

**NEWS LITERACY
FRAMEWORK**

MANAGING SENSITIVE CONVERSATIONS

At The Economist Educational Foundation, we don't shy away from potentially challenging topics. Here's our advice for having discussions with your students.

Ensure all important perspectives are fairly represented.

This does not always mean treating all perspectives or arguments equally: some might require more exploration, more time, or more challenge, depending on the perspectives in your class and how fact-based the arguments are. Consider asking whose voice is missing in your classroom and what they might say. Show solidarity with potentially marginalised voices. Ensure it's not left to any particular student/s to stand up for a minority viewpoint.

Champion facts and challenge misinformation.

Our schemes of work are designed to ensure that misinformation and misleading arguments are challenged. You can support this by ensuring that students challenge any incorrect or misleading information, including any that is shared during a class a discussion. Although this may help students to feel safer, avoid telling students that events in the news won't happen to them, as you cannot guarantee this. Again, focus on facts and context.

Consider informing parents.

Some parents might be concerned about their children discussing some topics, or considering viewpoints that are different to those shared at home. If this is the case, explain that their children are exploring a range of different perspectives with an open-mind, to build the skills to make up their own minds.

Be comfortable without an answer for everything.

Our resources give you the information needed to answer the answerable questions, but you don't need to have an answer for every question asked. Students should learn there is not a fixed 'right' answer in discussions. Your role when a sensitive issue arises is to protect your school's values, challenge assumptions and correct misinformation.

It is OK to feel uncomfortable about talking to young people about complex or sensitive issues.