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Broadcasting and Social Change in Sixties Britain

What can audio-visual materials reveal about the 1960s?

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Suggested responses

Suggested responses: *Wild, Wild Women*

1. At the beginning of the episode, the women demand a bonus for their work. When they are refused, they threaten strike action. In what ways is this reflective of the time at which it was broadcast?

This episode was broadcast in 1969, the year after the successful strike by the female sewing machinists at the Ford factory in Dagenham. The strikers gained popular support and resulted in the women winning a pay deal of over 90% of men's salaries for the same work. The Equal Pay Act was passed in 1970, a year after the episode aired.

2. Mr Harcourt (the boss) is presented as the villain throughout. He rants 'imagine, women striking!' and calls female enfranchisement 'the impossible dream'. What is the effect and intention of this?

By mocking the idea of women voting and striking and responding aggressively to their request, Mr Harcourt is presented as the villain. His aggressive response may have mirrored attitudes towards the female strikers in 1968, implying that this attitude is outdated and belongs back in 1902, when the programme was set. Therefore, the episode pokes fun at these old-fashioned attitudes, demonstrating that female rights have largely progressed since then.

3. Using your knowledge of the twentieth century, in what ways did female roles change between 1902 (when the programme was set) and 1969 (when it was produced)?

Women were enfranchised and their representation grew in Parliament. Women made gains in the workplace during the First World War and afterwards, although limited educational opportunities and the marriage bar still prevented many women from progressing in their chosen professions in the 1960s. Social change in the 1960s saw greater personal and sexual freedoms for women (e.g. the pill). The movement towards equal pay demonstrated progression towards equality.

4. Identify and summarise the two examples of the sexualisation of the female workers.

Mr Harcourt grabs Millie's bottom when she is reaching to get something from a shelf.

Millie offers to kiss Mr Harcourt's assistant and offers him her body in exchange for him keeping her secret.

5. Describe how the women behave in each case. What does this suggest about female empowerment?

Millie challenges Mr Harcourt after he grabs her, suggesting that she is empowered to take control of her own body and confront outdated male actions. However, one way in which she does this is by offering herself to him, which makes him retreat. Similarly, Millie offers sexual acts to Harcourt's assistant to keep him from sharing her secret. These responses suggest that Millie is aware of how to sexualise herself in order to gain the upper hand, implying that female empowerment can be rooted in misogynistic ideas.

6. What does this episode suggest about the way in which male attitudes towards women changed between 1902 (when the programme was set) and 1969 (when it was produced)?

The programme suggests that some males still believed that women should be subservient towards men, both in terms of their working lives and in their gender roles. It suggests that growing female assertiveness and sexual empowerment could be viewed as both threatening and alluring to men, and that women were increasingly aware of this in the 1960s.

7. Describe two aspects of the episode that encourage the idea of women being 'wild'. Based on your knowledge of 1960s culture and society, do you think that this was an accurate adjective? Explain your reasoning.

The women are presented as wild for demanding higher wages and encouraging their sexualisation. Although contemporaries to the period may have viewed these actions as 'wild' and not in keeping with the traditional role of women, it reflects the changing attitudes of the period.

8. To discuss in class: How does the fact that this is a BBC sitcom affect its usefulness to you in analysing 1960s society?

The purpose of the sitcom is to reflect contemporary issues, such as the changing role of women in society, through the lens of comedy. It emphasises the fact that attitudes like those perpetuated by Mr Harcourt were outdated by making him the butt of the joke, and it champions the women, indicating that female empowerment is a positive force. It is unclear, purely from watching the episode, whether or not these views were mirrored in wider society. However, the fact that this was the subject matter of a popular sitcom suggests that these are views that the BBC felt were significant and in need of exploration.

Suggested responses: 'Under My Thumb'

1. Read the lyrics and highlight all examples of the singer controlling/influencing his partner.

'Under my thumb' / 'The clothes she wears' / 'The way she talks when she's spoken to'

2. Verse one alludes to the idea that the woman was the original oppressor. What does this suggest about attitudes towards feminism at the time?

