Level: B2, C1

INTERNET DEBATE

Focus: Speaking – giving opinions

Theme: Internet censorship

Activity: Class debate

PROCEDURE

1. Write on the board "Governments should censor the internet". Tell the students they will hear a speech by someone who has this opinion. They must listen and identify three reasons that the person gives.

2. Read out the speech, or download and play the audio for this activity.

3. Check the answers together.
   Suggested answers: internet contains false information; dangerous for children; used by criminals and terrorists; publishing sensate information puts people's lives in danger

4. Give out the worksheets. Ask students to read the speech and check the vocabulary as necessary.

5. Ask them to read the For and Against points. If they can think of any more, they may add them.

6. Divide the class into two groups, A and B. Group A must defend the opinion on the board. Group B must argue against it. This is something of a game, because of course, they may have a different opinion to the one they are defending! This is about argumentative skills, not opinions.

7. Make sure the students follow the rules of the debate: only one person may hold the floor at a time. After each speaker's turn, a student from the other group gets an opportunity to reply and give a counter argument. Try to keep all students involved.

This activity is based on the ideas in *For and Against* by L. G. Alexander (Longman 1969)

INTERNET DEBATE

"Governments should censor the internet"
The internet has changed society in very important ways. Nowadays, we can get information on just about any topic you can imagine at the touch of a button. We can communicate with people all around the world. However, it's not all good. The internet can be very dangerous too, and governments should censor it.

There are a lot of lies and half truths being spread by the internet. People often believe these lies simply because they see them on a web page, so they think they must be true. This is specially bad for children – they do not have enough experience to know what is right and wrong. Also, children may see some very disturbing images on the internet, or communicate with evil people. We should protect children from this.

Criminals use the internet to trick people. They can get people's bank details and steal their money. Also, terrorists use the internet to communicate with each other, and to find dangerous information such as how to make a bomb.

Some people think that all information must be available to everybody. However, some information is sensitive, and in the wrong hands, it can put people's lives in danger. For example, when "Wikileaks" publishes the names of agents in foreign countries, people may be killed as a result.

In sum, I think that governments should censor the internet. Freedom of information is good, but sometimes there is too much freedom. It is the government's responsibility to protect us all from people who use the internet to do evil things.

For
- There is a lot of false information in the internet.
- Children can see bad images in the internet.
- Criminals use the internet to trick people.
- You can learn good things on the internet, but you can learn bad things too – for example, how to make a bomb.
- The internet is used by terrorists.
- Some information is sensitive. It can be very dangerous in the wrong hands. People could be killed.
  For example, the information on "Wiki-leaks" has put people's lives in danger.
- *Your ideas…*

Against
- People are able to decide for themselves what is good and bad on the internet.
- In a democracy, people must be free to say and think what they like.
- Who will decide what should be censored? The person who decides may be wrong.
- Some governments are bad. They don't want people to be free.
- Freedom of information can help democracy. Look at the "Arab Spring", for example.
- You can't censor the internet. If you stop people doing something one way, they will simply find another way to do it.
- A government can only control its own country. The internet is global.
- *Your ideas…*