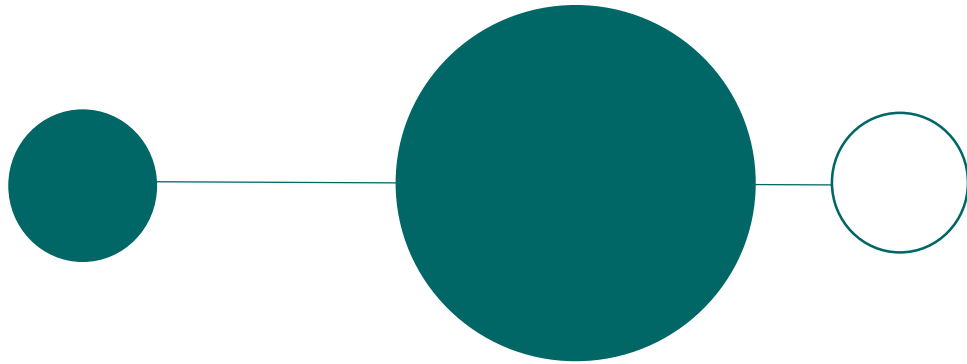


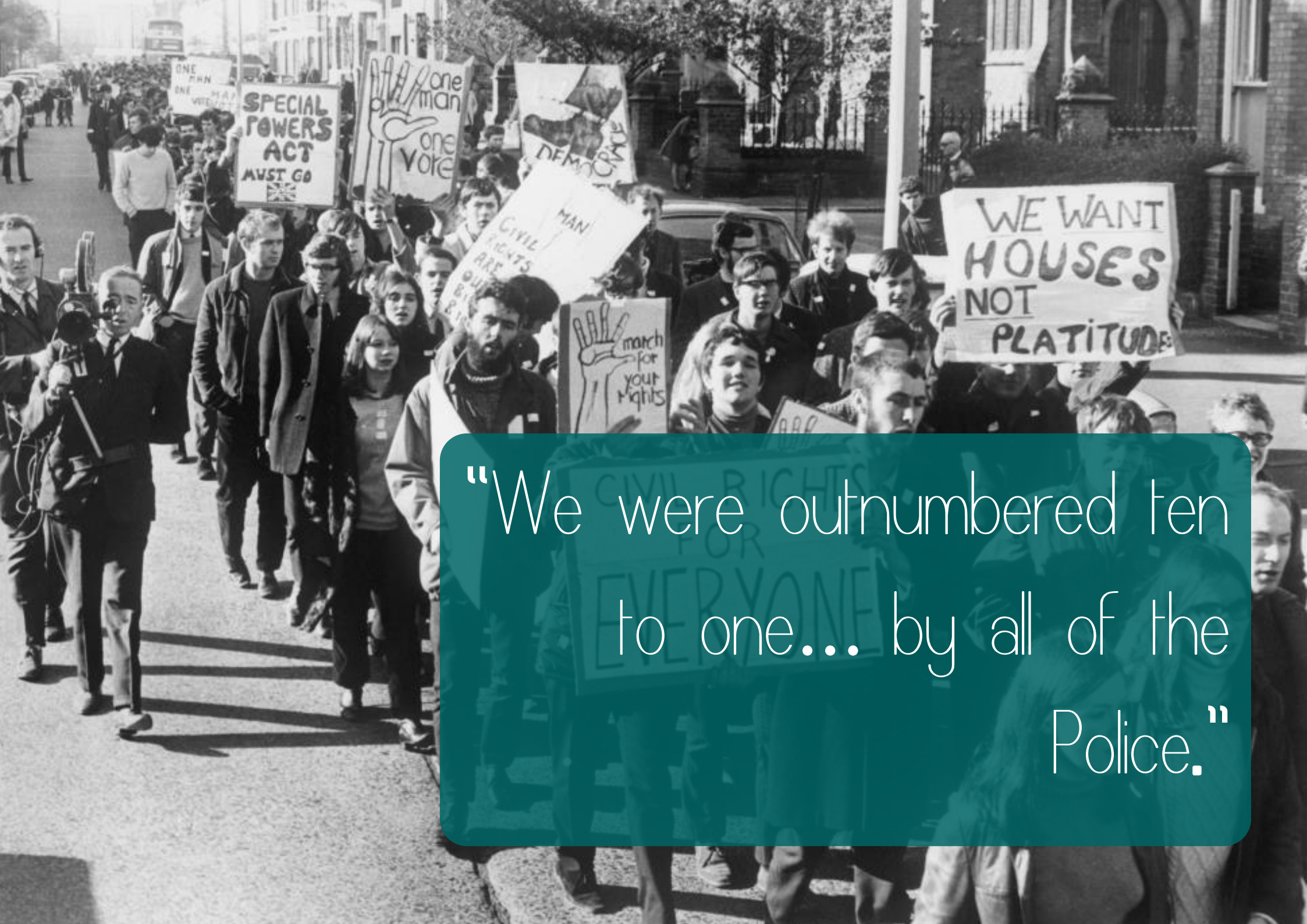
IRISH VOICES OUR STORIES SHARED

LEARNING RESOURCE

SOUNDS OF SUSPICION

LESSON PLAN





“We were outnumbered ten to one... by all of the Police.”

# SOUNDS OF

# SUSPICION

## CLASSROOM WORKSHOP

## OBJECTIVE

To introduce the theme of 'community under suspicion' as illustrated in many of the narratives of the Irish Voices project and to consider how this theme might hold meaning for other communities today.

For students to create a personal, poetic response from their own remembered experiences of feeling under suspicion, perhaps being accused unfairly of something or feeling isolated or as though they did not belong.

This workshop has been created for students 14+

## PREPARATION

The workshop can work as a stand-alone session. However consider holding the 'Timelines' workshop in advance to enhance students' knowledge of the Irish Voices period and themes. This can deepen their poetic response, drawing connections between their own experiences and those of a wider community.

## ACTIVITY TIME : 1 HOUR

# ACTIVITY ONE LISTEN TO IRISH VOICES AUDIO CLIPS

Listen to 3-4 audio clips from the Irish Voices website, which narrate experiences of the London Irish community at the height of the conflict over Northern Ireland during the 1970s and 1980s. Play the excerpts to students and ask them to take notes.

- What sort of experiences are the narrators recalling?
- How do they describe their feelings? Listening to their tone of voice and the details of the stories, what do you think they felt?
- Are there any particular words or images that stand out for you?



