



TASK 1: WHAT IS A PRESSURE GROUP?

ACTIVITY 2: JIGSAW READINGS

OVERVIEW

Information on five pressure groups is presented here. Each organisation has different aims, objectives and views.

Further information is available on each organisation's website.

TASK 1: READINGS

GREENPEACE

Today Greenpeace is a global organisation, campaigning on a range of issues including environmental conservation, nuclear power, whaling, forests, fishing and environmental pollution, weapons disarmament and peace. It seeks to change attitudes and behaviour and promotes the use of sustainable resources and sustainable agriculture. Global warming is a major issue for Greenpeace. Their campaigns have included sailing a ship into an 'exclusion zone' in the South Pacific to disrupt nuclear testing in 1972, combined with civil disobedience protests. In 1974 the organisation began anti-whaling protests, followed by an anti fur trade campaign in 1976, and further disruption to whaling ships.

The group has also used the courts to fight restrictions on what it can do. Greenpeace has used lobbying (of the United Nations) and direct action, when activists climbed on top of a British airways plane at London's Heathrow airport in protest at plans for a new runway.

The Greenpeace website says...

'Greenpeace stands for positive change through action. We defend the natural world and promote peace. We investigate, expose and confront environmental abuse by governments and corporations around the world. We champion environmentally responsible and socially just solutions, including scientific and technical innovation. Our goal is to ensure the ability of the earth to nurture life in all its diversity. We organise public campaigns:

- for preventing climate change by ending our addiction to polluting fuels and promoting clean, renewable and efficient energy
- for the protection of oceans and ancient forests
- for the elimination of toxic chemicals
- against the release of genetically modified organisms into nature
- for nuclear disarmament and an end to nuclear contamination.'

The website makes clear how Greenpeace distances itself from government in its attempts to maintain a politically neutral position 'Greenpeace does not solicit or accept funding from governments, corporations or political parties. Greenpeace neither seeks nor accepts donations which could compromise our independence, aims, objectives or integrity. Greenpeace relies on the voluntary donations of individual supporters, and on grant-support from foundations.'

'We are committed to the principles of non-violence, political independence and internationalism. In exposing threats to the environment and in working to find solutions, Greenpeace has no permanent allies or enemies. We have been campaigning against environmental degradation since 1971, when a small boat of volunteers and journalists sailed into Amchitka, an area north of Alaska, where the US government was conducting underground nuclear tests. This tradition of 'bearing witness' in a non-violent manner continues today.'

[Link to Greenpeace](#)



TASK 1: READINGS

FATHERS 4 JUSTICE

Fathers 4 Justice is a group which takes direct action to highlight the way family law, as they see it, limits fathers' rights after separation or divorce. The first protest occurred in 2002. The group argues for equal parenting and reform of family law. To achieve these ends, protests have included entering the Lord Chancellor's office (the Lord Chancellor is a very senior government official, responsible for the running of the Courts in England and Wales) dressed as Father Christmas and a whole series of protests involving climbing up public buildings, including the British Parliament and Buckingham Palace while dressed as famous cartoon and comic book heroes. They hung a large banner across the Royal Courts of Justice in London with the Batman inspired word 'KPOW' written in huge letters and protesters dressed as the cartoon character.

In America, Fathers-4-Justice US staged a re-enactment of the Boston Tea Party while in Britain, a UK government minister was handcuffed by protestors. Another government minister had to leave her home when demonstrators climbed onto the roof of her house. Purple 'flour bombs' rained down on top of Tony Blair and his government in 2004 when Fathers 4 justice campaigners arrived in a public gallery above the UK parliament chamber. This sparked a major security alert – initially it was thought to be a terrorist attack.

The Father's for Justice website says...

'Ridicule, satire and subversion are integral elements of the Fathers 4 Justice campaign. Naturally politicians, judges and the family law industry are targets for protests that are one part Monty Python, one part Pantomime and one part high-wire Circus act.'

