



HASSLES ABOUT HARRASSMENT

Teachers' notes

The following pages are about each Britkid's hassles and have been taken from the website (NB some of the text has been changed to fit in with this section).

They have been created so that you can print them out and work with them whilst not using the website and are specifically designed to be in line with PSHE and Citizenship curriculum needs, although they can be used in other areas (e.g. English).

Suggestions for use:

- Place the class into small groups and give each group a different character to look at, using the question sheet as a focus for discussions. After 5 minutes swap the characters round. At the end get each group to feed back their discussions and see if any patterns emerge.
- Give each person a character sheet and a question sheet to work on individually and then get them to write their own hassles sheet.
- After discussions, get the class to try and think of strategies to cope and ways to improve things – what do they think might work in areas like name-calling for example?

Some things that are discussed could be sensitive for individuals in your class. The last paragraph on the Serious Issues page about racist attacks and harassment says this:

'If you are being racially harassed, either physically or with words, the person doing it is probably breaking the law. Don't suffer in silence. Contact your local Racial Equality Council if there is one (if not, contact the Commission for Racial Equality in London, Tel: 0207 828 7022). Contact the police too, with a friend for support. You can also phone the victim support line Tel: 0845 3030 900. If you're scared and feel you have no-one to turn to, phone ChildLine Tel: 0800 1111, it's free'.

BritKid

ANAND'S HASSLES



I think harassment is just a fact of life for many black people and Asian people. It's just like... something you have to learn to deal with. Almost everyone I know has some experience of being insulted or called names. Sometimes it happens at school, sometimes it's just in the street, or when we're out shopping.

My parents say it happens at work sometimes. I mean, I know sometimes one of my best friends has used a racist word when we've had an argument or something, in the heat of the moment. I just let that go, because, you know, it's embarrassing to make a meal out of it - you just want to forget about it, but the thing is, you can't.

It's like it silences you, even if it wasn't meant to be really bad. If they knew how much it really hurts perhaps they wouldn't do it. Some kids use insulting words all the time for someone with another colour skin and they make a point of saying them in the street or in a bus, but it hurts most when your friends do it without thinking.

I'm not saying that white people never get insulted, but there just aren't as many words which can be used to insult you because you're white. Racist words are powerful because they hurt a lot. It's also bad because you never know when it's going to come out. You might be in a shop and someone pushes past you saying something bad. Sometimes a car will drive past our car and people in it are shouting racist things at us. Then you see it written on wall or on someone's book at school...

BratKid

BALVINDER'S FAMILY'S HASSLES



Hi, I'm Mrs Kaur, mother. She asked me to tell you about some of the hassles we've had over the years...My sister and her family moved out of the centre of Coventry into a nicer area. That's what they say we should do isn't it... not all stick together and live in one place? Well she tried that and they were the first Asian family in their street. After a couple of weeks they found their dustbin was always being turned over and the rubbish tipped out. The neighbours' bins were always okay. Then they started getting phone calls - perhaps they got the name or the number from something in the dustbin.... The phone calls were horrible, all swear words and insulting things about Asians.

The police and the telephone people were quite helpful, but they could never stop the calls coming. Over the next year they had their windows broken four times by bricks with *Paki* written on them, and they wrote it in red paint on the door once. They have a box outside for their letters now because they've had to seal up the letter box in their door. People like us all know about racists who put lighted rags and things like that through letter boxes.



I can't tell you what it's like, not feeling safe even in your own home. The kids can't go out and play, and they never answer the door after dark. You would think someone would have seen something, but apart from one neighbour who is nice to them the others all look away and hardly ever speak to them.

BritKid

DANI'S MUM'S HASSLES



Hi I'm Carole, Dani's mum. Dani probably doesn't know about some of the hassles we've had living here, so I reckon I should tell you... I like the house we live in now, but I can't help remembering the trouble we used to have. My Mum, Dani's Gran, used to try to hide it from us kids when we were young, but I knew she used to get trouble from racist landlords, even though she had a decent job.

I got a council house when I got married, but I don't believe it was coincidence that a lot of black families got housed together - I think the housing people gave us worse places and put us all in one area, where all the oldest council houses were.



We bought this house before Dani was born, and I know some of the neighbours didn't like it. God knows what things would be like now if there wasn't a law against people discriminating, though there's all sorts of ways it still goes on. I know people used to be able to put their house up for sale and say 'to white families only'. Then they used to complain that black people always lived together!

BratKid

JOHN'S HASSLES



My biggest hassle is being small for my age. It's a real pain 'cos I want to play football for the school but the bigger kids can push me out of the way. My Dad says one day I'll just start growing and catch the others up, but I wish it would hurry up.

