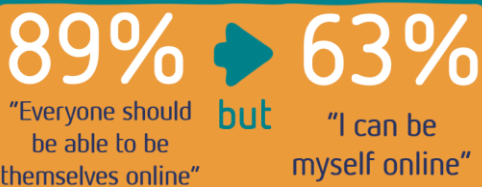


# Part 1 Understanding Online Hate

## Learning Aims:

- ▶ To understand what is meant by 'online hate'
- ▶ To explore why people may use the internet to express hate

Use these discussion questions and notes for educators to explore the statistics on Slide 2, **Discussion Prompts**:



What might prevent people from being themselves online?

Do you think some groups of people face more challenges in being themselves online than others?


Do you think those groups of people face similar challenges offline too?

How can the internet help people understand different views and beliefs? How isn't it helpful?

Why do you think most young people think the internet makes it easy for people to be mean? What makes it 'easy'?



Explore this idea more using **Follow-up Activity 2**  
**Is hate more common online?**



7/10  
young people  
"I know how to recognise online hate"

What do you think 'online hate' means?



Online hate is any online communication or content which harasses or targets someone based on their identity.

For a more comprehensive definition, see the [Guidance for Educators](#)

How would you recognise online hate?

What do you think is the difference between jokes and online hate?


What do you think is the difference between free speech and hate speech?



Explore this idea more using **Follow-up Activity 1**  
**Freedom of speech or hate speech?**

**92%** agree no one should be targeted with online hate because of their gender, race, religion, sexuality, disability or transgender identity. **but** **80%** have seen something hateful online aimed at a particular group in the last year...

Do you know what is meant by a 'protected characteristic'?

 It is against the law to discriminate against someone because of any 'protected characteristic' described by the Equality Act (2010). Whilst the law is not directly applicable to online hate and is not fully applicable in Scotland and Northern Ireland, it does provide a useful framework to help learners conceptualise groups more likely to be targeted. The statistic above lists the most relevant protected characteristics.

For more information about the law and online hate, see the [Guidance for Educators](#)

Why is it important that nobody is targeted because of their gender, race, religion, sexuality, disability or transgender identity?

Does the percentage of young people who have seen online hate in the last year surprise you?

Do you think online hate is a big issue?

Of those who had seen online hate, the **majority (68%)** had seen it on social media.

Other common answers...

- Videos & video comment threads
- Instant messaging services
- Chat functions in games
- Comment threads on news sites

Why do you think a large percentage of young people have seen groups targeted with online hate on social media?

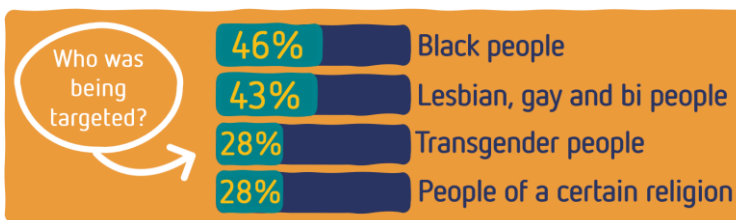
Why do you think online hate is more common on social media?



Explore this idea more using **Follow-up Activity 2**  
**Is hate more common online?**

Do these statistics surprise you? Why/why not?

Are there any groups not listed here which you think are also frequently targeted with online hate?



 You may wish to share the following additional statistics, from the same research findings:

- Asian people 18%,
- People from other ethnic minorities 23%
- Travellers/Roma Gypsies 10%
- Disabled people 19%
- Girls/Women 23%

## How to run this activity:

1. Discuss with young people how freedom of speech is sometimes used by people as an excuse to say anything online, but it is a misconception that freedom of speech works in this way.
2. Read or display the following:

The Human Rights Act (1998) states:

“Everyone has the right to freedom of expression”.

However, it also emphasises:

“The exercise of these freedoms, since it carries with it duties and responsibilities, may be subject to such formalities, conditions, restrictions or penalties as are prescribed by law.”

3. Explain that this means freedom of speech does not justify actions which break the law and that **hate speech is illegal in the UK, including on the internet.**
4. You may find it useful to share more information about which laws cover hate speech, using the [Guidance for Educators](#).
5. Distribute copies of [Appendix 1.1](#) and ask young people to sort the cards into two groups: Freedom of speech or hate speech.
6. Discuss with young people how they have sorted the cards. Finish with the following questions:
  - When could it be confusing deciding what is “freedom of speech” and what is “hate speech”?
  - What advice would you give someone when they are trying to decide whether it’s okay to post something online?

