

Jumping to Conclusions



Jumping to Conclusions

Purpose

To understand that people and situations are not always what they seem.

To challenge stereotyping and prejudice.

Entrance of Pupils

A thought provoking slideshow introducing the theme of 'Jumping to Conclusions' for the pupils to enter assembly to (10 minutes)

Introduction

There's an old saying 'Do not judge a book by it's cover'.



If you saw this book, you may not be interested in picking it up and reading it. The cover looks dull and unexciting.

But what if I told you that this was the latest 'Harry Potter' book? You wouldn't care what the cover looked like—your view of the book would change completely. I bet you would be racing to read it!



So often we make a judgement within just a few seconds. Probably the biggest purchase of people's lives is buying a house. But did you know that the average time it takes to make this key decision is just 8 minutes! How can you have even seen around the inside in this space of time. I wonder how many people regret their decision once they have really found out the good and bad points about the property?



We also make snap judgements about situations. We gather a few details and presume we know the full story.

Have you ever jumped to conclusions only to find out later that you did not have all the important information? If only we waited to find out a fuller story, terrible misjudgments may have been avoided.

[Listen to the Welsh Myth of 'The Legend of Gelert'](#)

Many years ago, in a castle deep in the rugged mountains of Snowdonia, in the county of Gwynedd, lived a brave and well respected prince called Llewelyn. This prince loved to hunt and his favourite hunting dog was a faithful and fearless hound called Gelert. Gelert accompanied Llewelyn everywhere and was always to be found at the head of the pack. No bird or animal was too big, too strong or too fierce for Gelert, whose bravery knew no bounds.

This prince had a beloved son, a little baby whose mother had died in



childbirth. Llewelyn had loved his wife dearly and been broken hearted by her death. His only consolation had been his son. On her death-bed, Llewelyn had promised his wife that he would cherish the boy and this he did.

He looked forward to the day when the two of them could ride out together, tracking the wolves and the other wild animals found in the ancient hills and the dark forests of Gwynedd in those far off days.

One day, Llewelyn and his men were preparing to go out hunting. The baby lay fast asleep in his cradle. The day was cold and damp but a huge log fire blazed in the bedchamber and the cradle was covered with warm furs. The baby was safe and snug. Nevertheless, Llewelyn decided to leave his loyal hound, Gelert to protect the homestead. As he left he gently stroked the dog's huge, shaggy head.

"Guard him well, Gelert," he said. "Until I return."

Gelert's tail thumped the ground slowly and his eyes remained on his master's face until Llewelyn softly closed the door behind him.

It was late when the prince returned home. He was tired but victorious. A sumptuous feast was being prepared and he strode through the great hall towards the bedchamber, eager to see his son and relax in front of the great fire.

But as he entered the room he beheld a terrible sight. Furniture lay upturned, tapestries had been ripped from their hangings and the baby's cradle lay empty on the floor. The luxurious furs that had previously covered the cradle lay scattered nearby, torn to shreds and smeared with blood.

As Llewelyn stood rooted to the spot, he felt a soft, warm, velvety nose



nuzzle the palm of his hand. He looked down to see Gelert's trusting eyes gazing up at him. The dog looked exhausted but wagged his tail weakly. His head and paws were stained with blood.

"You wicked creature!" roared the prince. "This dog has killed my son!" and without further ado he drew his dagger and plunged it deep into Gelert's side. The dog slumped to the ground, as the prince heard a soft whimpering from behind the upturned cradle.

As the dog lay dying, Llewelyn gently picked up his son. Too late, he turned to see the half covered body of a huge wolf lying dead on the floor. Clearly the wolf had tried to attack the baby boy, but thanks to Gelert, the baby remained unharmed. Filled with remorse, Llewelyn knelt and gently stroked his faithful friend and Gelert's tail thumped the ground slowly for the last time.

Gelert's body was buried outside the castle walls, close to the river. The huge stone slab, inscribed with Gelert's name, still marks the grave and the village nearby still carries the name 'Beddgelert' – Gelert's grave.



Unfortunately, we also jump to conclusions about people just as easily:

- How they look
- How they dress
- How they speak
- How they act
- Their mannerisms
- If they seem different to us.

A famous example of this happened during the popular television show 'Britain's Got Talent' in 2009.

What do you think the audience and the judges were expecting?

Why do you think they thought Susan Boyle would not be a good singer?

