

## UNIT 2

# WHAT MAKES A RELATIONSHIP ROMANTIC OR SEXUAL?

**Note:** You should review these resources and links before use to check if they are appropriate for your pupils at Key Stage 3 or Key Stage 4 and in line with your school's ethos and RSE policy, as approved by the Board of Governors.

### LEARNING INTENTIONS

Pupils are learning to:

- understand the importance of communication in a romantic or sexual relationship;
- distinguish between friendship and a romantic or sexual relationship;
- identify some of the feelings or confusion that a romantic or sexual relationship may cause;
- develop their understanding of the key facts and reality of being involved in a romantic or sexual relationship;
- develop awareness of misinformation; and
- discuss some of the challenges involved in being part of a romantic or sexual relationship.

#### SKILLS AND CAPABILITIES

- Working with Others
- Thinking, Problem Solving and Decision Making
- Communication
- Self-Management.

#### LEARNING EXPERIENCES

- Offers choice
- Supportive environment
- Ongoing reflection
- Active and enquiry-based learning.

#### ATTITUDES AND DISPOSITIONS

- Personal responsibility
- Concern for others
- Respect
- Integrity
- Moral courage.

### Resources

- Resources A–D
- Images for Activity 1 (back-to-back exercise)
- [Tes – Promoting Positive Relationships](#)
- [FPA – Sex and consent – giving it, getting it, understanding it](#)
- [Active Learning and Teaching Methods for Key Stage 3](#)

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#### Activity 1

#### Communication

- Explain to the pupils that communication is key to all relationships, but it is particularly important in a romantic or sexual one.
- See our [Active Learning and Teaching Methods for Key Stage 3](#) resource for details about the **back-to-back** exercise that the pupils will complete.
- For the exercise, choose images that are suitable for Key Stage 3 or Key Stage 4. They can be on any theme, and it's best to avoid anything romantic or sexual at this stage.
- After the pupils have completed the exercise, ask them to identify any issues or difficulties that they faced when communicating with each another during the exercise.
- Examples might include:
  - lack of body language;
  - lack of eye contact;
  - not being able to hear clearly;
  - not knowing how quickly to speak;
  - not knowing when the other person has finished speaking in order to ask questions or start to speak; and
  - not being able to see how quickly the other person is drawing.
- Explain to the pupils that, in the same way, it can be difficult to understand what two people who are attracted to each another are trying to communicate.

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#### Activity 2

#### Friendship or romance?

- See our [Active Learning and Teaching Methods for Key Stage 3](#) resource for details about the **walking debate** exercise used in this activity.
- Tell the pupils that they are going to have a walking debate using Resource A.
- Pupils should use:
  - the heart to indicate a statement that applies to romance;
  - the heart with the X to indicate a statement that applies to friendship; and
  - the heart with a question mark to indicate that the statement can apply to both friendship and romance (or neither).
- For the walking debate, place the three Resource A printouts at different corners of the room.
- Alternatively, you could give pupils copies to hold up as they think appropriate for each statement you read out. Pupils could also complete this activity in groups.
- The statements below are a starting point for the walking debate. You might also want to add some of your own or adapt these as appropriate.
  - Meeting up
  - Going ice skating
  - Going to the cinema
  - Chatting on the phone
  - Sending a message
  - Adding a kiss to a message
  - Talking for a long period of time
  - Going for a walk
  - Going bowling
  - Shopping together
  - Hugging
  - Emailing
  - Watching a movie at home
  - Holding hands
  - Going for a meal
  - Kissing
  - Asking for their mobile number.
- As the walking debate progresses, ask the class for feedback on their responses, particularly where there are differences in opinion.
- At the end of the debate, discuss any differences in opinion over behaviours relating to friendship and/ or romance.

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#### Activity 3 Attraction

- Give each pupil a copy of Resource B.
- Using Resource B, ask them to answer the following questions:
  - What attracts you to another person?
  - How do you know that someone is attracted to you?
- Give each pupil a copy of Resource C.
- Ask them to complete Resource C to identify the characteristics that they find attractive in another person.
- At this point, it might be useful to explore exactly what the pupils understand by the four boxes on Resource C, particularly 'Values'. Due to their religious or cultural values, some pupils may feel that their ideal partner is someone who is not considering a physical relationship at this point. The pupils should see their classroom as a supportive place to express these choices and values.
- Then encourage the pupils to discuss that attraction extends beyond the purely physical.

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#### Activity 4

#### Romantic relationships

##### [Tes – Promoting Positive Relationships](#)

This free resource is useful for several activities in this unit. As with all external resources, you should review it fully before use to make sure it complies with your school's ethos and RSE policy.