These lyrics suggest that some people feared feminism as they associated it with aggressive and 'non-feminine' behaviour, such as that which was expected of a man (to be dominant instead of subservient).

3. Underline all examples of the woman being compared to a pet (dehumanised). What does this suggest about attitudes towards women?

'Squirming dog' / 'A Siamese cat of a girl' / 'She's the sweetest, hm, pet in the world'

The dehumanising lyrics suggest that the male feels superior to his partner and has the right to treat her however he wishes because she is under his control – his pet. Therefore, the female has no agency over her life. This suggests that some attitudes towards women were still deeply misogynistic in 1966.

4. Circle all phrases where the singer is bragging that the woman's change of behaviour is because of his actions. What does this suggest about attitudes towards women?

'Down to me, the change has come' / 'The way she does just what she's told down to me'

Similarly, these lyrics suggest that some males felt that women should be subservient to the wishes of their male partners, who performed the dominant role. It implies that some males had the attitude that it was their right to control the actions of their female partners.

5. What does this double standard suggest about attitudes towards women and sex at this time?

'I can still look at someone else'

This lyric suggests that some males felt threatened by growing female sexuality, as the singer has prevented his partner from looking at anyone else – 'Under my thumb, her eyes are just kept to herself'. However, there is a double standard because the male is at liberty to engage in sexual encounters with other females.

6. Does the song support/oppose the idea of changing gender roles in the 1960s? Write down three examples from the lyrics and explain each one.

The title and repeated phrase 'Under my thumb' imply that gender roles have not changed and, in fact, that women have become more repressed by the 1960s because the female in this song is seen to be under the constant control of her male partner. The lyrics of the first verse contrast this and suggest that some women have gained greater power in this period, as they can be seen as a dominant force ('once had me down' / 'once pushed me around'). The repeating lyrics 'it's down to me' imply that males still see their roles as being more dominant or decisive over their partners.

7. Based on your knowledge of 1960s culture and society, is this song reflective of the wider attitudes towards women at this time? Why/not?

The song is surprising, given the huge gains in female empowerment before 1966. Women had more sexual freedom (due to the pill), had access to better and more jobs than before, and were enfranchised and gaining larger roles in government. Traditional gender roles were still heavily perpetuated in advertising and through the media, but significant gains had been made by 1966, meaning that this song is likely more reflective of a proportion of society rather than society as a whole.

8. To discuss in class: How does the fact that this is a pop song affect its usefulness to you in analysing 1960s society?

The fact that it was written and grew to be popular suggests that many people enjoyed the song. However, this doesn't mean that they agreed with the lyrics, although some certainly may have done. It demonstrates that these outdated gender roles did still have an audience in the 1960s, but can't reveal how many people subscribed to these attitudes.

Suggested responses: 24 Hours

1. Write down three facts about women's work from the introduction at the beginning of the clip.

Women and men had different jobs in the factories – women packed the products and men operated the machines.

Average earnings by women in industry were about half the men's earnings in 1968.

Half of fully employed women earned less than £10 a week – two million earned less than £6 a week in 1968.

Most voters were women and a third of workers were women in 1968.

2. What is the difference between 'equal pay for equal work' and 'equal pay for work of equal value'?

Equal pay for equal work encouraged women and men to earn the same amount of money for doing the same job. However, the main conflict is over the idea of equal pay for work of equal value. This idea suggests that if men and women are doing different jobs that are of similar importance, they should earn the same wage.

3. Why do some interviewees argue that women should not be paid equally for work of equal value?

Men and women had specific roles in the factory – the women packed the products and the men operated the machines. One male describes the 32-week training that he completed to become a skilled worker. Many argued that this work was not of equal value, as the males had more responsibility. Consequently, they argued, women should not see an increase in pay.

