HANDBOOK
FOR ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PUPILS

Manipulation and Propaganda

Content

Project Summary

Citizen's competence is of crucial importance for active political participation, which is one of the main components of good governance and sustainable democracy. Especially in the Eastern part of the Danube region, political participation is stagnating. Particularly worrisome are the apathy and lack of political interest on the side of younger population. Furthermore, in the last years, we witness political developments that result in deterioration of democratic standards in many parts of the region. The core element of the citizen's competence is high level of media literacy. It is necessary for citizens' reflection of social reality and their resilience to negative media phenomena, like hate speech and fake news.

The main objective of the project is to improve democratic transnational governance by developing transnational media literacy observatory, based on cooperation between different relevant stakeholders. In many countries of the Danube region the development of competences of media literacy and active citizenship are far behind more developed parts of Europe. This observatory will serve as a mechanism for increasing media literacy and thus strengthening citizens' competences what will contribute to development of sustainable democracy. The main target groups are the youth and the people who work with them. For the purpose of strengthening it, the observatory will provide tools, available for both young people as well as their educators.

The project will establish observatory for media literacy that will provide instruments for scrutinising media contents, training tools and policy recommendations for upgrading media literacy in relation with other civic skills. Outputs include: capacity building and training tools, web-based interface and policy recommendations. The core activities of the project are: mapping of practices and dissemination of information, developing learning system, designing web training platform, and pilot testing.

How to work with this Handbook and interactive presentation

Dear pupils,
you have just received a handbook that is designed for you and for your work with the presentation in the class. You will find information on how to work with individual slides, what is their main goal and you will find some tips for a better understanding of the topic.

The handbook also includes a list of literature, thanks to which you can acquire or expand knowledge that relates mainly to a specific topic of the presentation.

If you see an "i" icon on the slide in the lower left corner, click on it. Under it, there is additional information or examples that will help you better understand the issue.

Some slides have interactive elements in addition to the „i" button.
These elements are highlighted. When you click on them, you will learn more information (there can for example an audio sample, video or additional information). You will also find an audio icon in the presentation. Some slides contain sound. If necessary, you can click on the sound icon to mute or reactivate the sound in the presentation.

Click on the right arrow for the next slide. If you want to go back in the presentation, click on the left arrow. To go back to the very beginning of the presentation, click on the house icon.

For better orientation in the text, individual slides are gradually displayed with additional educational material and further expansion of teaching.
The text is interspersed with **Definitions**, because you come across some terms for the first time and it is advisable to remember them.
Also pay attention to the **Interesting Facts**.

Caption to the texts in the handbook:

INTERESTING FACT

DEFINITIONS

Introduction
to the lesson

Has anyone ever convinced you to make an action/decision you initially didn't want to make? Did you manage to convince someone to do what you want?
Can you think of a specific example?

In this lecture you will be introduced to the concept of manipulation and manipulation techniques that are often used. Most people get their information mostly from the internet - and this environment has become a haven for manipulators. Don't you believe it?

Manipulation is often disguised in forms that are difficult to detect.
You can encounter it on any website, including social media.
You will get acquainted with the types of manipulators through an animated video.
With the help of visual elements, you will get acquainted with the interpretation in photographs and its distortion, as well as manipulation in photographs.

In this lesson, we deal with the concept of propaganda, censorship and self-censorship.

Manipulation

How do you imagine manipulation?
Has anyone ever persuaded you to take an action or make a decision
that you did not originally want to make?
And did you recognize that you were being manipulated?
Or conversely, maybe you have managed to persuade someone
to do what you want?
▶ Give yourself an example.

On this slide you can read the definition of **Manipulation**.

MANIPULATION

Influencing other people in order to change attitudes, opinions, behaviour. It often uses emotions.

Manipulation techniques

There are many ways to induce someone to do what you want. An experienced manipulator can choose a suitable technique for a specific person.

As you can see on the slide, you can move the mouse cursor click on each technique and view its „detail". Choose the one that interests you and click on it one by one. You will see a specific description that should help you understand the technique. On the following slides, you will see the descriptions one by one. Read them calmly to understand them well.

Techniques in the right column: their detail will appear in the lower part of the slide.

Don't forget to click on the info button.

Manipulation techniques

- decreasing demands
- imitation
- familiar face
- shortage
- change of topic
- routine
- increasing demands
- source effect

There are many ways to induce someone to do what you want. An experienced manipulator can choose a suitable technique for a specific person.