- Using slides 9–11 of Lesson 2 from [Promoting Positive Relationships](#), available at [www.tes.com](http://www.tes.com), discuss the characteristics of attraction and romance.
- Explain to the pupils that, once it is clear two people are connected in some way, they are in a relationship. If the relationship involves attraction between the two people, this could evolve into a romantic relationship.
- You could display the following on the board or using PowerPoint.
  - Remember that sexuality is a natural and healthy part of being human.
  - Your romantic or sexual feelings are normal, **but you do not have to act on them.**
  - A very important question you must ask (and keep asking) yourself is **'Am I ready?'** **Only you can answer that.**
  - Being in a physical and emotional relationship with another person brings both rights and responsibilities.
- The pupils should also consider if a physical relationship (at any level) is in harmony with their personal values. Encourage the pupils to consider and, if they are comfortable, discuss how their personal, religious, and/or cultural values mean they are choosing abstinence at this point.
- Divide the pupils into pairs or small groups.
- Ask the groups to record examples of relationship rights and responsibilities.
- Then, as a class, discuss the difference between rights and responsibilities.
- Examples of relationship rights could include:
  - to be treated with respect;
  - to feel safe in the relationship;
  - to be trusted;
  - to be treated as an equal;
  - to not be abused; and
  - to have time with my friends.
- Examples of relationship responsibilities could include:
  - to communicate well with my partner;
  - to listen;
  - to admit to being wrong when appropriate;
  - to not abuse;
  - to not exert power or control; and
  - to allow privacy and space.

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#### Activity 5 Information or misinformation?

- Explain to the pupils that not all of the information we hear about romance and sex is accurate or helpful and myths often develop.
- Play a game of Chinese whispers with the class. (This is a relatively old-fashioned technique, but it is still a very effective way of showing how information can become distorted.)
- Give the first pupil a statement on a card to read to the next pupil, making sure that no other pupil can see or hear it.
- Keep the card to show pupils at the end.
- Examples of statements could include:
  - Not all information informs. Some information misinforms.
  - A turtle called Timmy went to Toronto on a tricycle.
  - The teens ate chips on a ship while the adults ate apples on the island.
- After the game has finished, discuss with the class what these distortions can mean for the information they may hear about sex and relationships from their friends, peers or others.



#### Activity 6 Sex and the law

- You could use Lesson 8 from [Promoting Positive Relationships](#), available at [www.tes.com](http://www.tes.com), as a starting point to create a short quiz for the class.
- The FPA page on [Sex and consent – giving it, getting it, understanding it](#), available at [www.fpa.org.uk](http://www.fpa.org.uk), includes information that might be useful for this activity.
- Important points to note and discuss:
  - The age of sexual consent is 16 in Northern Ireland, regardless of gender or sexual orientation.
  - Many young people in Northern Ireland choose not to become involved in a sexual relationship. Make sure that pupils are encouraged to see this as a healthy and positive choice. Give the class the opportunity to explore the question of legally being able to have sex within the framework of their personal, religious and/or cultural values.
  - There are laws to protect children under 16 from sexual abuse. However, these laws are not intended to prosecute teenage sexual activity where it is mutually agreed between two people of a similar age, unless abuse or exploitation is involved.
  - Specific laws protect children under 13 years of age who cannot legally give their consent to any form of sexual activity.
- At the end of the quiz, lead a class discussion on the answers that the pupils found surprising.

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#### Activity 7

#### Relationship challenges

- In mixed classes, you might want to create single sex pairs for this think, pair and share exercise.
- See our [Active Learning and Teaching Methods for Key Stage 3](#) resource for details about **think, pair and share**.
- Give each pair a copy of Resource D.
- Ask the groups to complete Resource D to explore the specific challenges of a romantic or sexual relationship for boys and girls.
- Ask the class for feedback and record the different answers on the board to facilitate a class discussion.
- You could ask pupils the following prompt questions during the class discussion.
  - Are challenges the same for both boys and girls?
  - What specific challenges do you think only relate to boys and why?
  - What specific challenges do you think only relate to girls and why?
  - What impact might these different challenges have on a romantic or sexual relationship?
  - What advice did you give on how to deal with these challenges and why?
  - Do you think the answers would be the same in a class of girls only/boys only/both girls and boys and why? (Adapt this question to suit the makeup of your class.)
- Ask the class if they think that knowing about these challenges might change their perception of the other person in a relationship.

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#### Activity 8

#### Review of learning intentions

It's important that pupils have opportunities to reflect on their learning. You can choose from a range of methods detailed in our [Active Learning and Teaching Methods for Key Stage 3](#) resource, such as:

- Dartboard Evaluation
- Graffiti Board
- Fist-to-Five
- KWL (Know – Want to Know – Learned) Grid
- Post-It Collection
- Think, Pair and Share.

