



Does social media have power and influence on society?

Lesson 2

Community volunteers or social media influencers – who has the most power and influence?

Lesson 2:
Does social media have power and influence in society?
Key Stage 3 (Year 9)

<p>Overview</p>	<p>Students investigate the potential of social media to drive positive change and social impact. They critically examine the concept of ‘slacktivism’ and its implications for active citizenship. They analyse the influence held by social media in shaping opinions and behaviours. Through the evaluation of case studies, students decide whether they believe social media is a powerful and/or an influential force within society.</p>
<p>Citizenship skills and concepts</p>	<p>Concepts: ethics, media, respect, making a difference, power, responsibilities</p> <p>Skills: media, literacy, making judgements, evaluation, active participation, analysis, representing others’ views</p>
<p>Essential teaching guidance</p>	<p>Timings for each task are given as guidelines. Please use your professional judgement when deciding how to deliver the tasks, depending on time available and your students’ needs. There is a lot to cover in this lesson and you may find you want to allow additional time.</p> <p>The purpose of this lesson is to encourage students to analyse whether social media has power and influence in society. Students will focus on case studies from social media that give them evidence to decide their opinion on the key question: Does social media have power and influence in society?</p> <p>Personalising students’ learning to reference social media campaigns and influencers in their local communities will help them to engage fully with the lesson. For example, you could research specific campaigns in your local community social media groups or on a search engine.</p> <p>Further examples of social media campaigns that have been successful in creating positive change can be found here:</p> <p>https://sproutsocial.com/insights/social-media-marketing-exampl</p>

	<p>es/</p> <p>You may find it helpful to look at these ACT guidelines and resources to find out more about active citizenship and media literacy before you teach this lesson: ACT Active Citizenship Toolkit, ACT Curriculum Briefing: Active Citizenship and Volunteering, Teaching Media Literacy in Citizenship, Teaching Citizenship Journal: Media Literacy and Information Disorder</p> <p>Be mindful of the diverse viewpoints that may arise, and seek to encourage empathy and promote community cohesion. Some students are likely to have close associations with the ice bucket challenge case study due to personal experiences with health issues. You may want to check with the head of year or safeguarding lead in case any students in the class are affected.</p> <p>Where the issues raised in teaching this lesson are sensitive or controversial in nature, ensure you are in line with your school policies on such matters. You may find the ACT guidance on Prevent and Controversial Issues and ACT guidance on Political Impartiality in Citizenship helpful.</p>
<p>Learning questions</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How can social media make a positive difference and drive social change? 2. Are slacktivists practising active citizenship? 3. Do social media influencers hold power in society?
<p>Lesson resources</p>	<p>Slide presentation for the lesson</p> <p>Worksheet: Power and influence continuum (for Do now/entry/starter task)</p> <p>Worksheet: Positive change through social media (for Task 3)</p> <p>Video clip: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9H-Glcper1s (ALS Ice Bucket Challenge Founders: "Every August Until A Cure" 3.32) (For Task 3)</p> <p>Video clip: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ObC0lcC-hLA (Ice Bucket Challenge: Thank You from The ALS Association 1:00) (For Task 3)</p> <p>Case study: Kony 2012 (for Task 5)</p> <p>Glossary of key terms</p>
<p>Differentiation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Use different levels of discussion tasks to support students, for example sharing opinions, analysing, solving a problem or persuading. ● Consider suitable pairings for the think-pair-share task.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Use differentiated questioning – who, what, when, where, how and why – to create a range of accessible open and closed questions for students. ● Stretch the questions with Socratic dialogue or pose, pause, pounce, bounce. ● Scaffold feedback – use prompting, recasting, eliciting, highlighting a language pattern (social = from the Latin, <i>socialis</i> meaning ‘allied’ from <i>socius</i> meaning friend), correcting, commenting on student language, promoting learning through discovery. ● Consider the reading age of pairings. The reading age for the worksheet ‘Case study: Kony 2012’ is 14, so suitable pairings may need to be considered. ● Give different levels of support, for example paired work, scaffolding frameworks, one-to-one, TA supported, model answers, sea of talk.
<p>Assessment opportunities</p>	<p>This lesson offers many opportunities to assess understanding through group discussion and direct differentiated questioning (used to check knowledge has been acquired). Students can also be assessed on their decisions made for the power and influence continuum, their justification for ordering the social media campaigns, and examples and points made in the slacktivism debates.</p> <p>Further assessment opportunities can arise from reviewing media literacy and its importance to society.</p> <p>Students will be expected to draw upon knowledge from across the lesson in the plenary. This will be revisited in the next lesson to ensure they have understood the material.</p>
<p>Do now / starter / entry task</p> <p><i>(10 minutes)</i></p>	<p>Power, influence and social media</p> <p><i>Slides 2 to 8</i></p> <p>Give each student a copy of the worksheet ‘Power and influence continuum’ and share slide 2.</p> <p>Ask students to decide where the different individuals and organisations sit on the continuum from power to influence. They could write numbers on the worksheet, or if you prefer you could cut the resource up in advance and ask students to place each role onto the continuum. You might want to laminate the resource for ease and future use.</p> <p>Make it clear to students that having different answers for this activity is to be expected and does not mean that their responses</p>

