

Let's Talk About Porn

Teachers Guide



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Overview

This lesson is intended for Key stage 3, we feel that year 9 in the UK is a good age for this lesson – [research](#) shows children will at this age have already been exposed to or be a regular consumer of online pornography.

The lesson is broken down into three sections; A brief history of porn, the legalities and Myth Busters. These can be taught together in one lesson or you may choose to tackle them section by section over a few lessons, depending on how talkative your learner's are- this may be necessary.

There is also a pared down version of the teaching notes you can provide as a student hand out. This has been created so that learners can refer back to this or continue learning at home.

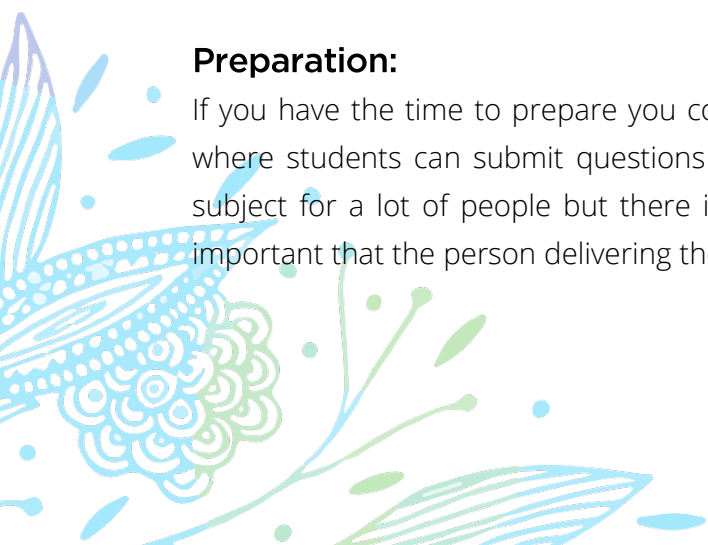
These teaching notes go in sequence with the slides provided, the sections highlighted in yellow are to help you with the slides, adding the extra context and information behind each one (some of these notes are also included in the compact version for learners). The sections highlighted in green are to help guide discussion and pose thought provoking questions; it is up to you and your learners how deep you get into these discussions.

Objectives:

- Be critical consumers of online pornography
- Have a better understanding of how porn is produced
- Have a clear understanding of the laws surrounding pornography, including access, distribution and creation.
- Feel more confident to talk about these issues. Know where/who they can talk to if/when needed.

Preparation:

If you have the time to prepare you could have a suggestions/questions box in the room where students can submit questions or thoughts anonymously. It is an uncomfortable subject for a lot of people but there is real value in talking about it, it is therefore fairly important that the person delivering the lesson is comfortable to have these conversations,



the learners won't join in and are unlikely to get as much out of it if the practitioner appears uncomfortable or shy.

Introduce the subject:

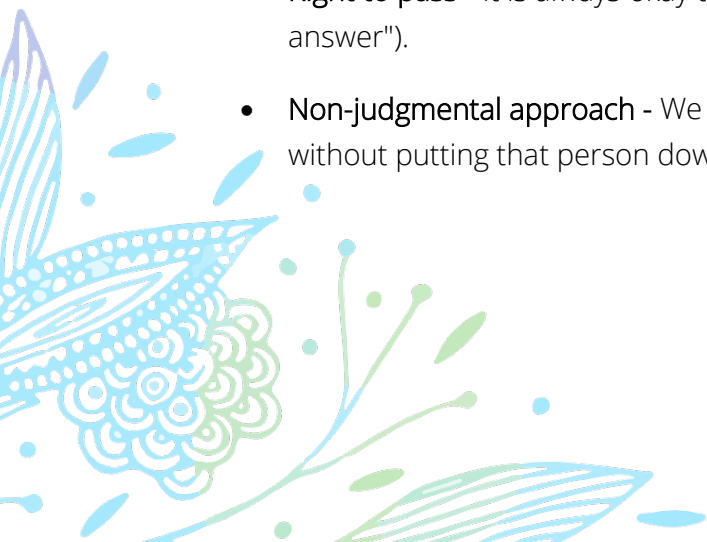
There are over 40 million porn websites in the US alone with over 30 million unique visitors to these websites every second of every day. 25% of all internet searches are porn related which might not sound like a lot but 25% actually means **68 million** porn searches a day.

