

Culture

Fan culture and social media

Learning objectives

- The students learn about how young people follow their favourite celebrities through online communities, e.g. Twitter, Facebook, forums, etc.
- In the project stage, they interview people they know about fan culture and then they will report back to the class on the results.

Cultural background

Fans are people who follow famous people like musicians, film stars or sports people. These fans can now talk to other fans through online networks like Facebook, Twitter, forums, etc. and may change what a celebrity does, for example a musician plays songs at a concert which are chosen by their fans. This community of fans is known as fan culture or fandom.

Warmer

Say to the class: *Imagine you could be a famous person for a day. Would you be a sports star, a film star, a TV actor or a musician? What would you do for the day? Would you play a match or make a film?* Allow the students a short time to think about their own answers. Then, in pairs, encourage them to share their ideas.

- 1 Pre-teach *celebrities*, if necessary, by asking the students to read the instructions in exercise 1 and find a word that means *famous people*. Organise them into small groups and appoint a secretary for each group to write down the names of the celebrities. Set a timer for two minutes. If the students enjoy competition, award points.
- 2 If necessary, pre-teach *fan* by asking *What do you call the people who follow famous people?* Encourage the students to discuss the questions in their small groups. Point out that they can talk about the celebrities in their lists or other famous people.
- 3 Ask the students to continue in their small groups. Point out that they should answer the questions *without* reading the text.

Answers

- 1 the importance of fans
- 2 Rihanna, Doctor Who and John Green, the author of *The Fault in Our Stars*.
- 3 Students' own answers

- 4 First, ask the students to read the text quickly to check their ideas in exercise 3. Next, ask the students to find the names of the three teenagers (Johanna, Arvin and Amy). Then ask them to read the three paragraphs about the teenagers again and write the correct name (or names) next to sentences 1–6 in the exercise.

Point out that the students need to think about the meaning of the sentence first and then find a sentence in the text with a similar meaning. They may not find the same words in both the sentences and the text.

Answers

- 1 Amy (*I've been on quite a few forums about it now and have discussed it with teens from everywhere – the States, Japan, Spain, Turkey ... It's awesome!*)
Arvin (*We text and tweet each other, and send photos of us watching it, and it doesn't matter that we're in different parts of the country.*)
Johanna (*she really connects with her fans, especially on Twitter*)
- 2 Arvin (*We always watch it live. I mean, we obviously want to talk about each episode as soon as we've seen it.*)
- 3 Johanna (*she really connects with her fans, especially on Twitter*)
- 4 Arvin (*...the ideas in it are, so, well, so unexpected*)
- 5 Johanna (*she actually tweeted her fans and asked us who we thought she should sing with on it. Amazing! And she accepted the fans' choice.*)
- 6 Amy (*What's really great is that there are so many fans that our opinions are listened to.*)
Johanna (*And she accepted the fans' choice.*)

- 5 Ask the students to answer the questions in small groups. If they aren't interested in sport, point out that they can talk about famous people in films or music. During the class feedback stage, brainstorm onto the board a list of ways in which students can follow their favourite celebrities.
- 6 **2.20** Tell the students to read the instructions and ask *What do you know about Jihoon? What's he going to talk about?* Ask the students to listen to Jihoon and say which of the ways on the board (see exercise 5) he uses to follow his favourite celebrities.

Answers

Jihoon's a fan of Arsenal and Özil. He watches football matches on satellite TV or he watches them online. He also joins in forums and chats to other fans during or after the matches.

Audioscript

Interviewer: Not so many years ago, one of the greatest role models for boys in South Korea was David Beckham, the English footballer. Let's face it, Beckham's name was known everywhere, so that wasn't a huge surprise. We wanted to find out whether European football was still so attractive for teens in Asia. I spoke to Jihoon, a South Korean teenager who is mad about football. Jihoon, you support a British football club, don't you?

Jihoon: Yes, I do. I support Arsenal.

Interviewer: Why don't you support a Korean club?

Jihoon: Well, I do, I go to local matches and support my town club, but that isn't international. It's much more exciting watching international football, like the World Cup.

Interviewer: So you supported South Korea in the World Cup, then?

Jihoon: Well, yes, but we came out quite early, so then I wanted Germany to win in the World Cup.

Interviewer: Why's that?

Jihoon: Well, I thought they were the best team, and they had Özil.

Interviewer: Özil?

Jihoon: Yes, Özil plays for Germany as he was born there but he is at Arsenal at the moment. He's fantastic – I think he's the best footballer in the world.

Interviewer: But he plays on the other side of the world from where you live.

Jihoon: That doesn't matter. His matches for Arsenal are often late at night here, but we have satellite TV so I can watch them live if it isn't school next day, or I can watch them online the next day.

Interviewer: Good point. What about feeling part of a fan community, though?


Jihoon: Community?

Interviewer: You know, group.

Jihoon: Oh, no problem. A lot of us here in South Korea watch Arsenal – most of the boys in my school do, so we watch matches together and we go and buy Arsenal shirts together, that kind of thing. But we aren't alone here, not now. We join in on forums – you know, when the matches are on, or just after, we can have live chats with fans from all over the world. The world is a very small place now!

Interviewer: Indeed, and it's obviously doing your English good.

Jihoon: Yes, thank you. But it isn't only the fans – we can follow Özil on Facebook and Twitter, so we know what he's doing and how he feels. It's a great time to be a fan!

- 7  **2.20** Ask the class to read the statements in pairs and try to guess the answer from memory or from their knowledge of football first. Then play the recording again. With a **stronger class**, ask the students to correct the false sentences.

Answers

1 F 2 F 3 T 4 F 5 T 6 F

Cultural background

Big Brother is a reality game show where a group of people or 'housemates' live together in a house and they are filmed doing everyday things. They are given different tasks to do and every week, the TV viewers vote to decide which housemate will have to leave. The winner is the person still in the house at the end. In *Celebrity Big Brother*, the housemates are all celebrities.

Cooler

Play 'Celebrity Big Brother'. Ask the students to write the name of a celebrity on a piece of paper. Collect in the pieces of paper and then give them out again to different students. Each student reads the name and becomes that person for this activity. In groups of five or six, the students imagine they are in the Big Brother house and one of the celebrities has to leave the house. Each celebrity has a few minutes to explain why they should stay and why one of the others should leave. For example, if one of the students is Rihanna, she can say that she can sing beautifully and entertain all the other housemates so nobody gets bored. At the end, the students vote on who leaves.

Project

Tell the students they are going to write a questionnaire about fan culture and then interview people they know. Organise them into groups or pairs and encourage them to choose their topic.

Next, ask them to read the ideas for questions and then write at least six questions. Ask the groups to read out some of their questions and encourage the others to try to guess what the answers will be.

Next, ask the groups to interview a range of people from their school, family, sports teams, etc. If the students need help in producing charts, remind them that they made pie charts in Unit 2 (Culture: Shopping). In the group presentation stage, ask the students to listen and say whether their initial guesses were correct.