



Commonwealth Connections



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Commonwealth Day assembly plan

**Delivering a common future:
Connecting, innovating, transforming.**

Aims: To celebrate the Commonwealth Day and develop knowledge and understanding of what the Commonwealth stands for and the work it is doing.

Commonwealth Values: Tolerance, respect and understanding, protecting the environment, and valuing the contributions of young people in the Commonwealth.

Useful resources: Internet access, speakers, slides, or pictures showing the Commonwealth flag and a world map, pieces of thin card, books, and some sticky tape. Educational resources (Flags, maps etc.) at:

<https://thecommonwealth.org/commonwealth-day>

Background information

Commonwealth Day is celebrated every year on the second Monday in March. In 2022 it falls on Monday 14 March. This day is an opportunity for the 54 nations of the Commonwealth to come together and celebrate the association's rich diversity and shared values of **peace, democracy, and equality**.

Leading up to the assembly, invite pupils and staff who have a connection with a Commonwealth country to bring in an object, flag, or article of clothing linked to the country to display around the room for the assembly. As pupils enter and exit, play some music associated with another Commonwealth country or A Song for the Commonwealth written by Vincent Atueyi Chinemula and Lucy Kiely for the Queen's Jubilee which can be found at:

<https://www.commonwealthresounds.com/news/a-song-for-the-commonwealth-released/>

The day will be marked across the world by a range of activities, including a multi-cultural, multi-faith event at Westminster Abbey in London. This service is traditionally attended by Queen Elizabeth II as Head of the Commonwealth, dignitaries from across the Commonwealth, as well as senior politicians and very importantly 1,000 school children. Street parties, poetry performances, storytelling festivals, fashion shows, flag ceremonies, and sports, dance and music events also take place in countries across the world to celebrate the day.

Each year a theme is chosen which informs events on the day and helps to guide activities by Commonwealth organisations throughout the year. This year the theme is '**Delivering a Common Future**.' This highlights how the 54 member countries are 'innovating, connecting and transforming' to help tackle some of the big issues that shape the world, such as climate change and its impact, and finding sustainable ways of using the planet's natural resources.

This year also celebrates Queen Elizabeth II's platinum jubilee and the Commonwealth Games taking place in Birmingham in the UK.

The following plan contains activities that you could use to help your school celebrate Commonwealth Day and support this year's theme. This includes accessing classroom activities in the **Commonwealth Games 2022 Resource**, based around the theme of the Commonwealth and the Commonwealth Games, to promote thinking, leadership, communication, collaboration, and creativity. Please see below '**Find out more**'

Ideas and activities for your assembly

Part 1 Introduction: Happy Commonwealth Day!

Leading up to the assembly, invite pupils and staff who have a connection with a Commonwealth country to bring in an object, flag, or article of clothing linked to the country to display around the room for the assembly. As pupils enter and exit, play some music associated with another Commonwealth country or A Song for the Commonwealth written by Vincent Atueyi Chinemula and Lucy Kiely for the Queen's Jubilee which can be found at:

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Welcome everyone to the Commonwealth Day assembly and give a special thank you to those who have brought in objects to demonstrate their connections with a Commonwealth nation and show some of the links shared by your community with different countries and cultures.



Image ©Flag Institute Chief Vexillologist, Graham Bartram

Show a picture of the Commonwealth flag. Ask your pupils to describe what they can see on the Commonwealth flag and ask if anyone thinks they might know what the different parts of the design could represent?

The design has an image of the globe to show that Commonwealth countries are found all over the world and spears making the letter "C" for Commonwealth. The spears are all the same size and represent the many ways in which the Commonwealth countries cooperate and how each nation is considered equal regardless of size or wealth.

Show the locations of some Commonwealth countries on a world map and invite a small group of pupils to show the artefacts they have brought in and explain why they have chosen these objects and what they mean to them.

Explain that the Commonwealth is made up of 54 nation states with over 2 billion people spread all over the world. Member countries come from Africa, Asia, the Americas, the Caribbean, Europe, and the South Pacific. It includes large countries like Australia and Canada and tiny island states like Tuvalu and includes some of the world's biggest, smallest, richest, and poorest countries.

Part 2: Finding solutions to tricky problems

Each year **Commonwealth Day** has a special theme. This year's theme highlights **how countries are working together across the Commonwealth to come up with innovative ideas to achieve global goals and make life better for everyone.**

Explain that if you have a problem to solve, it is often hard to do it alone and it might be better to work with others to achieve it. Ask for some volunteers who have inventive ideas. Choose confident children who are unlikely to be upset if they are unable to achieve something first time around.

