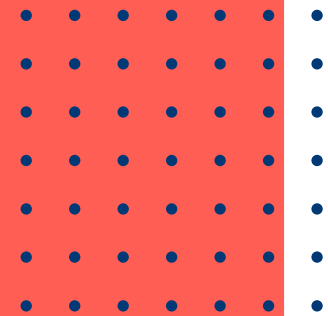


Confident Me

School Lesson for
Body Confidence

Lesson Guide
for Teachers



3

Lesson Three:
Confront Comparisons



Learning outcomes



In this lesson students will:

- + Understand that comparing looks to individuals and media images is automatic and part of human nature
- + Identify the ways in which the process of comparing looks often has negative consequences for themselves and their friends
- + Analyse the impact of comparing ourselves to others
- + Develop new ways to respond to comparison situations that have positive outcomes for themselves and the people around them

End-of-lesson assessment:

Students will identify external influences through semi-scripted role plays.



Preparation

Lesson Three: Resources and Materials Needed

From Your School



Lesson 3 Materials



○ Three-Column Chart from Lesson 2

○ Online access to or printed copy (one per student) of PDF containing:

- + How Do You Confront Comparisons?
- + Semi-scripted Role Play
- + Extension Activity - Breaking Free from the Whirlpool of Comparisons and How Will You Change Your Script?



The collage displays four pages of lesson materials:

- Page 1: How Do You Confront Comparisons?** A worksheet with a title, a name field, and two sections. The first section asks "What happens when people compare looks?" and includes a "Tick the answers to record your class vote" area with options like "Are the people we usually compare ourselves to... better looking?" and "not as good-looking?". The second section asks "Do people usually compare the body parts they..." with options like "like?" and "dislike?".
- Page 2: How Do You Confront Comparisons?** A worksheet with a title, a name field, and a "Semi-scripted role play" section. It includes three numbered scenarios: 1. Jennifer and Denise are on Instagram looking at photos of their friends. 2. Abdul and Jerry are shouting hoarsely after school. 3. Mercedes and Isabelle are viewing the latest music video of one of their favorite musical artists. It also features a "Semi-Scripted Performance Checklist" table.
- Page 3: Going Further** A worksheet with a title, a name field, and sections for "Taking action for yourself", "Taking action for others", and "Confront Comparisons: Main messages to remember". It includes a "Things you could do" section with a list of activities and a "Remember to change your internal script" section.
- Page 4: How Will You Change Your Script?** A worksheet with a title, a name field, and sections for "Change your script and generate new responses to avoid comparisons", "When I compare my appearance...", and "When I hear my friends compare their appearance...". It includes a "Celebrate your own positive qualities" section and a "Remember to change your internal script" section.

Lesson Overview



 50 mins



Page 6 **Introducing Comparisons** | 13 mins

- + What have we learned?
- + What are we learning today?
- + In what ways do we compare ourselves to those around us?
- + In what ways do we compare our looks?
- + What happens when we compare?

Page 10 **Problems with Comparing** | 32 mins

- + How to analyse the impact of comparing ourselves to others
- + The whirlpool of comparisons
- + What can we do instead?

Page 16 **Plenary and Assessment** | 5 mins

- + What have we learned today?
- + Congratulations
- + Going Further/Extension Activity- Breaking Free from the Whirlpool of Comparisons and How Will You Change Your Script?



How To Use This Guide

Suggested Time Allocation

This is the amount of time generally recommended for students, to achieve learning outcomes and improve body confidence. This may be adapted to suit the needs of your class.

 15 mins

Lesson Learning Objectives

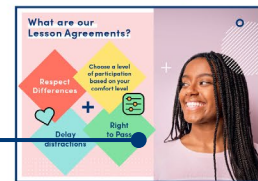
Students should achieve these objectives by the end of each section.

Presentation

These are visual cues and learning objectives to help you facilitate the lesson effectively.