	<p>are incorrect.</p> <p>Ask students to discuss their findings as a class, with questions such as:</p> <p>1) <i>Who do you think has the most/least power in a community?</i> Students should be able to explain their opinion from the previous lesson. It may be a combination of many people in different community and government roles.</p> <p>2) <i>Who do you think has the most/least influence in a community?</i> Ensure the students are clear about the difference between power and influence from the previous lesson.</p> <p>3) <i>What important roles have been missed out?</i> There could be a range of answers here, such as the police, family, NGOs, Metro Mayors.</p> <p>4) <i>Where does social media come on your continuum?</i> This question is important, to introduce the lesson and get some initial thoughts from students on how powerful or influential they think social media is in the community.</p> <p>5) <i>Why haven't you all got the same answers?</i> Make it clear to students that it is not easy to decide exactly how much power and/or influence someone has because it depends on the individual and the amount of action they take. This is why no one will have exactly the same answers on their continuum.</p> <p>Share slides 3 and 4 and explain that in this lesson you will be investigating social media campaigns and reflecting on active citizenship and media literacy. Remind the students how this connects to the work they did in the previous lesson and the key enquiry question for the whole scheme of work: Community volunteers or social media influencers – who has the most power and influence?</p>
<p>Task 1</p> <p><i>(10 minutes)</i></p>	<p>Social media and you</p> <p><i>Slides 5 to 8</i></p> <p>Share slide 5 and ask the students to participate in a think-pair-share activity based on the discussion of three questions about social media:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Does social media influence you? 2. Do you follow any social media influencers? 3. How much influence do you think social media has on the community? <p>Although some students are likely to be able to list ways in which</p>

	<p>social media influences their lives, many will probably say that they do not allow social media to influence them. You might choose to ask them who has bought the drink ‘Prime’, created by KSI and Logan Paul, two prominent social media influencers. Some students may be more realistic in their approach to this question and be able to list ways in which social media influences their lives.</p> <p>Expect a range of answers to the question about whether students follow social media influencers. Some may not have access to social media, while others will have accounts on several platforms.</p> <p>In response to question 3, students may identify advertising, raising awareness of important issues, fundraising and encouraging citizenship activities. There may be some discussion that social media does not have any influence on the local community because it has little power.</p> <p>The next three slides display some statistics and graphs about social media usage. Share and discuss these with the students. Does the wide reach of social media make it influential and powerful?</p>
<p>Task 2 <i>(5 minutes)</i></p>	<p>Positive change through social media</p> <p><i>Slide 9</i></p> <p>Share the Erik Qualman quote on slide 9.</p> <p>“The power of social media is it forces necessary change.”</p> <p>For background, Erik Qualman is an American author whose most famous work is <i>Socialnomics</i>. He is currently Professor of Digital Leadership at Northwestern University and his materials are used in over 500 universities.</p> <p>Ask the students to reflect on this quote. What do they think it means? Draw out that Qualman is highlighting that social media is powerful because it forces people to make changes in their community and in society as a whole. He believes that real change can occur as a result of campaigns started on social media and the awareness this can raise of important issues because of its influence and wide reach.</p> <p>Ask the students if they agree with Erik Qualman. This is likely to prompt a range of responses. Some students might be able to give examples of real change that has been instigated by social media. Others may disagree and state that this is not real power because they don’t know of any issue that has been changed because of social media.</p>

