

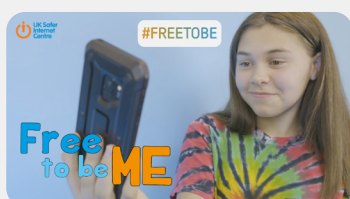
Notes for educators

The [Safer Internet Day 2020 film for 11-18-year-olds](#) provides many opportunities for discussions with learners around online safety, online identity and representation online.

This resource provides some prompt questions and suggestions to guide a discussion after watching the film with learners.

*Note: The discussions resulting from watching this film may include sensitive subjects. The **'Establishing a safe and supportive learning environment'** document in the Safer Internet Day 2020 Education Packs provides advice on how to set ground rules and establish a safe space for learners to discuss online issues that are relevant to them.*

Film theme – Are you #freetobe yourself online?

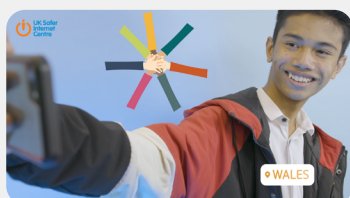


This film explores two key themes around online identity:

1. Are people **free to be** who they are online?
2. Do you think everyone is **fairly represented** online?

Discussing these themes with learners provides opportunity to explore:

- how they use and define themselves in online spaces,
- their perceptions around freedom and choice online,
- their views on and experiences of representation online,
- and the reasons why people may choose to hide aspects of their identity online.



Key questions

Before watching the film:

'What does online identity mean to you?'

Prompt questions:

- What is identity?
- Do your online activities/interests define who you are online?
- How do you express yourself online – is it different to how you express yourself offline? Why/why not?

Before watching the film, you may wish to ask learners this key question about online identity to explore their concept of identity and how it may relate to online environments. A key point to explore is whether their activity online defines their online identity or if it is shaped by their 'true' identity, or whether other factors play a part in defining their identity online.

Ask learners about how they portray themselves across different apps and services they use (particularly social media) – is it consistent or are there differences? What might be the reason(s) for this (e.g. different social groups online, different expectations/pressures in different online spaces, using social media to build a public presence vs. maintaining a private online identity, etc.)?

After watching the film:**'Do you use avatars online?'**

'Are people free to be who they are online?'

Prompt questions:

- What do you think 'free to be' means for someone online? What would it look like?
- What enables people to be who they are/wish to be online?
- What inhibits people (or acts a barrier to) being who they are/wish to be online?

Yes, because people shouldn't be put under pressure just because they're different. People should be able to be themselves.

Secondary learner, England*

No, as we must always make ourselves look better than we really are in real life.

Secondary learner, Scotland*

Use the prompt questions to start a discussion about freedom to express yourself online. Ask learners to pick out any specific comments or ideas they heard in the film that they agree/disagree with.

Some discussion points might include:

- Online spaces and technology offering opportunity for freedom of self-expression.
- Acceptance (or the lack) of different types/groups of people online.
- The availability of like-minded communities that a person can choose to join or interact with.
- The importance of being valued and accepted in online spaces/communities compared to being valued and accepted offline.
- How **external factors** such as bullying and abusive behaviour may inhibit or shape how someone expresses their identity online.
- How **internal factors** such as confidence, body image and self-esteem may inhibit or shape how someone expresses their identity online.

'Do you think everyone is fairly represented online?'

Prompt questions:

- Who/which types of people get more/less representation?
- Are certain characteristics underrepresented? (e.g. race, religion, sexual identity, nationality, etc.)
- What do you think the barriers to fair representation might be? (e.g. access to internet/services, concerns about safety, lack of 'role models', a desire to be private? etc.)

No, most of the internet is in English, even though there are different people present there.

Secondary learner, Wales*

Use the prompt questions to discuss learners' views on how representative the internet is of different groups and types of people. Ask learners to pick out any specific comments or ideas they heard in the film that they agree/disagree with.

Some discussion points might include:

- The distinction between underrepresentation and misrepresentation of different types of people online – are some people just not being acknowledged/seen/heard online, or are there attempts by others to

portray them in a negative way?

- Whether the issue of 'fair representation' is improving or worsening? – see 1:05 – 1:27 for one young person's perspective where they express that we are in 'an age where everyone is getting change' – do learners agree or disagree?
- Do online 'role models' and influencers reflect the diversity of their audiences?
- The expectations towards different groups online e.g. is the internet as a whole tolerant towards children's behaviour (which is not the same as adults) or behaviour from those with mental health issues or learning needs?

Note: Depending on learners' experiences, the discussion may turn towards types of unfair representation or treatment of people and groups online, including examples of online hate speech. The [SELMA Toolkit](#) provides free resources for anyone working with young people to explore issues around online hate speech.

'Why might someone create a different online identity to their offline identity?'

Discuss with learners the motivations for assuming a different identity online and the effect this may have on the well-being and safety of a user, and others online.

Some discussion points might include:

- Peer/group pressure or societal pressures that prompt people to assume different identities.
- Prejudices and discrimination that dissuades people from showing their true identity online.
- Using a different identity or persona online to explore and experiment with identity and self-expression.
- Creating a different online identity as a protective strategy for managing personal information or avoiding abusive or harassing behaviour.
- Malicious motivations for hiding true identities – to enable criminal behaviour, to bully/harass/troll, to manipulate or exploit others, etc.
- Adopting different personas for different online spaces, e.g. a photo-sharing social network, a gaming clan, an anonymous message board discussing moral/ethical issues, etc.

Note: Some learners may share personal experiences as part of this discussion. The '[Handling sensitive topics and disclosures](#)' document in the Safer Internet Day 2020 Educators' Pack provides advice and information on how to respond to any disclosures or safeguarding concerns that may arise from such discussions.

'What can we do to make a better internet where people feel 'free to be'?''

Discuss with learners any thoughts or ideas they have on what needs to be done to make the internet a better and fairer place for everyone to express themselves.

Ideas might include:

- ★ The role of legislation in changing behaviour (e.g. stronger laws governing hate speech or bullying)
- ★ The role of the internet industry (e.g. more moderators, stronger sanctions for malicious behaviour, greater privacy, greater action to encourage users to behave positively and respectfully, etc.)
- ★ The role of education (e.g. opportunities for learning in schools/colleges)
- ★ The role of adults (e.g. parents/carers, educators, online role models or influencers).
- ★ The role of young people (e.g. their peers, online role models or influencers).

**Quotes taken from Safer Internet Day 2020 workshops prior to filming.*