Ask your volunteers if they can work together and come up with any ideas that would help you to solve a problem which is finding a way to balance a pile of books on a thin piece of card using just 2 pieces of tape.

Give the pupils a short period of time to experiment with the task. Keep up a running commentary and then discuss with your volunteers how they got on.

If they do not come up with the solution of making a simple wide cylinder shape, explain that cylinders are strong, stable shapes used by engineers in building structures. Show how this can be done, by settling the cylinder flat on a table and asking the pupils to predict how many books they think can be carefully balanced on top of it before it crumbles.

Encourage the audience to count along with you as you place the books on your structure and then challenge the students to have a go themselves in their classrooms after the assembly to see which class can achieve the most books balanced on one single piece of card.

Explain that that this little activity was to show that all round the world the people of the Commonwealth are working together to try and find innovative solutions to big problems including dealing with climate change and finding ways to protect our oceans. Ask the pupils to discuss with the person sitting next to them what they think should be important goals for the Commonwealth to work towards together? Feed back some of these ideas to the rest of the group.

Part 3: Reflection

All the Commonwealth countries represented on the flag that we saw at the beginning of the assembly have also agreed on a set of **common values**. These include important issues such as **tolerance and respect and protecting human rights**.

One of the Commonwealth values focuses on the importance of young people and how they can help shape the future. Even small actions can make a difference.

Ask pupils to imagine the difference that could be made if all the young people in the Commonwealth worked to tackle important global issues together. By working together, young people can bring about real change.

Ask your pupils to reflect quietly on the below sentence and think about the positive contributions we can all make to deliver a more sustainable world to make life better for everyone.

**“We may be many,
but we can work as one”.**

Part 4: After assembly activities

1. Encourage members of your class who brought in artefacts to share their stories with the rest of the class and others across the school.
2. Carry out some of the relevant learning activities and investigations linked to major global issues using activities on the Connecting Classrooms for Global Learning website at: <https://connecting-classrooms.britishcouncil.org/>
3. You might particularly focus on the units on climate change, rising sea levels and

plastic pollution which can be found at: <https://connecting-classrooms.britishcouncil.org/resources/home-learning/climate-action> and <https://connecting-classrooms.britishcouncil.org/resources/home-learning/life-below-water-secondary>

4. Commonwealth Connections is a joint project from the British Council and the Birmingham Organising Committee for the 2022 Commonwealth Games. Using sport and art, the project seeks to create connections between young people on shared Commonwealth values. Information can be found at: <https://www.britishcouncil.org/school-resources/commonwealth-connections>
5. Commonwealth Games 2022 Resource is designed to celebrate this year's Commonwealth Games and the ongoing work that the Commonwealth is doing to improve the lives of its citizens: <https://www.britishcouncil.org/school-resources/find/classroom/commonwealth-games-resource>
6. Invite your students to choose one of the Commonwealth countries that they would like to find out more about. Ask them to note down what they already know and what they would like to investigate further. This could include information about the climate, flora, and fauna, along with information about its history and culture. Ask them to present their research creatively. This could be as a presentation, display, fact file or wikipage, which could be shared within the class and used to create a quiz for other classes or your partner school if you have one.
7. The Commonwealth flag was redesigned in 2013. If you were to design a new flag or logo for the Commonwealth to celebrate young people connecting, innovating, and transforming the world together what would your design look like?
8. Find out about people who have been responsible for innovative solutions to problems in your country and in that of your partner school if you have one.
9. On Commonwealth Day schools and communities from all around the world will be celebrating the work of the Commonwealth and their shared Commonwealth values. In London, Westminster Abbey comes alive as singers, dancers and musicians from different countries celebrate their cultures and faiths. Find out more about the Commonwealth values and perhaps hold your own school event to celebrate these on Commonwealth Day.
10. Find out more about the history of the Commonwealth, its values, and current programmes at: https://www.dropbox.com/sh/3g0hxxhma118rqey/AABP0p04WJE_lbpM_5Stln_4a?dl=0&preview=Our+CW+KidsBooklet+childrens+2022.pdf and <http://thecommonwealth.org/>
11. Help your pupils understand the big issues that shape our world and equip them with the knowledge, skills and attitudes they need to make a positive contribution by investigating the resources on the **Connecting Classrooms through Global Learning** website at: <https://connecting-classrooms.britishcouncil.org/>
12. Other British Council school and teacher resources can be found at: <https://www.britishcouncil.org/school-resources>

If your school is doing something special on Commonwealth Day, why not share images of your event on social media using the hashtags:

#CommonwealthConnections

#CommonwealthDay

Don't forget to follow and tag us **@Schools_British**