



AUTISM RE-EXPLAINED

Lesson Plans

Join us to share knowledge &
acceptance during World Autism
Acceptance Month 2025



Autistic
Young
Experts



Autism
Education
Trust

Autism Re-explained Lesson Plans

Session summary:

This session is an introduction to autism and aims to help young people think about how they can support their autistic peers. The session includes videos on different topics surrounding autism that are followed by a reflective discussion.

Audience: Secondary (11-16 years old)

Session Length:

This pack includes two versions of the session:

- A bitesize version (25 - 30 minutes)
- A full-length version (50 - 55 minutes)

Learning outcomes:

- For pupils to have a basic understanding of autism.
- For pupils to think about valuing difference.
- For pupils to understand reasonable adjustments and how to be supportive.

Preparation checklist:

Before you deliver the session, you will need to do the following:

- Read the teacher guide
- Gather some paper that students will be able to individually write on
- Before this session watch all 5 videos:
 - [Autism Re-Explained: Communication](#)
 - [Autism Re-Explained: Sensory Differences](#)
 - [Autism Re-Explained: Special Interests](#)
 - [Autism Re-Explained: Small Things That Make a Difference](#)
 - [Autism Re-Explained: What Kindness Means to Me](#)

Resources:

- PowerPoint presentation
- Videos linked within PowerPoint Presentation

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Bitesize Session:

(30 minutes)

Time	Slides	Description	Resources <i>e.g. slides, worksheets</i>
6 minutes	1-8	Introduction It is World Autism Acceptance Week so today we will be watching some videos and participating in discussions and activities to understand more about autism and how we can value differences. What is Autism? • Autism means someone’s brain works a little differently. • Autism is not a medical condition with treatments or a “cure”. • You can’t see if someone is autistic. • Each autistic person is different. • Autistic people have strengths and need help with different things. Being autistic does not mean you have an illness or disease. It means your brain works in a different way from other people. Autism is not a medical condition with treatments or a “cure”. Autism is a processing difference that can have an impact on many areas of a person’s life. Three Areas of Difference 1. Social Understanding and Communication 2. Sensory Processing and Integration 3. Flexible Thinking, Information Processing and Understanding	

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Time	Slides	Description	Resources e.g. slides, worksheets
6 minutes	1-8	While autistic people share these similar characteristics to some degree, they are also all different from each other. This is because autism is considered a spectrum. The autism spectrum is not linear from high to low but varies in every way that one person might vary from another. Every autistic individual has their own strengths, differences and needs, their own life journey and their own unique story. We will be watching a couple of videos which will discuss different elements of autism and how everyone can support their autistic peers. These videos were co-created and include autistic young people from the Autism Education Trust’s (AET) Autistic Young Experts Panel. This is a group of autistic 16-25-year-olds, who meet online every month. The group add their voice and life experience to AET projects and input into the strategy of the AET.	
8 minutes	9-11	Watch Videos: Communication and Sensory Differences Video 1: This is a video of two AET Autistic Young Experts called Annabel and Jessica discussing how different people have different communication preferences and how this can be important to autistic people. It is worth noting that some autistic individuals can be non-verbal. This means they may use very little spoken language or at all. In this case, they may use other methods to communicate, for example, writing/typing or gestures.	2 Videos

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Time	Slides	Description	Resources e.g. slides, worksheets
8 minutes	9-11	Video 2: This is a video of Annabel and Ryan from the AET Autistic Young Experts panel discussing what sensory differences are and the challenges these can create for autistic individuals.	2 Videos
5 minutes	12-14	Timed Journal Activity: <i>After the video has been played, ask students to write/draw/note down any thoughts that come to mind about what they’ve seen. Start the 2 minute timer that is automatically set up within the PowerPoint slides.</i> <u>Things for students to think about:</u> 1. What is one key thing you learnt from these videos? 2. What are some different ways to communicate? <i>Once students have finished, ask if anyone would like to share something they have written with the rest of the group.</i>	Paper and a timer

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Time	Slides	Description	Resources e.g. slides, worksheets
4 minutes	15	Watch Video: The Small ThingsThat Make a Difference This video discusses how small changes and considerations can really impact how an autistic person experiences school.	
5 minutes	16	Discussion: Creating an inclusive space: <i>The group will be presented with some photos of a typical school, including a classroom and canteen.</i> Thinking about what we have just learnt about autism and sensory differences, look at these pictures and the classroom around you. • What about these spaces could be challenging for an autistic individual? <i>Some examples:</i> <i>the bright overhead lights, big windows, the size of the canteen and echoing of sounds, strong smells from the food.</i> • How could the space be made more inclusive? <i>Some examples:</i> <i>could there being a quiet room available, the availability of fidget toys, dimming the bright lights or closing blinds, headphones/earplugs being available, creating a quiet eating space that isn't near the strong smelling kitchen.</i>	

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Time	Slides	Description	Resources e.g. slides, worksheets
3 minutes	17-20	Close <u>Key Messages</u> • No autistic person is the same, and they experience the world in a different way. • The main ways autistic people can experience the world differently is how they communicate, process information and their sensory experiences. • Small adjustments and considerations at school can make a big difference to supporting your autistic peers. Ask people how you can support them. Ending on a quote from the “what kindness means to me” video: Everyone is different, and it is good, it is unique, we’re all not the same and it is good to be different. Otherwise, it would be a pretty boring world. If you have time, you can watch the full 5 minute video. <i>Links to further resources:</i> • AYE YouTube Channel • Ambitious Youth Network	

