



## A-Z of Values

### Resource 1: An Introduction to values

This resource provides teachers, educators, multi-disciplinary practitioners and therapists with ideas on how to creatively explore the subject of values as well as a full list of values and their meaning.

The **A-Z of Values** series also includes **Resource 2**: Artist-led exercises, **Resource 3**: 32 worksheets featuring written/verbal exercises + optional art tasks and **Resource 4**: 32 worksheets offering multiple choice exercises + optional art tasks. All are available to download for free from [www.inivacreativelearning.org/collections/resources](http://www.inivacreativelearning.org/collections/resources). You can also visit the **ART LAB** section of the website to see art created on the theme of values in school-based workshops led by artist Shiraz Bayjoo whose work features in our sets of emotional learning cards.

#### EXPLORING THE CONCEPT OF VALUES

We probably all know what values are however we may not have given them much thought. Yet values are of great importance. They inform how we live, the choices we make and how we create our communities. The questions below are designed to be used as prompts to open up reflection on themes relating to values and can be used in the classroom, in small or large groups or to encourage individual learning.

##### **What do we mean when we talk about 'values'?**

Values are commonly defined as our principles or standards of behaviour. They reflect our judgement of what is important. The word itself tells us that they are what we consider of highest worth in life.

##### **Where do values come from?**

Some values are based in religious beliefs. As well, families or societies may form their own values which usually reflect what is called their 'morals'. Morals help us to identify what is right and wrong.

##### **How are values formed?**

We are not born with values - they are formed by our early experiences in our family and through our lifelong involvement in our wider cultural, social and educational communities. We learn from watching how others live and from taking in the 'messages' our family, friends and wider society gives us. We see what is meant by 'doing the right thing' and we learn how to show respect towards others. Parents, family, teachers, friends, religious groups, our social communities and society all teach us about values and how to live by them.

##### **Why do values matter?**

Values represent the guiding principles which influence how we think, speak and act and how we engage with others. They also ensure that we create a fair and just world.



### **Are some values shared by all communities?**

Many communities live by similar principles. An example is respecting your elders. This value is appears across the world. However, there are values that are not accepted by everyone. For instance, education is valued only for males in some parts of the world. Democracy is not something which all nations prioritise as some countries are ruled by monarchies or dictatorships.

### **Why might we question our values?**

In the West, popular culture places value on making money, being competitive, winning, becoming a celebrity, getting power, looking good and having whatever we want. These values reflect thinking only about ourselves. They do not lead to happiness or to feeling a sense of belonging. Developing real values takes time but it is important to do so. Our values will direct where we go in life. For example, someone who becomes a teacher or family therapist will have different values than someone who goes into a profession primarily to make as much money as they can or to try to become a star.

### **How do values reflect our ideas about success?**

Popular culture has a very narrow definition of what success is. We can easily pick up the message that the more money you have and the more attractive you are, the more successful you will become. Being poor, being less attractive or unpopular can be seen as unsuccessful or as 'losing'. If we believe in this definition of success, we may feel like 'losers' from the start and give up before we even try. Values which reflect important principles are based in what we feel rather than what we do or achieve. Happiness comes from feeling we are making a contribution to society and from living well with others. It does not come from having a lot of money or being the most popular.

### **Why does the current National Curriculum require that students learn about four core values - liberty, tolerance, democracy and respect for law?**

These values were selected by the British Government because they can help us to create a fair and just society. People from different countries, cultures, religions and ethnicities have made Britain their home. Even if we have a different religion or background from those who live next door to us or go to our school, it is likely that we will have some shared values which unite us. The British Government believe in the importance of liberty, tolerance, democracy and respect for law because these values have freedom and respect at their core. Children and young people need to understand what they mean and learn how to apply them to real life. By living by these values, we ensure that everyone is equal and we treat each other with respect. Sharing values unites us and gives us all a sense of belonging.

### **Do other countries have core values too?**

Other countries also define the values they view as important. Often nations value the same qualities and life principles but use different words to describe them. As well, we all share some universal values such as respect, honesty, forgiveness, loyalty, and taking responsibility.

