regarded as freedom fighters by Iran, Russia, Turkey, China and some Arab states.



▲ Protests against the bombing of Gaza take place worldwide



▲ The result of an Israeli bombing raid on Gaza, 2014

## The IRA

The Provisional IRA was a paramilitary organisation which carried out a series of bombings in Northern Ireland and in England between 1969, when it was formed, and 1998. It also attacked British forces stationed in Northern Ireland and police officers in the Ulster Constabulary. Its aim was to free Northern Ireland from British rule. It was opposed by loyalist paramilitary groups who attacked IRA targets in defence of the Union.

Following the Good Friday agreement in 1998, the Provisional IRA agreed to disarm. However, groups of dissidents, calling themselves the Real IRA and the Continuity IRA have continued to carry out attacks in Northern Ireland.

The Provisional IRA were labelled terrorists for their bombing campaigns and their attacks by the British media, but supporters regarded them as people fighting for a united Ireland.

### In groups

“Members of Hamas are terrorists, not freedom fighters.” Do you agree with this view? Or are they merely protecting themselves from Israeli state-sponsored terrorism? Give reasons for your views.