Decreasing demand

Manipulation techniques

- decreasing demands
- familiar face
- change of topic
- increasing demands
- imitation
- shortage
- routine
- source effect

Decreasing demands: A person does not submit his request straight away, he invents a more demanding one, from which he gradually reduces it to the originally intended one. Thus, the situation may seem more advantageous to us, as we bargained and the "original" demanding task is not required.

Familiar face

Manipulation techniques

- decreasing demands
- familiar face
- change of topic
- increasing demands
- imitation
- shortage
- routine
- source effect

Familiar face: We have more faith in someone we know in some way, whose face we have seen, whose name we have already heard...

Change of topic

Manipulation techniques

- decreasing demands
- familiar face
- change of topic
- increasing demands
- imitation
- shortage
- routine
- source effect

Change of topic: By changing the subject, the manipulator distracts us from something we wanted to deal with for some reason (e.g. because it is important to us).

Increasing demand

Manipulation techniques

- decreasing demands
- familiar face
- change of topic
- increasing demands
- imitation
- shortage
- routine
- source effect

Increasing demands: The person in question first wants a trifle, to which he gradually adds other requests, which may seemingly be related to the original request and thus be "part of it".

You've done the first part and you can move on to the next.
Maybe you've already personally experienced them. And if not, at least you'll be well prepared to recognize them.

Techniques in the right column: their detail will appear in the lower part of the slide.

Imitation

Manipulation techniques

- decreasing demands
- familiar face
- change of topic
- increasing demands

- imitation
- shortage
- routine
- source effect

Imitation: When we don't know how to behave, we imitate others.

We have added an example of this technique because it is quite a current phenomenon in today's world. Imitating people who impress us in some way is common. But in the case of social media, don't be influenced by the number of followers. They can also be paid and so the value of reality can be very low.

Shortage

Manipulation techniques

- decreasing demands
- familiar face
- change of topic
- increasing demands
- imitation
- shortage
- routine
- source effect

Shortage: This persuasion technique focuses on what a person loses, if he/she does not take advantage of the offer/challenge, or does not fulfil it.

Routine

Manipulation techniques

- decreasing demands
- familiar face
- change of topic
- increasing demands
- imitation
- shortage
- routine
- source effect

Routine: We choose what we always do (what we are used to). The reason may be trust, good experience, ignorance of the competition... In the store, I automatically reach for the same product. However, there may be a better quality/cheaper/tastier product on the side shelf.

Source effect

Manipulation techniques

- decreasing demands
- familiar face
- change of topic
- increasing demands

- imitation
- shortage
- routine
- source effect

Source effect: If we learn information from a trusted and respected person or source (the media), there is a high probability that we will believe the information or we will be convinced. (Appearance can also be very important.)

You just learned about eight examples of manipulation techniques.

INTERESTING FACT

There are more types of manipulation techniques.

Other examples of manipulation techniques are:
Technique: attractiveness, good/bad guy, dissonance, silence, compassion, gossip, scapegoat, authority, charisma, lying, flattery.

Audio sample

Test your ability to detect word manipulations. Click on the radio and listen to the sample. Try to determine what the speaker is doing, what/how he is trying to influence others.

Do not forget to have the sound on.

If necessary, we also include a transcript of the words from the audio sample:

Reporter: *"What do you say to Americans who are scared though? I guess, nearly 200 dead, 14,000 who are sick, millions, as you witnessed, who are scared right now. What do you say to Americans who are watching you right now who are scared?"*

Donald Trump: *"I say that you're a terrible reporter. That's what I say. I think that's a very nasty question and I think it's a very bad signal that you´re putting out to the American people.. The American people are looking for answers and they're looking for hope, and you're doing sensationalism."*

After listening to the audio sample, answer questions:

**What would you call and describe the types of manipulations that appear in the example?**

Which group of people is often mentioned?

Video

Those who manipulate us are called manipulators. It's usually used in casual conversation in a negative sense. Watch the video. We've prepared four examples of types of manipulators.

