



Autism  
Education  
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Lesson Plans

# Let's Learn About Autism

## Lesson Plans

For secondary schools



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## Let's Learn About Autism

<b>Session title:</b>	Let's Learn About Autism
<b>Session lengths:</b>	45 minutes, 1 hour or 1 hour 30 minutes
<b>Audience:</b>	Secondary (11-16)
<b>Objectives</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. For pupils to have a basic understanding of autism.</li><li>2. For pupils to think about valuing difference in regard to neurodiversity.</li><li>3. For pupils to understand reasonable adjustments and how to be supportive.</li></ol>

Time	Introduction	Points to consider
Up to 10 minutes	<p>This presentation is an introduction to autism. We are learning about autism as it is World Autism Acceptance Week. We want to be understanding and accepting. We should value difference.</p> <p>Present the first three slides:</p> <p><b>Slide 2:</b> We are all different</p> <p><b>Slide 3:</b> People are different</p> <p><b>Slide 4:</b> Brains are different</p> <p>Talking prompts: Before you show Slide 4 you can ask if anyone knows what neurodiversity is or means.</p> <p><b>Slide 5:</b> Neurodiversity</p> <p>Talking prompts: Before you show Slide 5 you can ask if anyone knows what autism is. Be aware that this could result in outdated, stereotypical or medical answers.</p> <p><b>Slide 6:</b> What is autism?</p> <p><b>Slide 7:</b> Autism – the differences</p>	<p>Read the ‘Things to consider before you deliver Autism Acceptance resources’ before you begin this presentation.</p>

Time	Introducing the Ambitious about Autism Youth Patrons	Points to consider
Up to 10 minutes	<p><b>Slide 8:</b></p> <p><b>Talking prompts:</b> We’re now going to hear about autism from a group of autistic young people.</p> <p><b>Play the video ‘What is autism?’ by Ambitious about Autism Youth Patrons (3:24)</b>  <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xTLUYda-008">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xTLUYda-008</a></p> <p><b>Talking prompts:</b> Ask the class what things struck them about the video. Was there anything that surprised them? Was there anything new they have learnt?</p>	<p>If you have time, you can watch the rest of the Youth Patron videos discussing meltdowns, shutdowns, stimming and communication. Using the ‘<a href="#">Young people explain</a>’ videos.</p>

Time	Activity 1: myths and stereotypes	Points to consider
Up to 10 minutes	<p><b>Slide 9:</b></p> <p><b>Talking prompt:</b> There is a huge amount of myths and stereotypes that continue to exist about autism and autistic people. There are lots of stereotypical characters in the media, books and TV and lots of out-dated and false ideas of what autism is.</p> <p>Hand out the <b>'Myths and Stereotypes'</b> quiz sheet. This could be done in groups, individually or as a whole class.</p> <p>If you have time after the quiz results have been shared you can ask:</p> <p><b>Talking prompt:</b> How did the video of the Youth Patrons dispel these stereotypes? Is there anything new you have learnt?</p>	<p>Be conscious of your autistic pupils when discussing harmful myths and stereotypes. It is likely they are still faced with these on a regular basis.</p>

Time	Activity 2: Creating a One Page Profile	Points to consider
Up to 15 minutes	<p><b>Slide 10:</b> We are now going to think about our differences a bit more and how we each have individual needs.</p> <p>A One Page Profile is a document for each pupil. It is a snapshot of who they are and how they are best supported.</p> <p>The headings are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What people appreciate about me</li> <li>• My hobbies and interests</li> <li>• My skills and strengths</li> <li>• How to support me</li> </ul> <p>Each young person to have time to fill out their One Page Profile on their own.</p> <p><b>Talking prompts:</b> We need different skills. We need different strengths. That's what helps teams work. Everyone has different needs and different learning styles. It is important that we can adapt and be inclusive of others.</p> <p><b>TOTAL TIME: 45 MINUTES</b></p>	<p>If pupils are finding it hard to fill out their profile, use the following as prompts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Different learning styles e.g are they a visual learner?</li> <li>• Different likes and dislikes e.g subjects, sports, times of the day, weather</li> <li>• Sensory needs e.g overwhelming noise / smells / temperature</li> </ul>

Time	Further activity 1: Understanding reasonable adjustments	Points to consider
Up to 15 minutes	<p><b>To take the lesson further, or for a second lesson, turn to thinking about how being different at school can be difficult.</b></p> <p><b>Slide 11: Play the video by the AET Autistic Young Expert’s Panel about their experiences of education and the adjustments that would have helped .</b></p> <p><b>Slide 12: Talking prompts:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Based on what you’ve heard from the Autistic Young Experts, what do you think the main difficulties are in school?</li> <li>• What adjustments can be put in place?</li> <li>• How can you better support your peers?</li> <li>• What does valuing difference mean to you?</li> <li>• What does inclusion mean for you?</li> </ul> <p><b>TOTAL TIME: 60 MINUTES</b></p>	<p>If you have more time available:</p> <p><b>Watch Bella’s poem (2:00) to hear about her experiences of education</b></p> <p><a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4ZwjLwHJOU">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4ZwjLwHJOU</a></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What part of Bella’s poem stood out to you the most?</li> <li>• What do you think we could do to make education more inclusive?</li> </ul>

Time	Further activity 2: Learning scenarios	Points to consider
Up to 30 minutes	<p><b>Slide 13-17:</b> The Autistic Young Expert’s panel have come up with the following five learning scenarios based on their experiences at school. These scenarios should be used to promote discussion, and support pupils in working out how to be inclusive. The suggested answers are not exhaustive but are the start of a conversation. No pupil should be made to feel that they are giving the wrong answer but should be supported to explore their ideas.</p> <p>These scenarios could be used as part of a follow-up discussion to the first two activities. They could also be returned to whenever there is a situation in which classmates aren’t being supportive of one another as a reminder.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• You could split the class into smaller groups and give them each a scenario to work through</li> <li>• You could tackle one scenario at a time as a whole class and ask for pupils to answer the questions individually</li> </ul> <p><b>TOTAL TIME: 1 HOUR 30 MINUTES</b></p>	Refer to the Learning Scenarios (secondary) worksheet.



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For autism training, information and free resources,  
visit: [https://www.autismeducationtrust.org.uk/  
schools-professional-development-programme](https://www.autismeducationtrust.org.uk/schools-professional-development-programme)

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