The stats don't lie, we can easily conclude that a lot of people are viewing porn online, however in the news and across the media porn is often portrayed as something that is bad and damaging especially for children, when in actual fact we don't know what the effects are as there is not enough evidence. Our aim is help you answer some of your students burning questions about online porn and how it all works. We want to give you facts, not opinions, and enable you to guide a sensible and much needed conversation. This is a resource about porn so it will talk about sex, boobs, willies and all the other stuff in-between, it's important that everyone is ready and *nearly* mature enough to talk about it and learn.

To start the session, set some ground rules, ensuring a safe environment for effective learning;

The Rules:

- **Respect** - Give undivided attention to the person who has the floor and don't talk over others.
- **Confidentiality** - What we share in this group will remain in this group.
- **Openness** - We will be as open and honest as possible without disclosing others' (family, neighbours, or friends) personal or private issues. It is okay to discuss situations, but we won't use names or other ID. For example, we won't say, "My older brother ..." Instead we will say, "I know someone who ..."
- **Right to pass** - It is always okay to pass (meaning "I'd rather not" or "I don't want to answer").
- **Non-judgmental approach** - We can disagree with another person's point of view without putting that person down.



- **Sensitivity to diversity** - We will remember that people in the group may differ in cultural background, sexual orientation, and/or gender identity or gender expression and will be careful about making insensitive or careless remarks.
- **Acceptance** - It is okay to feel uncomfortable; adults feel uncomfortable, too, when they talk about sensitive and personal topics, such as sexuality.
- **Have a good time** - It is okay to have a good time. Creating a safe space is about coming together, being mutually supportive, and enjoying each other's contributions.

PART 1

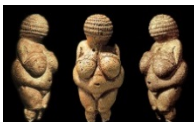
A history of porn

We have included the whole timeline for you as reference and highlighted the discussion points that are not included in the slides.

A brief history of porn. (P2)

Pornography has been a part of human life for as long as humans. Since we have been having sex, we have been consuming Pornography in some shape or form, whether it be a crude sketch on a cave wall or a pocket sized sculpture of a naked lady. Here are some key moments in history that lead us to the present day.

- 2044 BC - sees' the original BBW 'The Venus of Willendorf' carved into small 4.3inch statue (known as a symbol of fertility, sex and love)



- 1150 BC - Ancient Egypt has had a massive influence on life as we know it today and porn is no exception, the Turin erotic papyrus is widely believed to be the oldest pornographic imagery in existence.



(This is an interpretation of what it might have looked like when it was new)

Discussion point – art and worship: Venus of Willendorf, may be a deity or a symbol for fertility love and sex. Similarly, the Turin erotic papers may be an expression of art. When does art become porn?

- 400 AD - The Karma sutra is written by Vātsyāyana in India
- 1839 AD - Fast forward a few centuries and we meet Louis Deguerre as he cements his place in history as the “God father of photography” when he invents the camera. And what’s one of the first things we do with this new-fangled machine? That’s right, we take nudy pics!
- 1840 - Thanks to Louis, we see the introduction of the “French postcard”

Discussion point – new technology: what we are trying to start showing here is that when new technology is invented, as humans we explore our sexuality through it fairly quickly. How long after the camera phone came out did people start sending nudes?

- 1850 - and the word PORN is coined. Of course, something can't gain this much popularity in such a short space of time without attracting “haters”. So,
- 1857 AD – England introduce the first laws about porn “the obscene publications act 1857” basically making it illegal to sell any pornographic material and giving the courts the power to seize and destroy offending material. **At the same time, there was a debate in the House of Lords over a bill aiming to restrict the sale of poisons. Lord Campbell was taken by the analogy between the two situations, famously referring to the London pornography trade as "a sale of poison more deadly than prussic acid, strychnine or arsenic",^[7] and thus the act was introduced, not without strong opposition!**

Roughly 50 years after the stills camera, in 1888 the first movie camera is invented; in 1895 they became more readily available and in true human nature it is only a year later that the first porno is made.