I'm the smallest in our class, and some prats call me titch. I've got a good answer for anyone though, especially a girl who says I'm small: I just say 'Yeah but you're ugly - at least I'll grow'. It's not that anyone really bullies me over it, it's just that, y' know, they think you're weaker and everything, and they forget there's loads of important people who aren't all 6 foot tall.

I don't get much in the way of racist name-calling or hassles or anything, though I did get off a bus recently when there was a group of black kids going on about what they did to little white boys. It makes me all mixed up when I remember what happened to me and Nat.

BratKid

MEGAN'S HASSLES



I'm not really settled in here yet, since we only moved here six months ago from Cardiff. It was hard leaving my Gran and the friends I'd made at school there.

I don't like it the way people take the mickey out of my accent and try to copy it, but it's not what I call a big hassle. My friends don't do it, only a few idiots who I don't really know and don't want to know.

I'm not very dark skinned, 'cos Dad's Mum, my other Gran, was white as well, but sometimes people ask about it. A few people can't understand that I'm both black and Welsh. I guess they don't realise that there are black people from Wales, especially Cardiff. Some kids at my last school used to call me names a bit. I wish they were here at this school 'cos then they'd get called names for being Welsh...

BritKid

TAZ'S HASSLES



We don't really have any hassles where we live. We have some really nice neighbours and I wouldn't like to live anywhere else. We know people who have neighbours who hardly ever speak to them and say racist things when they do, so I think we're really lucky. We see a lot of the family two doors down, they invited us in for New Year's Eve and everything and I often babysit for them (I've taught their little boy to count to ten in Urdu!).

I hate it when people call us 'Pakis'. It just sounds so much like they don't like us, and they don't care if we've ever been to Pakistan or even if our parents are Indian. I heard some men walk past the house last week and one of them said 'That's that P*** house' and I felt really, y'know, unsafe and worried, but my Dad says they sometimes just don't think about what they say. I don't think people realise how much it hurts. It's like that's all you are, you're not even a human being. It's horrible.

BritKid

TZU LEE'S HASSLES



I was standing in a phone box last year (lost my mobile, didn't I?) when a group of boys surrounded it and wouldn't let me out. They jammed against the door and made stupid slanty-eyed faces and shouted things about take-aways. I was scared, and really ... well, just upset that they'd do that to a complete stranger. I get the odd comment in the street or shops sometimes - like one time this woman pushed right in front of me then when I said something she had a right go at me, saying English people know how to queue properly.

The other main hassle I have is that I'd like to be a model, but you never see any really Chinese looking models do you?

Brent Kid

NAT'S HASSLES



I really don't like telling this story. Me and John were walking home after we'd been in a music thing at school - it was last year - and these blokes started following us. They were about 17 I suppose, anyway they were much bigger than us and there were about eight of them. You could tell something was going to happen but you don't know what, do you?

If we'd known we'd have ran like hell straight away. But suddenly they started running and caught us up and pinned us into a shop doorway. They were saying all this racist stuff, they just went on and on about it, and going on at John about why he didn't stick to his own kind. One of them started hitting us then, and then they all started.

After a while I think they mostly held John, but they got me onto the ground and just kicked and kicked. I had concussion, a cracked rib and something done to my kneecap that they can't fix. It could have been worse, I don't think they cared, but they ran off when a load of women came out of a pub. No-one ever got caught.

BritKid

DAVID'S HASSLES



I have two hassles to do with who I am. The first is that people always talk about England as if it means all of Britain. They just forget about the other bits as if they don't matter.

The second hassle is the way people use 'Jewish' as an insult, without even realising what they're saying. Say someone won't lend someone else a pen, or give them any crisps, they get called 'Jewish'. Then there's all those jokes about Jews being mean and tight. Nobody my age even knows where it comes from, and they usually don't even realise they know someone Jewish, but they all think it's funny to go on about Jews hanging on to their money. I think it sucks.

People go on about Scots people being mean as well, so it's just as well I don't have a Scottish accent. I don't know why, but that doesn't bug me as much, maybe because the Scots haven't been so badly treated as the Jews have.....

Bristol

Some questions.....

Looking at all the stories, here are the sorts of things the people talk about:

- being assaulted (or threatened)
- getting called names by strangers
- getting called names by friends
- being referred to by certain words
- being hassled by neighbours
- being insulted/patronised/talked down to
- having your accent mocked
- seeing graffiti written about people 'like you'
- having abusive phone/text messages

Do you think these are things that could have happened around here?

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Have you heard of things like this happening?

.....
Has anything like this happened to you or your friends, or your family?



Of course not everything is hassle. Are there good experiences you've had to do with of 'race' and ethnic background? Like maybe

- people who aren't prejudiced,
- people being accepted for who they are,
- good experiences of people sticking up for others,
- people interested in differences rather than treating it as something bad,
- people trying to learn things about other cultures and languages

