



Racism and racists

In pairs

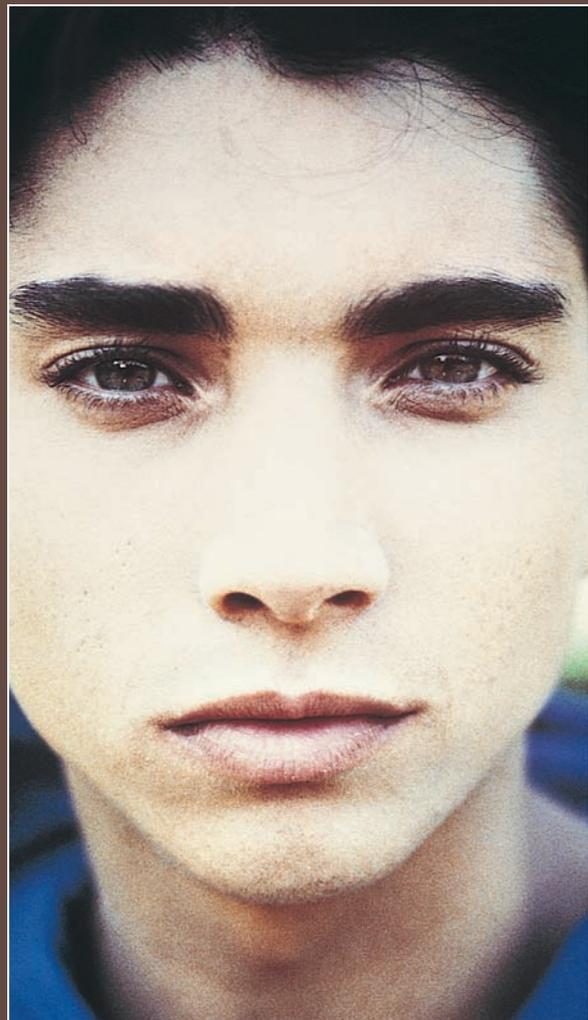
What is the difference between racism, prejudice and racial discrimination?

What is racism?

Racism is the belief that people from some races are innately inferior to others, because of things like the colour of their skin, their ethnic origin, or the country they come from.

Prejudice is knowing next to nothing about people but prejudging them anyway on the basis of stereotypes.

Racial discrimination occurs when someone is treated less favourably because of their skin colour, or their racial, national or ethnic origin. Racial discrimination includes racial abuse and harassment and is against the law.



Racism is...

Five teenagers explain what racism means to them.

Having to keep relationships secret

“ I can't walk down the street with my boyfriend because our families wouldn't approve of us going out together. ” *Lisa, 15*

Being ignored

“ I'm Jewish so I didn't have to sing the hymns at assembly. I thought that was reasonable until the other girls at school started to ignore me because one said I thought I was something special. ” *Hannah, 13*

Being singled out

“ I was in McDonald's and these lads said to my friend, 'Why are you going round with a Paki?' and pointed at me. Then they made jokes about there being a smell of curry. ” *Parveen, 17*

Ignorance at home

“ My mum says she doesn't mind me having black friends, but she would draw the line at me going out with 'one of them'. ” *Karl, 15*

Not getting the respect you deserve

“ I hate the way people talk to me as though I can't speak English, just because my parents are Chinese. They own a take-away and you would not believe the abuse they have to endure. ” *Anna, 18*

In groups

- 1 Discuss what the five teenagers (above) say racism means to them and how it affects them. Talk about what racism means to you.
- 2 'Racist jokes such as the ones made to Parveen aren't funny. As well as being insulting, they demean the person who tells them.' Discuss this view.

Why are some people racist?

Racism has been defined as the belief that some of the 'races of mankind' are superior to others. The 'superior races' were seen as more intelligent, more civilised, more capable of scientific invention, and even more moral – in other words, better human beings. People have used this idea of 'higher races' and 'lower races' to justify slavery, forced transportation, economic exploitation and even genocide – the killing of hundreds of thousands of men, women and children because they were said to be members of certain 'races' and should be 'eliminated'.

Not only has this cruelty inflicted untold human suffering over the centuries, the very thing it has been based on – the idea that there are different races in

the sense of types or grades – is now known by genetic science to be untrue. There are no such things as distinct races of mankind. Within the human form the range of differences is very large indeed, and the clustering of features such as skin colour and hair type – which are often taken to be the signs of racial difference – are just a tiny part of the possible range of DNA variation of which we are made up. People with similar skin colour, for example, and alike in that way, are also unlike in so many other ways that to say they are members of a distinct 'race' makes little more sense than to say that people who can roll their tongues longways, and those who can't, are two distinct 'races'!

In groups

- 1 Some people say, 'There is only one race – the human race.' What does this mean? Do you agree?
- 2 Discuss how the idea that there are superior races has been used in the past to justify slavery, the persecution of the Jews in Nazi Germany and the system of apartheid in South Africa. Talk about the human suffering that has resulted.

In groups

Discuss the reasons which are suggested on this page as to why people are racist. Can you think of any other reasons? What do you think is the main reason?

Racists what's their problem?

Present-day racists hold their views for a number of different reasons ...



Insecurity: Racists might not feel very good about themselves, so by bullying others they can forget their problems.

Upbringing: Many have racist views because their parents hold the same beliefs.

Bad experiences: Perhaps they've been in a situation before that has made them dislike an individual from a certain racial group. They may now hate people from the same background.

Fear of the unknown: Racists don't understand the groups they despise and have no interest in learning about other cultures or nationalities.

Arrogance: They believe that if everyone had the same upbringing and opinions as them the world would be perfect.

Intolerance: Racists believe people of other colours or nationalities shouldn't be living here.