- 1896 - Eugene Pirou and Albert Kirchen produce the world’s first known pornographic film.
- 1954 - Hello Playboy! – Marilyn Monroe poses on the cover of the first ever issue.
- 1963 - California is the largest producer of porn in the world (bear in mind pornography is still illegal, so it’s all very secret and underground)
- 1969 - Denmark makes history in becoming the first country to legalise porn



- 1980 - The VHS (Video home system) is invented, and of course to follow the pattern, what was one of the first films to be produced on this format? PORN, the introduction of VHS sees a huge boom in the porn industry with people now able to watch in the privacy of their own home. (note it has also been said that the reason Betamax finally fell from grace was because the porn industry decided to release their films on VHS!)
- 1987 - Scandal! It is found that a porn actress was under- age, and only over 18 in 1 of the many films she starred in. This sparked a massive backlash and cost the industry thousands in legal fees and recalling items. From this point on legitimate porn production companies are extra strict and this is why you are very unlikely to see anyone under 18 in a legitimate porno (quite rightly)
- 1988 - The king of porn John Holmes dies of AIDS related complications. This is also a turning point for the industry as it is clear more actors and actresses will die if more isn't done to protect their sexual health.

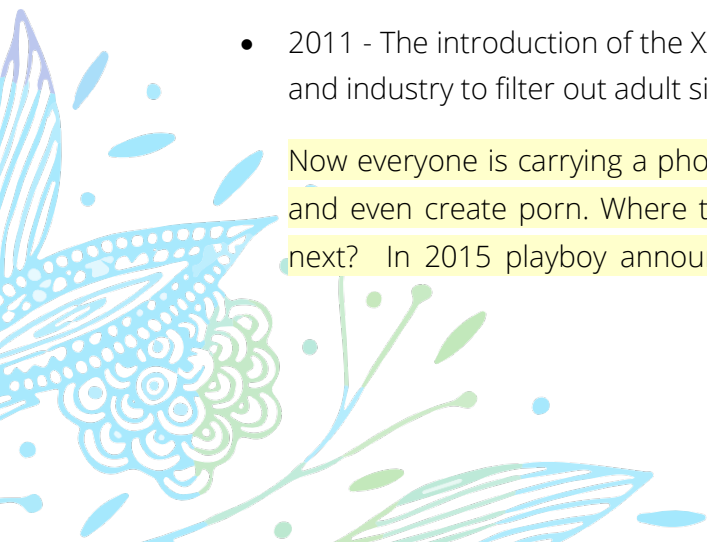
- Here comes, the **INTERNET....**

- 1990 - ASCII porn- first kind of internet porn was people using text to create images and sending them across the web. (.)(.)
- 1994 - Sex.com becomes a registered domain name ...

So, most people don't even have internet in their homes until the mid-late 90's and even then it was dial up! None the less, by the time the average Brit has access to the internet there are already thousands of dedicated pornography websites.

- 1998 - Viagra is born, and the porn industry LOVES it, setting un-realistic expectations for men, everywhere!
- 2007 - Steve Jobs bring us the iPhone, now people can get the internet anywhere anytime, the porn industry again sees a boom in production & popularity.
- 2011 - The introduction of the XXX domain, meaning it is easier for schools, parents and industry to filter out adult sites.

Now everyone is carrying a phone in their pocket with the ability to view, download and even create porn. Where technology goes, porn quickly follows, but where to next? In 2015 Playboy announced they will no longer be printing pornographic



material or images, their reasoning? Porn is so readily available for free online. "At the time when Hef founded the company [in 1953], nudity was provocative, it was attention-grabbing, it was unique and today it's not. It's *passé*." Says the CEO of Playboy. From the history I think we can determine that it has always been part of human nature to be interested in porn and the naked form.

So why now, in the 21st century are we too prudish to talk about it? When did symbols of fertility and life become sordid and naughty? Just like people have sex they also watch porn and enjoy it, it's just important that we know enough about it to make informed choices.

PART 2

The legalities

Watching and buying porn. There is no law about how old you have to be to watch porn. It could however be illegal to watch porn with anyone under the age of 18- even if you too are under 18. This rule is intended to prevent abuse of children, for example it would be inappropriate and illegal if a 36 year-old invited a 16 year-old to watch porn with them, not to mention creepy!

