



The Commonwealth Conversation

HOSTED BY THE ROYAL COMMONWEALTH SOCIETY

MY COMMONWEALTH COMPETITION

ARE YOU UNDER 25? THIS IS YOUR CHANCE TO:

**LEARN ABOUT THE COMMONWEALTH • THINK CREATIVELY
THINK CRITICALLY • SHOW OFF YOUR WRITING & DRAWING
SKILLS • WIN AMAZING PRIZES • GET YOUR WORK SEEN BY
THOUSANDS OF PEOPLE AROUND THE GLOBE... INCLUDING
PRIME MINISTERS AND PRESIDENTS FROM 53 COUNTRIES!**

LEARNING ABOUT THE COMMONWEALTH

WHAT IS THE COMMONWEALTH?

The modern Commonwealth was born 60 years ago in 1949. Today, it is a unique global family of 53 member countries stretching across all the world's continents and oceans and including 2 billion people, or 30% of the world's population. Over half are young people aged 25 or under – just like you!

The Commonwealth's members are astonishingly diverse, comprising countries large and small, rich and poor, industrialised and rapidly industrialising. All of the world's major religions are practised in the Commonwealth.

Yet despite these variations, all member countries are united by certain common values and principles. The Commonwealth:

Is about **FRIENDSHIP** and respect between peoples and countries

It works to improve **EDUCATION** and **QUALITY OF LIFE** for its citizens

It **OPPOSES RACISM**

It encourages **DEMOCRACY** and **HUMAN RIGHTS**

It regards boys and girls as **EQUALLY** important

It considers **PROTECTING THE ENVIRONMENT** to be vital



If Commonwealth member countries fail to live up to these values, they can be suspended or expelled from the organisation!

As voluntary members of the association, Commonwealth countries work together in an atmosphere of cooperation, partnership and understanding. At Commonwealth Summits, all members have an equal voice, regardless of size and wealth.



LEARNING ABOUT THE COMMONWEALTH

A LITTLE BIT OF HISTORY

1930s

The Commonwealth was born from the British Empire, which explains why English is spoken in many Commonwealth countries.

1940s

In 1931 Australia, Canada, New Zealand and South Africa joined Britain in a club called the Commonwealth of Nations.

1950s

After their struggle for independence from Britain, India and Pakistan became members in 1947. The modern, multi-racial Commonwealth was born.

1960s

In the late 1950s and in the 1960s and 1970s, many other countries in Africa, Asia, the Caribbean and the Pacific became independent. Although many fought wars for their freedom, almost all joined the Commonwealth.

1970s

1980s

1990s

2000s

These days, member countries don't always have a historical link to the UK. For example, Mozambique, Cameroon and Namibia joined the Commonwealth in 1990s.

There are now 53 countries in the Commonwealth.

Every two years, leaders from each of the Commonwealth countries meet together at the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting. They discuss shared problems and suggest possible solutions. This meeting takes place in a different Commonwealth country each time.

The Commonwealth's Secretary General is currently Indian-born Kamallesh Sharma. The Secretary-General is responsible for formulating the Commonwealth's Strategic Plan, which outlines the Commonwealth Secretariat's goals, plans, and programmes for the following years. In coordinating this plan, the Secretary-General talks regularly with all Commonwealth Heads of Government.

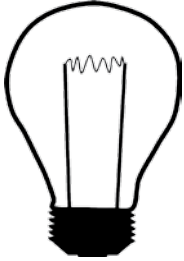
Queen Elizabeth II is the symbolic head of the association and, since 1965, The Commonwealth Secretariat has been based in London, UK.



To find out more download 'Your World, Your Commonwealth' from www.thecommonwealthconversation.org

THINKING AGAIN

TIME FOR DISCUSSION



Now think afresh. As we have seen, the Commonwealth is an organisation that has evolved rapidly over its sixty year history.

- How should it change next?
- What should the Commonwealth look like in another 10, 20 or 40 years time?
- How can it best work to solve the many big, global problems we will face this century?
- How can this international organisation make itself most relevant to your generation?

THE COMMONWEALTH CONVERSATION

It is the Commonwealth's 60th birthday in 2009. This is a great opportunity to reflect upon the past and to consider what the future may hold for the association.

The Royal Commonwealth Society (RCS) is working with people across the world to collect together views on the Commonwealth and its future. This is the Commonwealth Conversation.

Over half of the 2 billion people in the Commonwealth are aged 25 or under. Listening to young peoples' views on the organisation and its future is therefore a vital part of the Commonwealth Conversation.

In November 2009, the world's leaders will gather at the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in Trinidad & Tobago. There, we will present a set of recommendations based on what you tell us.

The Commonwealth Conversation is your chance to have your voice heard; it is your chance to shape your Commonwealth.

TWO BILLION PEOPLE. 53 COUNTRIES. ONE CONVERSATION. JOIN IN!

HAVE YOUR SAY

IN A CREATIVE WAY!

ACTIVITY



The year is 2049. It's the Commonwealth's 100th birthday!

Imagine that you are the Commonwealth Secretary-General.

What would your Commonwealth look like and do?

Write and/ or draw a response on **one side** of a piece of paper.

You could think about:

- What international issues will be the Commonwealth's priority and how will it tackle them
- Who will be in the Commonwealth
- Who will be running the Commonwealth and from where

Please **write your name, age and country** on your response.

You must be **under 25** to take part in this competition.

Please email in your scanned or typed response to:
mycommonwealth@thercs.org

WE PREFER THIS :)

Or, if this is not possible, please post it to:



My Commonwealth, The Royal Commonwealth Society,
25 Northumberland Avenue, London, WC2N 5AP. UK.

Responses must be received by **31 December 2009**.

WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO MY WORK?

- All entries will be carefully considered
- Many will be uploaded to our Online Gallery and blog at WWW.THECOMMONWEALTHCONVERSATION.ORG
- Here you will be able to see and comment on other entries from all around the world
- The most inventive entries will win fantastic prizes:

**1ST
PRIZE**

£200 in Amazon.com vouchers to spend on whatever you wish*

**2ND
PRIZE**

£100 in Amazon.com vouchers to spend on whatever you wish*

**3RD
PRIZE**

£50 in Amazon.com vouchers to spend on whatever you wish*

- The very best and most interesting submissions will go in the Commonwealth Conversation report which will be presented to Prime Ministers, Foreign Ministers and other leaders from all 53 Commonwealth countries, when they meet in Trinidad and Tobago in November 2009.

* UK pounds sterling.

Amazon sells a wide range of books, CDs, DVDs and more.

STILL GOT MORE TO SAY?

GREAT!

- Log on to www.thecommonwealthconversation.org to follow the debate, post your ideas and comments and to find out more
- Take part in the conversation through Facebook, Twitter, Flickr and other new media
- Convene or take part in a discussion group on the Commonwealth in your local area
- Talk to your local politicians or community leaders about what you think the Commonwealth should be focusing on and let us know about it
- Email your ideas or thoughts to conversation@thercs.org



THANKS FOR
TAKING PART IN THE
COMMONWEALTH
CONVERSATION.



*Finished
this activity?
Please pass on
this worksheet
to a friend
or to your
teacher. The
more great
ideas we get
from young
people, the
better!*