

# Unit title: The science and politics of cosmetic surgery

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## About the unit

In this unit, students explore the conflicting rights and responsibilities involved in issues concerning cosmetic surgery, such as those of individuals and the interests of the wider public. They learn that views may conflict and that expert opinion cannot always arbitrate between them. They find out who is involved in making public policy decisions, and learn that these are sometimes taken in the absence of scientific certainty or where there is contradictory scientific evidence. Students also learn about the different ways the media covers issues and problems of cosmetic surgery, and the effect this can have on our understanding and opinion of them. They analyse information from a range of sources to identify key issues and events. They appreciate diversity and see matters from other people's points of view

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## Literacy and language

Through the activities in this unit students will be able to understand, use and spell correctly words relating to:

- citizenship, *eg rights, responsibilities, fact, opinion, media*

Speaking and listening – through the activities pupils learn to:

- use talk to hypothesise, speculate and evaluate conflicting evidence

Reading – through the activities pupils learn to:

- use appropriate reading strategies to gather and synthesise information

Writing – through the activities students could:

- write closely argued text where precise links and connections are made within sentences
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## Links with other subjects

The activities in this unit link with:

- Geography – countries and development
  - ICT – using desktop-publishing and word-processing packages
  - key skills – working with others, problem solving
  - Citizenship/PSHE – the significance of the media in society; human rights and responsibilities
  - English – critical reading and report writing
  - Science - social, political and economic dimensions of topical scientific developments
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## Resources

- press and TV news coverage
  - the internet, including articles on the Beauty Matters website, <http://beautymatters.blogspot.com>
  - cards for sorting activity of facts and opinions
  - writing frames for a variety of genres/ downloadable **worksheets** from the Beauty Matters website
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### LEARNING OBJECTIVES

STUDENTS SHOULD LEARN

### TEACHING ACTIVITIES

### LEARNING OUTCOMES

STUDENTS

LEARNING OBJECTIVES STUDENTS SHOULD LEARN	TEACHING ACTIVITIES	LEARNING OUTCOMES STUDENTS
<b>What is cosmetic surgery?</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• about a topical issue, problem or event concerning cosmetic surgery</li><li>• to explore issues of cosmetic surgery and to share ideas and information</li><li>• about the significance of the</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Students use their own knowledge and the website of the American Society for Aesthetic Plastic Surgery (ASAPS) <a href="http://www.surgery.org">http://www.surgery.org</a> to make a list of responses to the question, what is cosmetic surgery?</li><li>• In pairs, students use a selection of recent newspapers to note the key issues reported in the media concerning cosmetic surgery for different parts of the body. These can</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• identify features of media reporting, <i>eg incomplete information</i>, and learn to distinguish between opinion and fact</li></ul>

