

# IDEAS 87

International Online Teachers Society  
Debate  
Educational Materials For  
Advance and Upper Intermediate  
Students



International Online Teachers Society  
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## PROTECTING ONE'S IDENTITY-NOW VITAL, MORE THAN EVER

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We all seek a sense of identity. We want to be known for being ourselves, while many of us need to be identified with certain groups or teams. The sense of identity makes us want to belong, whether to a special group or as an individual. We love to be recognized as part of a unique group or as being just who we are. Identity establishes our statement on why we are who we are, a gift that makes us able to say THIS IS ME and there isn't anybody in the world that's exactly like me.

We have profiles on social networking sites, in which we fill each and every blank with all manner of information available to us. We need to make others aware that beyond being just a part of the moving sea of humanity in which we swim and live and have our careers, we are different, maybe a breed apart even.

We find contempt in those who seek to establish an identity that's quite apart from who they really are. Take for instance, poseurs in social networking sites. There are many, I have heard, that use the identity of others to get into the inner circle of those they would like to victimize. Identity theft has been a perennial problem and it has gone hi-tech. Nowadays, it is no longer strange to hear of people whose credit cards have been used without their knowing it. Time was when such occurrences were unimaginable, what with the stringent identification procedures that were pursued by credit card issuers. But nowadays, with such tools as 'skimming devices', anyone can be a victim in a credit card information theft scheme. Yes, stealing identity has become as easy as swiping a card.

We can never tell where evil schemers will stop at stealing identities that are not their own. The brazenness with which they do their crimes is astounding and unbelievable. Imagine losing your hard-earned cash to unscrupulous individuals who will stop at nothing to gain what they have not worked hard for. Now, more than ever, we need to protect our identity in the same way we protect the lives of those we love, or the way we protect our own lives.

In the end, our identity is all we have. If we lose it or we get robbed of it, we lose nearly everything we work hard for. It would even be worse if our identity is used for evil schemes, as when someone sends emails to those in our contact list to ask for things in our name. I hope I have been able to establish my identity enough for all my friends to know what I can and won't do. If so, my identity is safe!

### Questions for Discussion:

1. What is identity?
2. Nowadays, how is identity established?
3. Why should our identity be safeguarded at all times?
4. How can one lose their identity?
5. Is it possible to regain a lost identity? How?



## ESTABLISHING IDENTITY AND WHY IT'S IMPORTANT

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Rushing to a class back in college, I was stopped at our school building's threshold by the guard who asked for my ID. I was hoping he wouldn't notice me as I entered the building, but on the contrary, he did. I begged him to let me go that time because in my hurry to get into my afternoon class, I had left my ID on my bed in the boarding house where I had been staying. I was fortunate that it was midterm examinations period, he said. Otherwise, he wouldn't even think of letting me in. Whew!

How many times have we forgotten to bring an ID to work or for a transaction that requires such to commence? We take for granted our Social Security numbers, perhaps not knowing that they can be used by others to get their evil plans into gear. When I was still working at a phone company, I had heard of bad people using the Social Security identity of bonafide members of the system so they could come out with loans taken out in the name of the members in good standing. Some of the poor victims only found out their names were used and their signatures forged when they themselves applied for a loan with the Social Security agency. I was mystified with the ease that such schemes were facilitated. This made me fear for the safety of my Social Security identity. A word of advice: never ever give out your social security number to people you don't trust.

Have you ever received emails from people from faraway places like Nigeria, offering you thousands of dollars that are supposedly "held in escrow" and that can only be released to you once you make a small deposit in a suspicious bank account? Such fraudulent schemes even have baby versions via text messages on cellular phones. One of the most amusing emails I have ever gotten with that template was one that was supposedly sent by a lawyer who was put in charge over a large account of one of his deceased clients, who needed a certain amount so the entire fortune could be released. However, I was incensed by the fact that the writer of the email even dared say in the message that the money had been earmarked for victims of a calamity (I don't remember which one), and since the holder of the account had died, I had first choice on whether I wanted to get the money for myself so I could help others. Appalled by the obvious absurdity of the set-up, I emailed back and told the sender how twisted his mind really was and how cruel he could be to play on other people's emotions and their suffering! For shame! I truly hope that someday, the identity of such fraudsters will be established so they can get their comeuppance.

Guard your identity. There's no telling how it can be ripped from you!

Questions for discussion;

1. How do you protect your identity?
2. In your country, what are the novel ways by which identity is established?
3. Why is it important to protect one's identity?
4. How is identity stolen?
5. If you received an email from a friend asking you for money, what will your first course of action be?



## LOVE THOSE MOVIES

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One of the most electrifying and heart pounding movies I watched in the 90's was that starring Sandra Bullock entitled *The Net*. The movie poster's taglines said it all: Her driver's license. Her credit cards. Her bank accounts. Her identity. Deleted.