4. Why did some males argue that men and women should continue to have different jobs?

One male argued that women should not be able to control the machines, even though they physically could, because it would take away the livelihood from a man. He emphasised the idea of traditional gender roles in that women could leave work to raise a family, whereas the male role was to make money to support the family.

5. Write down any quotes/opinions that you found surprising in the clip.

'It is a man's world' – this male went on to say that he was happy that this was the case.

One male argued that the female doing the same job as him should earn less money because she was younger/unmarried. The same male claimed that his colleague was a 'risk' because she could leave to have a family. He went on to suggest that a female could be paid the same if she could guarantee that she would not leave to have a family.

One factory owner suggested that not having equal pay might have 'good sociological consequences' because women might be more inclined to spend more time at home looking after their family.

6. What does this clip reveal about the extent of change in attitudes towards women by 1968?

The interviewer appears to be sympathetic to the women's campaign as he challenges some of the more gendered responses to his questions. For example, he challenges one male who suggests that women should guarantee that they will not have a family before taking employment. This suggests that there was popular support for the women's cause. The first male interviewee also suggests that he would give due attention to the female demands for equal pay – a progressive attitude. The first female interviewee is assertive and eloquent in arguing for equal pay and emphasising the changes that women had brought about before 1968. However, many of the male respondents continue to perpetuate outdated views about gender roles and appearances. This suggests that traditional ideas about gender roles were still deeply ingrained for some people, even in 1968.

7. The purpose of 24 Hours was to critique and analyse current events and social issues. How does this suggest that the BBC saw its role in shaping social attitudes?

The BBC seems to see its role as one that reveals attitudes. In some cases, the interviewer also appears to challenge outdated views. This suggests that the BBC believed that it had a duty to outline current events and social attitudes and provide arguments for and against the continuation of them.

8. To discuss in class: How does the fact this is a BBC news programme affect its usefulness to you in analysing 1960s society?

The source is useful as it portrays many conflicting opinions from people in different roles/positions in the factory. It is based in one factory in one area, meaning that it has limited scope, but it does outline various arguments, with some analysis indicating the interviewer's own position.

Suggested responses: 'Brown Sugar'

1. Listen to the track once without paying attention to the lyrics. What feelings does the music evoke? (Consider style/tempo/tone/etc.)

Upbeat, fast-paced, rocky, repetitious, lively, jubilant, resounding, cheery, bright, bold.

2. Verse one alludes to the enslavement and rape of 2,000 African people in New Orleans. In what ways does this jar with the musical arrangement?

The track is very upbeat and enjoyable to listen to, which makes it easy to assume that it is about a light-hearted subject matter. However, the lyrics contain references to trading enslaved people, raping women and racism, which completely contradicts the happy-go-lucky feel of the music. This suggests that the subject matter is being treated frivolously.

3. 'Brown sugar' is slang for an attractive Black woman. What does this suggest about attitudes towards women and Black people in Britain?

That women are being referred to in this dehumanising manner implies misogynistic attitudes towards women and women of colour. It suggests that women and Black people can be treated as commodities, in much the same way as enslaved Africans were treated in the historical period alluded to in the first verse.

4. Read verse two; what evidence can you find that the singer is still singing about enslavement and rape? Highlight this.

'English blood runs hot' / 'Wonderin' when it's gonna stop' / 'he's doin' all right' / 'should have heard him, just around midnight'

5. Some people have suggested that 'brown sugar' could refer to the drug heroin. Reread the lyrics with this in mind. What does this suggest about the culture of the 1960s?

'Brown sugar' could reflect the increasingly open attitudes towards drug-taking in the 1960s. The fact that the lyric is repeated in each chorus emphasises the allure of drugs for some performers during this period.

6. Verse three takes place in the present day and continues to refer to the sexual gratification of the singer by a Black woman. What does this suggest about attitudes towards women and Black people in the 1960s?

