

### Target audience

Children aged 7-11

### Key vocabulary

Identity, represent, freedom, expression, reputation

### Resources

- Dictionary
- Thesaurus
- Paper/mini-whiteboards

### Timing

1 hour  
(1h 15 min with ground rules)

### Preparation

Familiarise yourself with the other documents included in this pack.

### Lesson aim

This lesson aims to help young people understand the concepts of '**identity**' and '**freedom of expression**' when they are online. They will identify aspects of their own online identities, explore the boundaries of freedom of expression online and understand the importance of respect and reputation when navigating the digital world.

### Lesson outcomes

Learners will be able to:

- Explain what is meant by the term 'identity.'
- Describe aspects of their own online identity.
- Explore what it means to express their identity freely online.
- Describe issues online that might make themselves or other feel sad, worried or uncomfortable and understand how to seek help.

# Free to be ME

	Activity	Timing (suggested)	Grouping
Optional Starter	Ground Rules (see 'Establishing a safe and supportive learning environment' document)	15 minutes	Whole group
Starter	Identity is...	5 minutes	Whole group
Activity 1	Who am I online?	10 minutes	Individuals
Activity 2	Free to be me?	30 minutes	Small groups
Activity 3	The Boss decides	10 minutes	Pairs
Plenary	Emoji exit ticket	5 minutes	Whole group

### Optional Starter: Ground Rules

Run the Ground Rules activity from the '**Establishing a safe and supportive learning environment**' document to create a safe space in which to discuss the theme of online identity.

### Starter: Identity is...

Start off by displaying the word '**identity**' to the group.

Give learners a few moments to think about what this word means to them and give them time to discuss the following questions in pairs:

- What does this word mean?
- Where or when have you heard it being used? (Identity card, identity theft etc.)
- How would you explain the idea of 'identity' to someone who hasn't heard about it before?

Ask for feedback and discuss the learners' ideas together as a group. Their answers may include definitions of identity as being 'who you are', how you are different or unique, and the aspects of oneself that make you, 'you.'

If possible, ask a learner to look up the word 'identity' in both a dictionary and thesaurus. Share what they find and as a group decide on a definition in your own words. Record this somewhere visible, e.g. on a working wall or flipchart page.

#### Note for educators

The Cambridge English Dictionary defines 'identity' as, "Who a person is, or the qualities of a person or group that make them different from others."

Explain to learners that there are lots of different things that make up our identities and lots of different ways people can express their identities. Ask the learners to think about the sorts of things people define or identify themselves by.

If learners need further support with this, you could ask them to record as many different things about themselves as they can in 30 seconds, using either paper or mini-whiteboards and use their own examples to identify different types of characteristics.

Record examples on a whiteboard or projector screen e.g. physical appearance, age, gender, family life, names, area/location, languages spoken, hobbies, and personality.

To develop the learners' thinking further, discuss the following questions together:

- What parts of our identity stay the same throughout our whole lives? What parts might change?
- What parts are essential to who we are? What parts can sometimes seem less important?
- What parts of our identity might be seen differently by different people, including ourselves?

Explain to learners that our identity is made up of lots of different parts and that one of these parts is how we represent our identity when we are online. The online part will be the focus for this lesson.

### Activity 1: Who am I online?

Ask learners to discuss in pairs what they like to do online, and how they choose to represent themselves when they are online. This might be through the profile pictures they choose, the usernames they use, or the characters or avatars they like to use in games and how they choose what these look like.

Give each learner an online identity wheel (**Appendix 1**).



### Activity 1: Who am I online? cont.

Remind learners they are now going to focus on the online parts of their identity and how they represent themselves online.

Ask learners to fill in the sections with the ways they use the internet and how they choose to represent themselves online. Explain that once the wheel is complete, it will be a record of what makes them who they are online. In other words, their online identity.

To extend this activity, you could collect all the online identity wheels together, shuffle them and redistribute them, ensuring that any names are hidden. Each learner must then guess which other learner owns the online identity wheel they now have in front of them. If this option is chosen, ensure learners know before they start that other people will see their online identity wheel.

