

Influence and change

This activity looks at how people, including young people, can influence change.



These are some of the words used to describe the riots in the UK and the Arab Spring in 2011. The terms were used by the media, and organisations working for peace and justice.

Different words and phrases are used to support a particular point of view or perspective. In looking at these reports, it is important for everyone to recognise the reasons why certain words have been chosen.

The words above could form the basis for discussion with young people:

- ? Which words do you think were used by each group?
- ? What do the words mean to you?
- ? Who uses them and why? Which organisations might use them?
- ? Do the words have positive or negative associations? Are these associations the same for everybody?

Compare and contrast

Ask young people to watch this news report of the riots in London, and the use of social media, and then read the article below.

Report: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EJ9gnuDCv64>

Twitter was 'a force for good' during the UK riots

By [Mirror.co.uk](http://www.mirror.co.uk) 8/12/2011

A study has found Twitter was a force for good during the summer riots after analysing millions of messages posted by users. According to the research, the social networking site helped to organise clean-up operations after rioting across London and other English cities such as Birmingham, Liverpool, Nottingham, Manchester and Salford.

The study looked at 2.4 million tweets sent during the disturbances in August and found "no evidence" to back calls that Twitter should be closed down for inciting unrest. The study, funded by the Joint Information Systems Committee, included experts from a range of disciplines from the universities of Manchester, Leicester, St Andrews and Wolverhampton, and University College London. Professor Rob Procter from the University of Manchester, who led the team, said:

"In August this year social unrest spilled over on to the streets of English cities and the summer riots were the largest public disorder events in recent history. Politicians and commentators were quick to claim that social media played an important role in inciting and organising riots, calling for sites such as Twitter to be closed should events of this nature happen again. But our study found no evidence of significance in the available data that would justify such a course of action in respect to Twitter." He added: "In contrast, we do find strong evidence that Twitter was a valuable tool for mobilising support for the post-riot clean-up and for organising specific clean-up activities."

Researchers were able to analyse the millions of "tweets" generated during and after the riots by using experts in cloud computing from the University of St Andrews. Cloud computing allows large-scale computing facilities to be accessed and shared by many users over the internet. For this study, researchers set up dozens of computers to analyse the millions of messages posted during and after the riots. Dr Alex Voss, from the school of computer science at St Andrews, said the analysis would have been "practically impossible" without using cloud computing. The riots broke out in Tottenham, north London, on August 6, after the fatal shooting by police of Mark Duggan, 29. They then quickly spread to other parts of the capital and other English cities.

These questions can be used to discuss the reports critically:

- ? Are the reports mainly positive or negative about the influence of social media?
- ? Can you identify particular words which support your conclusion?
- ? Why do you think the reporter chose to use those words?
- ? Is it important to consider when the reports were made?

Approaches which encourage questioning will help learners to understand and appreciate different perspectives, for example [Philosophy for Children](#) and [Open Space for Dialogue and Enquiry](#)

Cities, people and change

Young people influencing change

There are many groups and organisations which encourage young people to get involved and do something to bring about a change. It is useful to consider the motives of an organisation, in order to make an informed decision about whether or not to get involved.

Listed below are websites of organisations which encourage young people to get involved. You could use a webcard framework with the class to record information about these organisations [such as the one shown below]. You might want to add a couple of examples that are local to your school, for example the school council, or a local sports club.

- As a group, which organisation do you think would be most effective at enabling young people to bring about change? Why?
- What other organisations exist in your locality?
- Are any of your classmates involved in these organisations?
- Do any of these inspire you to do something different in the future?

Websites

Envision - Birmingham, Bristol, London and Leeds	http://www.envision.org.uk/
Birmingham Children and YP Parliament	http://www.vip.bham.org.uk/67.cfm?s=67&m=3218&p=2030,index
UK Youth Parliament - National	http://www.ukyp.org.uk/
The Feast - Birmingham	http://www.thefeast.org.uk
Headsup - Online	http://www.headsup.org.uk/content/
Headliners - Belfast, London, Foyle and the North East	http://www.headliners.org
Oxfam	http://www.oxfam.org.uk/
National Youth Agency	http://www.nya.org.uk/youthinformation-com/
Eco-UNESCO -Ireland	http://www.ecounesco.ie/eco-dev/
Amnesty International	http://www.amnesty.org.uk/content.asp?CategoryID=10698
Youth Bank - UK	http://www.youthbank.org.uk
Send my friend to school	http://www.sendmyfriend.org/
Youth Parliament - Pakistan	http://www.youthparliament.pk/AboutYPP.asp
Youth Initiatives - Kenya	http://www.yike.org

Cities, people and change



Comic relief	http://www.comicrelief.com/get-involved/school-youth
World Wildlife Fund	http://gowild.wwf.org.uk/take-action
Latin American Youth Forum	http://layf.irmo.org.uk/main/

Webcard framework

	Organisation:
Description of organisation	
Location	
Aim of the organisation	
Why should you get involved?	
Who decides on activities and priorities?	
Why does the organisation want young people to be involved?	

Ideas developed by Dennis Edwards [Hamstead Hall School, Birmingham], Jackie Zammit [Freelance Education Consultant], Manraj Mander [Birmingham Young People's Parliament representative] and Cameron Nimmo [Envision, Birmingham] and Cathryn Gathercole [Tide~ global learning].