The song shows the singer moving from the role of an observer of sexual exploitation to an agent. The upbeat nature of the song and repetitive chorus insinuate that the male singer is not doing anything wrong. This suggests that some people promoted attitudes towards women allowing them to be treated as second-class citizens or commodities for the sexual gratification of men. This is even more disturbing when you consider the racial element of this song and suggests that the enslavement of Africans is comparable to this type of behaviour seen in the 1960s. If the listener sees these two cases as being comparable, it indicates that the treatment of and attitude towards Black people had not seen much change between these periods.

7. In 1995, Mick Jagger said, 'I never would write that song now.' Based on your knowledge of 1960s culture and society, highlight three lines that Jagger is referring to and explain how attitudes have changed.

'Brown sugar' is dehumanising, racist and misogynistic. It also implies that males can treat females as commodities for their own sexual gratification.

'Just like a young girl should' indicates that it is part of the role of the female to sexually satisfy their male partner.

Verse one does nothing to condemn the work of slavers. Instead, the chorus seems to legitimise the actions of these men.

8. To discuss in class: How does the fact that this is a pop song affect its usefulness to you in analysing 1960s society?

The fact that the song was written indicates that some people shared these attitudes towards both women and Black people in 1960s Britain. The purpose of the song is unclear as, under different circumstances, it could be used as a method of highlighting outdated racist attitudes and campaigning for change. However, it seems that the Rolling Stones did not approach the song in this way, meaning that it is unclear whether or not they were promoting these ideas. The fact that the song was one of their most popular but has since been seen as controversial indicates that there have been significant changes in attitude since it was written.

Suggested responses: *Till Death Us Do Part*

1. Throughout the episode, Alf Garnett repeats racial slurs and discriminatory remarks towards non-White people. Using your knowledge of 1960s culture and society, how accurately did this reflect public opinions towards race at the time?

Discriminatory remarks were used frequently in the mass media. The decades before 1974 had seen race riots in inner-city areas, indicating that public opinions towards race could be extremely negative.

2. Alf Garnett's opinions are sometimes challenged by his daughter and her husband. This represents a growing concern that older and younger generations had increasingly different views. Write down an example of this generation gap in the 1960s.
Rebellious teenagers / end of National Service / increased leisure time / more educational opportunities / increasingly politicised young people / access to the mass media.

3. Why is the presentation of Kevin O'Grady (by Spike Milligan) problematic? What does this suggest about attitudes towards non-White people in Britain?

Spike Milligan is a White actor pretending to be a Black character. He blackened his face in order to do this, indicating a seriously problematic portrayal of a non-White character on screen. This presumably aims to provide a point of comedy, which involves mocking the look of the non-White character – a form of racism. Furthermore, the fact that a White actor was used in the first place indicates a fundamental lack of willingness to employ non-White actors in roles in prime-time sitcoms. The fact that Kevin O'Grady is the only non-White character in the sitcom also demonstrates a lack of representation unless the script specifically calls for it.

4. Which of Alf Garnett's racial stereotypes are reinforced by Kevin O'Grady when he tells them about himself in the pub? What is the effect of this?

Kevin O'Grady says that he claims money from the government and sells stolen goods rather than having a job. By reinforcing the complaints that Alf Garnett made earlier, it implies that these are common actions of immigrants in Britain and that Alf was right to rant about them in his mocking and discriminatory manner. This reinforces the racist overtones.

5. The intention of this sitcom was to highlight the obscenity of racism and use comedy as a weapon to combat it. What does this suggest about how the BBC saw its role in shaping people's attitudes?

The BBC appeared to see its role as a broadcaster that could influence people's ideas about and attitudes towards race. By featuring a bigoted character who was intended as a point of mockery, the BBC used the programme to attempt to point out discriminatory and outdated attitudes towards immigrants.

6. At the time of broadcast, *Till Death Us Do Part* was controversial, but not only as a result of the racial prejudice that it contained. Instead, Mary Whitehouse campaigned against the general vulgarity of the programme. Why would a modern audience have different concerns?

