



## EYES WIDE SHUT

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**Theme:** Grooming of a child in the UK who was exploited for 7 years

**Time:** Two 55-minute lessons, depending on the level of your students

**Learners:** Older teens, young adults and adults, B1+ (upper intermediate to advanced)

**Materials:** Sarah's story, information about the grooming process, student worksheet, autonomous learning resources, slides, audio recording, Teacher's Guide

## Content Learning Objectives

Students will learn about the strategies used during the grooming process.  
Students will learn how groomers and traffickers target their victims.  
Students will learn that groomers and traffickers invest time, money and energy in the grooming process, knowing there is long-term financial gain.  
Students will learn how traffickers manipulate, control and exploit victims.

## ELT Learning Aims

**Vocabulary:** debt, grooming, torture, vulnerable, human trafficking, trafficker, to abuse, to blackmail, to be dependent on something/somebody, to exploit, to groom

### Skills

**Reading:** comprehension of a personal narrative and specific details

**Listening:** comprehension of specific information to identify the speakers

**Speaking:** expressing opinions, justifying a point of view

**Writing:** informal writing expressing a personal opinion

## About this Lesson

The lesson is about Sarah, a young girl in the UK who was groomed and exploited for seven years. The grooming began when she was aged 10, and then as a 12-year-old, Sarah became a victim of human trafficking for child commercial sexual exploitation (CCSE). The lesson title, EYES WIDE SHUT is a reference to the fact that nobody seemed to notice - of if they did, no action was taken for several years. This is a true story.

## From The NO Project

Sarah's narrative of her childhood years of exploitation is honest, raw and disturbing. We have structured the lesson to gradually address this crime with sensitivity and with respect for the survivor. As teachers, we can never know what memories, thoughts or emotions such content may trigger in our students, and this certainly includes adult learners. We ask you to be aware of this and to respond sensitively and responsibly.

## PROCEDURE

### Step 1: Introducing the theme

#### Show slide #1: EYES WIDE SHUT

- Tell the students that this is the title of the lesson.
- Encourage students to predict what the lesson will be about.

#### Show slide #2: EYES WIDE OPEN

- Allow time for the students to read and think about the meaning of this expression. Is there are similar expression in their language?
- Explain that the lesson title is playing with the expression, *Eyes Wide Open*. How might this contrast with the lesson title?

#### Show slide #3: NO ENTRY

- Ask the students to discuss the artwork. What is the artists' message?
- Tell the students there are words that the artists added to NO ENTRY.
- Encourage the students to come up with their own words. What is the message?
- Draw attention to the age of the two artists who created NO ENTRY.  
Accept all suggestions at this point – there is no right or wrong answer.

#### Show slide #4: NO ENTRY with statement

**I am a child. You have no right to touch me, to buy me, to sell me. Stay away from me.**

- Allow time for students to think about and react to the text. In pairs or groups, ask students to share their reactions. Do they think this is a powerful message? Why/Why not? What are the artists saying?
- Tell the students that this art has a connection to the story they will now read.

NOTE: Given the intensity of Sarah's story, the goal of the initial stages of the lesson is to approach the topic gradually, with sensitivity and respect. If at any time you observe that some students appear overwhelmed, **and this certainly includes adult learners**, then you may choose to react accordingly. Perhaps take a break, suggest to the students that you come back to the lesson another day if they prefer. Allow students to leave the room for a while if they ask to.

### Step 2: Pre-reading task

#### Show slide #5: Seven statements

If you are not able to use the slides, write these 7 short statements on the board. Each statement reflects a key element of grooming and trafficking.

**I was groomed  
alone and vulnerable  
gifts when I was sad  
when I was 12 everything changed  
I was sold every day  
completely controlled my life  
nobody noticed**

- In pairs/groups, ask the students to guess what the story will be about.
- Encourage the students to create a spontaneous narrative that includes the 7 statements.
- Guide the students with 'Wh' questions e.g. Who was sold? What happened?
- Ask the students to share their narratives with other groups/the rest of the class.
- Students may think that 'groomed' is related to the noun groom - as in the groom and bride at a wedding.
- Point out that 'groom' in this context is a verb and has a completely different meaning.
- Encourage the students to guess the meaning.