'Over the last four years, F4J has produced an ideas bank of creative work for campaigns, protest and demonstrations. Some ideas have yet to be realised and many never made it to their intended destination, most notably a Christmas banner of David Blunkett in a Santa Suit planned for the roof of the Church at Sandringham on Christmas Day 2004.' (Sandringham House is where the Queen spends Christmas each year).

Other protests have been successful, such as placing a banner saying "In The Name Of The Father" on a crane at Tower Bridge in London, on the roof of York Minster and on St Paul's Cathedral.

'F4J's campaigning policy has always been that its organised publicity stunts and protests should be humorous, non-violent, and ultimately harmless. The group advocated non-violent protests aiming to cause disruption rather than damage. The choice of the superhero costumes was based on the claim that "fathers have the role of superhero in the lives of children". Protests have not been restricted simply to fathers, as female supporters have adopted similar disguises and joined in the protests.'

[Link to Fathers 4 Justice](#)



TASK 1: READINGS

LIBERTY

Liberty is an organisation which campaigns on a wide range of issues, but all are related to either civil liberties or human rights. In detail, current campaign issues are - Torture, Privacy, Asylum, Equality, Free Speech and Protest, Anti Social Behaviour Orders, The Human Rights Act and Young Peoples' Rights.

The organisation tries 'to protect basic rights and freedoms through the courts, in Parliament and in the wider community and promotes 'the values of individual human dignity, equal treatment and fairness as the foundations of a democratic society.' 'We do this through a combination of public campaigning, test case litigation, parliamentary lobbying, policy analysis and the provision of free advice and information.' 'Liberty campaigns - with the public, press and politicians - to influence government policy on issues that impact on our rights and freedoms'.

'Protest and free speech are crucial parts of political life, with a strong British history, yet a variety of measures undermine them. Laws intended to combat anti-social behaviour, terrorism and serious crime are routinely used against legitimate protesters. 'Free Speech has been a victim on the 'War on Terror', with offences of 'encouragement' and 'glorification' of terrorism threatening to make careless talk a crime.' 'Liberty believes that all people have the right to be treated equally and fairly, with dignity and respect.'

The Liberty website also says...

'The underlying principles of the equality and human rights agendas are inseparable. A human rights vision of equality recognises that protecting and promoting every individual's rights and freedoms is vital to ensuring that every person has the opportunity to realise their potential, to live with dignity and respect and to participate in a democratic society. The goal for any plan to promote equality must be respect: respect for personal autonomy, respect for freedom of expression and respect for diversity. We welcome the creation of the Commission for Equality and Human Rights, which provides an opportunity to raise public awareness and bring greater human rights protection to the most vulnerable people in society.'

On Torture, Liberty says "'No one shall be subjected to torture or to inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.'" Article 3, European Convention on Human Rights. The European Convention on Human Rights gives member states the flexibility to allow for emergency situations, but no room for compromise on the question of torture. The Convention's authors had survived the 2nd World War, seen people liberated from concentration camps and witnessed the worst acts of barbarity. They could not contemplate a situation where torture or inhuman or degrading treatment could be justified. Neither can we.'

[Link to Liberty](#)



TASK 1: READINGS

FRIENDS OF THE EARTH

Friends of the Earth has a small organisation centre in Amsterdam but is otherwise a coalition of many national Friends of the Earth groups. The organisation says it is the 'world's largest grassroots environmental network. We campaign on today's most urgent environmental and social issues.' There are 69 national groups in the organisation, which 'challenge the current model of economic and corporate globalization, and promote solutions that will help to create environmentally sustainable and socially just societies.'

In Britain, Friends of the Earth England, Wales & Northern Ireland claims to be 'the UK's most influential national environmental pressure group and is a unique network of campaigning local groups, working in over 200 communities throughout England, Wales and Northern Ireland.'