### How to run this activity:

1. Explain to young people that some people believe it is 'easier' to be hateful online, and therefore it may be more common to experience or see hate online. Ask "Do you agree with this?"
2. Divide young people into groups and give each a copy of [Appendix 1.2](#). Using the prompts, young people should mind-map or list reasons why it might be easier to be hateful online, or why online hate might be more common.
3. Once young people have had some time to generate ideas, ask groups to share. You may wish to use the suggested answers below to support and discuss further.

#### Suggested Answers

- ◆ Use of username instead of real name (anonymity)
- ◆ Don't need to have a profile picture of yourself (anonymity)
- ◆ Leaving comments on someone's post is quick and easy
- ◆ People may feel 'braver' about posting hate speech online in comparison with saying it in-person
- ◆ Although there is always a report function, some hateful content can 'slip through the net'
- ◆ The internet is huge and wide-reaching
- ◆ Things posted online can become very permanent and hard to completely remove – a post might get taken down, but it might have been screenshotted and shared by many others
- ◆ If someone's account is public, it can be seen by anyone, opening up opportunities for conflict or disagreement
- ◆ People often use the internet, especially social media, to express their identity, which other people may see
- ◆ People with hateful opinions can find other people online that share their opinions
- ◆ Well-known or famous individuals may post something hateful online, reaching lots of different people, making others think it's okay to post similar things
- ◆ The internet is world-wide, but different countries have different laws and cultures
- ◆ If hate speech is online, a victim may find it harder to decide who to turn to for help
- ◆ Some people may post hateful things online to shock and get attention

4. Finish the activity by sharing the following statistics about where young people have seen hate against particular groups in the last year. Discuss which might be the most hurtful.

On the internet (for example social media, games, videos, messaging services etc)	80%
In other media (for example, newspapers, magazines, TV, radio)	67%
At school	73%
Face-to-face in other places (for example, in your local community or at home)	56%

5. Explain that unkind comments and bullying are never acceptable and that both online and offline comments can be hurtful. Online hate targets particular groups of people who already face prejudice and disadvantages in other aspects of their life because of who they are, meaning it can be even more harmful and damaging, especially for young people.

## Appendix 1.1 Is hate more common online?



Starting conversations to  
put an end to online hate

On a news article about a celebrity who has just come out many of the comments include offensive language about their sexual orientation.

Somebody likes and reshares an offensive cartoon about Jewish people.

In a group chat someone recalls a racist joke they overheard and explains why they don't think it's funny.

Somebody posts in an in-game chat stating that gamers of a particular gender are not welcome.

In a fan forum, a user comments about their dislike of an LGBT+ actor based on their acting skills and without referencing their sexual orientation.

Somebody shares a video of an act of violence against a person with a protected characteristic calling for action against the perpetrator.

A disabled person shares a video talking openly about their experiences. In the comments, somebody asks a question about their condition.

A well known online figure blames all people of a particular religion for a recent tragedy.

Two people disagree about a recent political decision and have an honest discussion on social media about what they believe.

A Black person shares an offensive term on social media when recalling a recent experience where someone used the term against them.

Someone repeatedly and intentionally misgenders (uses the incorrect pronouns) when commenting on the posts of a trans influencer.

Somebody DMs a disabled influencer saying that their content isn't suitable for social media because of their disability.

### The following are examples of online hate:

- *On a news article about a celebrity who has just come out many of the comments include offensive language about their sexual orientation.*

Depending on the sexual orientation, these kind of comments would be considered either **biphobic** or **homophobic**. Both target people on the basis of their identity and are examples of online hate.

- *Somebody DMs a disabled influencer saying that their content isn't suitable for social media because of their disability.*

This is **disablist** and seeks to isolate someone based on their identity. This is online hate.

- *Someone repeatedly and intentionally misgenders (uses the incorrect pronouns) when commenting on the posts of a trans influencer.*

This is **transphobic** and is a prejudice response to someone's identity. This is online hate.

- *Somebody posts in an in-game chat stating that gamers of a particular gender are not welcome.*

This is **sexist** and isolates a group of people based on their identity. This is online hate.

- *A well known online figure blames all people of a particular religion for a recent tragedy.*

This is a prejudice stereotype based on people's identity and is online hate. Pupils may make a link between this example and real examples of **Islamophobia**. It is also worth discussing that famous people, celebrities or those with verified accounts can still be perpetrators of online hate.

- *Somebody likes and reshapes an offensive cartoon about Jewish people.*

This is **anti-Semitic** and is an example of online hate. Even though they were not the original creator of the hateful content, by liking and sharing it on they are promoting hateful attitudes.

