

Teaching Guide

Introduction and overview

Teenagers today can access a world of possibilities online. Whether it's exploring important topics around the world or looking up a video to research a school project. This generation has never known a reality without this world at their fingertips.

Along with all the enriching opportunities the internet offers, one of the real challenges with online media consumption is the potential for exposure to mis- and disinformation. It is crucial that young people have the media literacy skills to navigate their way through the confusion.

This curriculum aims to help teenagers actively and knowledgeably use the internet, specifically by giving them the skills to differentiate fact from fiction and the confidence to share information responsibly.

This curriculum, designed for students aged 13-15, breaks down media literacy topics and ideas into bite-sized pieces that any facilitator can use. Students will be introduced to skills, ranging from learning to spot emotionally charged language to detecting AI-generated content.

The curriculum builds on YouTube's [Hit Pause](#) media literacy campaign: a series of short media literacy videos designed to combat misinformation, and builds on research done by the Poynter Institute's [MediaWise](#) and the [Digital Inquiry Group](#).

Lesson organisation

The lessons explore the organic process a user would experience when encountering online content (reading a headline, reacting emotionally, questioning and/or sharing).

More generally, the lessons in the curriculum cover topics like detecting manipulation, evaluating credibility and sharing responsibly.



Lessons can be used sequentially, as stand-alone, or in the order that best suits instructional purposes, providing versatility for the facilitator and the classroom. Each lesson is designed to last 30-45 minutes, with additional extension activities included in the lesson plans. The curriculum includes an introductory lesson, which is the ideal starting point for using these resources.

Each lesson plan is supported by a slide presentation (including evaluation quizzes – *see below*), handouts, and embedded video content that corresponds with the lesson.

Evaluation quizzes

To support the ongoing development and improvement of these resources, we have created online evaluation quizzes, which we ask you to use with your students before and after teaching each lesson. The quizzes are 2-3 questions long, and also include a personal statement of intent. For example, *'I plan to respond to mis- and disinformation by....'* Students can opt to have their written response sent to them by submitting an email address. While Parent Zone can see submissions, these will be anonymous and all email addresses will be deleted within 30 days of submission. If you would like to see your class submissions, please contact programmes@parentzone.org.uk. Learn more about how data is handled for this programme [here](#).

Locating and sourcing examples

The Be Internet Citizens curriculum is designed to be adaptable to your setting and your students. The opening lesson, for example, features several examples of mis- and disinformation. When preparing to deliver this lesson, you may decide that other examples are more topical or relevant for your class. Please consider some of the points below if selecting additional or alternate material for your lessons.

Check your own bias and emotions. Everyone has opinions – so it's important to recognise any potential biases or opinions you have that might interfere with your choices when selecting material. If you are feeling passionately for or against a topic or source, it might be best to keep looking for something else.

Balance is key. Be mindful that the examples you choose do not represent only one side or perspective. If you choose to use political or possibly controversial topics, you want to be sure to find examples that express both sides.

Know your sources. This [article from Poynter.org](#) offers some insights into how you might evaluate a source.



Media Literacy Programme

Don't be afraid to work backwards. If you're looking for examples of mis- or disinformation, it can be useful to rely on current fact-checking sites to find material that has already been checked. This way, you can be confident that the examples you are selecting do fit the lesson. Here are a few credible fact-checking sites:

- www.fullfact.org
- www.reuters.com/fact-check/
- www.poynter.org/ifcn/

Teaching tough topics

The material contained within the Be Internet Citizens curriculum may spark conversation about current and controversial topics. Before teaching, you might consider preparing for potentially difficult conversations and developing a plan for addressing them if they arise.

It's best to establish group agreements and guidelines in advance. You could decide to put these together before teaching the lesson or may suggest that the pupils themselves help you construct a set of guidelines.

You could consider rules like:

- Being respectful and giving everyone a chance to speak uninterrupted
- Avoiding blaming individuals as well as harmful or offensive language
- Keeping any personal information and anecdotes confidential, and not repeating them outside the session
- Avoiding assumptions or generalisations about groups of people