A modern audience would have very different concerns because the racial language used is very frequent and is now considered extremely offensive. At the time of broadcast, people were more likely to use these racial slurs in conversation, whereas now it is vastly more distasteful to listen to.

7. The intention of this sitcom was to highlight the obscenity of racism and use comedy as a weapon to combat it. Do you think that it achieved these aims? Explain your reasoning.

The main character of Alf appears to be a popular one and receives many laughs from the audience when he makes racist jibes and jokes. The reaction of the audience doesn't appear to be mocking Alf but mocking those at the butt of his jokes. Furthermore, although he is sometimes challenged by his daughter and her husband, these challenges are often weak, and Alf's is the loudest voice to be heard in the dialogue regarding immigration and attitudes towards it. Therefore, rather than highlighting the obscenity of racism, the sitcom appears to poke fun at the expense of immigrants, and the audience subsequently enjoys the use of racial slurs and finds them entertaining.

8. To discuss in class: How does the fact that this is a BBC sitcom affect its usefulness to you in analysing 1960s society?

The sitcom is useful as it depicts some popular opinions towards non-White people in Britain at the time and the way in which some people refuted these. It is also valuable for understanding how the BBC tried to combat racism in society.

Suggested responses: *Rainbow City*

1. The opening scenes feature several interactions between non-White people and White people living alongside each other in the city of Birmingham. How do these interactions contrast with each other?

In some scenes, White and non-White people interact positively and peacefully. For example, the church choir sees everyone singing together on an equal footing. However, the marketplace sees more negative interactions, as two White men mock a non-White seller, wolf whistle at a non-White lady and knock over the trolley of another. This sequence ends with the men physically assaulting another non-White man. He is helped up by two White women, demonstrating contrasting attitudes.

2. *Rainbow City* was considered ground-breaking, as it was the first television programme to feature an inter-racial marriage. The main character, John Steele, was also depicted as a professional lawyer. What do you think would be the intention and impact of this?

That this was the first television programme to feature an inter-racial marriage is important, as it depicts this as normal, rather than it being a problematic plot point to be solved. Also, the fact that John Steele has a highly regarded job demonstrates the attitude that non-White people should have equal opportunities to White people.

3. In what ways does the depiction of non-White immigrants to Britain differ to other television programmes of this period? You could consider programmes such as *Till Death Us Do Part* or *The Black and White Minstrel Show*.

There are a large number of non-White cast members, indicating that Black actors have not been used only when the plot demands it. This is an important step on the road to representation in the media. This contrasts with other programmes of this period, such as those mentioned, both of which only include non-White characters when required but also use White actors with a blackened face to portray these characters.

4. In what ways could *Rainbow City* be considered to show progressive attitudes towards race?

The programme shows that immigrants to Britain lived lives similar to non-immigrants. The sitcom primarily focuses on this idea, using a non-White cast, rather than a White cast. This gave opportunities to non-White actors, while also promoting the idea of equality and similarity. The non-White characters are not portrayed to be mocked or demonised, showing a more progressive attitude than those seen before. Furthermore, the programme highlights fundamental progressive attitudes such as the acceptance of inter-racial marriage and the elevation of immigrants to highly paid and highly regarded professions.

5. Using your knowledge of 1960s culture and society, write down three ways in which this programme reflected or challenged society's attitudes.

The negative responses of some characters towards non-White people mirrors the inherent racism that still existed in society: something that the government tried to address in the Race Relations Acts of the 1960s and '70s. The gang fight echoes the attacks on non-White people by subcultures like Teddy Boys and skinheads in the period.

6. What does the programme highlight as the main issues facing immigrants in Britain?

When John Steele speaks to the uncle of the hospitalised boy, they discuss the idealistic expectations that immigrants have when coming to Britain. John Steele is persuaded to try to prevent others from moving to Britain because of the chilly welcome that they often received. This suggests that the main problem is the contrast between expectation and reality when moving to Britain: that the attitudes with which they are faced are much worse than feared.