### The following examples may depend on content and context:

- *Two people disagree about a recent political decision and have an honest discussion on social media about what they believe.*

At first glance, this would not be considered online hate. However if either of the people involved are using offensive language, pictures, videos or symbols or express beliefs (political or otherwise) which are prejudiced against or target a particular group based on their identity, it would be considered online hate.

- *A disabled person shares a video talking openly about their experiences. In the comments, somebody asks a question about their condition.*

A genuine question that is well-intentioned and sent on a platform where the creator has invited this kind of engagement is unlikely to be online hate. However if the question is designed to humiliate or harass the creator based on their identity, it would be considered online hate.

- *In a group chat someone recalls a racist joke they overheard and explains why they don't think it's funny.*

If the intention was to raise awareness of the **racism** or to call out the behaviour, this would not be online hate. However it is generally best not to reshare or repeat hateful language, unless you share the same protected characteristic as the targeted group and are reclaiming the language. If someone sent a message like this because they thought the joke was funny or to share the joke, this would be online hate.

- *In a fan forum, a user comments about their dislike of an LGBT+ actor based on their acting skills and without referencing their sexual orientation.*

As this content does not target someone on the basis of their identity, it is unlikely to be online hate. However it is worth considering whether unconscious bias or other systems of oppression play a factor in the decision to criticise an individual who may already be disadvantaged in other ways because of who they are.

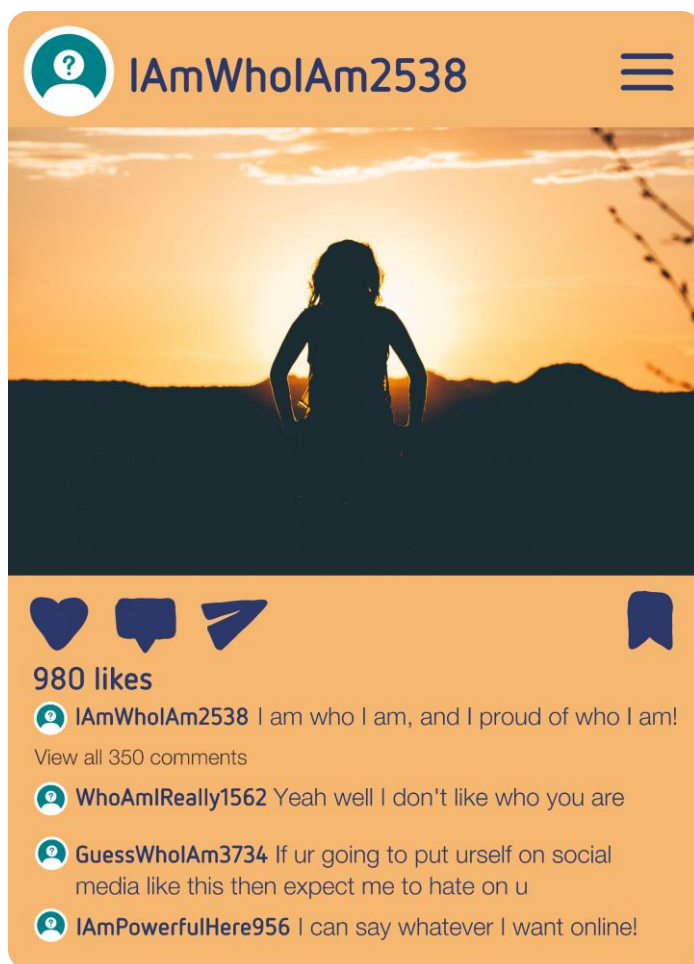
- *Somebody shares a video they took of an act of violence against a person with a protected characteristic calling for action against the perpetrator.*

This is not online hate. However, it may be worth noting that even if shared with good intentions, seeing this kind of content online could be very distressing for anyone who shares that protected characteristic. For this reason some users may choose to include a trigger warning, whilst other may avoid resharing at all. If someone shared a video of this sort and praised the actions, this would be online hate.



- *A Black person shares an offensive term on social media when recalling a recent experience where someone used the term against them.*

The internet can be an important space for people who are targeted by online hate to share their experiences and build supportive, empowering communities. This is not online hate.

Can you think of any reasons why hate might be more common online?  
(Hint: spot the clues in the prompts)



**Society Saviours!**   
6.7k members  
We're being censored!  
Speak the truth!  
Join this group if you believe in  
our cause! Save our society!

 **I Need No Introduction**  
@outspoken celeb   
This isn't about clout.  
This isn't for attention.  
I just speak my mind.  
I speak the TRUTH.