# **Educate Against Hate: Starting conversations about extreme left-wing, anarchist and single-issue extremism**

These materials are designed to help teachers initiate conversations in the classroom about extreme left-wing, anarchist or single-issue extremism.

There is no requirement to explicitly teach about extremism in schools. However, helping students to understand what extremism is and the process of radicalisation is one way to help build resilience to harmful narratives. Teachers can use this resource, or parts of this resource, to start discussions in class.

The **video** covers:

* An overview of extreme left-wing, anarchist and single-issue extremism
* Examples of extreme left-wing groups and causes
* The risks these groups pose
* How students can counter these ideologies with respect and tolerance

The **classroom task** can be used to explore the process of radicalisation and how young people can be drawn in.

The resources are designed to be used flexibly with students in Year 9 and above. However, you know your students best. It is strongly recommended that you review the films and handouts before delivering them to identify whether there are themes that might be upsetting for particular students.

## **Using the film in class**

Text reading: 

- Left-wing extremism
- Anarchist extremism
- Single-issue extremism 

The film is **4 minutes 29 seconds** long.

It’s designed to initiate conversations in the classroom. At several points in the video, a ‘pause’ icon appears in the top right corner indicating that it can be paused to open a class discussion.

Alternatively, the film is available as five separate videos.

An editable PowerPoint slide accompanies the video(s) with suggested discussion questions for the class:

* What does extremism look like?
* What are some examples of extreme left-wing, anarchist or single-issue extremism?
* Why are some groups considered extremist and not others?
* What is radicalisation?
* What would you do if you were worried about a friend?
* How would you counter these ideologies with respect and tolerance?
* How did the video make you feel?
* What did you learn?

## **Using the classroom handout**

This handout shows the journey of a young person being radicalised into animal rights extremism via social media. It aims to help initiate discussions about the techniques used by extremist groups to get more people to believe their hateful ideas.

For example, students could be asked to:

* Identify the differences between democratic protest and extremism
* Identify the differences between [terrorism and extremism](#_Definitions)
* Identify techniques being used to persuade the main character
* Consider what they would do if they were in the position of the main character or one of his friends
* Consider how they would counter ideologies with respect and tolerance
* Act out the narrative and then develop additional scenes.

Some of the techniques and examples that can be identified in this fictional case-study include:

* Offering a sense of community and a support network (while creating distance from friends, family and democratic forms of protest)
* Giving a sense that the individual is ‘special’, building on existing vulnerabilities such as lack of belonging or low self-esteem.
* Promoting an ‘us and them’ mentality
* Capitalising on individual grievances and blaming specific communities
* Encouraging using hatred and violent actions to seek justice

An annotated ‘teacher copy’ is available that highlights how these techniques are demonstrated in the case study.

## **Definitions**

**Extremism:** The vocal or active opposition to our fundamental values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and respect and tolerance for different faiths and beliefs[[1]](#footnote-1).

**Terrorism:** An action or threat designed to influence the government or intimidate the public. Its purpose is to advance a political, religious or ideological cause.

**Radicalisation:** Commonly used to describe the processes by which a person adopts extremist views or practices to the point of legitimising the use of violence.

**Extreme left-wing:** Extremists who believe in using violence and serious criminality to abolish existing systems of Government and replacing them with anarchist, socialist or communist systems.

**Capitalism:** A economic system based on privately owned businesses and the creation of profit.

**Anarchist extremism:** Extremists who believe in using violence to replace current systems of Government and law enforcement with a system that prioritises complete liberty and individual freedom.

**Single-issue extremism:** Extremists who endorse violence and serious criminality focused on a specific topic, such as animal rights.

**Democracy:** A system of government where people elect their leaders and have a say in how their country is run. Citizens can take part in the democratic process through means such as voting, petitioning and peaceful protest.

**Ideology:** A collection of ideas or beliefs shared by a group of people.

**Communism:** An ideology which is built around a model in which all means of production are owned by the community as a whole.

## **Examples of extreme left-wing, anarchist and single-issue terrorism**

The following events are mentioned in the film:

**Far-left extremism – Baader-Meinhof**

This extreme Far left group, which was also known as the Red Army Faction, wanted to bring a form of communism to Germany. Between 1970 and 1998, they engaged in a series of anarchist extremism, bombings, assassinations, and kidnappings in Germany destroying many people’s lives and livelihoods, and killing more than 30 people.

**Anarchist extremism**

In Italy in 2016, anarchist groups targeted migration services, with five bombs sent between February and September to travel agencies and related companies. Thankfully, nobody was injured in these incidents.

**Single issue extremism – animal rights extremism**

Some animal rights activists have bombed buildings and tried to kill people. In the UK in 1999, an extremist animal rights activist planted a homemade bomb on the doorstep of a businessman linked to Huntingdon Life Sciences, a large animal-testing laboratory.

A [timeline of terrorism](https://since911.com/explore-911/terrorism-timeline) between 1972 and 2018 is available on the SINCE 9/11 website. It includes extreme right-wing and Islamist examples. It is suitable to be used by secondary school students.

## **Where to find out more information**

**Vulnerability to radicalisation:** Some individuals are more vulnerable to radicalisation than others. More information is available in the [Q&A section](https://educateagainsthate.com/teachers/which-children-and-young-people-are-vulnerable-to-radicalisation/) of Educate Against Hate.

**Advice on holding difficult conversations:** The [Institute for Global Dialogue](https://institute.global/sites/default/files/inline-files/IGC_Essentials%20of%20Dialogue_English_0.pdf) has produced advice for teachers on holding discussions on difficult topics. This includes tips for facilitating discussion (Chapter 5).

**Talking to students after a terrorist attack:** The [PSHE association](https://www.pshe-association.org.uk/curriculum-and-resources/resources/generic-framework-discussing-terrorist-attack) have produced a framework for young people to discuss terrorist events, providing opportunities to process what has happened in the safety of a classroom.

**Proscribed groups:** A list of proscribed (banned) terrorist groups in the UK is available on [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/proscribed-terror-groups-or-organisations--2).

**Nazis and the holocaust:** The [Holocaust Educational Trust](https://www.het.org.uk/) aims to educate young people of every background about the Holocaust and the important lessons to be learned for today.

**Immigration**: A [Parliamentary briefing pack](https://researchbriefings.parliament.uk/ResearchBriefing/Summary/SN06077#fullreport) on immigration statistics.

**Fundamental British Values:** A film and handout by Educate Against Hate to facilitate discussions about Fundamental British Values is available here.

1. The Counter Extremism Strategy 2015 [↑](#footnote-ref-1)