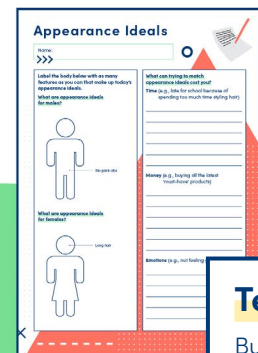
Introducing Appearance Ideals

Presentation



Educator Actions

Handout



APPEARANCE IDEALS

Teacher Actions

Bullet points highlight important questions to ask students to ensure key concepts are addressed with optimum impact on body confidence.

Text in *ITALICS* indicates directions for the teacher.

Underlined text is what the teacher should say.

Educator Notes

Educator Notes

Desired Responses

Notes/Desired Responses

Possible answers to look for from students, but also offers ideas for guiding their responses as they develop their understanding of key concepts and improve their body confidence.

Introducing Comparisons

 13 mins

By the end of this activity, students will understand that comparing looks to individuals and media images is automatic and part of human nature.

Presentation



Teacher Actions

Welcome students to the 'Confront Comparisons' lesson. Briefly remind students that the lesson series aims to help them to explore more helpful ways to manage appearance pressures and build body confidence.



What Have we Learned?

Invite students to share what they learned in the previous lesson. Summarise any key learning outcomes students might have missed.

Teacher Notes

Students will quickly review what they have learned in the previous lessons, Appearance Ideals and Media Messages.

Presentation



Teacher Actions

What are We Learning Today?

Briefly explain the areas of focus for today's lesson.

Share:

- + The comparison process
- + Negative consequences of comparing
- + The 'whirlpool of comparisons'
- + Changing our scripts

Review Classroom Agreements:

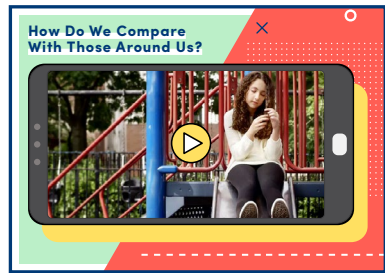
- + Respect differences
- + Choose level of participation based on comfort level
- + Delay distractions
- + Right to pass

Add any other agreements your classes added.

Teacher Notes

Remind students of the class agreements to help create a supportive, non-judgmental environment throughout the five-lesson programme.

Presentation



Teacher Actions

Explain that it is common to compare ourselves and our appearance to other people in everyday life, not just celebrities.

Play the “Change One Thing” video.

Facilitate a short class discussion.

Ask:

What does this video show us about how people compare themselves to others?

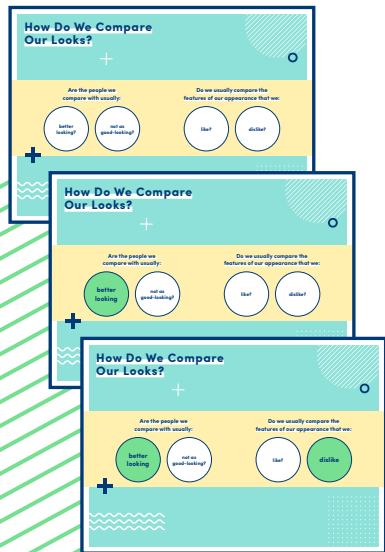
Teacher Notes

Students will watch a video with people commenting on features they wish they had and learn that nobody is ever satisfied with the way they look.

It is important that the teacher get the students to come up with the consequences of comparisons on their own and to ask follow up questions to assist them in getting there.

Desired Responses

Everyone in the video compares themselves to others and wishes they had a feature that someone else has, which is pointless and makes no one happy.



Explain that it is important to understand the process of making comparisons. This will help students see whether or not such behaviour is positive and whether they want to change it.

Ask students to stand in a line or a circle.

Say:

Move forward if you think we most often choose to compare features of our appearance with someone who we think is better looking, or move back if you think we compare with someone we think is not as good-looking.

After students have voted, click to the next slide to reveal the correct answer.

