

## Learning activity

# Holding power to account

## Learning outcomes

### Must:

**All students will** understand what power means and how journalism can hold power to account.

### Should:

**Most students should** be able to explain why it is sometimes important to challenge power.

### Could:

**Some students can** describe the different effects the Windrush reporting had on the people involved.

## Resource checklist

- ✓ **Holding power to account** slides
- ✓ **Windrush headlines and summaries** sheet
- ✓ **What is power? scenarios** printable
- ✓ **Holding power to account** glossary
- ✓ Albert Thompson and Paulette Wilson videos (see online links on page opposite)
- ✓ **Windrush explainer** notes and links for teachers

## Useful knowledge for supporting teacher/adult

- Power is when someone or something has influence over other people.
- One of the roles of journalism is holding power to account. This means investigating what powerful people and organisations do, and exposing wrongdoings to the public. When people find out about these wrongdoings, they may put public pressure on the people in power to change. Sometimes this means a formal enquiry into the situation, people losing their jobs, or even people being arrested. An example of this might be a company that is found to be illegally polluting rivers. If journalists find out about this and tell the public, there might be an investigation, senior members of the company might lose their jobs, and it's possible the company might even shut down.
- Background information and a timeline about the Windrush scandal are included in the resources.

## Outline

These activities are intended as a framework you can adapt to suit individual students' needs. They can be used as standalone activities or as part of a sequence of work on news literacy.

- **5-10 min activity** - Activity 1
- **20-25 min extend activity** - Activity 1 and 2
- **30 min enhance activity** - Activities 1, 2 and 3

## Activity 1

Use **Holding power to account** slides and **What is power? scenarios** printable

**Slides 1-3:** Introduce the concept of power. Ask students to discuss the different scenarios as a class or assign a different scenario to small groups or individual students. Students could also roleplay some of the scenarios.

**Slide 4:** Explain that one reason that news and journalism is important is because it can hold power to account. This means that if someone powerful does something wrong, it is a journalist's job to investigate what has happened, ask tough questions, and tell the public.

## Activity 2

Use **Holding power to account** slides

**Extend the learning:**

**Slides 5-7:** Explain the history of the HMT Windrush and the Windrush generation - see Windrush explainer. You may also want to watch this video: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/newsround/43793769>

**Slide 8:** Explain the Windrush scandal, using the notes and links provided.

**Slides 9-10:** Watch one or both of the videos about two of the victims of the scandal:

**Albert Thompson:** [theguardian.com/uk-news/video/2018/mar/15/my-54000-cancer-bill-its-like-ive-been-left-to-die-video](https://theguardian.com/uk-news/video/2018/mar/15/my-54000-cancer-bill-its-like-ive-been-left-to-die-video)

**Paulette Wilson:** [theguardian.com/uk-news/video/2018/may/09/the-hostile-environment-made-me-feel-like-an-alien-windrush-victim-video](https://theguardian.com/uk-news/video/2018/may/09/the-hostile-environment-made-me-feel-like-an-alien-windrush-victim-video)

*How did the video make you feel? Did the situation seem fair? Why or why not? Why do you think reporters made this video?*

Refer back to the starter discussion on power. *In this situation, who has power and who doesn't have power? What needs to change?*

## Activity 3

Use **Holding power to account** slides and **Windrush headlines and summaries** worksheet

**Enhance this learning further:**

**Slides 11-12:** Using the **Windrush headlines and summaries** worksheet, students can either cut and sort or number the parts of the story in the order they occurred in. Ask students to consider who has the most/least power at each point in the story and how this changes as more people find out about the story.

## Plenary

**Slides 13-14:** Return to the scenarios from activity 1 and discuss how power could be changed.

### Possible follow-on work

- Look at a more recent news story where the media has held power to account and create a timeline of events.
- Find a story that the media is reporting that students feel strongly about. Think about the ways they could push to change this situation such as writing to an elected representative or the head of a company.
- Explore the impact that the Windrush scandal has had on policy - what has changed and what has stayed the same? Are there other things that students believe should change?