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SPYING

Citizenship Activity Pack

Spying on celebrities

Celebrity culture and the right to privacy

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Celebrity culture and the right to privacy

Purpose

To develop skills in:

- analysing information and its sources
- justifying a personal opinion about issues, problems or events
- contributing to group and exploratory class discussions, and taking part in debates
- using imagination to consider, express and empathise with other people's experiences and views.

Age range (years)



Time needed

1 – 1.5 hours



Background

Do celebrities have a right to a private life or are they 'fair game' for the media?

Many skilfully use the media to market themselves and their careers. As long as there are celebrities, people will be interested in their private, as well as their public lives – and the media will try to satisfy this desire.

Pictures of celebrities are in high demand. Celebrity photographers, or 'paparazzi', armed with zoom lenses and the promise of huge cash rewards for an exclusive exposé, pursue the rich and famous. Media editors have also been known to use private investigators to find out about the private lives of the rich and famous.

This activity asks students to consider to what extent the privacy of celebrities can and should be protected.

Steps

1. Split the class into groups of six.
2. Give each person in the group one of the role cards you will find on the following pages. One person will take the role of the 'chair', who makes

sure everyone has a fair chance to express their views.

3. Each role is given the chance to present 'their' viewpoint to the group. Then the debate begins. Each student may challenge (or support) other viewpoints and must defend the position expressed on their role card. The prompt questions on page 6 can be used to help structure the debate.
4. At the end of the debate (which can last anything from 20 to 40 minutes) the chair asks the group to vote on the question: should the law be changed to give celebrities a greater right to privacy?

Students vote according to their own opinion, *not* the one expressed on their role cards.

5. Gather up all the votes at the end and declare the result.
6. Finish by chairing a class-wide discussion.



Spying on celebrities

Role card: **Celebrity**

‘Yes, of course I want more privacy!

I am sick of people spying on me and camping outside my house every night just to get a picture of me coming home from the gym.

I want to be known for my work, but it has to be on my own terms and when I want to talk to the media. I want to be taken seriously as an artist, not judged for a bad hair day or wearing the wrong outfit.’



Spying on celebrities

Role card: **Celebrity magazine reader**

‘Well, it’s always reassuring to see that celebrities aren’t perfect! They have spots just like the rest of us.

Yes, I suppose I wouldn’t like people spying on me every time I went out with my friends, but I don’t earn as much money as celebrities do and they’ve got bodyguards to protect them.

Anyway, I like reading the gossip, it takes my mind off my own troubles.’



Spying on celebrities

Role card: Paparazzi
photographer

‘Spying? Snooping? We are working for the public, showing them what celebrities are *really* like.’

Also, celebrities use us, particularly if a record isn’t doing well or they haven’t got an acting job. They set themselves up as someone the public would be interested in and so they have to take what comes with that.

Quite often we *made* them famous! If you want to live in the limelight you can’t switch it off when it suits you.’



Spying on celebrities

Role card: Newspaper editor

‘Celebrities sell newspapers. They know that as much as we do. Sometimes they give us stories to keep people’s interest in them alive.’

I don’t feel guilty about revealing private stuff about celebrities because they do it themselves if their careers are flagging.

We only use private investigators when we know a celebrity is lying and we want to expose their double standards.’



Spying on celebrities

Role card: Lawyer (Press Complaints Commission)

'Everyone is entitled to respect for his or her private and family life, home, health and correspondence.

A publication will be expected to justify intrusions into any individual's private life without consent.

The use of long-lens photography to take pictures of people in private places without their consent is unacceptable. However, there may be exceptions where they can be demonstrated to be in the public interest.'



Spying on celebrities

Role card: Chair

Keep to the time given by the teacher.

Make sure everyone has a turn at speaking and giving their opinion and that people do not interrupt or talk over each other.

At the end of the debate ask your group to vote on the question:

'Should the law be changed to better protect celebrities' privacy?'

(They must vote according to their **own** opinion, not those expressed on their role cards).

Spying on celebrities: questions to prompt discussion

- Do celebrities have a right to a private life?
- Did they give up this right when they became famous?
- Is it part of their job to tell us about their private lives?
- Do you enjoy reading about celebrities?
- How would you feel if photographers were constantly trying to take pictures of you?
- Do celebrities use the media for their own benefit?
- Should photographers stop following celebrities around?
- Should photographers stop using zoom lenses to get a closer picture?
- Should newspapers and magazines use private investigators to snoop out stories about celebrities?
- Should photographers be allowed to take pictures of celebrities' families?
- In what situations is it acceptable to intrude into someone's private life?