

Political Correctness: Handle with Care



Stage 1: Prepare a Lead-In

Study some of the recent cases connected with either overuse of political correctness or cases of verbal abuse as manifestation of discriminatory attitudes. Choose the one you would like to use in the lead-in as an introduction into the matter. The lead-in is down to the moderator, but the discussion stage is to be done as a group. Google Docs will come in handy when you need to share your findings with the other team members.

Here are some ideas that you could make use of

- Blame liberals for the rise of Donald Trump
<https://www.chicagotribune.com/news/opinion/commentary/ct-trump-donald-liberals-fox-news-perspec-0831-20150828-story.html>

- Was Megyn Kelly the Victim of Political Correctness?
<https://townhall.com/columnists/michaelbrown/2018/10/27/was-megyn-kelly-the-victim-of-political-correctness-n2532408>

- EASTER WHITEWASH

Cadbury and Nestle slammed by shoppers for removing word Easter from their chocolate eggs <https://www.thesun.co.uk/news/3300473/cadburys-easter-eggs-chocolate-word-removed/>

- H&M faced backlash over its ‘monkey’ sweatshirt ad. It isn’t the company’s only controversy. https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/arts-and-entertainment/wp/2018/01/19/hm-faced-backlash-over-its-monkey-sweatshirt-ad-it-isnt-the-companys-only-controversy/?utm_term=.8b1c9b615f0d

Each student is to contribute a case (find and bring to the class an article) to illustrate either the excessive or justifiable use of PC, euphemisms, gender-specific language.

Discuss your findings in class.

Stage 2: Topic-related vocabulary

While preparing for the round table, you will be reading articles on the subject and watching related videos. Whenever you come across a word or a collocation pertaining to the topic (within the topic of Political Correctness these could be words and phrases like *catcalling*, *blackface*, *blacklist vs deny list*, *amplifying melanated voices* etc.), write it down in your topic vocabulary list. This is best done at Google Docs, where you group all of your findings in a table, as shown in the example below.

Name	Word/ collocation	Definition	Example
Student 1			
Student2			

Stage 3: Define perspectives for the discussion

At this stage, students do not assume roles yet, they rather speculate on the variety of opinions that could be voiced on the subject and do Internet and other media research.

It is better if the number of perspectives equals the number of attendees, which does not exclude the possibility of some of the speakers having points of convergence.

Here are some examples of the perspectives on PC:

- With the universal spread and promotion of Human Rights, our language must become a tool for eliminating inequality, discrimination, denigration.
- Paradoxical though it may seem, politically correct words may offend certain groups of people. We invent complex constructs, such as 'hearing impaired' or 'visually impaired' thus attaching a stigma to being deaf or blind.

Report on your progress in class.

Stage 4: Assume roles and prepare for the role-play

Choose a public figure whose views you would like to present and prepare a set of arguments to support your stance. This task requires both analytical and critical skills.

President's / Prime Minister's Speech-writer. Presents the 'official' view on political correctness, emphasizing the importance of a careful use of words, especially

while dealing with a wide range of social and ethnic groups. Examples of real cases with high-profile politicians fueling scandals by inappropriate vocabulary choice are welcome.

Writer. Presents a purist approach to the language. Claims that the beauty of the language is distorted by purpose-made, weird and wonderful constructs, whereas it should develop on its own, natural and intact.

Representative of the Disability Rights Centre. Decries hypocrisy. Focuses on more down-to-earth problems the disabled people are faced with rather than coining new politically correct terms. Inventing more and more complex terms for disabilities is downright populist. It is a badge of shame that decent living standards are unattainable for the disabled in Russia, which in this respect ranks lower than many emerging economies. Language seems to be the last sphere which requires reforming.

Representative of Educational Organisation for Inclusive Society. Insists on the use of politically correct language, especially when it comes to a group as vulnerable as disabled children. Claims that people should be taught to use soft language at the earliest age possible.

Representative of the Radical Feminist movement/Women's Rights Activist. Gender equality will remain elusive as long as sexist language prevails in society. Gender-specific language inhibits the development of civil society.

Right-wing/Conservative politician. Represents the interest of the middle-class, middle-aged segment. Claims that politically correct, soft language distorts reality obscuring the burning problems and widening the gap between politicians and the public. This is one of the reasons why Trump won in the US elections. "Thanks to unrelenting demands by the left for increasingly preposterous levels of political correctness over the past decade, people are simply fed up. Trump survives -- nay, thrives! -- because he is seen as the antidote, bravely and unimpeachably standing athwart political correctness"

Journalist. Political Correctness is a threat to liberalism as it restricts freedom of speech. "Political Correctness is pernicious. It is blamed because very often people in power tell powerless people to shut up." Due to politically correct language, it has become much easier for "journalists" who are far from being professional to manipulate public opinion and disseminate propaganda, with terrorists disguised as 'freedom fighters' and separatists as 'rebels'.

Business Consultancy Analyst. Covers a business aspect of political correctness. PC is yet another way of dressing up the truth, which entails loss of time, so precious in business as 'time is money', on figuring out what really lies beneath this or that involved explanation. Executives and HRs also risk making wrong choices while recruiting candidates. It is professionalism rather than belonging to any of the minority groups that should always be a priority.

CEO of a large multinational company. Another view on PC in business. Doing business internationally involves working with people of different ethnicities, faiths, cultures. PC must be a priority in such a business environment. Politically correct teams of workers prove to be more innovative as they do not feel inhibited to voice their ideas freely, irrespective of their sex, race or age.

Prepare for your role with the help of the table below and upload the results to Google Docs.

Student's name: stance	Arguments	Facts / figures / examples
	1.	
	2.	
	3.	
	1.	
	2.	
	3.	

Stage 5: Role-play the round-table discussion in class