



# Equilibrium

Redressing sexualised attitudes and behaviour

## Session 4 – Message Received:

### What Stories Are We Told?

#### Key themes:

The messages and narratives we are constantly told through the media and society. Understanding how the culture and world we live in communicates certain messages/stories that shape how we think, our worldviews and expectations.

#### Key Questions:

- How might we be influenced by adverts, games, and social media?
- Who creates these messages – and why?
- How do these stories affect our self-image?
- Are these messages healthy or harmful?
- How can we resist and replace them?

Curriculum Links: ([click here](#))

Delivery guidance: ([click here](#))

**Aim** – The aim of this session is to explore the various stories and messages pupils encounter daily through different media. They will begin to reflect on how these narratives shape our thoughts, worldviews, and expectations.. This leads to developing skills to identify and critically analyze possible harmful narratives..

#### Ground rules:

- **Confidentiality:** We might talk about personal things, people will share their views, opinions or experiences. This is a safe place for you to be open and honest. We need to know that the things people say doesn't get talked about outside this room
  - **Respect:** Discussions need to be respectful, allow people the chance to talk, don't talk over each other. Don't speak about other people in the group or in school.
  - **Tolerance:** There will be lots of time to discuss, ask questions and express opinions. We may not always agree and this is ok.
  - **Fun:** This is meant to be fun, we will talk about some things that will make you want to laugh, we will be able to be silly at times and laugh at each other. However, if it becomes unkind or rude then I will stop us. We need to know when to stop as some of the things we talk about will be important and serious.
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## Warm up – Once upon a time

**(Why this? –** *fairytale and marvel films provide lots of common stories that most of us know. This activity helps the pupils to begin to notice common themes across stories)*

Think about the fairytales little children are told. Can you summarise some of the famous fairytale stories? (Snow white, cinderella, jack and the beanstalk)

Key characters– there is always/often a... (hero, villain, castle, etc)

Key events – this always happens

Are there themes in the beginning and ending? (Once upon a time, they all lived happily ever after)

What about marvel action films – can you do the same?

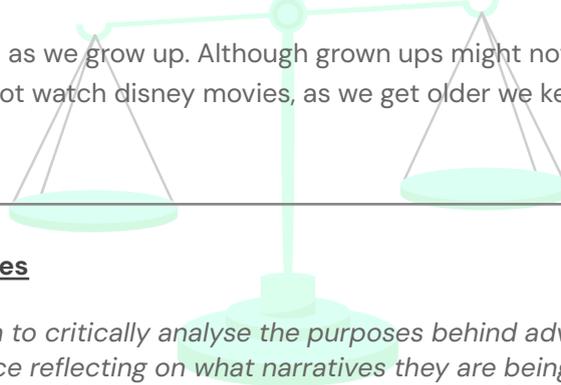
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## Introduction – Digging deeper into Disney – the stories we are told

Think about some of the famous Disney/fairytale lines and discuss what they mean, what story are they telling us

E.g. when you wish upon a star – you can have your dreams if you wish for them happily ever after... sometimes bad things happen but it will all be ok in the end Prince charming/true loves kiss... if we can find true love we will be happy.

We are told lots of stories as we grow up. Although grown ups might not read you a bedtime story anymore and you might not watch disney movies, as we get older we keep getting told stories just in different ways.



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## Reading between the lines

**(Why this? –** *pupils begin to critically analyse the purposes behind adverts, images and social media posts. They practice reflecting on what narratives they are being told through this media)*

**Activity** – here are a range of pictures. They all tell a story in some way.

Look at the range of toy ads, posters, film stills etc – encourage the pupils to consider what story the pictures and videos are telling them.

Consider the following questions together:

*What do you notice about the images/videos?*

*What do they tell us about happiness, life and people?*

*Who are they for/aimed at?*

*What do they want you to do/think/feel?*

**Definition – “Media”** – all the different ways we share information, ideas, and stories with lots of people. This can include video, pictures, messages and social media posts

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## Story sources – where’s it coming from?

**(Why this? –** pupils begin to reflect on the sources of media that might influence them and the kinds of narratives they experience. They also get the chance to compare and notice what are the most common narratives)

**Activity –** We can see there are stories in films and in adverts all around us.

Are there other places where we hear stories that might influence how we think or act?

Most of us spend time online accessing social media, videos, pictures, information and news.

What kinds of different sources of media do you access?

*The media that talks to me –*

**Mindmap –** Ask pupils to think about all the **media and platforms they interact with regularly**

– this includes:

- Social media (e.g. YouTube, TikTok, Snapchat)
- TV shows or films
- Music videos
- Online games or streamers
- News apps or websites
- Magazines or books
- Adverts (online, on TV, on buses, etc.)

Pupils work in groups to create a **mind map** titled **“The Media That Talks to Me”**, writing down all the platforms and media they personally use or see.

**Gallery Walk & Class Discussion –** Groups post their charts or mind maps on the wall. Pupils walk around, looking for:

- Similarities between their media influences – are pupils using the same apps?
- Surprising or unusual sources of influence
- Are there some themes/stories that are most common?

Then bring the class together to reflect:

- Which platforms influence us the most?
- Are these messages helpful, harmful, or mixed?

**What’s in my feed? –** In pairs or small groups, pupils choose **2–3 media sources** from their map and answer:

- What kind of videos/pictures/stories do they see?
- What are the messages or stories they are being told?
- What does it suggest about how people should look, act, or live?

