

WORLD VEGAN DAY



Overview

- World Vegan Day 1st November – purpose and aims
- What is veganism (protected characteristic)
- Benefits of veganism – climate, reducing non-human animal suffering, improved health outcomes

Preparation

- Check sound for YouTube clip for exit music

Key messages

- Veganism is a choice people make
- Ethical veganism is a protected characteristic under the Equality Act 2010
- Vegans believe that living in harmony with animals and the planet is possible through their choices

SLIDE NOTES (includes key message and potential wording)

Slide 1 – key takeaways – hook

This question is on the screen as students enter the assembly: ***If everyone in the UK ate a 100% plant-based diet, how much money do you think the NHS could save per year? £6.7 billion***

- Plant-based diets have multiple health benefits.

Potential wording

- This figure is perhaps surprising, can changing our diet really save the NHS this much money?
- Studies show that consuming more fruit, vegetables and plant proteins like beans, lentils and nuts is linked with better nutrition and health. This means that if we replace animal products in our diets with more foods that come from plants, we are likely to be healthier overall.

Slide 2 – key takeaways – World Vegan Day

- Worldwide celebration of veganism.

- Veganism has existed for thousands of years, it's only in the last century that the term veganism was coined.

Potential wording

- World Vegan Day is a worldwide celebration that was first held in 1994 which marked 50 years of The Vegan Society and the term vegan being created.
- Even before the word 'vegan' was created, plant-based eating has existed for over 2000 years, with religions like Hinduism and Buddhism following non-animal eating habits.
- And then in 1806, British doctor William Lambe began to recommend a diet without eggs and dairy.
- The term 'vegan' was coined by Donald Watson in 1944 – he called a meeting with 5 other likeminded activists and decided that they needed a new word to describe their beliefs – they settled on 'vegan', a word that Watson later described as containing the first three and last two letters of 'vegetarian'. And in his words, it marked *"the beginning and end of vegetarian"*.
- The Vegan Society continues to support vegans all around the world today.



Slide 3 – key takeaways – what is a vegan?

- A vegan chooses to eat a plant-based diet.
- Vegans choose a lifestyle and products that do not harm other animals.
- Ethical Veganism is a protected characteristic classed as a 'belief' system in the Equality Act 2010.

Potential wording

- So, what is a vegan?
- There are different types of vegans, some choose to only follow a plant-based diet, whereas others take a more ethical standpoint and refuse products or activities that harm other animals.
- The Vegan Society describes veganism as ***"a philosophy and way of living which seeks to exclude—as far as is possible and practicable—all forms of exploitation of, and cruelty to, animals for food, clothing or any other purpose..."***
- Veganism encompasses areas such as medicine, entertainment and clothing.
- For example, medicine can sometimes contain animal products like gelatine or lactose and where possible, vegans may choose to ask their health provider if there are any vegan alternatives available. But it is important to note that The Vegan Society does not recommend avoiding medication suggested by a doctor, hence the "... as far as is possible and practicable" part of the definition.

Slide 4-5 - key takeaways - why do people choose to be vegan?

- People *choose* to be vegan.
- Sarah's story – learning about the meat and dairy industry and their environmental impacts and then feeling empowered by veganism.
- Dylan and Liam's stories – not wanting to harm non-human animals and enjoying being more compassionate to all animals.

Potential wording

- Let's look at why people choose to be vegan.
- Here is a short story from Sarah who began researching veganism in 2019 on YouTube. She was shocked when she learnt about the environmental

impact of the meat and dairy industries, including the awful ways in how animals are treated.

- She began learning about vegan products and meals and changing her lifestyle to support her new ethical standpoint.
- By becoming vegan she now feels empowered knowing she's caring for the environment and living beings.
- Brothers, Dylan and Liam, started learning about veganism after also finding out how farmed animals were harmed in the meat and dairy industries. They wanted to save innocent lives and so they both chose to go vegan.
- Liam began to realise that what we have seen as normal perhaps needs reframing, "cow's milk is for cows", and now he is happy to be eating vegan food instead.

Slides 6-10 - key takeaways - true or false

- There are many assumptions about veganism that we can address.

Potential wording

- Let's look at some common myths surrounding veganism. Here we have 5 true or false statements (you could do this with point in either direction for true or false, different hand gestures or the chance for students to think to themselves) which I would like for you to consider:

- First statement: ***The only aim of vegans is to eat a plant-based diet – FALSE***

- This is a key belief of vegans and although some vegans choose to only eat plant-based food, there are different types of vegans, for example ethical vegans, who follow a vegan diet as well as choosing products that don't harm animals. They may choose not to buy clothes that contain animal products, or make-up that is tested on animals, and likely don't attend farms or zoos for entertainment.