<p>media in society</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• about the different ways in which the media covers situations, and the effect this can have on our understanding and opinion of events</li> <li>• to identify key issues and events</li> </ul>	<p>be written onto an outline of a body to provide a concise summary (<b>Worksheet 1</b>).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Group discussion of cosmetic surgery procedures. Students give their own opinions and experiences of cosmetic surgery and differing viewpoints are noted and added. From this introduction, make a list of key words: both citizenship words, <i>eg fact, opinion, objective, subjective, controversial</i>, and relevant science words, <i>eg clinical trials, implants, treatment, silicone, collagen, side-effects, public domain, scarring</i>. (<b>Worksheet 2</b>)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• discuss the media coverage of a contemporary issue and summarise their views of a media report</li> </ul>
<p><b>What points of view are there about cosmetic surgery, and why?</b></p>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• to identify appropriate questions and possible sources of information</li> <li>• that understanding contemporary events requires some knowledge of their political, social and economic context</li> <li>• to appreciate diversity and see events from other people's points of view</li> <li>• about the different rights and responsibilities involved in the issues</li> <li>• about the importance of the media in society</li> <li>• to use appropriate reading strategies to gather and synthesise information</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As a class, list the parties affected by issues of cosmetic surgery, <i>eg plastic surgeons, expert scientific advisors, other health professionals, regulatory panels, manufacturers, clients</i>.</li> <li>• Students work in pairs using the website of the American Society for Aesthetic Plastic Surgery (ASAPS) <a href="http://www.surgery.org">http://www.surgery.org</a> to complete the following tasks: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Work out the viewpoint of each of the affected parties and write it down. For example, are people's lives or employment directly affected? How? (<b>Worksheet 3</b>)</li> <li>2. Do the issues have political, social and/or economic dimensions?</li> <li>3. How has the issue been portrayed in the press and on TV? Has this influenced public opinion and political response, <i>eg images of scarring following cosmetic surgery procedures to lengthen limbs?</i></li> <li>4. Identify rights and responsibilities, <i>eg the right to individual choice as against the responsibility not to endanger the health of others</i>.</li> </ol> <p>Discuss answers as a class. Ask whether the differing viewpoints might be reconciled and, if so, how.</p> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• know and describe the key points of the issue they are investigating</li> <li>• analyse key points and pose relevant questions</li> <li>• understand the need to balance competing rights and responsibilities</li> <li>• recognise the role of the media and its effect on public opinion</li> </ul>
<p><b>What are the key scientific aspects?</b></p>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• about distinguishing fact from opinion</li> <li>• about the interplay between empirical questions, evidence and scientific explanations</li> <li>• to use talk to hypothesise, speculate and evaluate, conflicting evidence</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ask students to recall relevant scientific ideas, <i>eg What are the medical risks and side-effects of cosmetic surgery? How can clinical trials be used to provide empirical evidence of the safety of products used in cosmetic surgery? How can different treatments be compared for effectiveness? Why are some treatments prescription-only and not in the public domain?</i></li> <li>• Introduce one or more historical case studies to develop understanding of scientific and citizenship concepts. For example, a comparison of foot-binding in China with cosmetic foot surgery to fit feet into Choo shoes can identify medical complications and consider individual choice. (<b>Worksheet 4</b>)</li> <li>• Use a card-sorting activity to help pairs of students to categorise statements about cosmetic surgery as 'fact', 'opinion' or 'uncertain'. The statements could be from either a report in a recent newspaper or an article from a website used in earlier activities. Discuss as a class and encourage students to be critical of 'fact'. (<b>Worksheet 5</b>)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• identify and understand the key scientific aspects of issues concerning cosmetic surgery</li> <li>• distinguish fact from opinion and know the importance of being critical of how 'facts' are presented</li> </ul>
<p><b>What should be done? How can we take responsible action?</b></p>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• how to use their scientific knowledge and understanding to explain and interpret observations, measurements/other data</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Return to a structured class discussion of issues concerning cosmetic surgery by asking for specific reports from different groups of students. Each group should consider and agree on how they wish to communicate their findings to the audience. Encourage students to:</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• develop their own views and opinions and express and justify their own viewpoints</li> </ul>

<p>and conclusions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• about public policy decisions that are sometimes made in the absence of certainty</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– consider the evidence gathered (from media reports or elsewhere) by discussing questions such as: How have scientists gathered the evidence? Why might there be conflicting views among scientists? Why aren't scientists certain about the issue? Ask students whether the case requires further scientific evidence and whether this is obtainable.</li> <li>– appreciate that, in a democracy, public policy should represent the interests of a majority of people, but this does not mean that everyone gets what they want.</li> <li>– appreciate that public policy needs to be developed even when the scientific case is uncertain, and that this requires political argument and sometimes compromise. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ask students to consider how they could influence the debate or take action in some way. Students write a press release, design a campaign poster or write a report of their findings for publication on a website.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• recognise the strengths and limitations of existing scientific evidence</li> <li>• identify some of the processes by which scientific evidence is collected and evaluated</li> <li>• appreciate that public policy relies on factors other than scientific evidence</li> <li>• communicate their views to a chosen audience</li> </ul>
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