

Teaching notes

Key Stage: KS4.

Resources:

- ❖ Resource 1 'Get stop and search right' says Home Secretary Theresa May (video clip on BBC News UK – internet access needed).
- ❖ Resource 2 – Summer 2013.
- ❖ Resource 3 – Debate with an MP – reforming stop and search.

Objectives:

- ❖ Investigate ways in which the rights of the police to 'stop and search' might conflict with the rights of citizens.
- ❖ Understand why hard decisions have to be made to balance the above.

Overview

Against the backdrop of Theresa May's summer 2013 call to review police 'stop and search' powers, students explore who is most likely to be stopped and searched, and how many such searches lead to arrest. Students are then challenged to propose alternative ways of running the process.

Within the lesson they're also encouraged to take into account the views of teacher Stuart Lawrence, the brother of black teenager Stephen Lawrence who was murdered in a racist attack in 1993. Stuart claims to have been subject to 25 'stop and searches' due to his skin colour, despite none of these searches having led to arrest.

Starter (5 minutes)

Focus: why is 'stop and search' being debated?

1. If you have internet access, play the following media clip, showing 'stop and search' in Lewisham: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-23152271>.

You could ask students to consider the questions in **Resource 1** below as they watch.

2. In pairs, students discuss the following question:
When do you think a police officer has the right to 'stop and search'?

Answer: If s/he has good reasons to suspect that drugs, weapons or items for committing a crime could be found. In that situation s/he can search a person or a vehicle.

Activity 1 (10 minutes)

Focus: why is 'stop and search' being debated?

Resource 2: small group activity (instructions on sheet).

Answers: provided on p.5 below.

Activity 2 (30 minutes)

Focus: how would the ideal 'stop and search' process work?

Resource 3:

In groups of four, students use Resource 3 to take part in a debate with the 'local MP'. The focus of the debate is reforming the 'stop and search' process.

Plenary (10 minutes)

Focus: how would the ideal 'stop and search' process work?

Resource 3:

A few students feed back to the class on the group's suggestions. The class then votes on the best suggestions for a reformed 'stop and search' process.

Resource 1 'Get stop and search right' says Home Secretary Theresa May

BBC News UK, 2 July 2013

www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-23152271

Watch the video clip and think about the following questions:

1. Why was the first man stopped and searched by the police?
2. Was this justified?
3. Why was Jonathan Hinds stopped and searched?
4. Was this justified?
5. Why does Theresa May want to make changes to 'stop and search'?
6. Who gets stopped and searched, according to the people interviewed?

Discuss the following question in pairs:

When do you think a police officer has the right to 'stop and search'?

.....

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Discuss the following question in pairs:

When do you think a police officer has the right to 'stop and search'?

Resource 2 – Summer 2013

Fact 1

In July 2013, Home Secretary Theresa May called for a review of the police's use of 'stop and search', pointing out that it is used disproportionately amongst different ethnic groups.

Fact 2

Black citizens are six times more likely than white citizens to be 'stopped and searched' by police in the UK. For Asian citizens, their likelihood of the police conducting a 'stop and search' is twice that of their white neighbours.

Fact 3

Stephen Lawrence was a black teenager tragically killed in a racist attack in 1993. His brother, Stuart Lawrence, a teacher, claims that he (Stuart) has been stopped 25 times by police despite never being charged with anything afterwards. He believes that this is due to his skin colour, and has launched an official complaint about harassment.

Fact 4

Only 9% of those 'stopped and searched' are subsequently arrested (e.g. because drugs have been found).

Fact 5

For every 'stop and search' conducted, it takes an average of 16 minutes for a police officer to fill in the necessary paperwork. This paperwork is required even if nothing is found on a person or in a vehicle.

In small groups, discuss the following questions:

1. What is meant by the term *institutional racism*?

(This phrase was used about the police force after Stuart Lawrence's brother was killed in racist attack. Many felt that young Stephen's death would have been taken more seriously if he had been white.)

2. Why would Home Secretary Theresa May want to ensure that citizens from all ethnic groups are treated fairly in terms of 'stop and search'?
3. For every 100 'stop and searches' that are conducted, 91 do not lead to arrest. How many minutes of paperwork do 91 'stop and searches' add up to? Is this a good use of police time? Explain why / why not.

Resource 2 – Summer 2013 – Teacher answer sheet

1. What is meant by the term *institutional racism*?

Answer:

Institutional racism = systems and structures within an organisation (e.g. a school, hospital, charity or political party) that discriminate against people from certain backgrounds.

2. Why would Home Secretary Theresa May want to ensure that citizens from all ethnic groups are treated fairly in terms of 'stop and search'?

Answer:

Students could consider the following reasons:

- ❖ to be fair to those who are currently searched more than others (e.g. young black males)
 - ❖ to make the process more efficient – rather than guesswork based on skin colour, the police could make more informed decisions about who they search
 - ❖ to improve community relations – citizens like Stuart Lawrence feel frustrated towards a system that is supposedly there to support everyone
 - ❖ potentially to win votes from minority groups in society.
3. For every 100 'stop and searches' that are conducted, 91 do not lead to arrest. How many minutes of paperwork do 91 'stop and searches' add up to?

Answer:

1,456 minutes (24 hours and 16 minutes).

Is this a good use of police time? Explain why/not.

Answer:

This is not good use of police time because those 24 hours are wasted on searches that do not lead to arrest. However, some people point out that it is not possible to know whether a police office's time will be wasted until a search has been completed.

Resource 3 – Debate with an MP – reforming 'stop and search'



Destiny



Hans



Dave

Destiny: I'm a 22-year-old saleswoman. I've been stopped and searched three times this month because there's lots of knife crime in my work car park. It's ridiculous, because after the third time they should have registered me on their system as an innocent person. I just happen to work near people who aren't so law-abiding, unfortunately.

Hans: I'm a 19-year-old student. I've been stopped and searched three times. On the third time I was arrested afterwards for having cannabis in my car. I must admit that after the second search I nearly stopped carrying drugs in the car. I wouldn't use drugs again – the police catching me caused a massive argument with my girlfriend.

Dave: I'm a 28-year-old doctor. I've been stopped and searched three times and they've never found anything – there will never be anything to find as I stick to the law. I think that, to protect citizens, police should increase the number of stop and searches that are done monthly. Maybe there should be quotas to ensure fairness, for example, police search the same number of females and males in each city.

Debate

One student acts as the local MP.

The other three each choose a character above.

The MP is seeking feedback on behalf of the government, as a hard decision is required: how could the 'stop and search' process be improved?

Take into account:

- ❖ increasing police efficiency
- ❖ ensuring a system where rights of the police are balanced with rights of citizens
- ❖ Citizenship keywords such as: tolerance, diversity, responsibility, community cohesion, diversity, conflict and justice.

Class discussion

A few MPs should feed back to the class on the group's suggestions.

The class then votes on the best suggestions for a reformed 'stop and search' process.

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