- ***It's impossible to get enough protein with a vegan diet – FALSE***

- Protein is a vital component of nutrition, helping our muscles and bones.
- Although protein is commonly linked to animal



produce, dietitians agree that eating a vegan diet can fully meet our protein needs at any age.

- Foods such as peas, tofu, beans, nuts and meat replacements are readily available and are often cheaper to buy than animal protein.
- Veganism is a belief protected by the law – TRUE.
- Veganism is protected under the European Convention on Human Rights and is a protected characteristic for the purposes of British equality law.
- Just as our society aims to end racism, sexism and ageism, this act helps to support those fighting against speciesism – a form of discrimination against non-human animals.

• A top athlete could never succeed on a vegan diet – FALSE

- There are world class athletes who follow plant-based diets and celebrate the health benefits that come as a result of it.
- Stars such as tennis players Serena Williams and Novak Djokovic, Formula 1 driver Lewis Hamilton and former heavy-weight boxer David Haye all refer to their vegan, plant-based diets as a way to thrive in their field.

• A vegan diet could help decrease world hunger – TRUE

- The global population is due to rise dramatically this century and so we really need to consider what humans eat.
- Around one in nine people in the world don't have enough food to eat. At the same time, our planet only has a limited amount of land that can be used to grow food. With the world's population expected to grow to between 9 and 11 billion people by 2050, one of the most urgent questions we face is how we will feed ourselves in the future [\[source: The Vegan Society\]](#).
- Plant-based diets use far less land, water and resources to produce the same amount of nutrition. So, if more of the world chose to eat more plants, we could feed more people using the land we already have.
- That doesn't mean everyone needs to make the same choices overnight – but it does show us that what we eat has a real impact on the world around us.

Slide 11 - key takeaways - why is veganism the future?

- Choosing to live without harming non-human animals.
- Choosing food that reduces our carbon footprint.
- Choosing food that allows nature to thrive.

Potential wording

- We've already heard why Sarah, Dylan and Liam decided to be vegan, but there are many reasons which convince people to choose this way of life.
- Many choose veganism due to the harm that farmed animals face in the meat and dairy industries. It is shocking to find out the number of animals slaughtered daily; 900,000 cows, 1.4 million goats, 3.8 million pigs, 202 million chickens just to name a few [\[source: Our World in Data\]](#). Each of these animals are sentient and experience restriction while they are alive, not to mention the fear they feel upon transportation, and of course, the slaughtering of these living beings.
- Others are pulled towards veganism due to the impact of eating animal products on the environment. Food production is vital for humans, but the meat, dairy and fishery industries (including land use for these means) produce more CO2 than if we ate a plant-based or majority plant-based diet [\[source: Our World in Data\]](#). Additionally, the farming of cows in particular has very high emissions, especially that of methane output. Eating plants instead lowers emissions by 10 times, even if methane is excluded from the comparison [\[source: Our World in Data\]](#).
- Perhaps many people choose veganism because by eating plants, we would use less land for agriculture and therefore there is more land for nature. This would allow nature to thrive, with plants, animals and insects a vital part of a thriving environment. Additionally, UN experts agree that there is enough food for everyone, however many people around the world cannot access food. This is for many reasons, but one thing we could do is eat food grown in the UK [\[source: The Vegan Society\]](#). This would be a great step towards lowering our emissions and ensuring that food grown in other countries can be used on their own populations.
- Lastly, research shows that eating a vegan diet makes us less likely to get illnesses such as Type 2 Diabetes, heart disease, and some types of cancer. Vegans are also more likely to maintain a healthy body weight throughout their lives [\[source: The Vegan Society\]](#).



Slide 12 - key takeaways - what can you do?

- Pose these questions and allow students to engage by thinking to themselves.

Potential wording

- So, what can you do? Here are three questions which I would like for you to consider about your own eating and lifestyle choices. You could even take a minute or so to think about where your breakfast came from this morning. What processes were involved in the food you chose getting to your plate?
- I especially like question X as it sparks curiosity in me because...
- When we reflect on what we eat, we don't need to change everything quickly, sometimes it's important to consider what our impact is on the planet and other living beings.

Slide 13 - key takeaways - what is one change you could act upon this week?

- Benjamin Zephaniah was a famous British poet who was a vegan from the age of 13 and became an honorary patron of The Vegan Society.

Potential wording

- To conclude this assembly on World Vegan Day, it's worth us considering how we can be more compassionate to our planet as we continue with our day.
- Benjamin Zephaniah was a famous British poet who was a vegan from the age of 13 and became an honorary patron of The Vegan Society. During an interview he stated one of the reasons he was vegan was *"simply me, trying to do the least harm and the most good"*.
- Upon leaving today, I wonder how you can take this quote and the learnings of this assembly with you and consider what change you could act upon this week?

Slide 14 - exit music

This is a song by poet, Benjamin Zephaniah, about why he chose to be a vegan and its impact. This can be played as students exit the assembly.

