

# Sarah's Double Life

EXERCISE-IN-A-BOX LESSON PLAN (13-15 years old)

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## OVERVIEW

This lesson educates students about online persona, curated social media feeds, and false reality, highlighting how social media platforms can create specific images of oneself. Students will gain critical thinking skills to navigate social media responsibly and understand the differences between online and offline identities.

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## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Students will be able to:

- Reflect on their own digital identity and understand how it can be shaped by their online activities and interactions.
  - Analyse curated social media feeds and recognize how they can contribute to a false reality.
  - Develop critical thinking skills to evaluate the authenticity of social media content and question the validity of the online persona presented.
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## DURATION

60 minutes

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## KEYWORDS

- **Online Persona:** An online persona refers to the image or impression a person creates of themselves online through their social media profiles and activity. It is the way a person presents themselves to others online, and it can be different from their real-life personality.
  - **Curated Feeds:** A curated feed on social media refers to a collection of posts, images, and videos that have been specifically selected and arranged by an individual or platform to present a certain image or theme. It is a carefully crafted collection of content that aims to showcase the best version of a person or brand.
  - **False Reality:** False reality on social media refers to the idea that social media can often present a distorted or inaccurate view of reality.
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## INTERNET INDEPENDENT FRAMEWORK

The learning objectives in this workshop are aligned with the **Digital Identity** pillar of the Internet Independent Framework. Visit [cyberlite.org](http://cyberlite.org) for more information.

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## WARM-UP 5 MINUTES

Slide 1

**Say:** Today, we will be diving into the topic of digital identity and how we present ourselves online. Your digital identity is shaped by the types of content you post, the kinds of messages you write, or the games you choose to play.

Slide 2

**Ask:** Have you ever noticed someone on social media who seems to have a different personality online than they do in real life?

*A good example to begin with is a celebrity's social media profile who may only post professionally edited photos of themselves, or only share the side of their life that is very glamorous and lavish.*

Slide 3

**Ask:** Have you ever seen a post on social media that made you feel like your life wasn't as good as someone else's?

*Students at this age are likely to start comparing their lives with people they follow online as they start to become more self-conscious of their environments. Encourage students to have an open conversation about how it makes them feel when they come across such content.*



## DEFINE THE KEYWORDS 15 MINUTES

Slide 4

**Ask:** Does anyone know what online persona, curated feeds, or false reality mean?

*Allow students to guess or extrapolate meanings. Guide students to think about these key concepts in the context of digital identity and social media.*

Slide 5

**Read** the contents of the slide aloud.

**Discuss:** In what other circumstances might someone present a different persona to their true identity?

*A persona in the offline world means a side of your identity that is presented to the public. Someone might show an extroverted persona when they have to be on stage to give a speech, even though they might be shy in real life.*

Slide 6

**Read** the contents of the slide aloud.**Discuss:** Can you think of another example of someone who might curate their feed?

*There are many accounts who will actively curate their feeds to present a theme or messaging through the account, particularly companies, brands, or influencers on social media.*

Slide 7

**Read** the contents of the slide aloud.**Discuss:** Why is creating a false reality on social media harmful to others?

*People may only post the positive aspects of their lives, such as their accomplishments or happy moments, while hiding their struggles or negative experiences. This can create a false sense of reality and make it difficult for people to accurately compare themselves to others.*

**INVESTIGATE THE SCENARIO**  
30 MINUTES

Slide 8

**Say:** In this next section, we will explore a scenario about a girl named Sarah, who is a successful model on social media. Remember to keep the keywords we've just learned in mind as I show you five pieces of evidence we'll investigate together. Think critically about the information we're examining and consider the discussion questions.

*(Optional) Select six students to read as these characters: Sarah, Jakob, Stephanie, Harry, Marissa, and a Chatbot.*

Slide 9

**Read** Sarah's social media post.**Discuss** the following questions:**1. What does Sarah want her audience to know about her life?**

*Sarah wants people to know she is a successful model who is in high demand. She also wants people to know that she's travelled around the world to places like London and Paris.*

Slide 10

**Read** the messages between Sarah and Jakob.**Discuss** the following questions:**1. Do you think Sarah's social media feed is curated to present a certain image of herself? Why or why not?**

*Yes, Sarah's social media feed is extremely curated as she keeps repeating the*

*same idea that she is a very popular model who travels the world. She seems like she's trying very hard to convince others of this.*

**2. Jakob likes Sarah because of what he sees on social media. Do you think it's a good idea for Jakob to believe everything he sees online?**

*No, it's not a good idea to like someone just because of what they post on social media, as the person has carefully selected an image of what they want to present to their audience. Anything posted to social media is only a reflection of someone's online persona and not their whole personality.*

Slide 11

**Read** this group chat between Jakob, Marissa, Stephanie, and Harry.

**Discuss** the following questions:

**1. Stephanie describes an incident where Sarah posted a photo under false pretences. Which of the three keywords best describes this?**

*Stephanie's story about Sarah pretending to be on the beaches of Bali is best described as false reality as Sarah is deliberately distorting reality.*

**2. Why is it hard for Jakob to believe what Stephanie and Harry were telling him? Discuss how false realities and curated feeds can make it difficult for people to see the truth.**

*Because social media is made up of video and photo content, it can be very convincing to someone like Jakob who believes everything he sees online.*

Slide 12

**Read** this social media post by Aparna.

**Discuss** the following questions:

**1. What do you think is Sarah's motivations for posting false images online?**

*Sarah is probably motivated by the attention she receives online. It might make her feel great that people believe she's a successful model and boost her self-esteem.*

**2. Discuss why we should not always believe what we see online.**

*With advanced tools and technology on our fingertips, it's very hard to distinguish fact from fiction on the internet nowadays. Photos and videos can be edited easily to look like something totally different, which is why we should not always believe what we see online.*

Slide 13

**Read** Sarah's conversation with a self-help therapy chatbot.

**Discuss** the following questions:

**1. Do you think Sarah's reasons behind creating an online persona is justified?**

*While Sarah's reasons for wanting to live out her fantasies through an online*

*persona might be understandable, it is not justified that she has carried on for a long time and tricked Jakob into thinking that she was really a model travelling around the world.*

**2. Do you think by curating her feed and creating a false reality for herself that Sarah has done anything wrong?**

*Yes, Sarah has created an environment where her followers are jealous of her life because they're comparing themselves to her. Her carefully curated feed of her online persona also makes it hard for people to distinguish what's real and what's not.*



## KEY TAKEAWAYS

10 MINUTES

Slide 14

**Say:** Here are some things we've learned from this lesson.

1. You shouldn't believe everything you see online, as people tend to choose to present their online personas instead of their whole personalities.
2. Social media is full of curated feeds. If you feel overwhelmed, anxious, or jealous of what you see online, check in with your mental wellbeing and log off.
3. False realities make it hard for people to see the truth as it is a distorted or inaccurate representation of reality.

**Ask:** What are some key takeaways you've learned from this lesson?

*Call on volunteers to share what they've learned.*