



YEARS
5 and 6

CLASSROOM ACTIVITY 1.1 | Body Confidence

Timing

45 minutes

Materials

- **Media and Celebrities** video (<https://youtu.be/eNYnkWtOVHA>)
- **Discussion Questions**—one for the teacher
- **Other Questions That Lead to Discussion** handout—one per pupil or one displayed electronically
- **Note-taking** handout—one half sheet per pupil
- **Reflection** handout—one half sheet per pupil

Note: *There are facilitation options below if the pupils are in a virtual situation. Handouts can be provided electronically to be printed at home, or as an editable Microsoft Word template to be submitted via email, learning management systems, or a live/shared document.*

Tools to Build Body Confidence

APPEARANCE IDEALS IN THE MEDIA

Overview

Content for the *Amazing Me* programme was created in partnership with Dr. Marisol Perez, a clinical psychologist and researcher at Arizona State University and the Institute for Research and Education Advancing Children's Health (REACH). Dr. Perez has dedicated her career to assisting future generations to be less focused on appearance and more focused on respecting, liking, and appreciating their bodies.

In this activity, pupils will investigate how advertisements use appeal strategies and 'appearance ideals' to influence the decisions they make. After viewing the video **Media and Celebrities** (<https://youtu.be/eNYnkWtOVHA>), the teacher will guide a class discussion. This discussion will focus on:

1. the potential harm caused by appearance ideals
2. how appearance ideals can lead to unhealthy behaviours
3. how pupils can change their own habits to reduce these negative effects.

Each activity is part of a five-lesson series that focuses on confronting comparisons and building body confidence. Lessons 1–3 include core content and should be completed in sequence. Lessons 4 and 5 are supplementary and provide pupils with an opportunity to extend their learning of core concepts.

Background

Body image is defined as the thoughts, feelings, and behaviours towards one's own body. ¹Research shows that body dissatisfaction contributes to the development of unhealthy behaviours in pupils and adults. People are more likely to do unhealthy things to control their weight and body shape

¹ Cash & Prunzinsky, 1990

when they focus more on appearance than body functionality.²

There are many factors that can cause body dissatisfaction in pupils. Some of these factors include images from media and celebrities, pressures from family and friends to look a certain way, and teasing and bullying from peers.

Any talk about body or body type (even positive statements) can result in negative feelings about one's body.³

The concept of 'appearance ideals' is the idea that people are influenced by what society tells us is attractive and the use of these ideals to set goals for their own appearance. People from different cultures can have different appearance ideals. For example, in the United States and United Kingdom, the dominant appearance ideal is for girls to be unrealistically thin.⁴ Research shows that appearance ideals lead to unhealthy behaviours in pupils and adults. This means that when a girl consumes media (including television, magazines, and social media), she is likely to set unrealistic goals for her own body. This may cause her to dislike her own body, feel shame and guilt, and be more likely to engage in unhealthy behaviours. For boys and men, the appearance ideals are leanness and muscularity. When a boy consumes media, he is likely to set unrealistic goals for his own body. This may cause him to experience shame about his body, and be at risk of unhealthy behaviours to try to meet the ideals from popular culture.

Research shows that parents and educators have the ability to increase the body confidence of young people. Adults can help pupils become aware of the factors that negatively affect their self-image. Adults can also encourage healthy behaviours that have been proven to increase body confidence. Pupils can be healthier when they are aware of emotional and physical changes that occur during development. Pupils have more body confidence when they can accept their changing bodies. Adults can help by avoiding making comments about weight, shape and appearance.

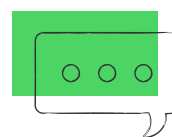
Research suggests that body confidence increases with more supportive relationships rather than those based on competition or comparison. Regular conversations on these topics will encourage pupils to identify and connect with their peers instead of comparing themselves to each other.

This lesson will focus on the influence of media and celebrities on young people's body image.

