

Activity Sheet 2

John Wesley was a passionate supporter of the Abolition movement. To show his support he wrote a short book about why the slave trade should be stopped and also preached sermons (a bit like a speech given in churches) about why it was wrong.

Not everyone agreed with him, mainly those whose jobs and incomes depended on the slave trade; it had made some people very rich. Because not everyone agreed, he sometimes faced violent responses to his sermons. This did not put him off as he believed very strongly that things needed to change.

In this activity we'll use an extract from a short book, or pamphlet, written by John Wesley in 1774, to help us write our own speech. The extract is below:

‘Whatever you lose, lose not your soul:

Nothing can countervail that loss. Immediately quit the horrid

trade: At all events, be an honest man’

‘Whether you are a Christian or no, show yourself a man! Be not more savage
than a lion or a bear!

. . . Give liberty to whom liberty is due, that is,
to every child of man, to every partaker of human nature.’

Throughout the book he uses language to try and persuade people to change. Can you think of a time when you've tried to persuade someone?

Persuade – Trying to get people to change their mind or do something

In the short extract he does the following:

Appeals to people's good nature, or to do the right thing

'Whatever you lose, lose not your soul' 'At all events, be an honest man'

He is trying to convince people that being a good person is better than any riches they could get. Asking people to do the right thing morally.

Tries to appeal to lots of people, not just one group

'Whether you are a Christian or no, show yourself to be a man!'

Even though John Wesley was a devoted Christian, he wanted to appeal to everyone, whether they were a Christian or not. Whilst he does refer to the Bible in his pamphlet, he uses lots of other sources as well to support his argument as he didn't want people saying that if they weren't Christian, it didn't apply to them.

Asks people to think about what they do

'Be not more savage than a lion or a bear!'

Sometimes being compared to a lion might make someone sound brave, in this case John Wesley is using it in a bad way. By saying 'savage', which means cruel or ferocious, he is trying to imply we should know better and not act like that.

Are there any causes that are important to you, or are you passionate about something that might help other people? Below are some examples, but you can choose whatever means something to you:

Climate change

Exercise

Anti-bullying

Reading

Equal rights for all

Write a short speech

Use what you have learnt to write a short speech about something that is important to you. It doesn't have to be very long; you can start with a few lines.

On a piece of paper (or using the template on the next page) start by writing a few notes under the following titles:

Introduction

- Who are you and what are you talking about?

Why are you talking about it?

- Find some facts i.e. about climate change, or why cyber bullying is harmful. If you have a favourite hobby, like reading, you could even speak about this and why it's good for people!

How can people help?

- Let people know how they can help, or what they could do to get more out of something. Make sure this is realistic. For example, it would be hard for someone to completely stop using plastic, but could they do something like get a re-usable water bottle, or cycle more? Again, if you are trying to get people to read more, set a realistic target like one or two books a month.

Conclusion

- Finish by summarising what you have said in your speech and thank people for listening.

Once you have done your notes, try writing it up in longer sentences, then ask someone to listen to your speech.

Some other things to remember:

John Wesley wanted to appeal to lots of people, you could do this by speaking about something we can all help with, like recycling, or reading more.

Do you know any stories that back up your argument? If you have a personal story that you can share this could help.

Use emotive language – people need to know this means something to you! Go back to Activity 1 and think about the best language to use.

Introduction

Why are you talking about it?

How can people help?

Conclusion