The UK introduced new guidance around access to online pornography and new laws and regulations are being thought as this resource is being created. This now means that some ISP's (such as Sky) will automatically block any adult content by default and you would have to request those filters are turned off should you want access to adult material. Other ISP's have instead changed it so that by default you can access adult material and would have opt-in to having those filters in place. Either way there was a lot of pressure put on the ISP's by government to put extra measures in place to ensure children can't access pornography.

Discussion point – rights and censorship: Is it right for the Government to do this? Do children and young people still get around these filters to find what they want?

Our thinking in making this resource was that young people look at porn for sexual gratification but also mostly to learn about sex and answer those questions we all have at that age about sex, bodies and what goes where etc, so if we as a society were more open to talking about sex and had a good SRE curriculum, would young people feel such a need.



At least if they did then access porn they would have the background context and knowledge to be able to balance some of the extremes that porn sometimes portrays

It IS illegal to sell porn to anyone under 18.

Discussion point – porn blockers: Talk about the new proposed porn blockers in the UK with the age verification process. In the slides we mention this could make some people vulnerable. This is because the main suggestion is that consumers now have to sign into a porn site with credit card details to verify their age. Firstly, trusting porn companies with credit card details is quite a big ask, secondly if the information is hacked, people could not only see their finances impacted but perhaps have their watch history exposed also ([like the Ashley Madison hack](#)). Lastly, what this could also have the potential to do is drive more people to the dark web to either buy someone else's stolen credit card credential and/or watch porn there, which could lead them to some pretty disturbing sites. There are other ideas including facial recognition and going to the local news agents for a "porn pass", but all of these options include trusting a lot of your personal data with organisations that know what porn you watch. You can read more about these proposals and the difficulties with them here;

<https://www.wired.co.uk/article/porn-block-uk-wired-explains>

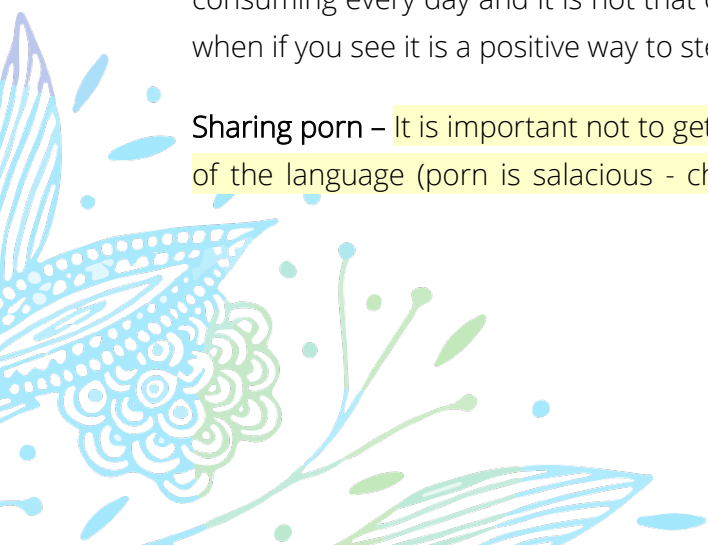
<https://www.sciencefocus.com/science/uk-porn-block-what-is-it-and-will-it-work/>

UPDATE -In October 2019, after numerous delays the government, while still committed to this plan have put a pause on it for now. <https://eachother.org.uk/uk-porn-block-is-it-the-end-for-online-age-verification/>

Illegal porn - While porn is legal in the UK it is illegal to produce any porn if it features under 18's, bestiality (sex with animals), torture, scenes of rape, sexual assault or violence that is life threatening or likely to cause serious harm.

Discussion- This is obviously touching on the darker side of pornography and while this is important to be aware of and know how to report, this is not the kind of porn people are consuming every day and it is not that common. Talking about how to report illegal content when if you see it is a positive way to steer this conversation. (<https://www.iwf.org.uk/>)

Sharing porn – It is important not to get sexting and revenge porn confused, this is because of the language (porn is salacious - children are not) and the law. A child can commit a



revenge porn offense but if an intimate image of a child is posted or shared that is a much more serious crime of child sexual abuse.

Don't want to focus too much on this as it is likely that many learners will have taken part in some sexting at some point either as a participant or bystander. In the lesson we want to focus more on the consumption of online pornography – however it was important to note especially as we are seeing a rise of legit porn being shared to upset.