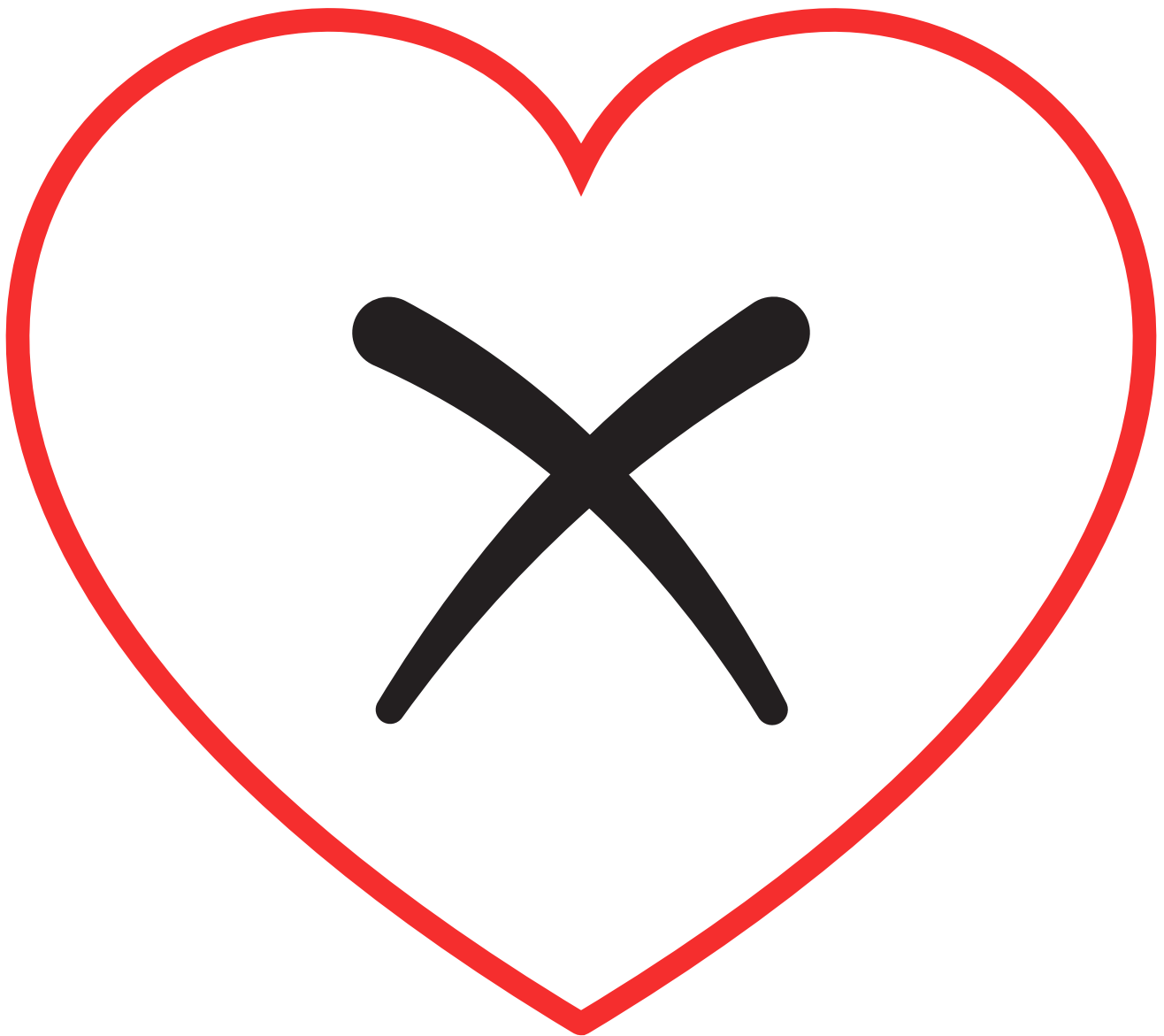
In Unit 3, pupils explore how not all romantic or sexual relationships are positive.



**RESOURCE A:  
FRIENDSHIP OR ROMANCE WALKING DEBATE**



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**RESOURCE B:  
THINKING ABOUT ATTRACTION**

What attracts you to another person?

A large, empty speech bubble outline with a green border, designed for students to write their answer to the question above.

How do you know that someone is attracted to you?


A large, empty speech bubble outline with a green border, designed for students to write their answer to the question above.

# HEALTHY, POSITIVE SEXUAL EXPRESSION AND RELATIONSHIPS

KEY STAGE 3/4

RELATIONSHIPS  
+ SEXUALITY  
EDUCATION

## RESOURCE C: DESCRIBE AN IDEAL PARTNER

Emotional Qualities	Values
	
Personality	Physical Appearance

**RESOURCE D:**  
**THINK, PAIR AND SHARE**

**Think**

Do you think relationship challenges are the same for boys and girls?

**Pair**

Working with your partner, what do you think are the specific challenges for boys and girls?

**Share**

Working with another pair, what advice would you give to a boy or girl to help them deal with these challenges?