#### Note for educators

You may notice that learners in your group record usernames on their online identity wheels that reveal their personal information e.g. their first name and surname. If so, you may wish to follow this up at another time with an activity around keeping personal information safe online. Even if a person has an account set to private, a username is usually always public.

You can find an interactive activity about personal information here:

[www.childnet.com/young-people/primary/get-answers/what-do-i-need-to-know-about-sharing-things-online](http://www.childnet.com/young-people/primary/get-answers/what-do-i-need-to-know-about-sharing-things-online)

### Activity 2: Free to be me?

Explain that being free to express who you are is really important and that the next activity will explore what it means to be 'free to be me' online.

Sort learners into small groups of 5 or 6 and hand out the statements from **Appendix 2**.

Ask each group to discuss each one, decide if they agree or disagree and their reasons why.

Take feedback from the groups, using the key questions below each one to help develop each group's discussion.

Conclude by explaining that everyone has the right to be 'free to be me' online, as long as what they do is not hurtful or stops someone else from being 'free to be me' online too. Even though people can change and represent their identities in different ways online, everyone still needs to be kind and respectful to others when doing so.

Ask learners to work in pairs and look at the scenarios in **Appendix 3**. They need to decide which scenarios show a positive example of being 'free to be me' online, and which scenarios are an unacceptable use of online freedom. Give learners the key questions below to help develop their discussions around each scenario.

#### Key questions:

- How does this scenario make you feel?
- What made you angry/sad/happy about these scenarios?
- How do you think each person in the scenario feels?
- How much freedom does each person have to be themselves in this scenario?
- Why did each person post/share this?

### Activity 2: Free to be me? cont.

- Where did the people in these scenarios get their ideas from about the things they don't like or disagree with?
- Does freedom of expression have a limit? What is it?

Reflect as a whole group on the scenarios. Explain to learners that in all of these scenarios, people are expressing a part of their identity online, but that in some of them, the way one person is expressing themselves online is hurting another person. This might result in that person feeling that they can't or shouldn't express themselves in that way anymore, which is not kind or respectful.

To extend this activity for older learners, focus on the last key questions:

#### **Does freedom of expression have a limit? What is it?**

It has already been explained to learners that everyone is allowed and encouraged to be 'free to be me' online, as long as they do it kindly and respectfully, and do not stop someone else from being 'free to be me' online. Now that learners have had the opportunity to apply this idea to some examples, guide the group in a discussion about where the limit to freedom of expression is, and how a person can make sure their online behaviour doesn't cross this limit.

Conclude this activity by asking, "What could the people in the scenarios do about the things that have worried or upset them online?" Draw out from the group that if anyone in the scenarios was upset, they could speak to someone they trust for more help and support. From there, they might decide to block the user who upset them or make a report to the site/app's safety team to be reviewed. This is an opportunity to remind all the learners that if anything happens online that worries, upsets or scares them, they should speak to an adult they trust at home or at school/their youth setting, who can help them to feel better and decide on what steps to take next.

### Activity 3: The Boss decides

Explain to learners how online identities and the way we express ourselves online can affect how other people see us online. Our online identity can also affect our online reputation.

Ask learners what they think '**online reputation**' means and to discuss their ideas in pairs. Next, ask them to write their ideas on a post-it note and stick these somewhere visible, e.g. on a working wall or flipchart page. Using the group's answers, lead a discussion to come to a shared understanding on what an online reputation is.

#### **Note for educators**

An online reputation is the impression others make about someone based on their online actions and what information is available about them online.

Explain that the way we act and represent ourselves online can affect what impression we make on other people. When someone applies for a job, it's now very common for companies to search their name online and look at their online behaviour. There have been examples when people haven't been offered a job based on something they have said or done on the internet. Even if something was posted or shared a long time ago, the person might have forgotten it was online, or someone else might have re-shared it.

In pairs, ask learners to imagine they are a boss of a big company. They have six applicants for one job. They look up each applicant online to find out more about their online reputation and see that each example from **Appendix 3** is linked to each of the six applicants.

**Activity 3: The Boss decides cont.**

Ask learners to score each applicant on different qualities, using the score card from **Appendix 4**.

