

4. Creating online content

Video summary

A short classroom film for secondary schools exploring what it means to create responsible and authentic content in today's digital world. In the film, presenter and documentary filmmaker James Blake challenges students to think about the impact a post or re-post might have, and to consider the ethical and legal responsibilities.

Before watching

Establish a safe learning environment. Remind students not to mock or shame others for believing false information; anyone can be vulnerable to it. Encourage students to focus on general online behaviour rather than sharing sensitive experiences.

In preparation for watching the film in class, ask students:

- What makes someone trustworthy online?
- How can a post cause harm even if it wasn't meant to?
- To reflect on their own online habits: What do they post? Why do they post? Who sees it?
- Think about a time they saw something online that didn't seem reliable or felt misleading.

While watching

There is one 'pause point' in the video for students to complete a task. You can either pause at this point (you will need to manually pause the video to give your students enough time to complete these task) or watch the film through and try the activity afterwards. An alternative activity is provided below.

Activity 1

This task challenges students to create an 'authenticity meter'. In groups they need to design a checklist or scale to rate how 'real' a piece of content feels. They are going to come up with a set of criteria to judge online content.

Possible responses might include:

Language and communication

- Does the creator speak naturally, or does it sound scripted?
- Are they using their normal voice and expressions?

1 = Feels rehearsed or promotional
5 = Sounds like a genuine conversation

Editing Style

- Is the editing minimal, or are there lots of cuts, effects, or graphics?
- Do we notice the editing, or does it feel like we're just watching real life?

1 = Heavy edits, clearly staged
5 = Simple, natural, barely noticeable editing

Emotional Tone

- Do the emotions feel believable?
- Does the creator react in a way that matches the situation?

1 = Feels exaggerated, forced, or "put on"
5 = Emotions seem honest and spontaneous

Impact on the Audience

- Does the creator seem aware of how their content might make viewers feel?
- Are they being respectful and thoughtful?

1 = Feels like they posted without thinking
5 = Clearly considerate of viewers and their reactions

Alternative activity

Provide students with a set of short scenarios (spoken, printed, or on the board), for example:

- A student shares a dramatic headline without checking if it's true.
- A fake news story is designed to influence people's opinions.
- A misleading headline exaggerates an ordinary event for clicks.

Challenge students to decide whether each example is misinformation or disinformation and explain why. Definitions of both misinformation and disinformation can be found earlier in the Solve the Story series, in [this classroom film](#).

Discuss:

- Why people create content online (attention, clicks, money, influence).
- How headlines are used to attract readers.

In pairs or small groups, ask students to choose one motivation (e.g. getting clicks) and explain how this might lead to:

- exaggerated headlines
- misleading wording
- emotional language.

After watching

In small groups, ask students to choose a simple everyday action (e.g., teaching a skill, explaining a hobby) and film it twice:

- once in a casual, natural, “authentic” style
- once in a highly polished or obviously edited style

Then, ask students to reflect on how the choices they made changed the tone, trustworthiness, and overall feel of the content.

You could also select real online videos (school appropriate) and apply their “Authenticity Meter” to each. Students could score them, explain their rating, and identify the specific features that shaped their judgement.

Students could work individually or in groups to write a short set of guidelines for how to be a responsible and authentic content creator. Their code should include practical behaviours (e.g. fact-checking, avoiding exaggeration, being mindful of audience impact) and principles (truthfulness, respect, transparency). They can present their code as a poster, a short video, or a digital slide.

Where next?

BBC Bitesize's [Other Side of the Story](#) resources are designed to help students navigate fake news and misinformation and be more critical and curious about what they see and share online.

There are several relevant pages relating to authentic content creation that you could set students for independent study or explore as a class:

- [Can you control your TikTok fyp?](#)
- [How TikTok influences what we eat](#)
- [Can you spot clickbait?](#)
- [How AI is transforming content creation](#)

Curriculum notes

This film will be relevant for several curriculum areas:

Citizenship and PSHE Key Stage 3 and 4: encourages responsible participation in digital communities; supports learning about rights, responsibilities, and the impact of actions online; aligns with topics like media influence, digital citizenship, and evaluating information; links directly to online safety, digital wellbeing, and relationships in digital spaces; supports discussions on identity, self-image, and the pressure to present curated versions of oneself online; encourages responsible behaviour and empathy in online communication.

Computing Key Stage 3 and 4: links to understanding digital literacy, online communication, and evaluating digital content; helps students think critically about how media is created, edited, and shared; supports outcomes around safe, responsible, and respectful use of technology.

English Key Stage 3 and 4: develops media literacy skills such as analysing tone, language, purpose, and audience; encourages clear and authentic communication—key skills for both written and spoken language; supports critical thinking about persuasive techniques and presentation style.