



ACTIVITY 'PRIVILEGE LINE' OF BRITISH ABOLITIONISTS

Follow-on activity from Black History Month:

It is important to keep the discussions on race, black history and privilege continuing outside of Black History Month. We have an activity you can run in schools and communities to continue your learning and understanding.

Each person in the group should have time to research one of the following abolitionists (you could provide factsheets depending on how long you have with them):



(Above left to right)*

- William Wilberforce
- Olaudah Equiano
- Thomas Clarkson
- Granville Sharp
- Mary Prince (No permission to use picture)

Their research should give them a good understanding of the basics of the person's life and their contribution to abolition, and enable them to answer the following questions:

- Where were they born, in which countries did they live and why?
- What level of formal education did they receive? What about their parents?
- What was their job/s? How did they enter this profession?
- Did they or their family have any health issues? How easily did they get treatment?

Ask the group to line up, and read out the statements with each person moving forwards, backwards or standing still depending on what they know about the historical figure they have researched:

- If your parents had access to education, take one step forward.
- If you went to school or received a formal education, take one step forward.
- If you went to university, take one step forward.
- If your identities are portrayed positively by the media, take one step forward.
- If the work you do is something respected in society, take one step forward.
- If you or your family has ever left your homeland not of your own free will, take one step back.
- If you studied the culture of your ancestors in school, take one step forward.
- If you were ever accepted to an institution, job or social circle because of your association with a friend or family member, take one step forward.
- If you have an illness or disability – visible or invisible – take one step back.
- If your family has to healthcare, take one step forward.
- If someone made decisions about your life over which you had no control, take one step back.

Reconvene the group to have a discussion, using the following prompts:

- Had you heard of any of these historical figures before?
- Why do you think some people managed to achieve more than others when it came to the abolition of slavery?
- Did anything surprise you when you were doing the 'privilege line' exercise?
- What do you wish people knew about the person you researched? Did the 'privilege line' exercise change or impact this?
- How can an understanding of privileges or marginalisations improve your understanding of the past and present?

more info

BRITISH BLACK PRESENCE

[BBC - History - William Wilberforce](#)

[BBC - History - Olaudah Equiano](#)

[BBC - History - Thomas Clarkson](#)

[BBC - History - Granville Sharp](#)

[Mary Prince | Slave Narrative](#)

NATIONAL ARCHIVES – BLACK PRESENCE

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