**Key questions:**

- Which applicant got the highest score? Who got the lowest score?
- Who would they offer the job to?
- In your pair, did you have any differences of opinion?
- Is this a fair way to make a decision?
- What advice would you give the applicants who didn't get the job?

**Plenary: Emoji exit ticket**

Ask learners to create their own emoji to reflect on what they have learnt and how it made them feel, and write an accompanying explanation. These could form part of a display in your school/setting.



## Appendix 1

Draw and describe your online identity.

You might have more than one answer in each section depending on what you like to do online.

The diagram is a circle divided into six equal segments by three intersecting lines. Each segment contains a question related to online identity:

- Top-left segment: I use these usernames online:
- Top-right segment: My favourite things to do online are:
- Right segment: I use the internet to keep in touch with these people:
- Bottom-right segment: My favourite emojis are:
- Bottom-left segment: I like to play games with this/these characters:
- Left segment: I use this type of profile picture:



## Appendix 2

Being 'free to be me' online means that I can do or say whatever I feel like.



### Key questions:

- Is this true? Why or why not?
- What stops us from doing whatever we feel like?
- If everyone always did what they felt like doing, what might happen?



When you're online, it's not really you so it doesn't matter if you create a completely new identity.

### Key questions:

- Why does being online make people act differently sometimes?
- What are the benefits and disadvantages of someone using a completely different online identity to their offline identity?
- When might it matter that your online identity is linked to your whole identity?

The online world lets everyone feel 'free to be me.'  
People who don't feel free aren't using it properly!



### Key questions:

- How can the internet help people to feel free to be themselves?
- Why might some people not feel as free as others online?
- Does current technology help everyone to feel 'free to be me'? E.g. are there emojis that represent everyone? Do people see YouTubers who look like them?

## Appendix 3

1



 Reply
  Reply All
  Forward



Tues 03/02/2020 09:38

**Ms Kamara**

RE: School Newsletter Feb 20

To: [Saira M](#)

2

**ORCHARD  
PRIMARY  
SCHOOL**

# SCHOOL NEWSLETTER

## Malik's Recycling Campaign

Malik in Class 5B has started a campaign to recycle more of the plastic, paper and glass Orchard Primary uses every term.

Malik says "This school is really bad at recycling but it's really important to me. It seems like our school doesn't even care what they do with all the rubbish, they are useless! My mission is to recycle at least 90% of our rubbish by the end of this term. You can help me by using the new bins that are in every





3

**MeView** Search

0:00 / 13:06

How to Make a Difference | WOW - Talk from an expert

3,546 views 845 507 Share

37 Comments

**Kat R** 10 mins ago

I can see this from your point of view, but I disagree with most of the things you're saying. What about people like me? I don't think this idea would work for everyone.

5 3 REPLY

4

**Aaron**

Did you see the basketball game on tv yesterday?  
This shot was amazing:  
[vidsports.com/insane-basket-from-back-of-court...](https://vidsports.com/insane-basket-from-back-of-court...) 16:12

**Samir**  
Yeah it was awesome! Didn't think you'd be interested in basketball though? Can you even play? 16:16

Why did you think I wouldn't be interested? 16:17

5

**Baking a Rainbow Cake!**

**CrazyBakers**  
Comments 28

**Yololife** • 1 hour ago  
Can't believe there are so many boys watching a channel about baking cakes! Haha, freaks

6

**Dream Team Chat**

Sat, Feb 1 2020, 5:01 PM

**Maria**

SEND THIS LINK to 5 people to help send GOOD LUCK to the England Football team for the big match! If they don't repost in 12 hours, they aren't true football fans and you should unfriend them!

**Maria**

You better send it on!



### Appendix 4

Score each applicant out of 5 to see who you think should get the job.

1 = low score

5 = high score

Name	Username chosen	Behaviour	Respect to others	TOTAL
1. JoshyT444				
2. Malik				
3. Kat R				
4. Samir				
5. Yololife				
6. Maria				



### Appendix 4

Score each applicant out of 5 to see who you think should get the job.

1 = low score

5 = high score

Name	Username chosen	Behaviour	Respect to others	TOTAL
1. JoshyT444				
2. Malik				
3. Kat R				
4. Samir				
5. Yololife				
6. Maria				