² Thompson & Stice, 2001

³ DSEP Content Development Framework, University of West England's Center for Appearance Research, 2012

⁴ Thompson & Stice, 2001



Objectives

Pupils will:

- Analyse how television, magazines, films, and advertisements use appeal strategies and ‘appearance ideals’ to influence the decisions they make.
- Understand how media influence can negatively affect self-image.
- Brainstorm ways to lessen the negative effects of ‘appearance ideals’ in their own lives.

Essential Question

How does the media perpetuate appearance ideals, and what can I do to lessen the negative effects of them?

Teacher Preparation

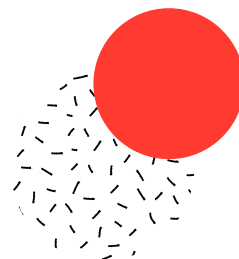
- Arrange the desks or chairs into two circles, one inner and one outer. Create a seating chart that mixes less and more confident pupils between the inner and outer circles.
 - If facilitating this lesson virtually, put the pupils into ‘inside circle’ and ‘outside circle’ discussion groups. During the lesson, make sure that the ‘outside circle’ group is always muted.

Sensitivity Note

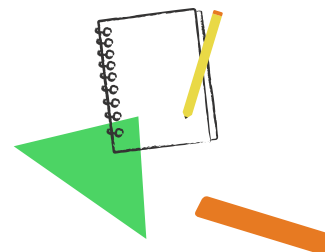
Due to the nature of today’s discussion, be aware of pupils’ feelings. There can be a diversity of emotions and reactions to these topics. Teachers should feel free to paraphrase/edit the language to suit their class.

Suggestions for Implementing Virtual Meetings

- **Lighting:** Backlighting prevents your audience from seeing you clearly. Make sure that you have lighting in front of you to ensure that you are seen.
- **Camera placement:** Try to make sure that your camera is placed at eye level. This helps to create eye contact and engagement with your audience. You can use books or other items to lift your computer (if using a laptop).



- **Sound:** Make sure that you do a quick soundcheck before beginning your session. Ensure that you can be heard and that participants will not hear an echo effect. Consider the usage of headphones equipped with a speaker.
- **Make connections:** Remember to try to connect with your audience, which can be challenging, virtually. Connect with them using quick stories or humour.
- **Troubleshooting:** It is okay to make mistakes or have technology issues. If you have a technology issue or things don't go as planned, do your best to reconnect and move forward with your lesson. The best thing you can do is be prepared by testing your internet connection, and sound and video settings prior to your session!



Lesson Plan

Discuss

- Write the following terms on the board or display them electronically: media, celebrity/influencer, appearance ideals, negative impact.
- Ask pupils to discuss each of the terms with a partner and try to create a definition in their own words.
- Ask pairs to share their thoughts about the definition of each word. Record pupils' suggestions on the board next to each word. Use the glossary as a reference and address any misconceptions as they arise.
- Explain that today the class will be engaging in a lesson to examine each of these terms, how they relate to each other, and how they can affect pupils and young people. Explain that in this lesson the inner circle has a discussion first while the outer circle observes the conversation, then the pupils in the two circles switch places.
- Distribute or display **Other Questions That Lead to Discussion** for pupils to refer to during the lesson. Remind pupils about the ways to participate in an active discussion.

VIRTUAL FACILITATION OPTIONS

- Allow pupils to share their answers out loud or encourage them to write their definitions down to reference later, add to a live/shared document, or comment in a chat box.

Do

- Begin by asking pupils to sit in the inner or outer circle as per your seating plan
- Distribute on **Note Taking Sheet** to each pupil. Explain that while they are sitting in the outer circle, they will take notes about what they observe in the inner circle's discussion.
- Show the video **Media and Celebrities** (<https://youtu.be/eNYnkWtOVHA>).
- Begin the discussion using the **Discussion Questions** as a guide.
- Allow pupils to respond to each other with teacher support and guidance. Remind them to look at the **Other Questions** list if they have trouble maintaining an active discussion.
- After 7–10 minutes, ask the pupils in the inner and outer circle to swap positions. Then continue the discussion.