# ACTIVITY TWO STUDENT DISCUSSION

From the 1970s-1990s, the Irish were a 'community under suspicion' in Britain. Ask the group:

- Did they know this about the Irish community?
- What do they think about this?
- Who are the people that might be viewed with suspicion today?
- Ask the students what words they might associate with this theme. Write down the students' associations, creating a word cloud on the white board.

## ACTIVITY THREE LISTEN TO HAFSA'S POEM

As a group, listen to the poem '[A Time When I Was Under Suspicion](#)' by Hafsa Bukhari, which was written as part of our school's project. Then ask students to think of a time when they were under suspicion. A time when:

- Someone accused them of something
- They were treated unfairly
- Somebody did not believe them
- They felt isolated or that they did not belong

Encourage students to focus on a memory of a specific event that is unique to them. Can they picture the memory in their heads? The narrators in Irish Voices are not talking about parades in general, they are talking about their own experiences and memories of a particular event, on a specific day.

## ACTIVITY FOUR WRITING POETRY-FINDING OUR VOICES

Work with students to begin to draft a poem about their personal memory of a time when they were under suspicion. Suggest sentence starters to begin writing lines for the poem:

YOU TREAT ME LIKE...

YOU LOOK AT ME LIKE...

BECAUSE I ...

WE ASK FOR...

Include a metaphor and / or a simile in the poem:

SUSPICION FEELS LIKE...

DIFFERENT IS...

## ACTIVITY FIVE WRITING POETRY-DEVELOPING OUR WORDS

Students extend their poetry writing into a completed poem. Ask students to look back over what they have written and develop it.