7. *Rainbow City* was considered ground-breaking, as it included many non-White characters and actors throughout, rather than introducing them only when it was important to the plot. How does this suggest that the BBC saw its role in shaping social attitudes?

This suggests that the BBC saw itself as a pioneering force in representing non-White actors and communities in the media. In so doing, it could be possible to influence people's attitudes towards immigration by portraying these communities as similar to their own. Therefore, the BBC saw itself as having an important role in shaping social attitudes.

8. To discuss in class: How does the fact that this is a BBC drama affect its usefulness to you in analysing 1960s society?

The source is useful for highlighting the limited representation of immigrant communities before 1967, considering that this was a pioneering programme. It is also useful for conveying some of the varied attitudes towards immigrants that were experienced in inner-city communities; however, the fictional status of this means that it is limited.

Suggested responses: 'Homosexuality news reports'

1. Write down some of the questions/comments made by the interviewer. What attitudes are being presented towards the Sexual Offences Bill?

The interviewer begins by commenting that the Bill could be seen to be 'condoning something which is absolutely wrong and immoral'. This belies a strongly oppositional attitude towards the Sexual Offences Bill.

2. Leo Abse was the sponsor of the Sexual Offences Bill, which sought to decriminalise private homosexual acts. What do his comments suggest about his personal attitude towards homosexuality? Explain your answer with reference to the clip.

He says that he does 'not condone homosexuality' in the same way that he doesn't condone adultery, which is not illegal. Therefore, both should have the same legal status. He refers to homosexuality as an 'unfortunate condition', indicating that he feels that it is still something that is wrong in some way.

3. What is the difference in the way in which homosexuality is presented between these news reports from the 1990s and the clip from the *Today Programme* in 1966? Support your answer with an example from the clips.

Both news reports from the 1990s refer to people's anxieties surrounding the debate, as well as equal rights campaigners who support the debate, whereas the previous clip had a more negative attitude towards homosexuality as 'problem'. For example, Edwina Currie is seen debating with MPs and members of the public to try to convince them of her opinion that the age of consent should be lowered to 16.

4. Consider the content of all three videos that you have watched so far. How far did public opinions and government attitudes towards homosexuality change between 1966 and 1997?

The first clip implied that homosexuality was an idea condemned in the same way as adultery, despite the changing legal status. The later clips show a more representative debate, with a further legal change described as a 'human right'. This indicates significant attitudinal change. However, the issue of inequality is still obvious, as even the Prime Minister voted to have a different age of consent for homosexuals and heterosexuals. This indicates that limited change had taken place. Some change is clear, though, in that this issue was being debated at all and that it was clear that the age of consent would be lowered; the question was more about what it would be lowered to.

5. What is the difference in tone between this news report and the previous clips? Write down two examples.

This modern clip has a lighter and more celebratory tone, despite the fact that it is also reported that some called it a 'day of shame'. It is also significant that not only are the rights of homosexual people being debated and analysed by others in this clip, but the couples involved in the news story are also given a platform to share their views.

6. How far would you agree that Britain in 2005 had seen significant change since the 1960s in attitudes towards homosexuality? Explain your answer using examples from all four clips.

There is certainly significant change to be seen throughout these clips, as the first deals with the issue of legalising homosexuality, whereas the last builds hugely on this by allowing homosexual couples the right to enter into a civil partnership. However, opposition to gay rights is still evident in the twenty-first century.

7. Based on your knowledge of 1960s culture and society, how significant was the Wolfenden Report in changing people's attitudes towards homosexuality?

Although the report did not have majority public support, it did pave the way for greater gains in equality for homosexuals in the decades following it. However, this road was long and slow, and these clips demonstrate the continuing negative attitudes towards homosexuality into the twenty-first century.

8. To discuss in class: How does the fact that these are BBC radio and news reports affect their usefulness to you in analysing 1960s society?