Think about it - does anyone around you behave the same way?
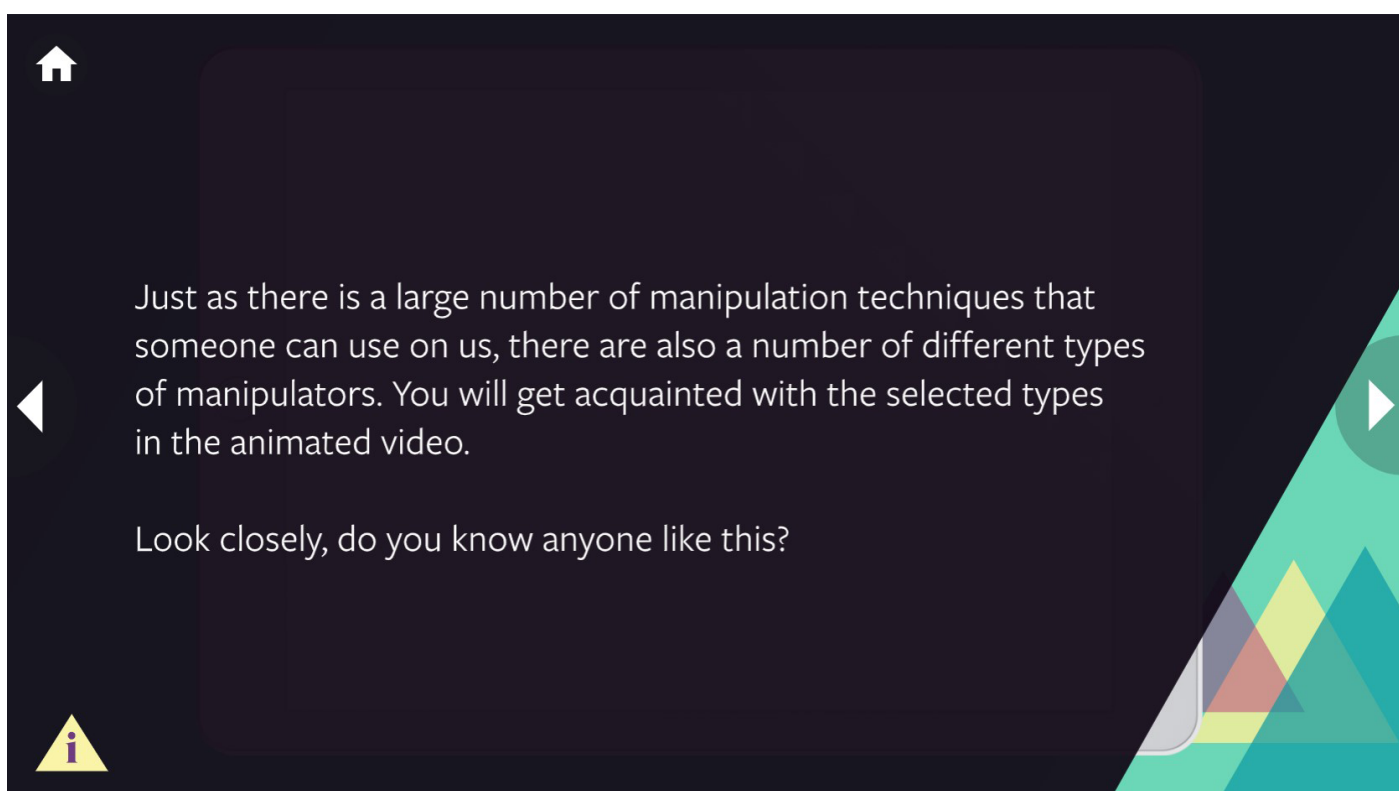
Think about whether you know a manipulator you have encountered, give an example. The most appropriate example would be found in internet articles on a political topic. Find a suitable example and try to analyse it. What technique do you think he/she used?

You can work with a classmate to find a suitable example together.

Interpretation – Sample 1

Take a look at the photos on the slide.

On the **left picture** you see a soldier/prisoner with a gun pointed at him.
On the **right picture** you see a soldier/prisoner receiving a beverage.
But where is the truth?
The **middle picture** shows that although the man is detained, the gun is pointed directly at him and at the same time he is getting a beverage. But if you only saw the left picture in any media, what would you think of the U.S. Mariners...?

Look at the info button and remind yourself what interpretation means.

Do photos have only one possible story?

Imagine that situation happens with the news in the media.
Every reporter or editor can interpret the story in his own way: he can omit some information, shuffle their sequence, focus on a detail that may be unimportant to others... and suddenly there may be several different variants of the original situation.
Therefore, it is good to identify credible sources - those that provide verified and true information. It is from them that we should draw.
We cannot guarantee that everything you learn will be 100% true, but we can count on mistakes or errors to occur minimally and, most importantly, unintentionally.

Interpretation = explanation of your understanding of the situation/thing/article ...