Teacher Notes

You can ask students to raise their hand, if more appropriate.

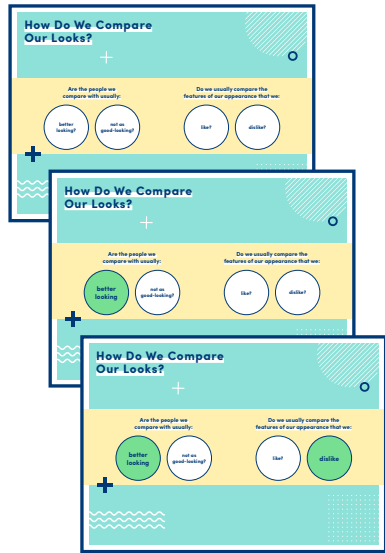
Desired Responses

We most often compare our appearance to people who we think have better features.

Take a moment to allow students to reflect on the result – is the room evenly split?

Continued >

Presentation



Teacher Actions

Say:

When we make comparisons our minds often play tricks on us in the way we make these comparisons, such as by breaking our bodies into pieces rather than considering our whole selves.

Say:

Move forward if you think we most often compare the parts of our body that we like. Move back if you think we compare parts of our body that we don't like.

After students have voted, click through to the next slide to reveal the correct answer.

Teacher Notes

You may need to remind the class to be respectful of each other's views, especially if there are students who are not in agreement with most of the class. We usually compare our appearance with people we think are better looking than us. However, you may need to acknowledge that some people may also compare their looks with people they think don't look as good as them, which boosts their confidence.

It's important to note that both forms of comparisons can be unhelpful, so all students can benefit from learning how to avoid this behaviour.

We most often compare the parts of our appearance that we don't like.



Instruct students to complete the first part of Handout 1 (Task 1.1) with the results of their class vote.

Teacher Notes

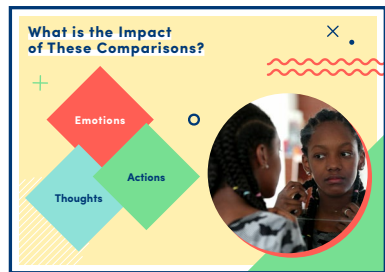
Students will capture their ideas on *How Do You Confront Comparisons?* handout.

Problems With Comparing

 32 mins

By the end of this activity, students will have identified ways in which the process of comparing looks often has negative consequences for themselves and their friends; analysed the impact of comparing ourselves to others; and developed new ways to respond to comparison situations that have positive outcomes for themselves and the people around them.

Presentation



Teacher Actions

Explain to students that we are now going to consider the problems comparing our looks can cause.

Arrange students into small groups to discuss the following two questions.

Ask:

- 01** **What do you think is the impact of comparing what we don't like about the way we look with people we think look better than we do?**
- 02** **How does this affect our feelings, thoughts and behaviours?**

Teacher Notes

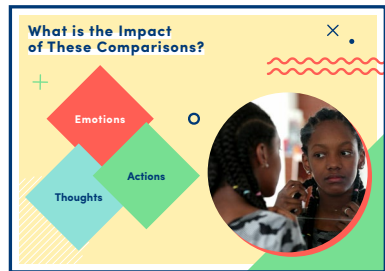
Try to guide students to give answers about their feelings, thoughts and behaviours. However, if breaking down ideas into the different categories is too complex for your class, simply compile an overall list of the different negative impacts making appearance-based comparisons might have.

Desired responses

- 01** Examples of impact may include dissatisfaction with our appearance; lower self-esteem; and engaging in unhealthy behaviours to change our body.
- 02** Examples may include feeling sad or angry; having negative thoughts about our body; thinking we aren't good enough; avoiding participating in activities; excessive exercise or dieting.

Continued >

Presentation



Teacher Actions

Invite one or two groups to share feedback, using the following questions as further prompts.