It's important that learners feel they can ask these questions and that an answer can be given but maybe these can be saved for an SRE.

PART 3

The Myth busters

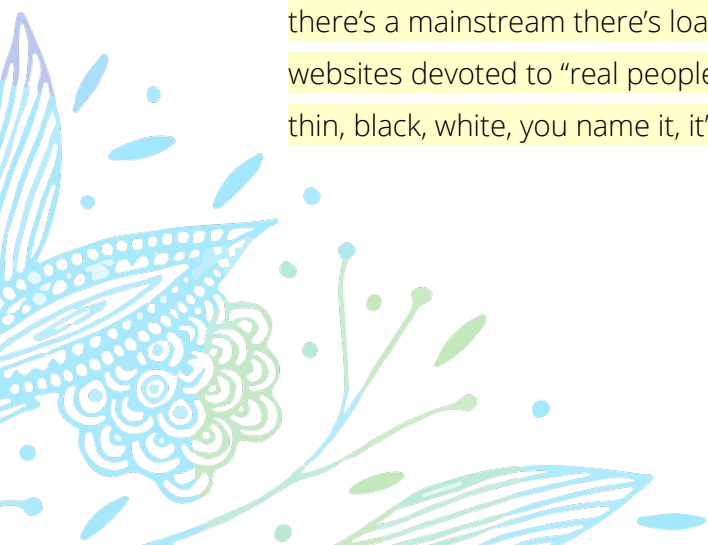
1) **Watching porn teaches you un-realistic ideas about sex.**

Of course it would, if you thought it was real. You play call of duty but does that make you go out and start shooting anything that moves? Porn is entertainment, like a film, not a “how to” guide. However, that doesn't mean people can't learn things from porn they might not learning other places. Just as movies can sometimes contain valuable insights, so can porn.

Discussion point - inclusivity: For example, porn tells us; anyone can be sexy, no matter shape, size or colour. There are loads of ways to express your sexuality, that women can exert sexual power as well as men and that sex is a part of life for all types of people. Is porn actually one of the more inclusive industries?

2) **Porn actors have to be young, fit and sexy because that's what people like to watch.**

Yes, well there's no denying that some porn features really fit muscly, young people with enormous “assets”. You might call this main-stream pornography, and where there's a mainstream there's loads of side streams. There's a large number of websites devoted to “real people/ amateurs”; BBW's, short people, hairy, bald, fat, thin, black, white, you name it, it's out there somewhere.



Discussion point - diversity: It would be rare for someone to have a fantasy that has not already been acted out in a porno. There is definitely greater body diversity in porn than there is in Hollywood or mainstream celebrity culture anyway.

3) Porn is hetero sexual and is mostly for men.

Nope, not really and this is obvious because there are so many types of porn available these days. There's a large number of websites devoted to gay, lesbian, bi and transsexual porn. LGBTQ people have cited the importance of viewing porn to normalise their sexual desires. There is also porn that portrays people with disabilities. So what this shows is it is ok for everyone to enjoy a healthy sex life and for many people, and porn could be an important resource in the development and practice of anyone's sexuality.

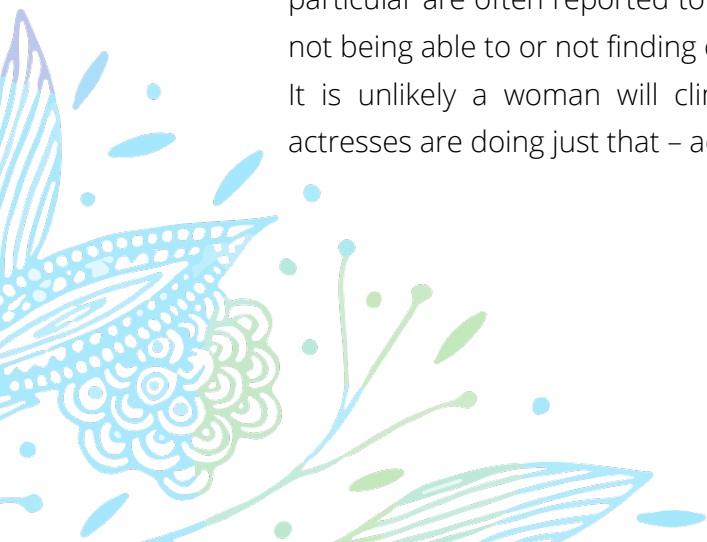
Discussion point- sex and gender: There is also tones of WFP out there. Men and women are wired differently, so different things turn us on. Studies show that women generally prefer watching people be intimate with each other. So, WFP (women friendly porn) was born, many sites have popped up and have a big following! So, while it may seem most porn is centred on the penis having a whale of a time, there are defiantly alternatives if that's not your thing. This is perhaps not a very "inclusive" statement, and learners may also want to talk about trans and gender identity- it doesn't make you less of a man if you want to or prefer to watch people be intimate over hard-core porn. Similarly, you can have an eclectic taste and watch what you feel like on the day.

