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# SPYING

Citizenship Activity Pack

## Corporate Espionage

Who should profit from intellectual property?

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### 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

Copycat designer gear, bootleg CDs, imitation computer games; where there is a new creation there will be somebody looking to copy it and potentially earn money from someone else's idea.

In many cases ideas are stolen from products already on the market but there is also an industry that employs people to steal product ideas *before* they're released to the wider world. This is called corporate espionage - the practice of obtaining commercial information that is considered secret or confidential.

This activity encourages students to think about how they might protect their ideas and how they might be stolen. Building on this, students are asked whether it is ever morally justified to steal someone else's intellectual property.

### Steps

1. Split the class into three groups. For each group prepare small folded pieces of paper, one for each member. Mark one piece of paper per group with a cross.
2. If time is available ask each group to come up with an invention. It can be as futuristic or as silly as they like.

The aim is simply to get students to think about how ideas can be

protected. If time is short ask them to pick an example invention from page 4. Make sure they don't tell you about their invention. You are the head of a rival firm that will shortly be hiring spies within each group to work for you.

3. Hand out the pieces of paper: you are recruiting your spies! If a student receives one of the three marked papers they are now working for you, hired to pass information about the invention to your firm. They must devise a way of doing this without the rest of their team knowing. You may wish to suggest specific information you are after – perhaps the name of the product, its designer or its price.
4. Using the information sheet 'What is intellectual property?' (page 3) as a starter the groups must discuss how to protect their invention from exploitation by others.
5. The winners of the activity are the first group to identify your spy or the first of your spies to feed new information back to you.
6. Open up a classroom discussion using the 'prompt questions' on page 5.

## Corporate Espionage: what is intellectual property?

Intellectual property (IP) lets you own the things you create in much the same way as owning physical property. The three most common types of IP are described on this page.

### Copyright

Copyright protects literature, art, music, sound recordings, films and broadcasts from being copied without permission. Owning the copyright to a work literally gives you the right to copy it. Makers of works (from pop singles to books on computers) automatically own the copyright to their own creations. An example might be the copyright owned by JK Rowling for the 'Harry Potter' books. Copyright owners can give permission to others to copy their works or sell their 'copy rights', if they choose, to another party.

Copyright does not last forever and some time after the creator's death the works enter the public domain, allowing anyone to use and reproduce them.

### Patents

Patents protect the technical and functional features of products and processes. Governments assign a set of exclusive rights to exploit the commercial possibilities of a product or service.

In order to gain these rights certain details about how the product or service works must be made public. Patent owners can sue others who breach their rights, for instance by copying a product in all but the name.

Perhaps the most famous patent of all time was issued in 1876 to Alexander Graham Bell for the invention of the telephone.

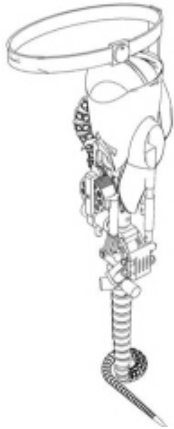
### Trade Marks

Trade marks protect signs or symbols that can distinguish the goods and services of one company from those of a competitor. Popular things to trademark include names, logos and slogans.

Famous trademarks include the names Coca-Cola™ and Sony™.

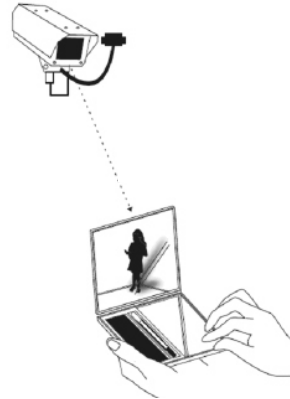
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## Corporate Espionage: example inventions



**Super-powered leg.** Replace your leg with this and you could become a superspy: running faster, jumping higher, gripping like an octopus, climbing sheer walls, dangling from tall buildings.

*Design by Noam Toran and Nick Williamson*



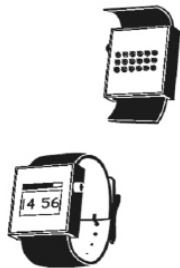
**How do I look?** This make-up compact hacks into nearby CCTV cameras and displays their images on its internal screen. Check out how you look wherever you are.

*Design by Troika*



**Blur anti-photography spray.** Highly reflective nanoparticles reflect the flashbulbs of peeping and stalking photographers. They blind camera sensors and whiten part of the image.

*Design by Troika, idea by Kok-Chian Leong*



**Stress watch.** This watch monitors your heart rate and blood pressure, and can prick you when your stress levels rise. If necessary, it can also inject a shot of beta-blockers to calm you down.

*Design by Troika*



**Factor 40 DNA protection spray** stops you shedding your unique DNA. The spray helps keep your cells in place while adding a fine dusting of other people's DNA.

*Design by Troika, idea by Suw Charman*



**Electromagnetic sniffer.** Converts electromagnetic fields into tickling electrical sensations that can tell sniffer dogs if bugs or cameras are nearby.

*Design by Dunne and Raby*



## Corporate Espionage: questions to prompt discussion

- Is there ever moral justification for spying on someone with the intention of stealing their intellectual property?
- Should a company be forced to share its invention if it could potentially benefit society? (for example, an invention that could reduce carbon emissions, or a life saving drug).
- How would you feel if someone copied something you had created without asking you?
- Have you ever copied music from a friend without paying the original artist? Do you think this is stealing or not?
- Do you think governments should spy on other countries to find out information that could possibly benefit their own nation?