- Identify a good opening and finishing line for the poem.
- Refer back to the words that you noted down when listening to the Irish Voices narrations. Can you include these into the poem?
- Highlight the verbs and try to make them more interesting and specific. For example, instead of - I walked in the Parade, consider the different feelings suggested by - I strolled, marched, skipped, sauntered, trudged in the Parade. How many different words can you think of for walk? Can you use words that you do not think of as verbs? For example: I ball and chained it into school.

## ACTIVITY SIX PERFORMING OUR POETRY

Perform and share all poems with the group. Encourage students to read their poems out to the class. Or put all the poems in a box and have each student pick out another's poem to read. Encourage students to be active listeners. What makes a good audience?

Give each reader a round of applause.





“You could hear  
us so easily...  
and the police  
were all lined up  
against the  
windows”

To explore the issues raised by the narratives complete the Timeline workshop prior to this workshop and take a look at the history, timeline and additional resources sections of the website for students to carry out additional research.

A story within a poem can help ground it. By starting with a personal response students can locate the emotion in their own experience and then widen this out to include other people, experiences and communities.

The poetry worksheet is an aide that prompts students to write individual words and lines. In completing the worksheet students will have all the material in front of them to draw upon to write their poem.

Guidance to students for poetry writing could include -

Avoid clichés. A cliché is an over-used, unoriginal word or phrase. It becomes bland and loses its flavor through over-use. Examples: What goes around comes around. Practice makes Perfect.

Use a Striking Line. A striking line is the opposite of a cliché. It is original, unique, a surprise. It makes you wish you had thought of it. Examples: As cold as your Dad telling you that he wishes you had never been born. Lifeless as a scoop of melting ice-cream. Making your chest ache like a tractor breaking through bone.

Avoid end rhyme. Simple end rhymes can be too predictable. It's more important to say what you mean, than it is to rhyme.

Verbs are important. The right verb can create an image in your head. Think of as many alternative verbs as possible and then decide which conjures up the most evocative image.

Metaphor. A metaphor makes a comparison between two things or objects that have some characteristic in common. It suggests that one thing is something else. Examples: All the world's a stage /Hip-hop is my new bought house/ My flow just grew legs and walked out.

If you inform students that they will be sharing the poems at the end it may make them anxious during the writing process. Once they have finished their poems, those that feel they have written a strong piece of work will generally be keen to share it. You could draw parallels between what it is like to listen to an oral history interview and to listen as an audience to a poetry performance.

TIPS

&

TEACHERS

NOTES



# USEFUL RESOURCES

## IRISH VOICES AUDIO CLIPS

Themes-Politics - [Policing - Andy Rogers, Bill Aulsberry, Ann Rossiter, Pete Middleton](#)

Listen to [Hafsa's Poem](#) or use the printed copy below.

## WEB RESOURCES

The BBC History / The Troubles - useful information on the conflict in Northern Ireland with related links to specific themes – Everyday Life, Violence, Politics, Peace. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/troubles>



## A TIME WHEN I WAS UNDER SUSPICION... By Hafsa Bukhari

You treat me differently

You treat me curiously

Why is that?

Thoughts and threats

Thoughts and threats

That's what your heart beats.

In the bus I was

Suddenly the bus alarm goes off

The echoes shatter my ears

You look at me suddenly

'That's her'

'A terrorist'

Admit it, you did the same with the Irish

You can't lie, you know you are guilty

You treat me differently and the same occurred to the Irish

You treat me curiously and the same occurred to the Irish

Why is that?

Because I am a Muslim... and they are who they are ...

We ask for peace and justice

# I COME FROM...POETRY WORKSHEET

I had .....	
I would stay ...	
There is still ....	
I would watch the ...	
There's the ...	
I come from (food)	
I come from (experience)	
I come from (emotion)	
Who has influenced you?	
Write a list verbs (doing words) and adverbs to describe them. ex: snoring, loudly, beautifully	
Extension: write a simile or metaphor for how that person makes you feel	
What experiences, hobbies have influenced you?	
Extension: Write a simile or metaphor for how it feels	

Pick the best bits from what you have written. Put it together in a poem (Try to include, a simile or metaphor, specific incident, interesting verbs)

Your Poem