Interpretation – Sample 2

How does the image on the left affect you?
What impression would you get of the situation it depicts?

In the picture on the left you see a politician greeting a crowd of people.
At least that's what it looks like, right? But as you can see in the picture
on the right, there isn't actually a big crowd around...

The media sometimes edit photos to describe the situation in a way that suits
their purposes. Or rather, which article or photo the reader is more likely
to click and view. Sometimes they are supplied with photos for stories from
verified sources, but still the photos may not be accurate in their narrative value.
Therefore, you need to look at the article and the photos you read and view
objectively and evaluate them critically. Therefore, if you are not sure about
an article, it is ideal to try to find it in other sources, as another medium
has written about the situation.

Manipulating photos

Who is in the picture?

▶ The info button explains in detail **who** are people in the picture and **why** the figure on the right **was deleted** after some time.

For what purpose were pictures edited?

▶ To influence the behavior of an individual/ society in a certain direction.

From what time period does this photo roughly date?
Try to think of what possibilities existed for manipulating photographs before and what exist today. **What can be done with photographs?**

Stalin used a large group of photo retouchers to cut his enemies out of supposedly documentary photographs. One such erasure was Nikola Yezhov, a secret police official who oversaw Stalin's purges. For a while Yezhov worked at Stalin's right hand, interrogating, falsely accusing and ordering the execution of thousands of Communist Party officials.
But in 1938, Yezhov fell from Stalin's favor after being usurped by one of his own deputies. He was denounced, secretly arrested, tried in a secret court, and executed.
Stalin's censors then removed Yezhov from the photographic record, including cutting him from a photograph in which he smiled next to his former boss, Stalin, next to a waterway. The photo retouchers removed Yezhov from the photo and inserted new water to cover up the space where Yezhov would have been.

Video

Watch a video clip from YouTube. Listen and watch carefully.
Is everything you see and hear true?
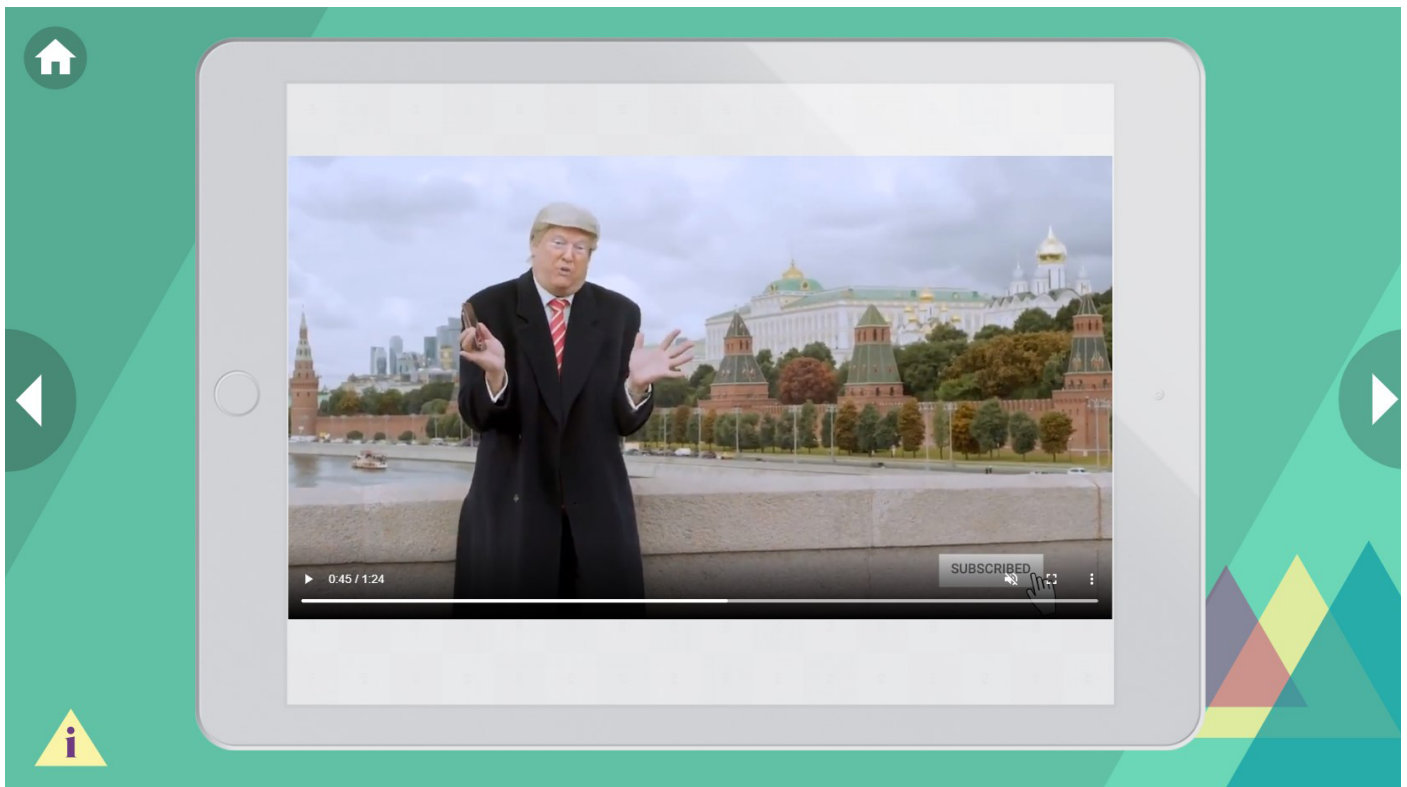
You just had a chance to watch the deepfake video.
What does deepfake mean?
See info button.

