

### Learning outcomes

- ◇ Students will gain greater understanding of debates surrounding the headscarf
- ◇ Students will develop understanding of how these debates can affect interactions between Muslims and non-Muslims in British society
- ◇ Students will explore different ideas of women's freedom

### Lesson in brief

In pairs or groups of three students will read an article on the veil and after answering a few comprehension questions will perform a role play to explore the issues raised more fully

**Materials:** Articles or access to the internet, role play cards (part of this document), simple props such as bags, scarves, hats etc

## Lesson Plan

### Starter

- ◇ Brainstorm how does what you wear express something about yourself? Has anyone else's clothes ever offended you? If yes, how?
- ◇ Ensure that everyone in the class understands some key words and concepts that will feature in this lesson:

Hijab – The headscarf worn by some Muslim women

Niqab – A face veil covering the lower part of the face (up to the eyes) worn by a minority of Muslim women

Oppressed – to be burdened with cruel or unjust power and restraints, to be controlled by other people against your will

Empowered/liberated – to be free from oppression, to regain power/control over your own life

Feminist – somebody who believes that men and women are equal and should have equal human, social and political rights. A man or woman can be a feminist

### Main activity

- ◇ Split the class into pairs or groups of three and give each pair/group a copy of an article and accompanying questions and role-play scenario. There are 6 articles and 8 role-plays.
- ◇ Ask each pair/group of three to read the article and answer the questions and then to prepare the role-play to perform to the class.
- ◇ Each article comes with the definitions of a few difficult words. Encourage students to ask if there are any words/concepts that they are struggling with as they read the article.
- ◇ N.B. Girls or boys can take any of the characters in the role-plays. To aid with this, and the discussion that the students will have afterwards in role, give them props, such as scarves, bags, hats, other accessories. In the discussion, students should only speak out of role when they take their prop off.



There are 10 cards:

1. Article: *A lesson to be learned*. Role-play A - A British Muslim teenage girl wants to veil—her family is against it
2. Article: *A lesson to be learned*. Role-play B - A British Muslim teenager starts to veil. She's the only Muslim in her class and has never had problems before. But it creates some tensions between her and her friends.
3. Article: *My body is my own business*. Role-play B - A British Muslim teenager starts to veil. She's the only Muslim in her class and has never had problems before. But it creates some tensions between her and her friends.
4. Article: *My body is my own business*. Role-play C - A British Muslim teenager is veiled and so people often think she must be foreign.
5. Article: *Here's why the veil offends me*. Role-play D - Two women – one who says that she is more free wearing a hijab and one who feels more free dressing up etc
6. Article: *Here's why the veil offends me*. Role-play E - A non-Muslim woman on a bus/tube/train sees a Muslim woman fully veiled and feels intimidated. They start talking.
7. Article: *So much for the sisterhood*. Role-play D - Two women – one who says that she is more free wearing a hijab and one who feels more free wearing dressing up etc
8. Article: *So much for the sisterhood*. Role-play F - Conversation/argument between three women who believe in equality between men and women (feminists).
9. Article: *I want to unveil my views on an important issues*. Role-play G - A fully veiled Muslim woman and her husband go to their MP Jack Straw because they have a problem. Jack Straw asks the woman to remove her veil.
10. Article: *Muslim barrister wins £75,000 over 'Mother Teresa' and 'tent head' jibes*. Role-play H - Woman leaves work after she is harassed and abused



### Plenary

Each group will perform their role-play to the rest of the class. They will stay in role while others in the class ask them questions – such as about how they feel or the reasons they respond in particular ways.

Additional questions that might be addressed:

How do you think Muslim women feel about whether or not they veil being such a topic of public and media debate? Should they put with it or should they be left alone?

Should Muslim women who veil remove it in order to avoid hostility?

For instance this article on the BBC website about a prominent British Muslim figure, Dr Badawi, advising veiled Muslim women "who fear being attacked physically or verbally to remove their hijab so as not to be identified by those hostile to Muslims... Dress is meant to protect from harm, not to invite it." The London mayor's human rights adviser at the time had a different view arguing that the only people who should change their behaviour are those who seek to intimidate or attack Muslims.

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk/4742869.stm>

What do you understand by the term 'multiculturalism'? Do you think that that Britain is a 'multicultural' nation? To what extent do you think multiculturalism is a principle worth defending in Britain?

### Homework

Ask students to write up answers to the questions discussed in class or to write a diary entry for the character that they played









**So much for the sisterhood**

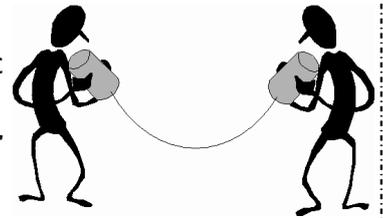
- ★ Integration – a minority fitting into the whole society
- ★ Submission – accepting or submitting to somebody else’s control over you
- ★ Autonomous decisions – an autonomous decision is one you make yourself and is fully your own
- ★ Patriarchal – something that suits men’s needs and interests not women’s

**Questions**

- ✂ What sisterhood is the author of the article referring to?
- ✂ What is her criticism of non-Muslim feminists who are against Muslim women wearing the hijab?
- ✂ What different rights does she say that she defends?

**Role play**

Two women – one who says that she is more free wearing a hijab and one who feels more free wearing dressing up etc  
*Characters: 1. Muslim woman wearing hijab, 2. Non-Muslim who feels free dressing up with heels and make-up etc. Or if doing with 3 add: a woman who dresses modestly but does not veil (can be either Muslim or non-Muslim)*



**So much for the sisterhood**

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**Role play**

Conversation/argument between three women who believe in equality between men and women (feminists).  
*Characters: 1. Muslim woman wearing a hijab, 2 and 3: Two non-Muslim women with different views on whether Muslim women should be able to veil*

