



# POLITICAL CORRECTNESS

***"I disapprove of what you say, but I will defend to the death your right to say it."***

Evelyn Beatrice Hall (1868 – 1956), in *The Friends of Voltaire*

## 1. Political Correctness Discussion

1. What is political correctness? Doesn't it just mean treating people with respect? Shouldn't we all be politically correct? How politically correct are you?
2. Who is the most politically incorrect person you know? What makes them politically incorrect?
3. Should we always try to avoid offending people, or should people have the right to insult or offend other people? When is it acceptable to offend? Do you ever get offended by things?
4. Do people get too easily offended these days? Which people take offence to things more than others? What do they get offended by? Don't these people just lack a sense of humour?
5. Why are people criticised for being politically correct?
6. Is political correctness used as a form of censorship to limit free speech?
7. If people disagree with someone else's opinion, isn't it better to talk and explain why they disagree? Is this even possible in today's world?
8. Is it ever right to try and get someone fired from their job for the beliefs or opinions they hold? Which beliefs or opinions, if any, should result in a person's firing?

## 2. Political Correctness Vocabulary

- **political correctness gone mad** (saying) – *an excessive amount of political correctness, often considered to be an attempt to change perspectives in society, rather than just to ensure people are not offended.*
- **to trigger** (verb), **triggered** (adjective) – *to cause someone to feel offended or upset; extremely offended or upset.*
- **social justice warrior** (noun, insult) – *people who promote liberal views including feminism, racial equality or civil rights.*
- **snowflake** (noun, insult) – *a person who is easily offended or upset.*
- **wokism** (noun), **woke** (adjective) – *an awareness of social justice issues, often used as an insult.*
- **cultural appropriation** (noun) – *when one culture adopts the customs or practices, such as fashion or musical styles, from another culture.*

**Using the vocabulary words above, complete the following sentences (remember to use the correct form of the word, e.g. verb conjugation or plural noun)**

1. Berkeley City Council's decision to rename manholes as 'maintenanceholes' so as not to offend women is **political correctness gone mad**.
2. GB News said it was fighting back against **wokism** to act as a counterbalance to the liberal bias found in other TV news networks.
3. Right-wing **snowflakes** became incredibly upset when Premier League football players decided to start taking the knee before football matches to speak out against racism.
4. The woman was **triggered** when the man assumed her gender.
5. There is a debate about whether non-black people wearing their hair in dreadlocks could be considered **cultural appropriation**, or whether it is a form of appreciation.
6. When Emma Watson launched a #MeToo helpline for women who had been victims of sexual harassment, she was accused of being a **social justice warrior**.

### **Political Correctness vocabulary comprehension questions**

1. Has political correctness gone mad? Can you think of any examples?
2. What triggers those on the left? What triggers those on the right? What triggers you?
3. What motivates social justice warriors?
4. Should snowflakes just grow thicker skin and stop getting offended all the time, or should we be more sensitive to these people?
5. How woke are you? Is it a good thing or a bad thing to be woke?
6. Can you think of any examples of cultural appropriation? Is cultural appropriation acceptable?

### 3. Video: An Alternative to Political Correctness

You are going to watch a video by the School of Life called "Is There an Alternative to Political Correctness?"

Watch the video here: <https://yourenglishpal.com/blog/esl-conversation-lesson-plan-political-correctness/>

Watch the video and answer the following questions:

#### Multiple choice

1. Political correctness involves sensitivity towards whom?  
a) everyone                      **b) minority groups**                      c) the dominant group
2. When people tell us about political correctness, it can make people feel what?  
a) indifferent                      b) angry                      **c) guilty**
3. People who are told they are privileged often don't believe they are what?  
**a) privileged**                      b) guilty                      c) responsible
4. If people don't want to feel guilty or humiliated by political correctness, they can become what?  
a) sensitive to others                      **b) intolerant of others**                      c) accepting of others

#### Sentence completion

5. Politeness shares some objectives with political correctness, including **sensitivity**, kindness and grace.
6. Political correctness concentrates on only certain groups in **society**.
7. Politeness means that a person should treat **everyone** with respect.
8. People will naturally have mean or dark **thoughts** about other social groups.

#### Short answer

9. Which side of the political spectrum does political correctness lean towards? **The left**
10. When does politeness start? **In childhood**
11. Polite people don't make impolite people feel what? **Guilty**
12. What is always a fundamental force within us? **The desire to be kind and respectful to others**

## 4. Political Correctness Conversation Questions

1. Despite achieving great things for their countries, Winston Churchill, Mahatma Gandhi, and George Washington have all been accused of racism in recent times. Should people of the past be judged according to the attitudes of the present?
2. After World War 2, the victorious powers removed statues of Hitler across Germany, despite Hitler remaining popular with many German people well into the 1950s. Is it ever ok to take down a statue simply because you disagree with what that person did in the past?
3. Some countries have banned Nazi/fascist and communist symbols because of the oppression and violence that they have represented in the past. Should symbols ever be banned? If so, which symbols should be banned and why?
4. Is it ever ok for a person to wear "black face" (where they paint their face dark) to imitate a black person in a costume?
5. Billy Eilish was recently forced to apologise for using a racial insult against Asian people when she was 14 years old. Should adults ever have to apologise for what they did or said as a child?
6. Should people have the right to identify with whichever gender they want? Should people also have the right to refuse to recognise this choice?
7. Should people say, 'happy holidays' instead of 'merry Christmas', so non-Christians are not offended? Has any non-Christian ever really been offended by Christmas celebrations?
8. What do you think will be considered politically incorrect in the future, that is considered politically correct today?

## 5. Political Correctness Writing Task

Write about your opinion of political correctness. Try to use some of the vocabulary you learned earlier in this class. In your answer, you could include some of the following topics:

- What political correctness means.
- Whether being politically correct a good thing and a bad thing.
- Any examples of political correctness gone mad you can think of.

### Alternative exam question

Political correctness is fundamentally about treating all people with respect. However, the concept has come in for a lot of criticism in recent times. What are the positives and negatives of political correctness?