In the demonstration we saw a deepfake.

A deepfake video released by the Russian state-controlled network RT pokes fun at US president Donald Trump.

Deepfake = video that pretends to be real footage. The videos use technology to put sentences in the mouths of speakers that they never said (or never said in context).
The resulting videos look very real and believable.

Deepfake is created using digital technology.
Professional processing can make it look very believable. It can be misused to spread the views of influencers or to damage them.

There are also several apps and websites where you can create your deepfake videos personally.

If it wasn't written in the video, would you know right away that this is a hoax/parody?
How do you think others identify it?
- Your classmates, your parents, your grandparents...
How believable is the look and voice?
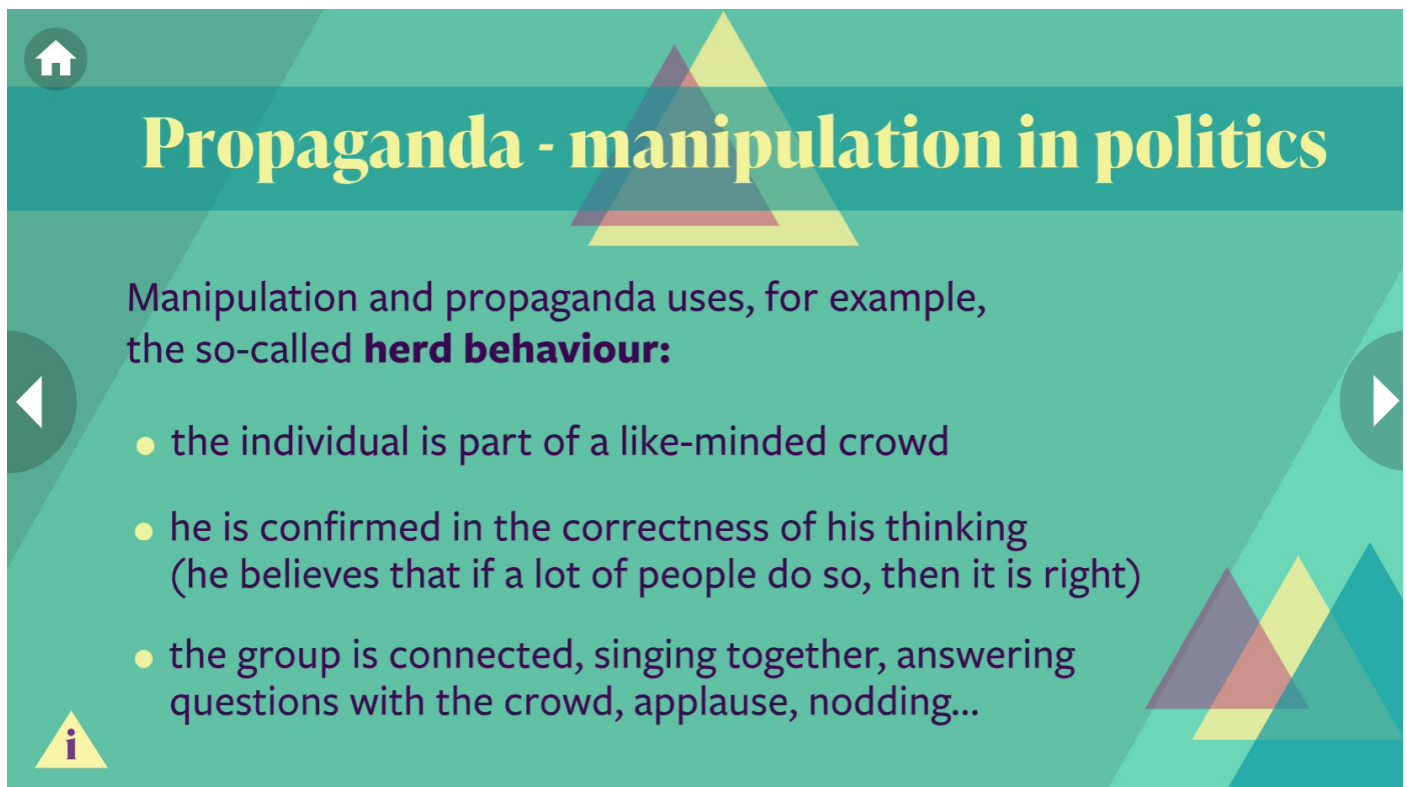How would you verify the authenticity of the video?