It works in a number of different ways which include – 'Campaigning - Pressuring Government and business to adopt policies and practices which ensure environmental protection, conservation and the sustainable use of natural resources. Citizen Action - Activating people and communities locally and nationally to reduce their impact on the environment, and to push Government, industry and financial institutions to adopt the environmental agenda. Information and Ideas - Researching and communicating reliable, accessible and provocative information and ideas about environmental problems and their solutions, and the state of the environment locally, nationally and globally.'

There are many different campaigns. They include, for example, forestry and climate change. The group says, 'We support the right of countries to ban or restrict the introduction of Genetically-Modified Organisms (GMOs). We believe that countries have the right to decide what they want to eat, and we support sustainable agricultural practices & food sovereignty in order to avoid food crises in the first place.' 'We campaign to replace corporate globalization with fair and sustainable economies, based on democracy, diversity, reduced consumption, cooperation and caution. We work with others to curb the power and scope of the World Trade Organization and other regional and bilateral trade liberalization agreements.'

On forestry protection they say 'We want a halt to machine-intensive corporate logging and the conversion of forests to agriculture and pastures. We oppose "carbon sinks" and other schemes that replace diverse forests with tree plantations. We want local communities and indigenous peoples to control their forests in their traditional sustainable way.' The issue for which the group is most famous is climate change. 'The world is facing two related challenges that threaten the lives and livelihoods of billions of people: climate change and the global energy crisis related to the competition for resources. We demand climate and energy justice which is the right of all peoples to a fair share of the earth's resources within sustainable limits. Historical polluters must immediately reduce their greenhouse gas emissions and take responsibility for the impacts of climate change in vulnerable communities.'

The organisation says its core themes 'running through our work are: protecting human & environmental rights, protecting the planet's disappearing biodiversity, the repayment of ecological debt owed by rich countries to those they have exploited for their own economic benefit.'

[Link to Friends of Friends of the Earth UK](#)



[Link to Friends of the Earth International](#)



TASK 1: READINGS

THE CONFEDERATION OF BRITISH INDUSTRY (THE CBI)

The CBI is a business organisation promoting its members' interests through lobbying, networking and liaising with government, other businesses, trade unions and other influential groups and individuals. Although much of its work is done in the UK, it has offices in Beijing, Brussels and Washington DC, indicating its international importance for the businesses which make up its membership.

'Working on over 80 policy issues that directly affect business at any given time, the CBI is second-to-none at achieving wins for business. Members can use the CBI to reinforce their own efforts to bring about change in the legislative and regulatory framework within which they must operate. Every department of government influences the prosperity and profitability of business, but the impact of proposed legislation is not necessarily fully understood by those who devise it. The CBI is therefore of crucial importance to the entire business community because it can mobilise business opinion and successfully bring influence to bear on government. Such is the strength of the CBI's reputation that government frequently approaches the CBI for advice and opinion.'

No other business organisation has such an extensive network of contacts with government ministers, MPs, civil servants, opinion formers and the media. We are the only business lobbying organisation with offices in London, Washington DC, Brussels and Beijing – a set-up which ensures the voice of business is heard in Brussels, and across the globe. The CBI enjoys strong support because it gets the results for business at home and abroad.'

Successful lobbying needs to be backed up with solid evidence. The CBI says it is 'business' most powerful lobbying force in the UK. We also lobby in Europe and across the world on behalf of our members with global interests to bring about effective change to the legislative and regulatory frameworks in which business operates. To support our lobbying work we generate a wide range of policy materials and organise an extensive events programme.' Linked to this are the group's networking and intelligence functions.

As the CBI states on its website...

'The best-networked companies are the most successful. Members highly value the opportunity to meet and exchange views and experience with their peers, particularly from outside their own business sector. There is no doubt that contacts made within the CBI lead to business development opportunities. Members can widen their contacts, share experience and facilitate further business development.'

'We are unrivalled for the breadth and depth of information we produce. As a member, you will benefit from a wide selection of regular updates and analysis on how government policy, industry trends and international happenings will impact upon your business.'

[Link to The CBI](#)