### **Does matching specific values with nations strengthen shared identity or reinforce stereotypes?**

Some examples of values which countries are known for are listed below. Many would disagree with assigning values to specific countries as these values may not represent how people choose to describe themselves or how they live today. For example, not all Europeans value equality -



some do not give immigrants equal status. As well, not all Americans or Africans would recognise themselves in the descriptions below and not all people living in parts of Asia would even call themselves 'Asian'. **Do you think we should define values as nation-specific or is this problematic?**

**Europe** is made up of many different nations. The European Union brings them together so that countries can better support each other. The values held by the EU are human dignity, freedom, democracy, and equality.

**The United States of America** is a country in which people from different parts of the world have made their home. America places importance on the individual. Each person is seen as having the opportunity to achieve a good life regardless of their circumstances or their background if they are willing to work hard. Freedom and independence are valued along with individual work ethic and creating a classless society in which people are affirmed for what they personally achieve rather than their family background.

Traditionally, **African countries** have placed value on group, rather than individual, success. The clan, or the community, is seen to be of more importance than each individual who makes up the clan. Steve Biko, founder of the Black Consciousness movement, said that everything must be in the interests of all and that political action should be for the community rather than the individual. Living together and the sense of a community of 'brothers and sisters' is viewed by many as being at the heart of the African value system. This is also reflected in the African notion of the extended family where everyone looks out for each other. Importance is placed on individual obligations or responsibilities over individual rights.

The idea of shared **Asian values** was created in the 1990s to describe society, culture and history common to the nations of Southeast and East Asia. It aimed to use shared values to unite people so that everyone could feel a sense of belonging and be looked after. Asian values also puts the group or the collective at the centre. This contrasts with the European idea of universal rights of the individual. Generally, Asian values reflect the influence of the teachings of the ancient Chinese philosopher Confucius (551–479 BCE). These values include loyalty to family and to the nations; giving up some personal freedoms for the sake of everyone in society; the importance of education and a strong work ethic.

**The United Arab Emirates** was established in 1971. As the UAE is governed by monarchies, it is autocratic, not democratic. This means that the civil liberties and political rights respected in other parts of the world are not given the same importance by the UAE. Islam is the official religion and the principles of Islam inform many of the UAE's values. For example, *zakah*, or showing charity towards others, is central. Muslims recognize that all wealth is a blessing and that being well off brings certain responsibilities. In Islam, it is the duty of the wealthy to help those who are poor or suffering. Muslims also believe that we must not judge people by what they have. Instead we should see everyone as equal and treat others as if they are part of our own family. These values are common to nations across the world.



### How do laws relate to values?

International laws protect our rights, promote human dignity and ensure basic freedoms. Here are some examples:

Protecting the rights of children is seen by all countries in the United Nations as a core value. This value is linked to democracy and respect for the law. Children must be looked after by adults and this should always be guided by what is best for the child. This principle is now a human rights treaty set out in the **United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child**.

**Workers' Rights:** Throughout history, workers have attempted to ensure that they have rights. Even during the Middle Ages, workers in England expressed their wish for better pay and working conditions through what is now called the Peasants' Revolt. In 1919, the International Labour Organization (ILO) was formed as part of the League of Nations to protect workers' rights. The ILO then became a part of the United Nations and workers' rights were built in the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights.

**Women's Rights** have also been fought for over the centuries. Women want to have equal status to men including the right to vote, to be educated, to work, to be paid equal wages and to have the right to own property in their own name. Since 1975 the United Nations has held a series of world conferences on subjects relating to women's rights starting with the World Conference of the International Women's Year in Mexico City.

**LGBT Rights:** Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender laws vary greatly from country to country. In 2011, the United Nations Human Rights Council first recognized LGBT rights. As of July 2015, eighteen countries, most of them in the Americas and Western Europe, recognize same-sex marriage and grant other core human rights to LGBT citizens.

### How might an understanding of psychology shape our values?

Family therapists, psychotherapists and psychologists place much value on building meaningful and mutually supportive relationships. We know we have meaningful relationships when:

- we do not feel judged for who we are or what we look like and we do not judge others
- we feel listened to and understood
- we are prepared to see things from other people's perspectives and respect their views
- when we make mistakes or behave without thinking, we are not harshly criticised or made to feel ashamed but instead we are taught how to do things differently
- we do not treat others harshly when they get it wrong
- we help each other to deal with difficult situations and painful feelings
- we value honesty
- we have empathy and show compassion
- we consider the feelings and needs of others.