These reports include the views of a large number of different people, meaning that they are useful for comparing differing opinions on the topic. The latter news reports allow a wider range of perspectives to be heard. They are contemporary to the period, so reveal people's responses to social change at the time.

Suggested responses: *Man Alive*

1. In the panel show discussion that followed these two reports, it was claimed that the report interviewers 'made no judgments and passed no opinions'. Find two quotes from the programme to prove or disprove this claim.

'Men who choose to love other men' – the use of the word 'choose' implies that some people in society still have the opinion that homosexuality is a choice.

'For many of us this is revolting' – this comment shows an obvious judgement, made by the report, that homosexuality is wrong.

2. In the panel show discussion, it was emphasised that homosexuals were able to speak for themselves in the two reports, without 'expert' analysis on homosexuality. How does this suggest that the BBC saw its role in these clips?

This suggests that the BBC saw its role as a reporter of people's experiences rather than in a role that analyses and makes judgements about the experiences of others. In this way, the report used the words of homosexuals to accurately portray their lives. This is in contrast to the panel show discussion, where 'experts' were brought in to make judgements about what was included in the earlier footage.

3. What have you learnt from the report/s about the treatment of and attitudes towards homosexuality in 1960s society?

Homosexuals were often shunned and treated as second-class citizens. Many people chose to live a secret life, such as the man whose wife was interviewed at the beginning of the first episode. He married a woman to appear heterosexual, but later took his own life to avoid facing a court case where his real sexuality would be revealed. However, others were able to live as openly homosexual, such as the male hairdresser interviewed in the first programme. Some men, like the doctor, talked about their experiences of being accepted by their friends and colleagues. Yet he also mentioned that some people had the opinion that seeing a homosexual doctor was dangerous for young boys, suggesting damaging attitudes towards homosexuals as being potential criminals. Episode two revealed similar experiences, with the one of the first interviewees revealing that they were born a female but preferred to be known as a male, which had resulted in the estrangement of their family. Furthermore, a group of women in this programme spoke of how they felt safer in a private club, away from the unwanted advances of men.

4. If you watched both reports, how did this treatment and attitude differ when referring to male and female homosexuality?

Both reports featured people who spoke about how their sexuality had been accepted by their friends and colleagues and people who had been ostracised because of their sexuality. The fundamental difference between the two was that male homosexuality was illegal until 1967, whereas female homosexuality had not been included in the law.

5. Do the reports support or oppose the suggestion that 1960s Britain was a 'permissive' and more liberal society? Explain your answer with reference to your own knowledge of 1960s culture and society.

The reports offer experiences supporting the idea that Britain had become more liberal, as some homosexuals were able to enjoy a life where they did not feel the need to hide their sexuality. However, this was not a universal experience and many of the attitudes described by the interviewees point to the limits of 'permissiveness' in sixties Britain.

6. To discuss in class: How does the fact that these are BBC documentaries affect their usefulness to you in analysing 1960s society?

The documentary nature means that people's lived experiences were told in their own words, meaning that this is a very useful method of learning about the treatment of and attitude towards homosexual people in Britain at this time. However, there were a limited number of interviews in each film, something that was later discussed in the panel show, limiting the scope of representation. Therefore, it is unclear how far these experiences reflect those of wider homosexual society.

7. Following the reports, an 'expert' panel was interviewed about the contents. How do the attitudes of the panel add to your understanding of how people responded to homosexuality in the 1960s?

Most of the panel appeared to be supporters of homosexual rights; however, as they discussed the ideas further, it appeared that some negative attitudes were ingrained and unnoticeable to the panellists. For example, the doctor used the term 'normal boys' to describe non-homosexuals. This suggests that there were many such attitudes, like the comments by the narrator of the documentaries, which were considered non-judgemental but actually revealed negative attitudes.

8. The BBC dedicated two programmes to report on the experiences of homosexuals and then constructed an 'expert' panel to analyse this in further detail. What does this suggest about how broadcasters viewed their role in society?

