Written Language:
Storing knowledge

Ban it! / Teachers notes

Focus

This activity looks at the implications of communications technology and censorship. It is less about the mechanics of recording information and more about the social and cultural impact of the technology.

Objectives

Students will:
- engage in group discussions about censorship
- prepare arguments, in groups, about the advisability of censorship
- create documents arguing a particular viewpoint.

Outcomes

All students will:
- take part in a small group discussion.

Most students will also:
- summarise their ideas about censorship.

Some students will also:
- complete documents to a given specification arguing for or against a particular viewpoint.

Equipment

- Worksheet: *Ban it!* (1 copy per student).
- Worksheet: *Censorship opinions* (1 copy per student, this will need to be cut into four separate sections and may be better printed onto card).

Running the activity

Introduce the notion of censorship as it applies to written documents. Ensure that students are aware of the meaning of the word and appreciate how widespread censorship is in the modern world. Encourage them not to see censorship as merely rules about sex, bad language or violence in books and magazines!

The class will need to be divided into groups of four. These become the home groups. Hand each group the four issue cards. These are distributed within the group and then everyone in the class with the same opinion card joins the same expert group for discussion of the issues raised. After ten minutes of discussion students are re-assembled into their home groups to feedback and produce the two documents described in the worksheet.

The final output will be a shared document - everyone in the group will make a contribution. It would be useful if students discussed how they were going to construct this before they start writing. Ensure students have a sensible timescale to produce the document - shared documents always take longer to produce than individual ones.