

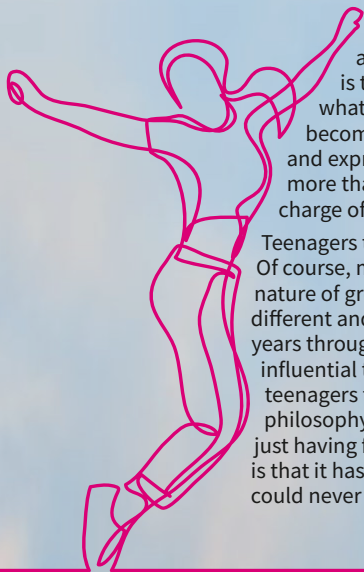
Teenage Freedom

What does freedom mean to teenagers? Freedom as a construct is incredibly abstract; it means many different things to many different people. We, as teenagers, are gaining new freedoms every day, independence in our decisions, actions, consequences, opinions and in our identity. Adolescence is a period of your life where you are 'figuring yourself out', a confusing, intense process, where your freedom shapes you as a person. We asked year 10 students at The Archer Academy what they thought of when they thought of freedom and the majority expressed ideas surrounding the importance of freedom of speech and expression. When asked, 'What does freedom mean to you?' many answered 'the freedom to express myself' or 'the freedom of expression', and one student said 'freedom is the ability to be one hundred per cent myself without the fear of being judged or feeling like I should apologise for who I am'

Some people think freedom to teenagers is being allowed to go out with friends when they want or being seen as more grown up and adult, and whilst freedom may be those things, to a certain extent, it is so much more than that. Freedom to us is the ability and power to make our own decisions, decide what we like and dislike, decide our futures, what we want to become, who we want to be, spend time with the people we love and express ourselves in the way we want to. Freedom is so much more than its literal sense, it is a concept that allows us to take charge of our life, to find out who we really are.

Teenagers today have a complicated but strong view on who they are. Of course, most teenagers are still unsure of a lot, but that is just the nature of growing up. However, being a teenager at the moment is so different and confusing; not only having to experience your teenage years through a pandemic lens, but because social media is more influential than ever before. Social media has become a haven for teenagers to freely express themselves, whether it be art, music, philosophy, friends, fashion, politics, beliefs, personal experiences or just having fun. Social media obviously has its problems, but an upside is that it has given us the freedom to express ourselves in ways we could never have done before.

SUSANA RIO & AVA SYMONDS



Freedom of Speech

Freedom of speech is the right to express ideas, information and opinions without the risk of government interference or penalties. It lies under the general umbrella term of 'freedom of expression'.

Surely, freedom of speech is something we all want? The ability to express our thoughts is incredibly important, as it helps to protect people from injustice and oppression and it ensures that everyone's opinions are heard. On a much larger scale, freedom of speech is essential within a democracy, as it helps in the development of better policies and laws through debates and challenges; those who vote are able to form their own opinions on political matters, giving them the opportunity to oppose those of others. This ensures all opinions are taken into account before a major political decision.

Despite its importance, there are many threats to freedom of speech. Firstly, in several countries the government controls the media and this can take many forms. For example, China's media environment is one of the most restrictive in the world and censorship is used to regulate material in the news, online, and on social media. Chinese media regulators are allowed to remove news stories by claiming that they expose state secrets and endanger the country. Such censoring makes Chinese citizens unable to oppose the views of the government which greatly limits the freedom of speech. Ultimately making people unable to express themselves.

However, some challenges to freedom of speech can be beneficial.

There are laws making 'hate speech' illegal, that is, language interpreted as racist, expressing religious hatred or hatred on the grounds of sexual orientation. The fact that this is considered a criminal offence ensures that freedom of speech is not taken advantage of to express opinions that negatively impact others. This is an example of where freedom of speech sometimes needs to be restricted in order to maintain civility and respect towards others. Amnesty International states "Governments have an obligation to prohibit hate speech and incitement. And restrictions can also be justified if they protect specific public interest or the rights and reputations of others."

Overall, freedom of speech is a central tenet of society as the opinions of all individuals are core to continually developing and improving the way we run the world together. Freedom of speech is fundamental to our society and this means there is a continual debate on the level of restrictions placed on it.

RIYA KHATRI & ADEENA KHAN



A non-violent path to Freedom

Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi was born in 1869 in India. In 1888 he went to England to study Law and was admitted to the Bar at the High Court of Chancery. He then spent a formative 21 years in South Africa where he met virulent racial prejudice which inspired him to rally Indians to fight for their human rights, and cultivated his methods of non-violent civil resistance or, as he called it, *Satyagraha*.

Gandhi returned to India in 1915 where he joined the Indian National Congress (INC). In 1922 Gandhi was charged with publishing seditious writings in the journal *Young India*. He pleaded guilty and spent almost two years in prison where he used the time to read, pray and spin cloth. He then directed his attention to what he called "constructive work", such as easing tensions between Hindu and Muslim communities, opposing the practice of "untouchability", and spinning cloth as part of his noncooperation with British colonial rule.

Gandhi was provoked into action (along with other members of the INC) by the creation of a British Commission to help chart the course of India's future - which included no Indians.

In 1929, The INC passed a resolution asking for full independence and promising civil disobedience if it was not granted.

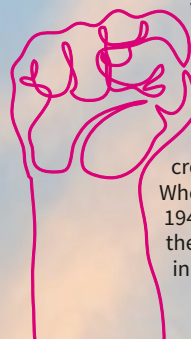
On 26 January 1930, the INC celebrated 'Independence Day' and Gandhi decided to launch his campaign with an act of civil disobedience involving the British salt tax. The salt tax was a political issue that had a personal impact on all Indians, especially the poor. Salt was a basic necessity for survival and its taxation was viewed as an example of British cruelty. On 2 March 1930, Gandhi wrote a letter to Viceroy Lord Irwin informing him of his intent to commit civil disobedience in ten days if eleven previously-communicated demands (relating to among other things the salt tax, and a tariff on foreign cloth) were not met. The letter, addressed to the Viceroy as 'friend', was delivered by British Quaker, Reginald Reynolds to make the point that it was not simply a matter of Indians against the British. The civil disobedience campaign was designed to appeal to multiple audiences including the broader Indian society, British officials, young radicals in the freedom movement wanting violent confrontations, and some Indian economic elites who opposed independence altogether.

On 12 March 1930, Gandhi set out with 78 members of his ashram on a 241 mile march from Sabarmati, Gujarat, to the coastal village of Dandi. Greeted by large crowds along the way, some of whom joined the march, Gandhi communicated his message of Indian independence.

The campaign failed to bring independence or even major concessions, but it inspired the Indian people and, as Jawaharlal Nehru put it, widened the outlook of 'the village masses' who for the first time 'began to think a little in terms of India as a whole'.

The repression Gandhi's *satyagrahis* suffered at the hands of the regime - beatings, imprisonment, even torture - backfired, creating a serious credibility problem for the Empire at home and abroad. When India finally achieved independence on 15 August 1947, scholars and many Indian people looked back on the Salt Satyagraha as a turning point in the Indian independence struggle.

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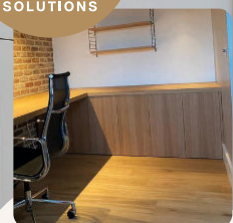
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