Current trend

Current trend

- People spend a large part of their lives in virtual environments, and much of the propaganda has moved there.

- Social networks give the opportunity to express opinions, to share posts and to influence or affect large numbers of people.

- Political propaganda has migrated here. Groups are forming on networks that use the principle of herd behaviour and purposefully manipulate the opinions or mindset of the group for their own prosperity.

As the world changes, social habits change as well.
We've moved from the streets to the virtual world.

Propaganda – manipulation in politics

What is propaganda? Where can we most often encounter it? Give an example.
The answer can be found in the info button.

An effective strategy for manipulation and propaganda is, for example,
the so-called **herd behaviour** - the individual is part of a like-minded crowd,
so he is confirmed in the correctness of his thinking (he believes that
if a lot of people do so, then it is right).
(Means of strengthening cohesiveness: singing together, answering questions with
the crowd, applause, nodding...).

Propaganda = *deliberate action, spreading of selected ideas (unsuitable information is concealed) in an effort to persuade society (individuals) to think and act in a certain way. It can take a large number of forms (spoken/written speech, posters, songs, statues, postage stamps, flags...). It can often be difficult to distinguish the boundaries of propaganda.*

It has always been there, it uses elements that assault the senses.

Common forms were posters and propaganda songs.

But the world is moving from the streets to the digital world and therefore the form of propaganda is adapting as well.

You've probably heard the term propaganda song before. Ask your parents if there's a song that comes to mind. Often they had a political reason and the aim was to motivate the people for some purpose.

Catchy melody, rhythm, simple lyrics, repetition of the chorus... that are **propaganda songs**. The songs have many advantages that can get under our skin. It is therefore not surprising that people and also the whole groups (even political) tried to influence the society by these songs. You can express a lot through the song. But will everyone understand what the author or singer is trying to tell the listeners?

In the past, both propaganda phrases and criticism of society were hidden in the lyrics - even in small hints. Some songs were heard repeatedly from the radio, others were banned (for example in the Czech republic, the work of Marta Kubišová, Karel Kryl, Waldemar Matuška and many others)

Try to find examples from your country.

What is censorship?

Can everyone in the world say and write what they want?
How is it in our country? Is there censorship/self-censorship?

What is censorship?

It is a control of what is publicly communicated (e.g. in the media, freedom of self.expression), the content is limited - most often by the state, religious organization or other important institution or individual.

What is self-censorship?

Censorship made by the author himself (for example, for fear that his text might not otherwise be accepted by superiors/institutions, the public...) The author himself avoids content, opinions or attitudes that could be problematic; the author reduces the mentioned parts if necessary.

In our country, we are quite used to saying what we want. Is this the case in the rest of the world?

Think about it and name an example where you think it's liberal and where you think it's worse. Discuss it with your classmates, don't be shy to express your opinion.

Remember that *one man's freedom ends where another's begins*. It is always necessary to respect others as well as the laws in force.

The End

Conclusion

Propaganda, manipulation, hoaxes, fake news... Are you starting to worry that you can never find out what is right and real?

BINGO - this is exactly the main goal of those who participate in the running of this merry-go-round. To flood society with dozens of topics, thousands of opinions and texts precisely in order to make people give up on the effort to find out the truth.

But if we try to choose verified sources and sort the information that comes to us, we are on the right track to outsmart all these merry-go-round movers.

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