

UNIT 1: RESOURCE OUTLINE

If ideas were
real light bulbs 

UNIT TITLE: If Ideas were Real Light Bulbs

TARGET AUDIENCE: 10 – 11 year olds

AIMS: to develop a respect for individuals and intellectual property

CURRICULUM AREAS: Literacy and language development, Citizenship and Social Education.

INTRODUCTION

These notes provide guidance to teachers who are using this resource to teach their pupils about showing respect for intellectual property. In this resource, Intellectual Property is symbolised metaphorically and literally by the light bulb. We focus in this teaching resource on copyright, which is the type of intellectual property with which children most frequently engage.

Why is important for children to learn about respecting IP?

Intangible things – such as creative works, software, images, games and videos - make up an ever greater part of everyday life, especially given the world of social media. Children need to learn about the social, economic and ethical implications of our dealings with such intangible property and to think how others may be affected by our behaviour. Apart from the basic need for children to learn that plagiarising another’s work is wrong, in the wider world a lack of respect for IP can mean legal consequences for careless users and emotional or economic harm to others.

RESPECT

Any resource on intellectual property has the concept of respect at its heart. Fundamentally, somebody who creates something has the right to decide where their piece of work is shown. Any person (child or adult) who takes a photo or writes a story has rights to protect them. They are free to let others know that their creation belongs to them and that they decide where it is shared and who can share it.

Section 1: Property

This section examines the idea of what we mean by property in a general sense. The mind map allows children to think about what they own. This may well raise issues about ownership which can be followed up through discussion.

It also raises the issue of what happens when property is stolen.

Section two moves on from actual physical property to consider the more abstract concept of ideas and how we might own them.

The following definitions might be of use:

Defining key terms: what is Intellectual Property?

Intellectual property is any new invention, story, piece of art or music, film, report, computer software, dance, design or brand created by a person. The law protects these creations in different ways: patents (for inventions), copyright (and related rights) for creative works and applied art, design rights for product designs and trade marks for brands.

What is copyright?

We have to make sure we've got permission before we make a copy of an original creative work. This is what 'copyright' means – asking permission for the right to copy a creative work. Copyright does not mean that abstract or general ideas cannot be re-used, just that the original expressive work of a creator cannot be copied without their consent. Sharing someone's copyright work online is making a copy of it. It is becoming increasingly common for children to have access to copyright works for free online, but this doesn't mean we can take them and make them our own. Also, authors are entitled to be given credit when their work is quoted.

Section 2: Creating

This section asks children to think about something that they themselves have created and to reflect on why it is important to them.

Section 3: Elements

This section asks children to think carefully about all of the different elements that go into creating an artistic product. It introduces the idea that behind every film, book, song etc. there is a long process involving, possibly, many people.

Section 4: Respect

The teacher should introduce the different scenarios. We are all familiar with the concept of an idea being represented by a light bulb. Ask: "what if your ideas turned into real light bulbs?"

Imagine this scenario: every time you had an idea for a story, a solution for a science experiment, or a piece of artwork, a light bulb appears in your locker. Explain that the class are going to look at a number of stories which raise issues about ideas and intellectual property.

Children are then asked to think about how the various characters might feel about what happens to their ideas.

The final activity asks children to find out about respecting intellectual property in the real (and virtual) world. They play: 'It is ok?' by asking and sharing their thoughts on the following questions:

Is it ok to share a photo of somebody on the internet without asking their permission?

Is it ok to watch a film that's been illegally downloaded from the internet?

Is it ok to 'borrow' someone's work and use it in your own work?

Is it ok to add your favourite band's music to a film you made?

Is it ok to cut and paste information from the internet when you're researching something?

Children can come up with their own 'is it ok?' scenarios based on their 'If Light Bulbs were Real' scenarios. They are to discuss what would happen if someone stole one of their ideas without their names being credited, how would they feel?

One could extend this activity to imagine this happening in the real world. Many writers, storyboard artists and film directors rely on the money their stories generate. Children could consider:
– what if their ideas were stolen? How would it impact how they live and work? Original creative works, however modest, are people's property. They are what we call 'intellectual property'. Why is it important to respect people's ideas and intellectual property?