

YEARS
5 and 6

CLASSROOM ACTIVITY 1.3 | Body Confidence

Timing

45 minutes

Materials

- **Agree/Disagree Signs**—one copy for teacher
- **Competing and Comparing Looks** video (<https://youtu.be/3GPkw0hZPE8>)
- **Competing and Comparing Looks Agree/Disagree Statements**—one copy for teacher
- **Nine Things I Love About ME!** handout— one half sheet per pupil

Note: There are facilitation options below if the pupil 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

COMPETING AND COMPARING LOOKS

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 respond to statements regarding competing and comparing looks in a 'four corners' format. They will then view the video **Competing and Comparing Looks** (<https://youtu.be/3GPkw0hZPE8>) and write a summary of their learning. Finally, pupils will brainstorm nine things they love about themselves with a focus on what makes them unique.

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.¹ Research 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 when they focus more on appearance than body functionality.²

¹ Cash & Prunzinsky, 1990

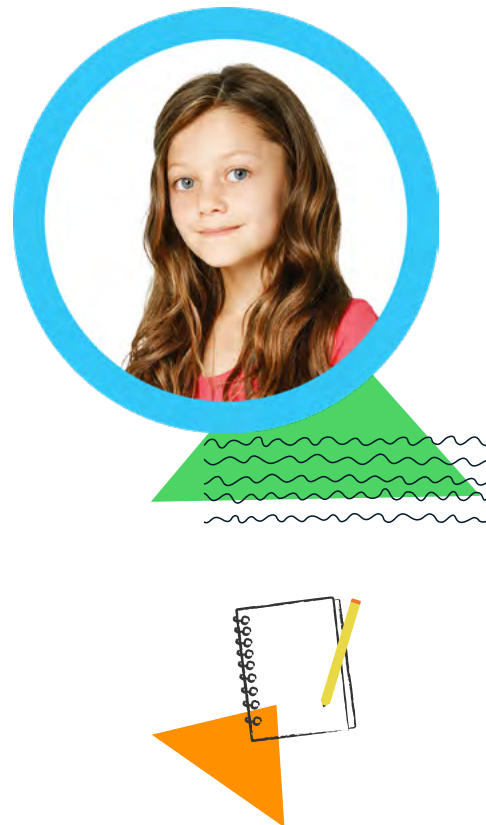
² Thompson & Stice, 2001

There are many factors that can cause body dissatisfaction in pupils. These factors include: media and celebrity body images, 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. Comparing how we look to others and measuring ourselves against others can be very common and can damage self-image. Comparing oneself to others is related to body dissatisfaction with both pupils and adults.⁵

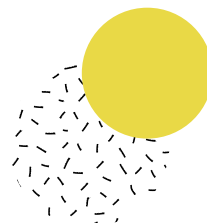


³ DSEP Content Development Framework, University of West England's Center for Appearance Research, 2012

⁴ Thompson & Stice, 2001

⁵ Myers & Crowther, 2009

This lesson will focus on competing and comparing looks how it affects body image; the aim of this activity is to help pupils celebrate what makes them unique and that includes both the physical and non-physical.



Objectives

Pupils will:

- Discuss how comparing themselves to others can be harmful.
- Create a list of unique attributes that they love about themselves.

Essential Question

What can happen to our self-image when we compare ourselves to others? How can we turn the focus to appreciate our own unique bodies and abilities?

Teacher Preparation

Before the lesson:

- Hang each **Agree/Disagree Sign** in a different corner of the room. Classroom and virtual facilitation options are presented below.

Sensitivity Note

Due to the nature of today's discussion, be aware of pupils' feelings, and be sensitive to the emotions and reactions of all pupils in the classroom. 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 sound check 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

- Ask pupils to think about the times that they have compared themselves to others (e.g., celebrities, influencers, sports people, parents, family members, or peers). What sorts of things did they compare? How did it make them feel?
- Invite pupils to share their responses. If they seem reluctant to share, consider sharing a personal experience.
- Explain that today the class will be discussing the effects of body comparison and thinking of some ways to prevent them.

Do

- Show the video **Competing and Comparing Looks** (<https://youtu.be/3GPkw0hZPE8>).
- Ask the pupils to stand. Point out the **Agree/Disagree Signs** displayed in each area of the room.
- Read the **Agree/Disagree Statements** one at a time and allow pupils to move to the area of the room that best expresses his/her opinion on the statement.