- 01 **How would these comparisons make us feel?**
- 02 **What sort of things might we think?**
- 03 **What might we do as a result?**

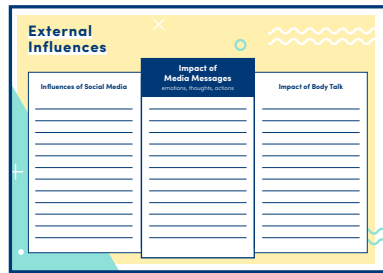
Say:

Having negative feelings when you compare doesn't mean there's actually something wrong or that you're really 'worse' than the other person; people can still have strong feelings even if the basis for these feelings isn't true.

Desired responses

- 01 Sad, dissatisfied, worried, and guilty.
- 02 'I'm not good enough', 'I need to change', 'I wish I looked like them', and 'I need to lose weight/build muscles'.
- 03 Extreme dieting, not going out with friends, and spending a lot of time/money on appearance.

Presentation



Teacher Actions

Three-Column Chart

Refer back to Lesson 2 and your three-column chart in which students brainstormed influences from social media. Revisit what was placed in the left-hand column.

Introduce the middle column, "Impact of Media Messages". Remind students that appearance ideals are regularly shared and reinforced through the media, and making appearance-based comparisons is one of the consequences of this.

Add the emotions, thoughts and actions that result from comparing themselves to the appearance ideals they see every day from media just discussed. Ask students if they can generate any other examples.

Say:

Comparing our looks is not helpful to anyone – and can have a number of negative consequences for us and those around us.

Teacher Notes

If you teach multiple classes in a day, feel free to develop a three-column chart on chart paper, the board or using a document online for each class, or build off the list from the class prior.

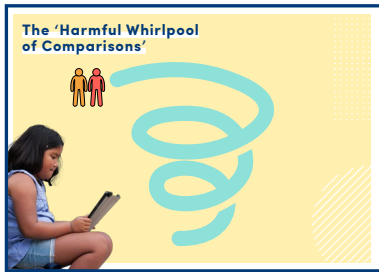


Desired Responses

- + **Emotions:** frustrated, unhappy
- + **Thoughts:** "I'm not good enough", "they're better than me", "their life must be better than mine because they are more attractive"
- + **Actions:** Buying beauty products I can't afford, skipping meals



Presentation



Teacher Actions

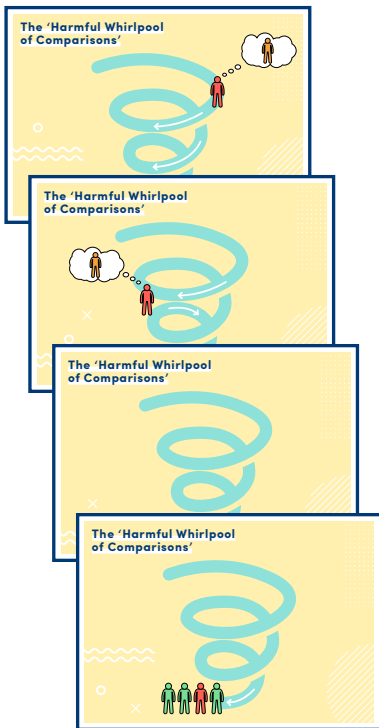
Explain that when we compare our looks to others, it is easy to get stuck in a “downward spiral,” in which we just feel worse about ourselves the more we do it. This can feel like getting caught in a whirlpool.

Ask:

What is a whirlpool?

Desired responses

It is a powerful force; it pulls things downward; it is hard to escape; lots of things get sucked inside it.



Explain how the process of comparisons can be like a whirlpool as you click through the next four slides. Click before reading each statement. Emphasise the distance from where the figure in the illustration started at the top of the whirlpool.

Say:

- 01** You compare yourself to someone else. How does this make you feel?
- 02** Then you compare yourself again. How do you feel now? Can you think of any reason why this might be worse than before?