**Show slide #6: GROOMING definition**

- Discuss the definition of grooming and address unfamiliar vocabulary.

**Step 3: Reading**

- Let the students read the story all the way through.
  - Allow time for students to process the information in the narrative.
  - Give the students a minute or two to write their personal feelings and reactions. This can be done in their own language if they prefer. These thoughts do not need to be shared - this is up to the individual student.
  - Deal with the pre-reading questions that the students generated.
- Some students may identify the crime, and that Sarah is the victim of human trafficking, officially known as the crime of Trafficking in Persons.

**Step 4: Follow-up questions**

The questions on the next slide (#7) are important as they focus on fundamental elements of the grooming process, which are:

- targeting of vulnerable people who seem to feel unloved, alone
- long term 'friendly treatment' to make the victim feel special
- creating dependency on the gang e.g. financially, use of drugs
- manipulation through blackmail, threats, debts

- complete control over daily activities and locations
- exploitation to generate profit for another person

**Show slide #7: Follow up questions**

- Discuss the questions in groups or class as a whole.
1. For two years the men in the gang were nice to Sarah. Why? They were grooming her, they had a long-term plan.
  2. Why was Sarah a 'perfect target' for the gang? She was alone, vulnerable, wanted to have friends, wanted to feel loved.
  3. Why did they give her drugs? To make her dependent so she would be easy to control.
  4. How did the men threaten Sarah? They had photos of her loved ones and threatened to harm them.
  5. Why didn't she go to the police? They said they would tell the police she was a drug dealer.
  6. The gang had international connections - how do we know this? Sarah was forced to have clients in another country (France) when she went there on her school trip.

**Step 5: Discussion - The Grooming Process**

- Allow students time to discuss their personal reaction to Sarah's story.
  - Address questions regarding unfamiliar language.
- NOTE: We strongly recommend that you follow up this lesson with more detailed information about GROOMING. Please see the document included in the downloadable lesson plan file. This content addresses the methods and stages of grooming and the 'red flag' warning signs to be aware of. Students could read this content in preparation for the next class, and bring their own thoughts, questions and comments to the discussion.

**Step 6: Listening: Who's speaking?**

- Ask students to think about different people Sarah would have come into contact with. e.g. teachers, shop owners, friends.
- Tell the students they will hear six people talking about Sarah. Ask the students to listen and to guess who is speaking.
- Play the recordings all the way through.
- After the first playing, ask students to share their ideas.
- Elicit responses. Are there any speakers that students want to hear again? Encourage students to listen specifically when you play the recordings a second time - this also

allows for confirmation of correct responses.

### **Personal reaction to the speakers**

- Ask students to express their thoughts in pairs/groups.

What is your personal reaction to each speaker?

What would you want to say to each person? Why?

What other people might have noticed Sarah, but did nothing to help her?

If you had seen Sarah, what would you have thought? Would you have spoken to her?

**KEY:** Speaker 1 school teacher, Speaker 2 taxi driver, Speaker 3 shop owner, Speaker 4 client, Speaker 5 hotel worker, Speaker 6 school student

### **Step 7: Language review - optional (can be used for homework)**

Student handout with new vocabulary. Depending on time available and the level of your students, this can be an in-class activity or done at home.

#### **KEY**

**TASK 1:** 1e 2g 3a 4c 5b 6d 7f 8h

**TASK 2:** 1 grooming 2 debt 3 blackmail 4 vulnerable 5 scary 6 foster

### **Step 8: Video viewing: I am Little Red**

Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NWDcfnyduwE>

This powerful, ingenious trailer of **I am Little Red** was created to target awareness of the strategies used by groomers and traffickers. It is a very clever re-framing of the classic fairy tale Little Red Riding Hood, and like many contemporary animations it is designed for both an adult and a younger audience. [www.50eggs.com/i-am-little-red/](http://www.50eggs.com/i-am-little-red/)

**NOTE:** The full short film lasts 11 minutes and was created by award-winning writers and directors, including a writer who worked on Toy Story. Ten survivors aged 14-21, who had been groomed and trafficked, were personally involved in the research process. You may prefer not to prepare the students and to play the video 'cold'. Given the previous lesson content, they will have a solid understanding of the message already.

