

JULY 16TH 2021

The
Economist

EDUCATIONAL
FOUNDATION

E TOPICAL TALK
HEADLINES *Advanced*



1-HOUR
LESSON

BRITNEY'S CONSERVATORSHIP

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ABOUT THIS RESOURCE

- Target age** 11-15 years
Group size 10–30 students
Time 1 hour
Objective To evaluate the control that comes with conservatorships

In this session, students will have discussions about control and conservatorships. They will use Britney Spears' story to build an understanding of what a conservatorship is, think about how much control is appropriate and decide what should happen next.

Before the session you will need to:

- Print the **TEACHER Instructions**
- Print and copy the **STUDENT Chat mat**, enough for one between three

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

This session focuses on the following UN Sustainable Development Goal →



For more information, look here:
sdgs.un.org/goals

CRITICAL-THINKING AND COMMUNICATION SKILLS

This session provides opportunities for students to practise the following skills which are important for understanding and discussing the news.

We break skills down into steps for progression.
Download our skills poster: bit.ly/SkillsPoster

THIS SESSION'S SKILL FOCUS



STEP 10

I speak adaptively by changing my language, tone and expression depending on the response of listeners



STEP 9

I create solutions for complex problems by generating a range of options



STEP 7

I show I am listening by using open questions to deepen my understanding



STEP 11

I innovate effectively when working in a group

SHARE YOUR THOUGHTS

Tweet us with news of your discussions as you work through the session!

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#TopicalTalkHeadlines



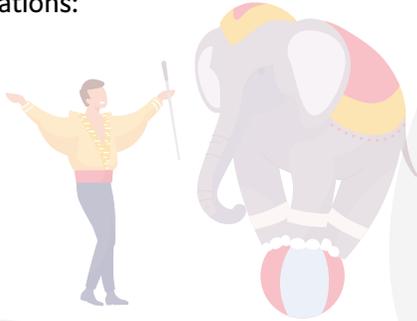
TEACHER INSTRUCTIONS

ACTIVITY ONE

Read **KEYWORD 1**. Students should describe how control is shown in the situation of a teacher and a class. One student should ask **Q1-4**. Repeat the activity with the following situations:

- a trainer and an animal
- a pirate and their prisoner

Ask: what other examples of control are there? What is the difference between control and support?



ACTIVITY TWO

Students should complete **ACTIVITY TWO** in groups of three by answering the question together, then answering questions A, B and C. Repeat this activity for all of the decisions.

Groups should develop their answers with reasons and examples and keep a tally of the amount of times they hear / use "because" and "for example" in their responses.

At the end of the activity, the group with the biggest tally, wins.

Ask: which is the most important decision for someone to make for themselves? Why?



ACTIVITY THREE

Read **KEYWORD 2**. **Ask:** why might this be controversial? How do the keywords link?

Students should move into three bigger groups – group the As together, Bs together and Cs together. Write the following questions on the board:

GROUP A = Who should have control at this point in the story? Why?

GROUP B = What should happen next? How could you be sure this is the right thing?

GROUP C = What would you like to ask / say to the other people in this story?

Read the events in **BRITNEY'S STORY**. After each event, groups should answer their question. Share. Challenge students to respond to Group C's comments and questions in character.

Explain: Britney's fans are calling for the court to "free Britney" and scrap the conservatorship. How might this pressure from fans be helpful / unhelpful to the situation?

ACTIVITY FOUR

Read **Q5**. Group A should argue that the answer is "ALWAYS", Group B should argue that the answer is "SOMETIMES" and Group C should argue that the answer is "NEVER". Give groups time to plan their arguments before having a class debate. Students should vote on the answer they believe is right at the end and say whose argument was the most convincing and why.

Students should go back to their original groups of three and answer **Q6**. Share. Challenge groups to create three rules to make sure conservatorships are fair.

Ask: what part has the media played in this story? Could it affect the outcome of Britney's story? If so, how?



SPEEDY SKILLS REVIEW

Give students two minutes to work through the **SPEEDY SKILLS REVIEW**.



STUDENT CHAT MAT

KEYWORDS

- CONTROL**
= the power to influence or make decisions about a person or something that is happening.
- CONSERVATORSHIP**
= under American law a conservatorship is when a judge decides that a **conservator** – a guardian or a “protector” – should manage someone else’s money and/or daily life due to old age, disability or poor health.

SPEEDY SKILLS REVIEW

How would a judge use the following skills to make a decision about Ms Spears' conservatorship? Which is the most important for the future of this news story?



ACTIVITY ONE

- Q1) How much control is there in this situation?
- Q2) How long should the control last?
- Q3) Say one word for how each person in this situation feels about it. Explain why you chose it.
- Q4) Is the balance of control right in this situation? What would change this?



ACTIVITY TWO

- 1 Who should decide whether someone...
Has children?
- 2 **A** Are there any exceptions?
B What would it be like to have no control over this?
C Why might someone want to control this decision for someone else?
- 3 Answer questions A, B and C again with the following decisions:
Gets married?
.....
Has privacy?
.....
Goes to work?
.....
Takes medication?
.....
Decorates the kitchen?
.....
Spends money?
.....

Tally of reasons



ACTIVITY THREE

Britney's Story

1998 Britney Spears, aged 16, becomes a global pop-star.

2007 Ms Spears struggles publicly with her mental health.

2008 Ms Spears' father becomes her temporary conservator after she spends some time in hospitals and rehabilitation centres. He is put in charge of her money, career and life – including all of the examples in **ACTIVITY TWO**.

2008 The conservatorship is extended with no end date.

2020 Ms Spears' lawyer says that she is “afraid of her father” and does not want him to control her anymore.

2021 Ms Spears tells a court, “I shouldn't be in a conservatorship if I can work... I truly believe this conservatorship is abusive... I don't feel like I can live a full life”.



ACTIVITY FOUR

- Q5) Should the person being controlled by a conservatorship have a say in the situation?
- Q6) Where should you draw the line between someone having a say or not?