Reflect

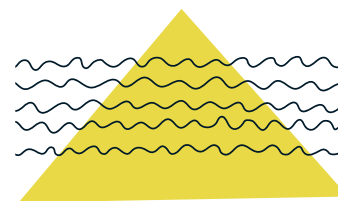
Following the discussion, distribute a **Reflection Form** to each pupil. If time allows, invite pupils to share their reactions to the activity.

Possible Extension

Ask pupils to choose one of the ideas the class brainstormed to help lessen the effects of appearance ideals and implement the strategy for one week, recording notes in their journal each day. Then ask pupils to share how they felt after implementing the strategy.

VIRTUAL FACILITATION OPTIONS

- Ask everyone assigned to the “outer circle” to mute themselves while the “inner circle” discusses.

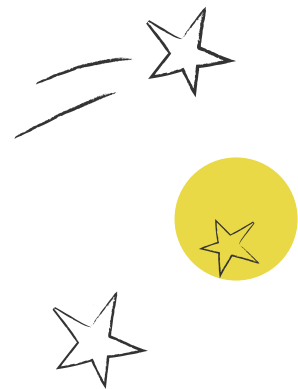


VIRTUAL FACILITATION OPTIONS

- This can be facilitated as a group discussion or on a live/shared document.

Glossary

Media	Means of mass communication; ways to give information to lots of people
Celebrity/influencer	A famous person/ A famous person that persuades people to buy something.
Society	People living together in a community
Appearance Ideal	What our culture tells us the ideal way to look.
Negative Impact	An emotionally, physically, or psychologically negative effect; something that is bad for you.



Discussion Questions

1. What did you think about the video? Which parts of the video made you think differently about the topic?

Answers will vary.

2. What problem does Peridot have in the video?

Possible answer: She loves her tablet but realises it makes her feel bad about the way she looks because the internet features unrealistic expectations for people.

3. According to the media, what does the 'ideal' girl or woman look like? What is the 'ideal' appearance of a boy or man?

Possible answers for girls/women: thin, large eyes, straight teeth, smooth skin/no wrinkles.

Possible answers for boys/men: lean, muscular, tall, nice smile, smooth skin.

4. How do models in the media tell us what we should look like?

Answers will vary, but possible answers include: female models featured in the media are usually very tall and thin; male models tend to be tall and muscular. Models for both genders are usually able-bodied.

5. Why do people use filters or change how they look in pictures? Why is this a problem and how does it make people feel bad about how they look?

Answers will vary.

6. What can we do so that appearance ideals don't affect us as much?

Possible answers: limit time on the internet and social media, research positive role models, talk with others about feelings regarding appearance ideals.

Other Questions That Lead to Discussion

What do you mean by that?

How does the text support your answer?

Can you tell us more?

What do you think about _____?

How do you think _____ would be viewed by _____?

How does this idea connect to _____?

What is puzzling you?

What did your classmate just say? Can you paraphrase his/her idea?

How does this idea connect to _____?

What would happen if _____?



Note-Taking Sheet

HANDOUT

Use the table to record your thoughts as you listen to the discussion in the inner circle.

Something That Interested Me	Something That Surprised Me	One Connection I Made	Something I Disagreed With
Other Notes:			



Note-Taking Sheet

HANDOUT

Use the table to record your thoughts as you listen to the discussion in the inner circle.

