





Scottish Resources: 7-9

Autumn 2008

Listening and talking

Passion for Fashion

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Series introduction

Passion for fashion

Introduction

These programmes are based on the controversial topic of the use of animal fur and whether or not it is deemed appropriate in today's society. The programmes are thought-provoking and brutally honest yet there is a good balance in tone and a light-hearted approach is frequently adopted. This approach is designed to prompt challenging discussion amongst the children and encourage the ability to ask questions, initiating the use of thinking skills.

The children are directed to use reasoning skills and asked to listen to the different arguments for and against the use of fur; this allows them to form personal opinions, make judgements and give reasons for their own points of view after having heard the information presented.

The broadcast is divided into two programmes, both of which include presenter's questions, stopping points and suggested activities. They are delivered in a variety of styles likely to appeal to children in the age range. Children will respond in different ways to the reporting of the use of fur and some reaction of shock should be expected. It is unlikely that all of the children will be aware of the methods use to kill animals whose fur is to be used for clothing.

The programmes focus on the present antipathy towards the farming and culling of animals purely for their fur to be used in fashion clothing. However, when introducing the lesson to the class, the teacher should try not to display any personal opinions which might influence thoughts and feelings amongst the pupils.

In Programme One the listeners hear two sides of the story. Conflicting information challenges them to think about the different circumstances in which fur is used for clothing such as the use of seals for fur, food, fuel and tools amongst the people of Northern Canada. Then they are given examples of uses for fur in fashion, and prompted to think about where and when it is appropriate to kill animals for their skins. The programme is left open-ended, allowing the children's views to grow. This should foster the idea of considering all the available information before making a decision, and not making an immediate choice for or against any topic of debate.

Programme Two introduces us to two girls who are penfriends; one is from Scotland and the other from Poland. They consider the use of fur for clothing and explore the idea of becoming vegetarian, wondering if killing an animal for meat is any better than killing an animal for its fur. They wonder whether it would be acceptable to wear a fur that has been inherited or given, as opposed to one you bought yourself. The programme again ends without suggesting a right or wrong answer, instead presenting many things for the children to consider, digest and develop into opinions of their own.

Consideration should be given to the sensitivities of children who are vegetarian or who may have been brought up with strong views about animal welfare. There may also be pupils from a farming community who are quite at home with the idea of rearing and slaughtering livestock.

Timing

Without stopping points, each programme lasts approximately 15 minutes. To allow for thoughts and opinions to develop, and to give adequate time for research outwith school hours, it would be advisable to leave around a week between listening to the programmes.

It would be helpful to go over the vocabulary below before listening, to ensure a clear understanding of the programmes. A list of useful websites is also provided.

Presenter's questions

The questions could be given to groups on discussion cards.

Part 1

- Would you wear a fur coat if you lived in a cold country like Canada?
- Do you think it's cold enough in Scotland to wear a fur coat?
- Some people who live in warm countries like to wear fur too, why is that?
- What about farming animals for their fur? Is that any different to farming animals for their meat?
- If animals farmed for their fur are treated well, do you think it's okay to use their coats for fashion?

Part 2

- Would you wear something because a celebrity does?
- Is it different if a famous person wears fur, to you and me?
- Do you think they should be allowed to wear what they like? It's their choice after all.
- What do you think of fashion designers like Armani and Gucci who use fur in their clothes?
- It's such a glamorous material — do you think that's why they like to use it?

Part 3

- PETA believe that animals are treated cruelly by the fur trade. Do you agree with that?
- Fur farming is banned in the UK. Do you think it's fair to keep animals like mink in small spaces on fur farms when their natural home is in the wild?
- Perhaps you would wear fur if you knew the animal had enjoyed a good life and had died naturally?
- Some people say they would wear rabbit fur but draw the line at cat or dog — why is that? What's the difference?
- PETA says that you don't need to wear fur to keep warm nowadays anyway. What do you wear to stay warm when it's cold outside?
- There must be other kinds of materials designers can use instead of fur. Can you think of any?

Activities

Activity 1: Discussion

This is an ideal time to allow the children their first opportunity to voice their opinions. They will have considered a lot of information in a short space of time, and are likely to have formed ideas which they will be keen to share and build on.

The first stopping point could be used as an opportunity for a brief discussion. It would be a good idea to have the presenter's questions from part 1 already prepared on cards in order to carry out a question and answer session. This activity would be best suited to small groups of four or five children. The questions should be looked at one at a time and each pupil allowed to comment freely at any time.

This exercise could be repeated again at the end of Programme Two, to build on the children's initial thinking. They will be encouraged to make comparisons with their first

Why do we like fur?

I liked

best, because

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What you wear and what it says about your beliefs

Transmission date 7 October 2008

Programme synopsis

Part One

Programme Two starts by introducing us to two penpals who share a love of wildlife; Kirsty from Scotland and Anna from Poland. We hear their first meeting and then during a boat trip later on they notice the grey seals which are found in the area. They find it hard to believe that there are places where seals are killed to make coats, and question the ethics of doing this.

A representative from Orkney Seal Rescue offers some background information about seal culling and explains that it no longer takes place in Scotland.

This sketch leads into a story about the myth of the Selki folk of Orkney.

Stopping Point:

SR

M

Part Two

Activity 6 Debate

The presenter's questions for part 2 explore an area of discussion which is probably the most difficult on which to make judgement. The listeners are asked to contemplate and consider their principles about the wearing of fur along with the decision about eating meat and wearing leather. They are required to take into account all the information they have heard in both programmes and decide if they would fix a limit on what they would and wouldn't do.

The children should be given time to engage in discussion of these issues and to prepare for a debate on a theme such as 'eating meat is as bad as wearing fur'. If the class includes a wide range of viewpoints and opinions, the children could be invited to argue from a personal point of view. If it would lead to a more lively debate, however, they could be divided into groups and asked to present one side of the debate or the other. To extend the activity, you could then ask the children swap sides and present the opposition point of view.

Activity 7: Survey

You could remind pupils of the discussion they had after listening to part 1 of the first programme. It would be a good time to have a follow-up discussion and see whether, and why, the children have changed their minds about any of the issues that have been covered.

To summarise and reinforce the work, you could carry out a class survey using the survey sheet. The results, once sorted and turned into charts, should prompt further discussion.

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d

Name

Do you think that it is okay to wear fur?

Do you think that it is okay to wear leather?

Do you think it is okay to eat meat?

Do you think that it is okay to wear leather if you don't agree with wearing fur?

Do you think that it is okay to eat meat if you don't agree with wearing fur?

Do you think that it would be okay to wear fur if you ate the meat from the animal too?

Do you think it would be okay to wear fur (and eat the animal's meat), if it had been treated well?

Do you think it would be okay to wear fur (and eat the animal's meat) if it had died naturally?

Any other comments?

I worked well in a group.

Programme 1	Programme 2