	<p>To review students' understanding from lesson 1, ask them to consider Qualman's use of the word 'power'. Do they think social media is powerful, or influential?</p>
<p>Task 3 <i>(15 minutes)</i></p>	<p>Campaign case studies</p> <p><i>Slides 10 to 13</i></p> <p>Choose suitable pairings and give each student a copy of the worksheet 'Positive change through social media'.</p> <p>Share slide 10 and explain the instructions. Students should read through the information on three campaigns that have inspired positive change in a community or society as a whole, ordering them from 1 to 3 based on which they think has had the most influence on their community (with 1 being the most). Having written their ranking numbers in the fourth column of the table, they should explain their decision in the final column.</p> <p>This activity allows students to think critically about how powerful social media is and to deliberate in pairs which campaign they believe brought the most positive change to the community. Again, there is not a definitive correct answer to this question, but it allows students to discuss and debate the issues raised.</p> <p>Share slide 11, explain the ALS Ice Bucket Challenge and show the video:</p> <p>ALS Ice Bucket Challenge Founders: Every August Until A Cure (3.32)</p> <p>To extend students' learning, further information about ALS can be found here: ALS Organisation: Understanding ALS</p> <p>The video is summarised on slide 12.</p> <p>Explain to students what positive change was created by the Ice Bucket Challenge by reading slide 13 and watching the video:</p> <p>Ice Bucket Challenge - Thank you from The ALS Association (1:00).</p> <p>Pose the question at the top of the slide to students: Does this mean that social media has power and influence on society?</p> <p>Students may agree that this campaign was powerful and influenced many people to donate to the ALS Association. However, some may feel that there are not many campaigns that go to this level and therefore social media is not as powerful as it may seem from this one example.</p>

<p>Task 4</p> <p><i>(5 minutes)</i></p>	<p>Media literacy</p> <p><i>Slides 14 to 16</i></p> <p>Remind students of the meaning of the term ‘media literacy’ by sharing the definition on slide 14.</p> <p>Ask students how they think this lesson is linked to media literacy. Why is media literacy important when accessing social media and taking part in active citizenship?</p> <p>Share the points made on slide 15 and discuss the importance of realising that social media influencers can be misleading.</p> <p>Display slide 16 and, as a class, discuss why it is important to practise media literacy. Talk through the REVIEW diagram on the slide.</p> <p>Students should be able to explain what they need to be careful of when posting or sharing stories on social media. Focus on students finding out about stories or issues and whether they are true and worthy before just clicking, sharing or signing a petition. This is a good introduction to the next activity on ‘slacktivism’.</p>
<p>Task 5</p> <p><i>(15 minutes)</i></p>	<p>Slacktivism</p> <p><i>Slides 17 to 21</i></p> <p>Share the definition of slacktivism on slide 17.</p> <p>‘the practice of supporting a political or social cause by means such as social media or online petitions, characterised as involving very little effort or commitment.’</p> <p>Using slide 18, ask the students if they can think of any examples of slacktivism. They may come up with a variety of answers, which you could discuss with the aid of some responses to the question outlined on slide 19:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● hashtag posting ● profile picture filters ● online petitions ● clicktivism <p>Give each student a copy of the case study ‘Kony 2012’ and share slide 20. Ask them to read the case study in pairs or threes and discuss anything they find interesting or any questions they may have about the story’s impact.</p> <p>Discuss the case study as a class and answer any questions students have. Do they think this is an example of slacktivism?</p>