Discussion point 2 leading to next myth: when sex ends in porn, it usually ends with the male participant orgasming- is that when sex ends? Where does the female orgasm fit into this time line

4) Sex always results in orgasms for everyone

Not all sex ends in an orgasm. Some people deliberately try not to. Women in particular are often reported to being less likely to orgasm with some women never not being able to or not finding out they can until much later in life.

It is unlikely a woman will climax purely from penetrative sex, and most porn actresses are doing just that – acting!



Discussion point – Female orgasm: Why do women struggle more than men generally, does this tap into societal norms that women are not sexual/shouldn't enjoy sex. Does this harp back to "lie back and think of England". It is very normal for women to struggle to orgasm and if learners reach out to you about this issue you could share some of these;

<https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/sexual-health/female-sexual-problems/>

https://www.vice.com/en_us/article/health/neepb8/the-science-of-female-pleasure-still-needs-more-attention

5) **Watching porn will desensitise you**

There is very conflicting research around this. However, many people have noted that if they watch too much pornography repeatedly it just kills their own imagination a bit, meaning they find it harder to orgasm when having sex. People have reported being addicted to sex and porn is often the starting point for this, like any addiction it can have a very negative affect on someone's life.

Porn is a bit like a chocolate cake, it's nice to enjoy it every now and then but if you have it for lunch everyday it's no longer a treat and becomes the norm, then you're just in cycle of eating chocolate cake because you're too busy eating it to make anything else. Now sure, you're still having the chocolate cake but it is not nearly as fulfilling or satisfying anymore.

Discussion point - addiction: You may have heard of "porn addiction" and picture someone somewhere secretly watching at work or going to school high on porn, however, new research suggests porn is not addictive and it is instead a compulsion, that's not to say it's not problematic but if the urge to view pornography is an addiction then that means that one can never hope to fully recover from the urge to view pornography. As the saying goes, "Once and addict, always an addict." However, as research suggest a compulsion, this means it can be treated like many other impulse control problems, such as anger.

6) **Anal is a normal part of a sexual relationship**

Anal usually refers to penis- anus intercourse, which for gay couples is seen as completely normal, but for heterosexual couples it's probably the least popular form of sexual play, especially for women.



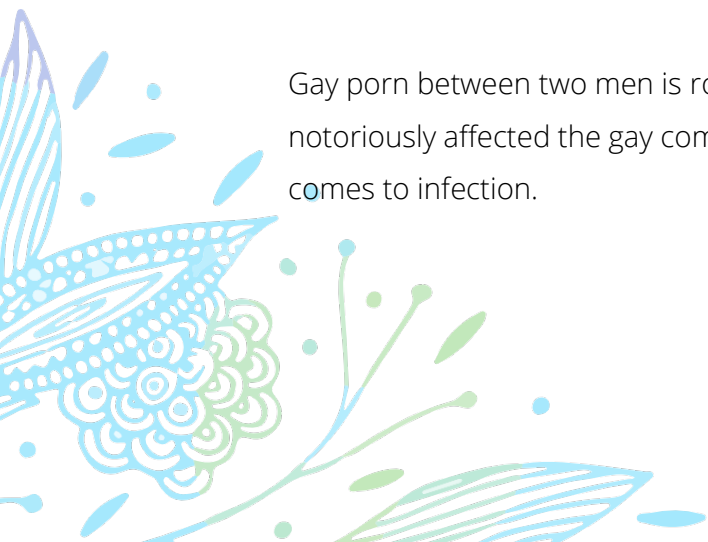
Porn actresses who perform anal sex scenes use a tonne of lubricant and wear but plugs for an hour or so before filming, of course viewers don't see this. But it makes me think; if the professionals who do this for a living need a good hours warm up, what would the average Joe or Joanna need?! We also need think about the possible health effects of what is a fairly risky activity; you are more susceptible to contracting a sexual infection through anal sex because the lining of the anus is thin and can easily be damaged, which makes it more vulnerable to infection. As well as this, tears and cuts in quite a sensitive area, could make your bus journey to work/school all that more uncomfortable. **Anal sex can be part of a normal sexual relationship if both partners enjoy it** whether gay straight or in-between, but in reality it's a lot less common than porn might make you think.