It suggests that broadcasters saw it as their role to report on and critique matters of current affairs and public interest, sometimes offering judgement on such issues.

Suggested responses: 'Glad To Be Gay'

1. Do some research: What was Tom Robinson referring to here? What does this reveal about official attitudes towards homosexuality after the 1967 Sexual Offences Act?

This dedication was a reference to the fact that the World Health Organisation had officially declared homosexuality to be a disease. Homosexuality was further dehumanised as it was classified as a number, rather than a description: 302.0. This number referred to 'sexual and gender identity disorders'. This reveals that homosexuality was still considered to be inherently deviant, even nine years after it was decriminalised in England and Wales.

2. Highlight all lyrics that describe how homosexuals were treated by the police, public or press.

'Raiding our pubs for no reason at all' / Lining the customers up by the wall' / 'Knocking them down' / 'Kicked on the ground' / 'Searching their houses' / 'Calling them queer' / 'Molesters of children, corruptors of youth, it's there in the paper' / 'Beaten unconscious and left in the dark' / 'Queerbashers caught him, kicked in his teeth' / 'Close down our pubs'

3. Based on your knowledge of 1960s culture and society, is this song reflective of the wider attitudes towards homosexuality at the time? Why/not?

The song reveals many aspects of discrimination faced by the homosexual community in the 1960s – for example, the fact that gay clubs continued to be raided by the police after the Sexual Offences Act was passed (verse one). It also highlights the hypocrisy of the censorship of *Gay News*, a publication that was prosecuted for obscenity, while others, like *Playboy* and the *Sun* continued to publish female nudes without backlash. Therefore, the song reports on familiar attitudes towards homosexuality.

4. This song was written 19 years after the Wolfenden Report and nine years after the Sexual Offences Act. What does this suggest about the rate of change in society's attitudes towards homosexuality?

The fact that this poor treatment was still happening suggests that change was extremely slow after the Wolfenden Report and the Sexual Offences Act.

5. This song was originally written by Tom Robinson for the 1976 London Gay Pride Parade. How does this suggest that musicians saw their role in changing/commentating on societal attitudes?

This suggests that some musicians saw it as their role to reveal problems in society and campaign for change through their music. In verse three, Robinson gives some ironic advice to homosexual people to avoid getting caught. This is likely a sarcastic comment, criticising the lack of action for homosexual rights. This implies that he sees his role as important for shedding light on the treatment of and attitudes towards homosexuality in order to encourage change.

6. When the song was officially released on an EP in 1978, it reached no. 18 in the UK Charts. However, BBC Radio 1 refused to broadcast it on their Top 40 Charts Show. What does this suggest about attitudes towards homosexuality?

That the BBC refused to play the song suggests that it did not agree with presenting these challenging lyrics to 'Glad To Be Gay' and the critical nature of the lyrics in describing police and public treatment of homosexuals. This implies that attitudes towards homosexuality had not progressed far enough to oppose the dangerous way in which homosexuals were treated.

7. This song has been rereleased and rewritten many times since 1976. Explore some of the alternative lyrics. What does this suggest about the role of music in shaping attitudes?

The fact that the song was rewritten many times to reflect growing problems facing homosexual people in Britain shows that there was a very slow and limited change in the way in which people viewed homosexuals in Britain. It suggests that music played a big role in highlighting these social problems and challenging them, in order to influence the wider public's opinions to make positive change.

8. To discuss in class: How does the fact that this is a pop song affect its usefulness to you in analysing 1960s society?

The song is useful as it reveals many of the issues facing homosexuals in Britain at the time, both through the lyrics and in the fact that it was not allowed to be played on the BBC Charts Show. Furthermore, the fact that so many versions exist is useful for revealing the role and impact of music for highlighting and influencing social attitudes. The song is limited, as it is the opinion of one activist who tried to change attitudes towards homosexuality for good.