



<b>Lesson Title</b>	What is extremism? Causes and examples.		
<b>Lesson Plan Number</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>Age Range/ Year Group</b>	15-18 years
<b>Resources</b>	<b>Learning Outcomes</b>		
1. Resource Sheet 1. Task 1 – What do we already know about extremism? Task 2 – What is the definition of extremism? 2. Resource Sheet 2. Task 3 – What are the similarities and differences between types of extremism? 3. Resource Sheet 3. Task 4 – What causes violent extremism? 4. Resource Sheet 4. Task 5 – What are some examples of violent extremism?	By the end of this lesson students will be able to; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understand what extremism is.</li> <li>• Recognise some of the factors that lead to extremism.</li> </ul>		

**LESSON INTRODUCTION**

This lesson encourages students to understand what extremism is and to identify some of its causes. It allows them to consider the concept of extremism - both in their own country and in other countries.

**STARTER (10 mins)**

- Ask students to think about how they would define extremism.
- Encourage volunteers to explain their own interpretations of extremism
- Ask students to read task one and to fill in the table.
- Encourage students to orally justify their answers.

**Answers:**

		True or false?
1.	The British government has created an 'extremist toolkit' which helps schools to prevent violent extremism.	TRUE.
2.	You can tell whether someone has extreme beliefs by looking at them.	FALSE.*
3.	People of the same religion all have the same opinions about important issues.	FALSE.
4.	There is extremism in almost every country.	TRUE.
5.	Extremism always leads to violence.	FALSE.
6.	Websites exist which help young adults to tackle violent extremism.	TRUE.
7.	Extremism can apply to issues such as whale hunting, nuclear power, rights for fathers and vegetarianism.	TRUE.
8.	The events of 9/11 were caused by extremism.	TRUE.
9.	There is extremism in this country.	+
10.	Certain extremist actions can tarnish whole communities (even when the extremists are in a small minority).	TRUE.

\* Someone might be wearing a pro-Nazi T-shirt for example.

+ Whilst it is highly likely, this obviously depends on the country in which the lesson is being taught.

**Examples of oral justifications might be:**

“I put false for number 3, because you might have two neighbours who have the same religion but who feel really differently about an issue such as women’s rights.”

“I put true for number 6, because there is a site called ‘Extreme News’ that helps young people to understand what extremism is and why it is dangerous.”

- Ask students to read through task two and to follow the instructions.
- Invite volunteers to comment on the definitions of extremism and to give (local and global) examples of extremism.
- Praise those who respond.

**MAIN ACTIVITY (20 mins)**

- Ask students to work in groups of three or four and to complete task three on paper.
- Ask spokespersons from a few of the groups to feed back.

**Examples of good responses:**

“There seemed to be a lot of differences, so the similarities are easier to explain! All of the people felt really strongly about a certain issue. Some of them felt so passionately that they gave up a job, a marriage, food, or a weekend for their beliefs. Another similarity is that a lot of them seemed to be interested in changing the law. Also, we noticed that some of them referred to other people as if other people were wrong.”

“There were lots of differences between their views and actions. For example, some of the people were anti-religion whereas others saw themselves as very religious. Some focused upon humans whereas others focused on animals. Some had violent tendencies but others used peaceful protests. Some were rude about other people, and others weren’t. Our group has realised that there are lots of forms of extremism and that not all extremists are violent.”

- Ask students to discuss the information in task four in small groups.
- Ask them to use a coloured pen to highlight the causes that, in their opinion, apply in their country.
- Ask the class to take part in a brief discussion.
- Prompt questions might include:
  - Is there a difference between extremism and violent extremism?
  - Which causes of extremism seem to apply in this country?
  - Which kinds of people do you think are particularly susceptible to joining violent extremist groups?