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Full Session:

(55 minutes)

Time	Slides	Description	Resources <i>e.g. slides, worksheets</i>
6 minutes	1-11	Introduction It is World Autism Acceptance Week so today we will be watching some videos and participating in discussions and activities to understand more about autism and how we can value differences. What is Autism? • Autism means someone’s brain works a little differently. • Autism is not a medical condition with treatments or a “cure”. • You can’t see if someone is autistic. • Each autistic person is different. • Autistic people have strengths and need help with different things. Being autistic does not mean you have an illness or disease. It means your brain works in a different way from other people. Autism is not a medical condition with treatments or a “cure”. Autism is a processing difference that can have an impact on many areas of a person’s life. Three Areas of Difference 4. Social Understanding and Communication 5. Sensory Processing and Integration 6. Flexible Thinking, Information Processing and Understanding	

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Time	Slides	Description	Resources e.g. slides, worksheets
6 minutes	1-11	We will be watching a series of videos which will discuss different elements of autism and how everyone can support their autistic peers. These videos were co-created and include autistic young people from the Autism Education Trust’s (AET) Autistic Young Experts Panel. This is a group of autistic 16-25-year-olds, who meet online every month. The group add their voice and life experience to AET projects and input into the strategy of the AET.	
8 minutes	12-17	Watch Video 1 and 2: Communication and Sensory Differences Video 1: This is a video of two Autistic Young Experts called Annabel and Jessica discussing how different people have different communication preferences and how this can be important to autistic people. It is worth noting that some autistic individuals can be non-verbal or have limited verbal skills. Some may use very little spoken language or at all. In this case, they may use other methods to communicate, for example, writing/typing or gestures. Video 2: This is a video of Annabel and Ryan from the AET Autistic Young Experts panel discussing what sensory differences are and the challenges these can create for autistic individuals.	

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Time	Slides	Description	Resources e.g. slides, worksheets
8 minutes	12-17	Activity Timed Journal Activity: <i>After the video has been played, ask students to write/draw/note down any thoughts that come to mind about what they've seen. Start the 3 minute timer that is automatically set up within the PowerPoint slides.</i> <u>Things for students to think about:</u> 1. What is one key thing you learnt from these videos? 2. What are some different ways to communicate? Once students have finished, ask if anyone would like to share something they have written with the rest of the group.	Paper and a timer
4 minutes	18-19	Watch Video 3: Special Interests In this video Jessica and Ryan discuss what a special interest is, and why these can be important to autistic people. A special interest can be about anything, for example a person, a TV show etc. They can also change over time.	

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Time	Slides	Description	Resources e.g. slides, worksheets
10 minutes	20-21	Activity/Discussion <i>The PowerPoint presentation will show a selection of images. The group is to then be asked: Are these considered a special interest?</i> <i>It will start off with images of more stereotypical special interests and then become more obscure.</i> <i>For example:</i> • Maths • Trains • Stamps • Gaming e.g. Fortnite or Sims • Football team • Nail art <i>The answer is that all can be considered a special interest.</i> Students will then talk in pairs asking each other about an interest/hobby they have and why they like it. <u>Questions for students to ask each other:</u> • What sparked the interest? • What interests did you have when you were younger?	

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Time	Slides Preview of designed slide	Description	Resources e.g. slides, worksheets
10 minutes	20-21	<u>Questions for teacher to ask the group:</u> • Did you have anything in common? • How did it make you feel to talk about your hobbies/interests?	
4 minutes	22	Watch video 4: Small Things That Make a Difference In this video Annabel and Ryan discuss how small changes and considerations can really impact how an autistic person experiences school.	
6 minutes	23	Discussion: Creating an inclusive space: <i>The group will be presented with some photos of a typical school, including a classroom and canteen.</i> Thinking about what we have just learnt about autism and sensory differences, look at these pictures and the classroom around you. • What about these spaces could be challenging for an autistic individual? <i>Some examples:</i> <i>the bright overhead lights, big windows, the size of the canteen and echoing of sounds, strong smells from the food.</i> • How could the space be made more inclusive?	

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Time	Slides Preview of designed slide	Description	Resources e.g. slides, worksheets
6 minutes	23	Some examples: could there being a quiet room available, the availability of fidget toys, dimming the bright lights or closing blinds, headphones/earplugs being available, creating a quiet eating space that isn't near the strong smelling kitchen. Alternative Activity: You could also have a go at planning what an inclusive day would look like. Or thinking of how activities can be more suitable with individuals with sensory issues e.g. cinema, school, swimming.	
8 minutes	24-27	Ask the group: What is one thing you have learnt and will take away with you today? You could have these written on sticky note paper and it could be added to a board or box. Key Messages: • No autistic person is the same, and they experience the world in a different way. • The main ways autistic people can experience the world differently is how they communicate, process information and their sensory experiences. • Small adjustments and considerations at school can make a big difference to supporting your autistic peers. Ask people how you can support them. Close with video 5: What kindness means to me Links to further resources: • AYE YouTube Channel • Ambitious Youth Network	

World Autism Acceptance Month is the whole of April 2025

There are lots of different and creative ways to get involved including doing a 5km fundraising walk for the National Autistic Society, or simply fundraising in your own way.

Find out more and get more resources to help you at www.autism.org.uk

For more information on autism and education, visit:

www.autismeducationtrust.org.uk

Autism Education Trust

info@autismeducationtrust.org.uk

To hear more from our Autistic Young Experts, you can follow them on their YouTube channel:

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