	<p>Extending this activity You could give students the opportunity to research the story in more detail and give their opinion about whether they think there was any benefit – or indeed any harm – in this social media campaign going viral.</p> <p>Further information can be found here:</p> <p>https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2022/apr/27/kony-2012-10-years-africa-problem</p> <p>https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/worldviews/wp/2014/12/16/was-kony2012-a-failure/</p>
<p>Plenary / reflection</p> <p><i>(5 minutes)</i></p>	<p>Review discussion</p> <p><i>Slides 21 & 22</i></p> <p>Share slide 21 and remind the students what ‘active citizenship’ means:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">‘Participating in society to bring about change’</p> <p>Reflecting on what they have learnt about slacktivism, ask students to contribute to a think-pair-share discussion focusing on the three key questions on slide 22.</p> <p><i>1) Do you think slacktivism is a form of active citizenship?</i> Points to further the discussion could be that slacktivism is not a form of active citizenship because the person is not doing anything practical and active; it is a passive activity that requires very little commitment or energy from the participant. Active citizenship is about bringing positive change, but we can see through Kony 2012 that slacktivism does not.</p> <p>However, students could argue that it is a minor form of active citizenship because at least the participant is doing something rather than ignoring the issues in society. Sometimes even a signature on a petition can spark debate in Parliament and change things for the better.</p> <p>You could extend this discussion by asking students whether slacktivism actually discourages active citizenship or not. Students may say that slacktivism makes people feel they are contributing to change in society and it stops them from taking on more active work that could bring about real lasting change.</p> <p><i>2) Do we ever take positive actions as a result of a social media slacktivist post?</i> You will be offered a range of responses here according to the views of the students to the first question. Students may think that</p>

	<p>sharing an important cause on their social media feed is completing a positive action. Draw out that active citizenship is about participating, not just clicking on something on social media.</p> <p><i>3) Does social media have power and influence on society?</i> You can encourage a debate here around the key lesson question. Social media only has power if the people using it want to spark real change and participate in active citizenship as a result of what they have read or seen. If slacktivism occurs, no real influence or power is used or gained. However, some students may feel that any post on social media that raises awareness of community issues is important and can influence society.</p> <p>You may also want to add that many politicians and government officials use social media as a platform for their policies, manifestos and views, so it can be used by people in power to influence society. There is a lot of data to back this up, for example Rishi Sunak has over 2 million followers on Instagram and X (formerly known as Twitter); Keir Starmer has 198,000 followers on Instagram and 1.4 million followers on X. <i>(Source: X & Instagram).</i></p> <p>Invite students to reflect on their learning in this lesson and how it has improved their knowledge and understanding of whether social media is powerful and influential on society. Students should have a discussion about the importance of media literacy as a way to improve active citizenship in order for it to be powerful and influential. Explain to students that acting on issues is far more powerful and influential than slacktivism.</p> <p>Students could also revisit slide 4 to check they can now answer all three learning questions from this lesson:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How can social media make a positive difference and drive social change? 2. Are slacktivists practising active citizenship? 3. Do social media influencers hold power in society?
<p>Takeaway task</p>	<p>Ask the students to teach three people in different age groups about slacktivism, explaining whether they think it is a good example of active citizenship or not and asking for their views.</p> <p>Ask them to report their findings in a creative way, e.g. a poster, information leaflet, social media post, interview script, collage.</p>

Additional teacher links & resources

There are lots of resources that can assist in delivering this lesson, including specific information about media literacy.