**SUMMARY (10 mins)**

- Show students task five and ask them to discuss their reactions in pairs.
- Ask students to give feedback about their partners' responses (e.g. "Kamaljeet said that..").
- Prompt questions might include:
  - Which story affected your partner the most? Explain.
  - Had your partner already heard about any of the stories? Which one(s)?
  - Does your partner think that whole countries or regions sometimes get labelled as extremist because of the actions of a few people?
  - Does your partner think that extremism is something that countries should tackle individually or together?
  - How does your partner believe that young people can be prevented from joining violent extremist groups?

**EXTENSION/FOLLOW UP IDEAS**

Look at the '[www.extremenews.org.uk](http://www.extremenews.org.uk)' website.

Write down five facts from the website that you did not previously know.

Be ready to share these with other students next lesson.

**CHECK THE WEB**

1. [www.extremenews.org.uk](http://www.extremenews.org.uk) for thought-provoking material about how extremism can be tackled (through the media and otherwise).
2. [www.wikipedia.org](http://www.wikipedia.org) for the latest information about extremist attacks throughout the world.

**NATIONAL CURRICULUM LINKS**

**KS4:** 1.2.c, 1.3.b, 1.3.c, 2.1.a, 2.1.d, 2.2.a, 2.2.b, 3h, 3l, 3m, 3n, 4a, 4b, 4c, 4h & 4i.

## What is extremism?

### TASK ONE. What do we already know about extremism?

'Extremism' is an important word that we hear quite often nowadays. As such, it is essential to know what it actually means and to identify some examples of extremism.

Look at the statements below. Decide which are true and which are false.

		True or false?
1.	The British government has created an 'extremist toolkit' which helps schools to prevent violent extremism.	
2.	You can tell whether someone has extreme beliefs by looking at them.	
3.	People of the same religion all have the same opinions about important issues.	
4.	There is extremism in almost every country.	
5.	Extremism always leads to violence.	
6.	Websites exist which help young adults to tackle violent extremism.	
7.	Extremism can apply to issues such as whale hunting, nuclear power, rights for fathers and vegetarianism.	
8.	The events of 9/11 were caused by extremism.	
9.	There is extremism in this country.	
10.	Certain extremist actions can tarnish whole communities (even when the extremists are in a small minority).	

### TASK TWO. What is the definition of extremism?

The word 'extremism' should be used with care because it has a specific meaning in modern society.

Read the definitions of extremism below. Discuss them with a partner and identify some examples of extremism.

(1). Beliefs and political parties which most people consider unreasonable and unacceptable.

[www.dictionary.cambridge.org](http://www.dictionary.cambridge.org)

(2). It means having a view or taking action that might be considered extreme. In politics it might be an individual, group or party that believes or takes action that goes beyond the accepted norm.

For our purposes to better explore extremism we can turn to Robert F. Kennedy, he said that "what is objectionable, what is dangerous about extremists is not that they are extreme, but that they are intolerant. The evil is not what they say about their cause, but what they say about their opponents.

[www.extremenews.org.uk](http://www.extremenews.org.uk)

(3). Extremists of all persuasions try to paint the world as black and white, accentuating division and difference, and exploiting fears based on ignorance or prejudice.

[www.dcsf.gov.uk/publications/violentextremism](http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/publications/violentextremism)



**TASK THREE. What are the similarities and differences between types of extremism?**

Because extremists have different personalities and different backgrounds, there are differences (as well as similarities) between extremists.

**Look at the comments below. Find as many similarities and as many differences as you can between the people's beliefs.**

**USEFUL VOCABULARY:**

*acceptance* **anger** *confrontation* *difference* **division** *emotional* *fact*  
**(in)tolerance** *issue* *judgement* **narrow-minded/open-minded** *norms*  
*opinion* **passion** *peaceful* *personal* **polarised** *politics* *protest* **racism**  
*relationship* *sexism* **(un)reasonable** *violence*

1. I feel passionately against whale hunting – so passionately that I have given up my job to run a website about it. My husband and I split up last year because he said that the whales were taking over my life. My husband didn't agree with me that people who hunt whales should be killed with harpoons

2. I am a Christian. Lots of people call themselves Christians, but only a few of us in the world are true Christians. I believe that all women should cover their heads and should raise families rather than getting jobs. I also feel that all the laws in our country should be based upon the bible, so I hate the fact that shops open on a Sunday and that divorced people are allowed to have relationships. Blasphemy should be punishable by a fine.