In the movie, Sandra plays Angela Bennett, who performs her computer analyst work from home. She discovers a computer glitch in a disc sent to her by a friend she's never met, but soon forgets about it all when she goes on vacation. She gets into a romantic relationship with someone she meets in Mexico. Pretty soon, she discovers her credit cards, driver's license and bank accounts were closed, and she was given a new but notorious identity, someone with a criminal history. She races against time and the law, using the only weapon she knew how to wield: the computer. In the end, everything went back to the way it was, and her real identity was restored.

I don't remember the exact details of the entire movie, but I do remember loving it for the fast pace and the who's-doing-it plot. Great story coupled with great acting and great direction. What more could you ask for?

Then I saw *Charlie's Angels* in 2000, starring Drew Barrymore, Lucy Liu and my favorite ogre, Cameron Diaz. Loaded with kickass female power and high octane action, the movie showed how voice recognition software could be used for evil ends to mislead even the most talented and sexiest detectives there are. And Charlie's identity remained a mystery to the very end, even beyond the second installment *Charlie's Angels Full Throttle*. I watched the TV series when I was a kid, and I was always excited to finally get to know Charlie's true identity. Was it John Bosley? The way the creators hid a primary character's identity was exasperating. All I knew was that Charlie was a billionaire, for how else could he afford to provide the Angels with high-tech weapons and gadgets? Speedboats and stuff? Don't you wish you had a boss as rich as Charlie?

We hate it when we don't know the identity of the people we encounter regularly. In my line of work, I need to establish a clear profile on my work page, while the clients I work for have the freedom to use whatever name they want. Goodness also knows if the very countries they say they're from are even where they live. All I have to go with in studying a contract is the feedbacks the clients get for work they contract out. And that can even be a shaky premise.

Our identity establishes who we are and what we are. We can only hope, especially in my case, that those we transact with day to day are as honest as they get.

### Questions for Discussion:

1. Will you do business with someone you don't really know at all? Why or why not?
2. Why are many people so strict about safeguarding their identity?
3. How will you gain the trust of someone you've only met for the first time? What aspects of your identity will you divulge?
4. How far will you go to protect your identity?
5. What is your opinion of people who do not reveal their identities but expect others to reveal theirs?



## IDENTITY CRISIS - DISCOVERING YOURSELF

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We all experience an identity crisis trying to discover our self and this crisis stage is characterized in our life since birth and even till our death. Oh yes! We always are unsure of what roles are we having and taking in life. There even comes a time when we reach the point of wondering and pondering as to who is the real you. These are only some of the things that we undergo when we experience an identity crisis in our life. These are also conflicting emotions that people face with development.

Identity crisis is very true during the stormy years of one's adolescence wherein its changes can be attributed or actually associated with puberty. Hence, teenagers undergo changes in their built, emotions and their cognitive abilities. They actually try to contemplate on whatever roles they could have in a society. This crisis may occur at any time during our adult years when we faced with life's challenges. But I must say that not every adolescent experience an identity crisis simply because they have accepted the roles and values that their parents have handed down to them.

For those adolescents who have not accepted and has remained in that permanent, identity crisis status, there are some ways where could resolve their identity issues. One is when people have a high commitment; they definitely know who they are and what the choices that they have to make are. For those who are not really committed they have that sense of uncertainty in life. Another mark will be when one is high on exploring one self, you are then showing signs that you would like to look for your true identity. Then you find ways on heading for it.

Therefore, those people who have a high resolve on commitment and exploration are most likely the ones who have achieved their identities. On the other hand, those who are not bent on commitment and exploration are mixed up or diffused with what their true identities are. And yet for those who are exploring a lot but are not that committed are still putting a hold on whatever decisions they may have. They are trying to drool and tend to think very hard on what they would really want to be and they are not ready to commit at all. Then there are also those who do not really delve with exploring oneself but are actually high in their sense of commitment, these people have a firm sense of one self but they have never questioned their commitments. In other words, they are not seriously contemplating on what they really want in life.

On top of them all, this sense of commitment and exploration are what we can call developmental process in one's stage of life. These can all be carried throughout our life. Then we could all keep on exploring our values, roles and sense of self, regardless of whatever age that we are in. All we have got to do is to figure out your identity crisis and discover your real self.

Questions for discussion:

1. How can we really get over our identity crisis? Explain your answer.
2. Where can you categorize yourself among these different ways that were discussed for you to discover your true identity?
3. Are you still in that developmental process in this stage where you are in? Why is it so?
4. At the moment, have you finally come up with your true identity? What made you say so?
5. What are the ways other than those mentioned above have you thought of to resolve your identity crisis? Explain your answer.





International Online Teachers Society(IOTS) is an independent non profit international organization committed to improving the state of online and offline education in the world by engaging all kinds of language teachers with fluent English speaking skill in the world to shape global, regional and education agendas.  
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