Discussion point – erogenous zones: The anus is an erogenous zone for men, but not for women, so It makes perfect sense in a homosexual relationship, but in a heterosexual one, who is getting the pleasure out of it?

7) Porn stars don't wear condoms because it feels better

Porn actors don't tend to wear condoms; this is purely for filming purposes as it looks more "real". Porn actors are subjected to regular STI checks which allow them to film without protection. However as much as they are tested and strict rules are put in place, this clearly isn't fool proof as there have been numerous HIV outbreaks across the industry with lots of actors affected. There was a movement in the united states called "The California Condoms in Pornographic Films Initiative (2016)" which would require all adult entertainment companies to make wearing condoms compulsory, provide routine testing and access to healthcare related to STIs for actors, and obtain necessary healthcare licenses. As well as having to wear protective eye gear(!)The initiative would have imposed strict fines on violators of the law. However, this was thrown out in February 2016, much to the relief of the porn industry, and the dismay of the law-makers.

Gay porn between two men is routinely filmed with the use of condoms, HIV notoriously affected the gay community as penetrative anal sex is riskier when it comes to infection.



Discussion point – HIV: There have been very few outbreaks of HIV amongst Gay actors but considerably more amongst straight actors. The porn industry has been known to say that regular testing is far safer than latex... hmm

8) Men can keep erections for hours

No, that's a little trick called Viagra! It's actually more common for men to lose erections during sex and this can be down to a multitude of reasons like; they're tired or have something else on their mind, they've already orgasmed that day or just distracted. Despite the heavy use of Viagra within the industry, it does still happen and that is why you might see a screen cut from one angle or position to another, they've basically just given him some time to.. errr.. Get back up. The average penis size in a porno is 8 inches, whereas the average penis is only 5.5 (in the UK). It is also rumoured that there are other people on porn sets known as "fluffers" these people are not featured in the film at all but are on the side lines ready to encourage & support performers in-between takes. This isn't really common in porn, as most online porn available is "amateur" and low budget, but for the paid-for straight to DVD stuff, you can expect the actors had quite a few riders.

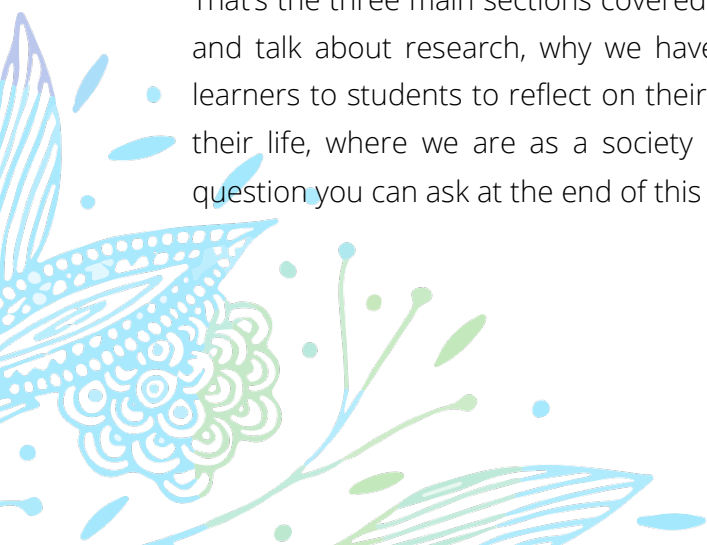
9) Porn is racist

Get a premium pay cheque for working with a black male co-star. Similarly, it is typical that on average black female porn actress' are paid less than their white counter parts. Porn websites have specific sections for "BBC" and/ "Ebony Vs Ivory".

