

Online bullying: Does being anonymous make it easier to be mean?

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/teach/articles/z8ys9ty>



Type of resource

Video (1min 16 secs) Article (5mins read)

Learning objectives

- 'I can recognise online bullying can be **different to bullying in the physical world** and can describe some of those differences'
- 'I can explain why people need to **think carefully** about content they post and how it might affect others, their feelings and how it may affect how others feel about them (their **reputation**)'

Content summary

- Explanation of what being anonymous means, and how it can allow people to behave differently online to the way they behave offline
- A discussion about how being offline allows us to share our feelings and see how others are feeling, and how this will affect our behaviour

Glossary

- **Anonymity:** where a person's identity is hidden and/or unknown
- **Fake:** not real
- **Profile:** your user account that is displayed to other people, like your friends. Your profile can be built up with content, images, or other pieces of information about you (data)
- **Breeding ground:** a place or situation where things can develop quickly
- **Trolling:** someone who is posting or commenting, usually online, in a negative way to specifically get a negative reaction from others
- **Aggressive:** to behave negatively in a forceful way

Topic introductions and starters	Before the video: • Ask pupils write down their definition of ‘anonymous’ After the video: • Check their definitions as well as other new vocabulary and key words: anonymity, fake, profile, breeding ground, trolling, aggressive • Make a list of when it is useful offline to be anonymous, (voting, Secret Santa) and when it is important to let people know your name and details • Ask pupils in pairs to share their own experiences of either being anonymous online or getting a message from someone who was hiding their identity • In small groups or pairs, make a list of five positive and five negative reasons for sending a message or posting a comment • Write down three ways that being anonymous makes it easier to say something negative or hurtful to someone else
Discussion points	• What features of being online make it easier to hide your identity? You’re not in the same place; others can’t see your face; you can use a fake identity; it can be difficult to find out • What would someone want to use a fake identity? They don’t feel confident as themselves? They don’t want to be caught being mean? They think it’s just a fun prank? • How can you avoid anonymous people online? Only talk to people you know in real life; avoid apps that allow anonymity; check profiles that look fake • How can talking to people on anonymous apps be dangerous? You don’t know who they are; you can’t find out if something bad happens • What is the difference between being anonymous and keeping your personal information private?
Fillers and fast finisher activities	• Create some additional graphic decoration panels like the ones in the article to illustrate different key points of the article • Make a crossword using some of the key words in the article – create clues to help people solve the crossword • Make a mind-map showing all the ideas in the article and video, and how they link together • Summarise the article into four or five important sentences, one for each section – summarise further into just one or two key words • Write a DOs and DON’Ts list for dealing with anonymity online
Signposting potential homework activities	• Create a top-tips style illustrated leaflet with some of the suggestions for avoiding problems with anonymity online • Create an acrostic poem using ANONYMOUS as the first letters of each line – cover the main points of the article • Add some extra suggestions to the five given in the video and article – write a short paragraph explaining each one