The government guidelines on the Online Media Literacy Strategy can be found here:

[Online Media Literacy Strategy](#)

[Year 2 Online Media Literacy Action Plan 2022/23](#)

There is also some research from Ofcom which you may find useful:

[Media Literacy Research](#)

Further statistics about social media can be found here:

<https://www.forbes.com/advisor/business/social-media-statistics/>

<https://www.ofcom.org.uk/research-and-data/media-literacy-research/childrens/children-and-parents-media-use-and-attitudes-report-2023>

<https://datareportal.com/social-media-users>

<https://www.smartinsights.com/social-media-marketing/social-media-strategy/new-global-social-media-research/>

Name:

Power and influence continuum



Name:

Positive change through social media

Read about the impact of these three campaigns and order them from 1 to 3 in terms of the influence you think they have made on the community. Explain the reason for your decision in the last column.

Campaign	Description	Impact	Influence	Reason
#Cook for Syria	This campaign encouraged people to host fundraising dinners in aid of Syrian refugees. Due to the popularity of the social media campaign in countries such as the UK, Hong Kong, France, Australia and the USA, a Syrian cookbook was launched.	All the proceeds from the fundraising dinners and the book sales have gone to aid Syrian children and families affected by conflict. Since launching in 2016, over £800,000 has been raised and has helped buy food, shelter and emergency medical supplies.		
#FridaysForFuture	This was a youth-led movement started in 2018 by Greta Thunberg, who sat in front of the Swedish Parliament every day for three weeks to protest against the lack of action on climate change. She posted what she was doing on Instagram and Twitter (X) using the hashtag #FridaysForFuture. This started a social media campaign called #Climate Strike.	Greta encouraged young people in every continent across the world to join in having a global school strike for the climate crisis. Over 4 million children took part in the protest, which was the largest climate protest in history. Since this campaign, many climate reports have been published, promises made to prevent it and awareness of the climate disaster has intensified.		
#GivingTuesday	Originating in the USA back in 2012, Giving Tuesday emerged as a day of kindness. This initiative effectively used the influence of social media and cooperative efforts, motivating countless individuals globally to unite and give to charities and causes in their local communities. Giving Tuesday has now solidified its presence in more than 60 countries and its aim is to bring kindness to every individual across the world.	In 2014, Giving Tuesday in the UK became a full global partner of the campaign and since then has supported its growth. It now has thousands of partners across the charity and business sectors and enjoys support from celebrities and decision-makers alike. Since 2022, Giving Tuesday in the UK has been led by the Chartered Institute of Fundraising, which will continue to grow and develop the campaign to support all charities. In 2022, it announced that Giving Tuesday in the UK raised over £20 million.		

Case study: Kony 2012

Kony 2012 was a social media campaign initiated in 2012 by an organisation called 'Invisible Children'. Its aim was to raise awareness about Joseph Kony, the leader of the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) in Uganda, who was responsible for abducting children to become child soldiers and committing other atrocities. Invisible Children created a 30-minute video that explained the situation and called for viewers to take action. The video went viral, spreading quickly on social media platforms like Facebook and Twitter. The campaign urged people to share the video, purchase a kit containing posters and bracelets, and participate in a global 'Cover the Night' event on April 20th, 2012.

The Kony 2012 campaign achieved success in raising awareness. Millions of people watched the video, and it generated conversations about Joseph Kony's crimes and the plight of children affected by the LRA. However, the campaign and the celebrities like Kim Kardashian who endorsed it by tweeting, 'Kony 2012' faced many criticisms. Some argued that the video oversimplified a complex conflict and that Invisible Children's spending priorities were unclear. There were also concerns that the organisation's actions might unintentionally harm local communities.

Joseph Kony is still working in Uganda committing the same atrocities, so the campaign's influence and impact was not lasting. Kony 2012 highlighted the power of social media in raising awareness about important issues. However, it also demonstrated the need for accurate information, responsible fundraising, and a deeper understanding of complex global conflicts. The campaign showed that while social media can be a catalyst for change, it's crucial to approach activism with critical thinking and consideration for all aspects of the issue.