So, the more you compare, the worse you feel about yourself.

- 03** When we get stuck in the whirlpool of comparisons, what impact do you think this has on your friends?

Teacher Notes

Emphasise that our words and actions can have a huge impact on those around us. When we regularly compare ourselves to others, this creates a culture of everyone wanting to look different and feeling bad about ourselves.

Desired responses

- 01** Dissatisfied, critical of your appearance and wanting to change.
You already felt bad; you wish even more that you were different; you are more aware of others who you feel are better looking; you feel further away from achieving appearance ideals.
- 02** Talking and focusing on comparisons can draw our friends in as well. They might also start comparing and feel pressure to match appearance ideals. Everyone ends up getting pulled into the whirlpool of comparisons.
- 03**

Presentation



Teacher Actions

Initiate a class vote.

Say:

Raise your hand if you think it would be a good idea to free ourselves from getting caught in the whirlpool of comparisons.

What are some ways we can do this?

Invite students to suggest actions they could take instead.

Ask a few students to read aloud the ideas listed in the presentation.



Introduce role plays by working on a semi-scripted role play as a class.

As a class, take five minutes to complete the first semi-scripted role play in the second handout (story of Jennifer and Shana).

Teacher Notes

Help students identify that breaking free from the whirlpool of comparisons means not comparing with people they think look better than they do and not comparing features they don't like about themselves.

Desired responses

Complimenting others and ourselves on things other than appearance, and focusing on enjoying each other's company rather than being critical of ourselves and each other.

Teacher Notes

Role play is a really powerful way to help students change their behaviour. Starting off doing the first scenario as a full class supports the progression of role play confidence. Working in pairs allows less confident students to role play without exposing themselves to the whole group.

Be careful not to reinforce any of the situations or scripts and make sure that students aren't singled out during role plays. Scripting role plays is part of the skill. Students do not need to present the role plays in order to be assessed.

Continued >

Presentation



Teacher Actions

After the class finishes this role play, have students work in pairs to complete the second and third role plays.

Criteria:

- + The definition of appearance ideals is included.
- + At least two harmful impacts of appearance ideals are included.
- + At least two positive comments are included.
- + A respectful tone is used.

Teacher Notes

After the class example, have students work in pairs to complete the Semi-Scripted Role Play page of the handouts (Abdul and Joey story and Marcela and Isabelle), where they should spend five minutes on each role play. You may choose to formally score their role plays as an assessment using the performance checklist.

>>> **Desired responses**

- + The way society tells us the ideal way to look is at a certain point in time.
- + Examples of harmful effects of appearance-based comparisons: low self-esteem, social withdrawal, self-harm.
- + Examples of positive comments: “You’re such a good friend”; “You listen”; “You make me laugh”.
- + Respectful tone: eye contact, smiling, positive statements, not shouting.

Plenary

 5 mins

By the end of this section, students will have reflected on what it means to compare looks. **Students have...**

- + Understood that comparing looks to individuals and media images is automatic and part of human nature;
- + Identified the ways in which the process of comparing looks often has negative consequences for themselves and their friends;
- + Developed new ways to respond to comparison situations that have positive outcomes for themselves and the people around them;
- + Analysed the impact of comparing ourselves to others.

Presentation



Teacher Actions

Ask for volunteers to recall, briefly, what they have learned in the lesson.

Ask:

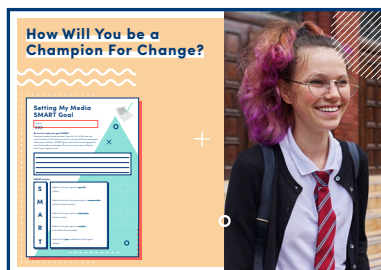
What have we learned in today's lesson?

Invite volunteers to read out the key learning points from the slide and summarise any points students have missed.



Desired Response

Students articulate the key messages in their own words.



Revisit their SMART Goal from the previous lesson.