How have the judges and the audience changed their opinion after hearing Susan Boyle sing?



Perhaps the biggest misjudgement that is made is to assume how intelligent someone is dependent on whether or not they have a disability.

Who would have thought that this man has been hailed the 'Greatest Mind of Our Times'.



Stephen Hawking was born on 8th January 1942 in Oxford and although nicknamed 'Einstein' at school, he was not always successful academically and was slow to learn to read.

He quickly made up for this slow start and after studying Physics and Chemistry at Oxford where he was bored because he found the work 'ridiculously easy' and despite receiving the devastating news that he was suffering from Motor Neuron Disease at the age of 21 years old, he went on to make incredible discoveries culminating in his world famous book 'A Brief History of Time'.

After being given a diagnosis that would have suggested a very short life, Stephen Hawking went on to live a further 55 years dying on 14th March 2018 and leaving the world with some of the greatest insights into physics.



On trying to understand:

‘Remember to look up at the stars and not down at your feet. Try to make sense of what you see and wonder about what makes the universe exist.’

On being diagnosed with motor neuron disease:

‘My expectations were reduced to zero when I was 21. Everything after that has been a bonus.’

On the importance of a sense of humour:

‘Life would be tragic if it weren’t so funny.’

On what he thinks about all day:

‘Women. They are a complete mystery.’

On an imperfect world:

‘Without imperfection, you and I wouldn’t exist.’

On intelligence:

‘Those who boast about their IQ are losers.’



On fame:

'The downside of my celebrity is that I cannot go anywhere in the world without being recognized.

It's not enough for me to wear dark sunglasses and a wig - the wheelchair gives me away.'

On death:

'I have lived with the prospect of an early death for the last 49 years...I'm not afraid of death but I'm in no hurry to die.'

Quotation

'As human beings, we suffer from an innate tendency to jump to conclusions, to judge people too quickly and to pronounce them failures or heroes without due consideration.'

Prince Charles

Exit of Pupils

A thought provoking slideshow reminding pupils of the key issues raised in the assembly about the theme of 'Jumping to Conclusions' for the pupils to exit assembly to (10 minutes)



The Bible Says:

In the new testament, St Matthew recalls what Jesus teaches about jumping to conclusions and making judgments:

‘Judge not, (in case) you will be judged.

Why do you see the speck that is in your brother’s eye, but do not notice the log that is in yours?

First take the log out of your own eye and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother’s eye.’

Matthew 7 : 1-29

Let’s Pray

Dear God

We often fall into the trap of making instant judgements about people based on very little, and often misleading information.

Help us not to judge instantly and to avoid assuming things by the way people look.

Amen

Putting it into Practice

Discuss how many popular stories are based on jumping to conclusions - often about whether people are good or bad.

Make a list of as many characters as you can from books and films that are unfairly judged because of their appearance.



Collective Worship and Putting it into Practice for the Rest of the Week

Day 2

Dear God

Help us to remember than many people in the world are treated unfairly because of other jumping to conclusions.

Help us to do something practical to stand up to when our friends misjudge people based on how they look, act or sound.

Amen

From the list of characters who are misjudged, choose one character and draw or make two masks: one which shows how they look on the outside and the other to show what they are really like on the inside. You might think about Beast or Gaston from 'Beauty and the Beast' or Severus Snape from the Harry Potter series.

Day 3

Dear God

Help us to recognize that we tend to jump to conclusions. Help us to recognize the 'log in our own eye' before we try to remove the 'speck of dust in another's.

Amen

Research the terms 'stereotype', 'Prejudice' and 'Discrimination'.

What do they mean? Why can it be a bad thing to stereotype, prejudge or discriminate against people or groups?



Day 4

Dear God

In 'To Kill a Mockingbird' a novel all about prejudice, Atticus says 'Before you judge a man, walk a mile in his shoes.'

Help us to try to empathise with others and imagine how it might feel to be them before we judge them.'

Amen

Look at the picture below.

Discuss what your first impression is of the place?

How does your mind change if you discover it is the scene of a murder?



Day 5

Dear God

It can be very annoying and upsetting when others misjudge us. It feels so unfair.

Help us to forgive those who jump to conclusions about us and to have the patience to show others, through our words and actions , who we really are.

Amen

Imagine that you have a cloak of invisibility and can listen to what others are saying about you.

What would be the positive and exciting things about this?

How might there be negative aspects?