Something That Interested Me	Something That Surprised Me	One Connection I Made	Something I Disagreed With
Other Notes:			

Reflection Form

HANDOUT

Answer the following questions regarding today's discussion:

1. Did you participate in today's discussion? Why or why not?

2. How did your thinking change today? What new ideas do you have based on what we talked about?



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HANDOUT

Answer the following questions regarding today's discussion:

1. Did you participate in today's discussion? Why or why not?

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Curriculum Links

England
<p>PSHE</p> <p>Relationships <i>Respecting self and others</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • R31. To recognise the importance of self-respect and how this can affect their thoughts and feelings about themselves; that everyone, including them, should expect to be treated politely and with respect by others (including when online and/or anonymous) in school and in wider society; strategies to improve or support courteous, respectful relationships <p>Living in the Wider World <i>Communities</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • L9. To know about stereotypes; how they can negatively influence behaviours and attitudes towards others; strategies for challenging stereotypes <p><i>Media literacy and digital resilience</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • L11. To recognise ways in which the internet and social media can be used both positively and negatively • L16. To know about how text and images in the media and on social media can be manipulated or invented; strategies to evaluate the reliability of sources and identify misinformation
<p>Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education</p> <p>Relationships Education <i>Respectful Relationships</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To know the importance of self-respect and how this links to their own happiness Online Relationships • To know how information and data is shared and used online <p>Physical health and mental wellbeing <i>Internet Safety and Harms</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To know that the internet can also be a negative place where online abuse, trolling, bullying and harassment can take place, which can have a negative impact on mental health
<p>English</p> <p>Spoken language</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To maintain attention and participate actively in collaborative conversations, staying on topic and initiating and responding to comments • To use spoken language to develop understanding through speculating, hypothesising, imagining and exploring ideas • To participate in discussions and debates

Curriculum Links

Citizenship

- **1.a** To talk and write about their opinions, and explain their views, on issues that affect themselves and society
- **1.b** To recognise their worth as individuals by identifying positive things about themselves and their achievements, seeing their mistakes, making amends and setting personal goals
- **2.k** To explore how the media present information
- **3.a** To know what affects mental health, and how to make informed choices

Scotland

Health and Wellbeing

- **2-01a** I am aware of and able to express my feelings and am developing the ability to talk about them
- **2-02a** I know that we all experience a variety of thoughts and emotions that affect how we feel and behave and I am learning ways of managing them
- **2-47a** I recognise that how my body changes can affect how I feel about myself and how I may behave

Literacy Across Learning

- **2-08a** To help me develop an informed view, I can distinguish fact from opinion, and I am learning to recognise when my sources try to influence me and how useful these are

Wales

Health and Well-being (Progression Step 3)

Developing physical health and well-being has lifelong benefits

- I can explain the way in which physical and emotional changes are connected in different contexts, and I can monitor, review and adapt my behaviour to support my physical and emotional health, setting myself relevant targets

How we process and respond to our experiences affects our mental health and emotional well-being

- I can recognise the benefits of being able to focus attention on my perceptions and thoughts and know that I am developing my self-awareness
- I can see the benefits of communicating about feelings as one of a range of strategies which can help promote positive mental health and emotional well-being

Our decision-making impacts on the quality of our lives and the lives of others

- I can reflect on the way that past events and experiences have affected my thoughts, feelings and actions
- I can anticipate how future events may make me and others feel
- I can make considered decisions, taking into account available information, including past experiences

Curriculum Links

How we engage with social influences shapes who we are and affects our health and well-being

- I have developed an understanding that my values, attitudes and identity are shaped by different groups and **influences**

Languages, Literacy and Communication

Expressing ourselves through languages is key to communication

- I can respond to others' points of view, seeking clarity, structuring arguments, summarising and explaining what I have heard, read or seen
- I can interact with others, talking and writing about my thoughts, feelings and opinions showing empathy and respect

Northern Ireland

Personal Development and Mutual Understanding

Self-Awareness

- To develop self-awareness, self-respect and self-esteem
- To explore and examine what influences their views, feelings and behaviour

Feelings and emotions

- To examine and explore their own and others' feelings and emotions
- To know how to recognise, express and manage feelings in a positive and safe way

Relationships

- To explore and examine what influences their views, feelings and behaviour

Language and Literacy

Talking and Listening

- To participate in group and class discussions for a variety of curricular purposes
- To know, understand and use the conventions of group discussion
- To share, respond to and evaluate ideas, arguments and points of view and use evidence or reason to justify opinions, actions or proposals