VIRTUAL FACILITATION OPTIONS

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

- Take time after each statement to ask some pupils to share their thoughts and reactions or read some of the additional information and ask follow-up questions.
- Ask pupils to return to their seats.

CLASSROOM FACILITATION OPTIONS

- Pupils can stay seated and point to the corner of the room that best expresses his/her opinion.
- Pupils can sit and stand to represent agree and disagree, respectively.
- Pupils can write 'agree' or 'disagree' on small white boards and hold them up in the air.
- Pupils can show a thumbs up or down to represent agree and disagree, respectively.

VIRTUAL FACILITATION OPTIONS

- Pupils can use the 'raise hand' feature in online meeting.
- Pupils can record responses on a sheet of paper or live/shared document.
- Pupils can leave video on for 'agree' and turn video off for 'disagree.'

Reflect

- Review what pupils have learnt about how comparing themselves to others can be harmful to their self-image and cause too much focus on other people.
- Distribute one **Nine Things I Love About ME!** handout to each pupil. Explain that they can refocus their thoughts on their own unique bodies and abilities by creating a list of things they love about themselves.
- For the rest of the session ask pupils to think about nine things they love about themselves, including three things they like about their personality, three things they like about their body because of what it can do, and three things they like about their appearance.

Agree/Disagree Signs

I AGREE

Agree/Disagree Signs

I DISAGREE

Competing and Comparing Looks Agree/Disagree Statements

1. Smoky Quartz was upset after she compared herself to Sardonyx.
 - Possible follow up questions: Why do you think she was upset? How did her feelings about her own body change as she compared herself to Sardonyx? What types of things did she say after she made the comparison?
2. I can relate to how Smoky Quartz felt in the video.
3. People compare how they look to others.
4. I compare myself to others.
 - Possible follow up question: How does it make you feel when you compare yourself to someone else?
5. Comparing myself to others is bad for me.
6. Comparing to others is bad for your health.
7. I have ideas on how to stop comparing myself to others.
8. I can think of some things I love about my body.
9. I can help my friends to like themselves more.
 - Possible follow up question: What can you do if you hear your friend comparing him/herself to someone else?
10. All bodies are great bodies.



Nine Things I love about ME!

HANDOUT

Three things I like about my personality	Three parts of my body I like because of what they can do	Three parts of my body I like the look of
1.	1.	1.
2.	2.	2.
3.	3.	3.



Nine Things I love about ME!

HANDOUT

Three things I like about my personality	Three parts of my body I like because of what they can do	Three parts of my body I like the look of
1.	1.	1.
2.	2.	2.
3.	3.	3.

Curriculum Links

England

PSHE

Health and Wellbeing

Ourselves, growing and changing

- **H27.** To recognise their individuality and personal qualities
- **H28.** To identify personal strengths, skills, achievements and interests and how these contribute to a sense of self-worth
- **H29.** To know about how to manage setbacks/perceived failures, including how to re-frame unhelpful thinking

Relationships

Respecting self and others

- **R30.** To know that personal behaviour can affect other people; to recognise and model respectful behaviour online
- **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
- **R32.** To know about respecting the differences and similarities between people and recognising what they have in common with others e.g. physically, in personality or background

Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education

Relationships Education

Respectful Relationships

- To know the importance of respecting others, even when they are very different from them (for example, physically, in character, personality or backgrounds), or make different choices or have different preferences or beliefs
- To know the importance of self-respect and how this links to their own happiness

Being Safe

- To know how to recognise and talk about their emotions, including having a varied vocabulary of words to use when talking about their own and others' feelings

Physical health and mental wellbeing

Mental Wellbeing

- To know that bullying (including cyberbullying) has a negative and often lasting impact on mental wellbeing

Internet Safety and Harms

- 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.

Curriculum Links

English
<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
Citizenship
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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 1.d To recognise, as they approach puberty, how people's emotions change at that time and how to deal with their feelings towards themselves, their family and others in a positive way 3.a To know what affects mental health, and how to make informed choices 4.a To know that their actions affect themselves and others, to care about other people's feelings and to try to see things from their points of view
Scotland
Health and Wellbeing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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
Literacy Across Learning
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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)
<p>Developing physical health and well-being has lifelong benefits</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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

Curriculum Links

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

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 share, respond to and evaluate ideas, arguments and points of view and use evidence or reason to justify opinions, actions or proposals
- To describe and talk about real experiences and imaginary situations and about people, places, events and artefacts