

# Project idea: „The internet – my mask“

**Competencies:** Communication skills and awareness of consequences

**Age group:** 10-12 years

**Project duration:** 120 minutes

**Link to learning module:** [www.teachtoday.de/en/internetmask](http://www.teachtoday.de/en/internetmask)

## Project objectives

The aim of the project is to develop children's ability to reflect on their communication behavior on the Internet. Through the joint role-playing, they are to be sensitized to the fact that the Internet as an imaginary mask can quickly tempt people to disregard the general rules of conduct on the Internet. By analyzing exemplary chats and through the development of a netiquette, the children will begin to question their own and each other's communication behavior. This promotes the ability to think critically.

### The children

- know the effects of verbal expressions,
- discuss and resolve conflicts together,
- put themselves in different roles and take each other's perspectives,
- share their experiences and observations and think about them,
- jointly develop rules for the communication behavior and comply with them.

### Subject and methods

### The children

- analyze the communication behavior of others on the Internet and assess it critically,
- reflect on their behavior in digital communication situations.

### Activities and behaviors

### The children

- observe, reflect on and discuss their own and other people's communication behavior in a constructive manner,
- become empathic and put themselves in the shoes of their counterpart.

### Social communications

## The children

- rethink their own consumer behavior,
- recognize that their consumer behavior must also meet moral and social standards,
- develop solution strategies and think about them.

Personal competence

## Introduction

Based on Oscar Wilde's statement "A mask tells us more than a face", the children deal with communicative behaviors on the net and in the real world.

On the basis of exemplary excerpts from chats, the children work out how the Internet affects individual communication behavior. Using masks for a performance-like lesson, they deal with their personal attitudes and transfer their findings to digital communication. Based on this, a so-called netiquette with relevant rules of conduct on the net will be developed.

## Project procedure

The project starts with a thematic reference to Carnival or Halloween. The children discuss what costumes they like to wear. The costumes are recorded in writing and enriched with typical behaviors. The children then reflect on the extent to which they implement these behaviors as soon as they wear their costumes. At the end of this phase there is the realization that wearing a mask or the mask itself influences one's own behavior.

The children transferred the acquired knowledge onto the digital communication behavior. They analyze exemplary chat histories and reflect communication behavior there. In order to facilitate the transfer to one's own behavior, a performative role-playing game takes place with the aid of pre-defined conflict scenarios and masks.

The children recognize that they act differently with masks than without, and transfer this knowledge to the Internet. Finally, they will develop a netiquette, a collection of behaviors for communication on the net.



## Phase description | Social form

### Phase 1 | Whole class

The children get together in cinema seats so that they have a good view of a presentation area on the wall. In the center of the cinema seats are various masks (witch, pirate etc.). These serve as silent impulses. The children make the connection to Carnival and Halloween. They then tell which costumes they like to wear on these occasions. The costumes are fixed in writing on the presentation surface..

Word  
cards

### Phase 2 | Individual work, whole class

In the second phase, the children receive three to five word cards on which they record the typical behavior of the costume (one behavior per card). The cards are assigned to the costumes on the presentation board. They then reflect on the extent to which they accepted or adopted this behavior when wearing the costumes. The children draw a first conclusion: A disguise—or in this case also a mask—is not only an external disguise, but also has an internal influence which is shown in behavior.

Word  
cards

### Phase 3 | Partner work, whole class

They work out how children and young people behave, for example, in chat rooms, through statements of exemplary chat histories (see more information). They analyze these and reflect the communication behavior. The focus here is on the question of whether the actors would behave the same way in the real world as well.

Discussion

### Phase 4 | Partner work, whole class

In the context of a performative role playing game (note: the distribution of roles should be randomly generated by means of a lottery procedure) the children now investigate their own communication behavior with and without a mask. They receive corresponding masks (see more information) as well as task cards. Possible assignments would be:

Discussion,  
graphic

- Compliment your partner.
- Tell your partner a secret.
- Try to sell your partner something invented as something true.
- Tell your partner the following: (Specify a negative statement individually.)
- etc.

The children learn that the inhibition threshold is lower if they can wear a mask and hide behind it. It puts the children in a position of anonymity and gives them more security when communicating. Transferred to the Internet, the spatial separation (no direct contact with a person) leads to the fact that one is more “courageous”, but also makes imprudent statements.

After the role-play, they meet again in the cinema seats. As part of a survey, they visualize their findings graphically on the presentation board:

- The children are more self-confident with a mask.
- The children are more honest with masks.
- With masks the children express themselves more carelessly / less thoughtfully.
- The children have a lower inhibition threshold.
- etc.

In a transfer to digital communication, the children recognize that the supposed anonymity and hiding behind a screen on the Internet also functions as a kind of mask. Together we will consider how to deal with this and how important it is to conduct fair and open communication “eye-to-eye” without a mask.

## Continuation

Further, the children can derive meaningful behaviors for digital communication and record them in the form of a netiquette (poster).

The project should continue to raise awareness of general behavior patterns on the Internet. In addition to communication, topics such as data protection, privacy, deception, slander etc. can also be dealt with. This is based on the comments of the children from phase 4.

## Notes