Discussion point – racism: It's hard to know where the line is drawn; it may well be a fantasy for some to have sex with someone of a different ethnicity, so of course this is depicted in porn. But what if it is also a fantasy to degrade someone during the sex because of their ethnicity? Some porn is made to represent the relationship between a slave and his master, using black and white actors, is this too far?

Conclusions and further reading

That's the three main sections covered. To conclude we want to take this back to the start and talk about research, why we have even made this teaching resource and allow the learners to students to reflect on their learning, think about how porn actually impacts on their life, where we are as a society and what we expect might change. An interesting question you can ask at the end of this (not necessarily to be answered but to think on) is; If



you had a younger sibling and they asked you about online pornography, what would you advise them?

We are told by politicians and the media that porn is “damaging” to young people and children are growing up “addicted” to online pornography. In a speech made in 2013 by David Cameron, *“Many children are viewing online pornography and other damaging material at a very early age and the nature of that pornography is so extreme it is distorting their view of sex and relationships.”* Research to back this up is very conflicting, and goes to show a lot of politicians and people “in the know” are jumping to conclusions, with no real evidence base. Research carried out by Andy Phippen of Plymouth University looks at pornography’s influence to commit sexual crimes amongst young people. To do so he compared the rise of internet pornography to the number of young people being charged with sex crimes and found no correlation.

“What is clear from the data is there is no clear trend. While in some forces there has been an increase in sexual offenses committed by minors over the years, there is almost equal numbers of forces such they have decreased. In terms of arrests, there has been a clear decrease across forces over the last five years.”

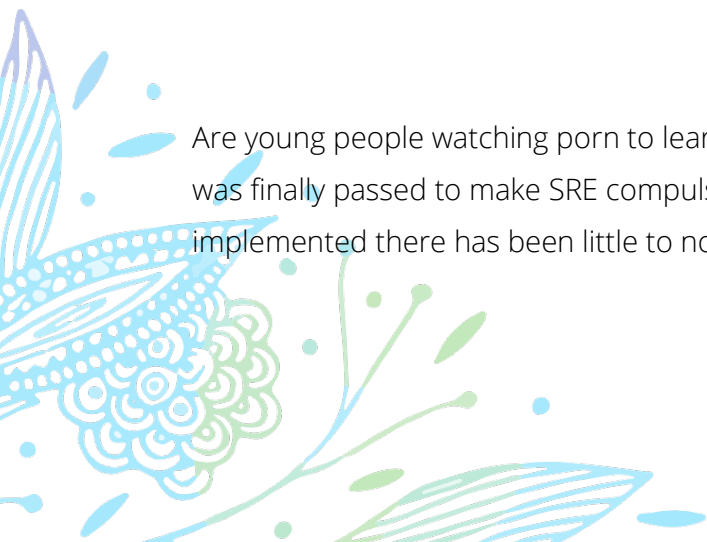
This does not however consider potential emotional harm. The majority of people who watch porn are adults, with over 68 million searches made for porn on the internet every day, if every one of those people were as “damaged” by porn as the media may have you believe I think this would be a lot more apparent.

Why are young people watching porn?

“The fact is, pornography is part of the internet and of course some young people look for it, no matter what technological countermeasures are put in place. However, they do have the right to relationships and sexual education that is fit for purpose and relevant to the 21st century.”

- Prof. Andy Phippen

Are young people watching porn to learn & understand about sex? In February 2017 a bill was finally passed to make SRE compulsory in schools across England. Before this was implemented there has been little to no education in schools around sex, porn and



relationships and as a society we are pretty prudish when it comes to talking about it. It would make sense that young people are finding answers to their questions online. The real damage comes when we are not aware how fake it all is.

Even if a child is not or has never accessed pornography that does not mean they are not being exposed to overtly sexual themes and soft pornographic content every day. Some of the most “followed” women on social media are people like Kim Kardashian, women who have built careers and lives around their bodies and sexuality. If your child has an online life, it would be naïve to think they are not being exposed to some of this content in one shape or another, that’s why having conversations about sex, relationship and what is ok are even more vital for children today.

