

# Words that hurt

## Introduction

This activity is designed to raise students' awareness of issues of diversity and how unconscious biases can be offensive.



The students explore a number of statements and expressions and think about how they could be hurtful to some people and why. This lesson deals with what may be, in some countries, a very sensitive issue.

**Webinar time reference:** 29:49 – 36:46

**Level:** Secondary B1+

**Time:** 20- 30 minutes

**Aim:** To raise students' awareness of and sensitivity to perceptions of diversity.

## Preparation:

- Make copies of the worksheet for your students.

## Procedure

- Ask students if they can remember the last time someone said something to them that hurt them.
- Ask them if they want to share and tell the class, or you could share something that hurt you.
- Ask the students if the person intended to hurt them.

- Explain that in many cases the harm isn't intentional.
- Show the students the three pictures.
- Tell them to read the list of comments and decide which of the people might be hurt by these comments.
- Once they have finished reading, put the students into small groups and ask them to compare and explain why the people may be hurt.
- Get some feedback from the students and see if they can explain why these statements might cause offence.

**Materials:**

**Words that hurt**

Which of these sentences would hurt these people? Why?



1. Are you sure you can walk there?
2. This is not for your body type.
3. But you don't look black.
4. You're rational like a man.
5. At least you're not flamboyant.
6. I'm straight/not gay, but I'm fine around you.
7. But you were made to have babies.
8. Was it difficult to get a job with that hair?

## Additional resources

### What is inclusion, and how do we implement it?

- When we have true inclusion, it is when we have removed all barriers, discrimination and intolerance. When implemented properly, it should make everyone feel included and supported, whichever environment they are in.

<https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/article/what-inclusion-and-how-do-we-implement-it>

### Creating an inclusive school environment

- This collection of papers highlights the need for inclusive education and some of the steps taken to implement it.

<https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/article/creating-inclusive-school-environment>

### English Teaching Talks – Inclusion

- Use these videos from Susan Douglas about giving all our learners access to rich, inclusive and engaging learning opportunities.

<https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/article/english-teaching-talks-inclusion>

### Gender in language teacher education

- Laura takes a practical look at issues of bias and representation in the materials, language and interaction patterns we use in the training room and suggests simple ways for teacher educators to promote gender equality.

<https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/article/gender-language-teacher-education>