Ask:

- 01 What different strategies for challenging comparisons have we learned?
- 02 How else can you show your commitment to personally confronting appearance comparisons?
- 03 How does your SMART goal from Lesson 2 support this commitment?

Ask if anyone would like to share a SMART goal related to personally confronting appearance comparisons.

Presentation

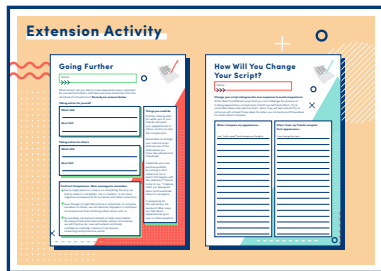


Teacher Actions

Thank students for their participation in today's lesson.

Encourage them to think about and apply their knowledge and understanding every day from now on.

If possible, offer to stay behind or speak to students at another time about anything covered in the lesson.



Optional Extension Activity:

Ask your students to explore the ideas raised in today's lesson by completing the Extension Activity handout sheet before the next lesson. Encourage them to be aware of the ways they talk about appearance.

Curriculum Links

England

PSHE

Health & Wellbeing

Self-concept

- » **H1.** To know how we are all unique; that recognising and demonstrating personal strengths build self-confidence, self-esteem and good health and wellbeing
- » **H3.** To know the impact that media and social media can have on how people think about themselves and express themselves, including regarding body image, physical and mental health
- » **H4.** To know simple strategies to help build resilience to negative opinions, judgements and comments

Relationships

Social Influences

- » **R42.** To recognise peer influence and to develop strategies for managing it, including online
- » **R43.** To know the role peers can play in supporting one another to resist pressure and influence, challenge harmful social norms and access appropriate support

Living in the wider world

Media literacy and digital resilience

- » **L24.** To understand how the way people present themselves online can have positive and negative impacts on them

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

Physical health and mental wellbeing

Online and Media

- » To know what to do and where to get support to report material or manage issues online
- » To know the impact of viewing harmful content

Mental Health

- » To know how to talk about their emotions accurately and sensitively, using appropriate vocabulary

Internet Safety and Harms

- » To know the similarities and differences between the online world and the physical world, including: the impact of unhealthy or obsessive comparison with others online (including through setting unrealistic expectations for body image)
- » To know how people may curate a specific image of their life online, over-reliance on online relationships including social media, the risks related to online gambling including the accumulation of debt, how advertising and information is targeted at them and how to be a discerning consumer of information online

Scotland

Health and Wellbeing

- » **3-02a** 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

- » **3-08a** To help me develop an informed view, I am learning about the techniques used to influence opinion and how to assess the value of my sources, and I can recognise persuasion
- » **4-08a** To help me develop an informed view, I can identify some of the techniques used to influence or persuade and can assess the value of my sources

Wales

Health and Well-being (PSE framework)

Developing thinking skills

- » To identify and assess bias and reliability, e.g. evaluate messages from the media

Active citizenship

- » To develop respect for themselves and others
- » To value and celebrate diversity and equality of opportunity locally, nationally and globally

Health and emotional wellbeing

- » To display a responsible attitude towards keeping the mind and body safe and healthy
- » To develop positive attitudes towards themselves and others
- » To understand the range of emotions they experience and how to develop strategies for coping with negative feelings



Northern Ireland

Personal Development and Mutual Understanding

Self-Awareness

- » To explore and express a sense of self
- » To explore the different ways to develop self esteem
- » To investigate the influences on a young person

Relationships

- » 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

Communication

Talking & Listening

- » To listen to and take part in discussions, explanations, role-plays and presentations
- » To contribute comments, ask questions and respond to others' points of view



Acknowledgements

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It was adapted from 'Happy Being Me' with permission and under licence from Susan T. Paxton, Sian A. McLean, Shanel M. Few and Sarah J. Durkin, 2013.

Confident Me, US version, was revised and updated for a US student audience by Jessica Lawrence, Director of Cairn Guidance.