We also have a relationship with ourselves. Family therapists, psychotherapists and psychologists place importance on:

- becoming aware of how we see ourselves
- changing negative or critical 'self talk' so it is more constructive or positive
- accepting our shortcomings and building on our strengths
- learning about our emotions and how to express them
- being able to think before acting
- learning how to communicate well with others
- not feeling ashamed of who we are, our family history or how much we have
- valuing personal wealth which comes from positive relationships over financial wealth
- knowing we have a place in the world
- finding out who we are, what our values are and what our purpose in life is.

## CONCLUSION

We have seen how important values are. They ensure that our human rights are protected, that we cultivate respect and that we learn how to live well with others. To continue to explore some of the themes we've covered, complete the art tasks included in our resource entitled **A-Z of Values Resources: 2 & 3** which could be downloaded for free from [www.inivacreativelearning.org/collections/resources](http://www.inivacreativelearning.org/collections/resources).

See a list of values and definitions below as well as further resources...



## A-Z LIST OF VALUES AND DEFINITIONS

### **Acceptance**

Accepting that everyone is different; being positive & welcoming to all

### **Adventurous**

Being open to new experiences

### **Ambition**

Being committed to achieving important goals

### **Appreciation**

Recognizing the quality, value or significance of people and things

### **Belonging**

Ensuring everyone is included and that we all have a sense of belonging

### **Community**

Creating a sense of belonging through sharing life experiences together

### **Compassion**

Awareness of the difficulties faced by others along with the wish to support them

### **Courage**

Being able to deal with the new or the unexpected; facing up to difficult feelings; taking a stand for others

### **Curiosity**

A desire to know or to learn; an interest in the world around us

### **Dedication**

Being committed to completing important tasks and achieving our goals

### **Democracy**

Ensuring that we are all equal and that we show respect everyone in our community

### **Dependability**

Being reliable; being someone who can be counted on and trusted

### **Determination**

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Being purposeful and having direction; seeing things through from start to finish

**respecting Diversity**

Getting to know and understand others who are different from us

**Access to Education**

Being offered opportunities for formal and informal education so that we can acquire knowledge, skills and experience

**Empathy**

Being able to think about and understand other people's circumstances and showing that we care

**Encouragement**

Positively supporting someone else either for who they are or what they are doing or how they live their values

**Equality**

The entitlement we all have to being treated the same

**Fairness**

Ensuring that the good things in life are shared out equally

**Faithfulness**

Committing to someone or something (like a religion or political belief or social value) that is worthy of our respect and loyalty

**Flexibility**

Being able to 'go with the flow'; being willing to make changes in light of new experiences

**Forgiveness**

The willingness to stop blaming or being angry with someone who has said or done hurtful things

**Friendship**

A relationship between people based on mutual esteem, trust and goodwill

**Generosity**

Giving freely and willingly

**Giving**

Voluntarily donating possessions, property or knowledge without expecting some kind of payment in return

**Gratitude**

A feeling of thankfulness and appreciation

**Hardworking**

Industrious and tireless; keeping going even when things are difficult

**Helpfulness**

Being able to provide useful assistance or support; behaving kindly and helpfully



**Honesty**

Being fair, open and straightforward in how we think, act and behave

**Humility**

Believing that we have no special importance that makes us better than others

**Imagination**

Having the capacity to be creative or resourceful

**Initiative**

Being the one who comes up with a new idea and can inspire others

**Integrity**

Making a commitment to moral values and principles

**Justice**

Ensuring that everyone has equal rights and that we live in a just society

**Kindness**

Being caring and sensitive to the needs of others; never judging others negatively but trying to understand their circumstances

**Liberty**

Having the right to choose how to live, what to believe in and how to express ourselves

**Love**

A feeling of intense warmth, goodwill and compassion towards a person or group

**Loyalty**

Being respectful to those who depend on us or are part of our community

**Mercy**

Showing forgiveness towards someone who has done us wrong or hurt us

**Moderation**

Having neither too little or too much of anything

**Morals**

Individual beliefs about what is right and wrong

**Saying 'No' to negativity**

Not giving in to negative thinking; working towards positive change

**Optimism**

A bright, hopeful view and expectation of the best possible outcome

**Patience**

The ability to accept delays or not having our needs met without complaint or anger; being able to try again if something doesn't work out