3. I am a Muslim man who feels really strongly about fathers' rights. In my opinion, mothers have lots of rights and fathers have very few. Every day I write letters to the President asking him to change the law. I also spend most evenings peacefully protesting about fathers' rights. Last month, we chained ourselves to our local school's gates and refused to eat or drink until a member of the government agreed to listen to us.





## What is extremism?

4. I am proud to be white and so I do not see any need to mix with non-white people. I believe that white people who have non-white friends are traitors. I think that there should be cities where only white people are allowed to live. I also feel that it should be against the law for white people to have children with non-white people.

5. God does not exist. People who believe in God are mentally ill and are a danger to society. Teachers who talk to children about religion should be sacked. I have taught my daughter to laugh when adults talk about God.

6. I have been vegan since I was five. No-one on this planet should eat or wear anything that comes from an animal – it's a form of torture! Every Saturday and Sunday I stand outside McDonalds and try to persuade people about the moral benefits of veganism.

### TASK FOUR. What causes violent extremism?

Extremism has lots of causes, and not everyone becomes an extremist for the same reasons. For example, people might become extremists for different reasons in different countries.

**Discuss the information below in a small group.**

Some of the causes of violent extremism:

- The media regularly gives negative messages about people from minority groups/ people from other countries.
- Extremist groups usually target susceptible young people. These young people might be lonely, bored or 'lost'.
- Extremist training for young people can be very 'exciting' and can provide strong friendships.
- Unemployed young adults sometimes feel that extremism gives them a purpose.
- Young adults who did not achieve well at school sometimes use extremism as a way to feel that they are succeeding.
- Certain areas have influential extremist networks (e.g. in the UK there are Al-Qaeda networks in London, Manchester, the Midlands, Bristol and Exeter).
- Family members sometimes encourage extremism.
- Extremist websites/videos have a big impact and are hard to regulate.
- Social networking websites allow people all over the world to influence each other.
- Some extremist groups believe that they are following God's instructions. As such, they do not understand that what they are doing is wrong.
- Some citizens feel that they have been treated unfairly throughout life, and want someone to blame or punish.
- Some citizens who move to a different country find it hard to adapt to their new life. They look for someone to guide them.
- Violence is increasingly glamorised by the media.
- Teachers and police officers do not usually have enough training to recognise extremism or to deal with it.



### **TASK FIVE. What are some examples of violent extremism?**

The world seems to have paid a lot of attention to violent extremism since 9/11 - even though it goes back hundreds of years. Many of us hear about violent extremism regularly through the media and through our education. Although violent extremism only represents a tiny percentage of the world's population, it definitely needs to be understood.

**Read through the extremist attacks below and be ready to discuss your feelings.**

**(A) England: 7th July 2005.**

Fifty-six people (including four suicide bombers) were killed in Islamist extremist attacks on the London transport network. About 700 people were injured, many of whom needed hospital treatment. It was the deadliest single act of terrorism in the UK since 1988 and the deadliest bombing in London since World War Two. More people were killed by the attack than in any single IRA attack.

**(B) Israel: 11th October 2008.**

A gang of 200 Israeli Jews attacked a Palestinian-Israeli neighbourhood. They were chanting "Death to Arabs!" and set a house on fire before the police stopped them. The violence escalated after the house-burning; young people started throwing stones and the police were called back. The attack happened because a non-Jewish man in Akko had driven his car during a Jewish holiday.

**(C) Basque region: 30th October 2008.**

After four members of ETA were arrested, an ETA car bomb injured twenty-one people in Pamplona. Their injuries were mainly caused by broken glass. The vehicle exploded in a university car park and caused other vehicles to be set on fire and nearby buildings to be damaged. After the explosion, over 200 people were treated for breathing problems and coughing. Many stayed in hospital for more than a week after the attack.

