

The following activities are designed to stimulate a current events discussion. Generative in nature, these questions can be a launching point for additional assignments or research projects.

Teachers are encouraged to adapt these activities to meet the contextual needs of their classroom. In some cases, reading the article along with students may be appropriate, coupled with discussing the information sheet as a large group to explain concepts and contexts of the social issue being discussed. From here teachers can select from the questions provided, even combining elementary and secondary questions.

Ontario curriculum connections charts for grades 6 to 12 are included on the Global Voices homepage www.thestar.com/globalvoices.

Since these activities are designed as discussions rather than formal lessons, assessment strategies are not included. Follow up written assignments or research projects can be extensions to these activities with appropriate assessment rubrics designed as needed.

Note to Teachers: This case study focuses on the experience of a Muslim woman living in France who wears a niqab, a veil that covers her face leaving only a slit for the eyes. This story has received international media attention and is the cause of much heated debate.

Teachers are encouraged to review policies or guidelines on teaching controversial issues and be mindful of backgrounds represented in the classroom. Due to the complexity of the issue, the activities below are predominately large group discussions facilitated by the teacher. Questions are designed to explore multiple points of view on this issue without attempting to reach a conclusion of what is right and wrong. In this case, reading the information sheet before the column is advised to assist students with the basic facts and terms.

Pre-Reading Activity:

1. Assessment of prior knowledge. Ask students why some people wear head coverings (i.e., warmth, fashion, protection as well as religious reasons).
2. Review the information sheet as a large group (especially the background on forced veulings). Then, generate a list of questions about the topic.

Post-Reading Activity:

1. What is at issue in the column (i.e., freedom of religion vs. separation of church and state)?
2. a) What law is currently being debated by the Government of France?
b) What is motivating the new law (i.e., what do they think the law is trying to accomplish)?

- c) Do you think it will work?
 - d) What do you think will happen if it is passed? Consider emotional reactions as well as practical implications.
3. What position is held by the authors of the column?
 4. While many human rights organizations, including the one in the column, campaign against forced veilings in countries like Iran, Saudi Arabia and Afghanistan, they are also against forcing women not to wear a veil. Do you think the French laws infringe on rights to religious practice?
 5. Different points of view are represented in the column. Whose voice is not heard? What would you like to ask people representing these points of view?

Closure:

Chose one of the following statements and create a written response. Students are to consider their own point of view as well as at least one alternative perspective.

- Freedom to practice religion is a basic human right. Governments should not be allowed to prohibit this practice.
- If people migrate to countries where practices like wearing all-encompassing veils are uncommon, they should adapt to the customs and practices of their new home.
- There are practical reasons why the niqab needs to be removed in public places. This includes when withdrawing money from a bank or picking up children from school. This issue is about national security, not religious freedom.
- A person's religious beliefs are paramount. The challenge is to find out what is choice and what is oppression (Hint: Encourage students to explore the types of questions they would like to ask in order to help further their argument).
- Other: _____