**Questioning the way things are:** Being willing to challenge popular beliefs and think things through for ourselves

**Perseverance**

Steady persistence in staying with a course of action, a belief, a purpose or a goal

**Prudence**

Making good judgements; not rushing into things but being thoughtful and considerate

**Punctuality**

Demonstrating commitment and respect by showing up on time

**Reason**

The ability to think and make good judgments

**Reconciliation**

Enabling two people or groups to see each other's opinions and find a compromise

**Reliability**

Being dependable and trustworthy

**Resourcefulness**

Being able to act effectively or imaginatively, especially in difficult situations

**Respect for the law**

Showing our consideration and understanding by respecting the laws in place which govern how we treat each other

**Responsibility**

Being accountable for our thoughts, words, actions and behaviour

**Sacrifice**

To give up something for someone or for something else considered more important

**Self-control**

Being mindful of how we express our emotions and showing personal integrity

**Self-discipline**

Doing things when we should, even if we do not want to do them; not indulging in escapist activities, food or drink

**Sensitivity**

Being aware of the needs and emotions of others

**Sharing**

Allowing others to join in or to have what is on offer; taking turns

**Sincerity**

Being genuine and honest and not pretending to be something we are not



**Supportive**

Offering support or assistance in a sensitive, mindful way

**Thoughtfulness**

Being mindful of others and respectful of their circumstances, needs and wishes

**Tolerance**

Recognizing and respecting differences including the beliefs or practices of others

**Trustworthiness**

Behaving in ways which show that we can be trusted

**Understanding**

Being able to make sense of our experiences and not judging ourselves or others harshly

**Virtue**

Doing something because it is the right thing to do; living our values

**Wisdom**

The ability to make good judgments based on what we have learned from our experience

**Work**

Learning a skill or a job and being able to make a contribution to our family and to society

**eXploring emotions**

Being willing to learn about our emotions and how to express them respectfully

**Yet to achieve**

Being able to do the work required to meet longer term goals without having to achieve instant results

**Zest for life**

Having a positive attitude; finding the good in life and being solution focused



### CHILDREN'S BOOKS WHICH EXPLORE DIFFERENT VALUES

**Book Title**

Adventure of Pinocchio  
 Prince Siddhartha  
 Bambi  
 Rainbow Fish  
 Little Prince  
 The Giving Tree  
 Jungle Book  
 One Green Apple  
 Two Mrs Gibsons  
 No Matter What  
 Anh's Anger  
 Under the Lemon Moon, Eidth Hope Fine  
 The Birdman, Veronika Charles  
 Thanks a Million, Nikki Grimes  
 There's a Flower at the Tip of My Nose Smelling Me  
 Henry's Freedom Box, Ellen Levine

**Value**

Determination, Honesty  
 Devotion, Love, Service  
 Friendship  
 Generosity  
 Service, Helping  
 Compassion  
 Respect, Friendship  
 Difference, Friendship  
 Respect  
 Love, Respect  
 Respect, Learning  
 Compassion, Caring  
 Compassion, Caring  
 Being Thankful  
 Being Thankful  
 Courage



## OTHER RESOURCES

- **Values, attitudes and behaviours -UNICEF**  
<http://www.unicef.org/teachers/environment/essence.htm>
- **Fun Ways to Teach Children About Values** [http://www.ehow.com/info\\_7971089\\_games-teaching-values-children.html](http://www.ehow.com/info_7971089_games-teaching-values-children.html)
- **How to Teach Respect** [http://www.educationworld.com/a\\_lesson/lesson/lesson329.shtml](http://www.educationworld.com/a_lesson/lesson/lesson329.shtml)
- **Teaching Values in the Classroom** <http://classroomcaboodle.com/teacher-resource/teaching-values/>
- **Teaching Children Values Video from Bangalore Project**  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qjlkGw0MiTk>
- **Love Your Neighbour As Yourself - Good Neighbour**  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l4xO8kXwpek>
- **Short stories for children - 13 Moral Stories**  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=krBxNvLUxU4>