- Play the video for the students.

- Allow them to discuss the roles.

- Who are the 'little reds' and who are the 'wolves'? (innocent victims/groomers and traffickers)

- Ask the students their personal opinion of the video. Play again if needed.

## Step 9: Discussion - public awareness campaigns

- Ask students to discuss the most effective way to reach potential victims by considering the following questions:
- Have they ever seen this kind of public awareness campaign in their area?
- Should schools be responsible for educating youth about this?
- Do they know of any adults who have been targets of groomers/traffickers?
- Have they or any family members/friends had any experience of fake accounts?
- At what age should children be made aware of this crime?

## Step 10: Speaking: Expressing and justifying a specific point of view

### Role Play

NOTE: We have provided two alternative role play situations, but feel free to select and adapt according to your observation of the emotional and cognitive maturity of your students. While the students' linguistic level is an important factor, perhaps more crucial is their intellectual and emotional response to finding out about the reality of grooming and human trafficking. The first role play situation we have designed is perhaps more 'gentle', while the second context is more confronting and complex. Depending on the size, level and age of your students, you could use both role plays simultaneously in the class.

- Students to work in groups of 3 or 4.
- Set up the context and explain the situation to your students.
- Allow time for students to select the role they will take. Let them understand that this may not be their personal opinion.
- Give students time to prepare their thoughts, arguments and opinions.
- Monitor the various groups and provide language when they request support.
- Students to carry out the role play – all groups simultaneously.

NOTE: If you have a large class, be aware that this can be quite a loud stage of the lesson. This is perfectly normal, but pre-check that no colleague in a nearby room has a quiet exam happening that day!

- Depending on time, willingness of students and learning context, ask each group to show their role play to the whole class.
- Discussion to follow.
- If students presented a point of view that was different to their own, how did they feel? Did they learn anything by seeing the situation from another perspective?

NOTE: If you devise different role plays that engaged your students, please get in touch with us. We would love to hear about your ideas. [info@thenoproject.org](mailto:info@thenoproject.org)

### **Situation One**

You all live in the same area and recently there have been several cases of grooming of teenagers and children. You are talking with others about how to raise awareness of the crime. Discuss what to do and put forward your point of view.

**Person 1:** You think posters should be put up in bus & train stations, main shopping areas and schools.

**Person 2:** You disagree with public campaigns. You think this subject should be raised in homes **by parents**, definitely not in schools.

**Person 3:** You feel strongly that a public awareness campaign should target teenagers **15 years and older**.

**Person 4:** You feel strongly that a public awareness campaign should target children as young as **nine years old**.

### **Situation Two**

You are all part of a film production company that makes documentaries and you are discussing the next documentary that you will produce which is about adults who groom and exploit teenagers.

NOTE: The focus is **not** on the victims of the crime, but on the people who carry out the crime. E.g. Why do they do this? Don't they have children themselves?

**Person 1:** You want to interview the men and women who have been imprisoned for grooming – and show their faces and names.

**Person 2:** You want to interview imprisoned traffickers and groomers, but you do not want to show their faces on camera.

**Person 3:** You want to interview the family members of the people who groomed and exploited the teenagers. Did they know?

**Person 4:** You want to include interviews with the people who bought the teenagers for commercial sexual exploitation.

### **Written tasks as outcome**

Depending on the outcome of the role play, use the students' creativity and knowledge of the crime to generate a written task beyond the class. This could range from a very personal written piece in response to Sarah's story to a more formal article or report. Some students have written an imaginary letter to the survivor, while others have written to the groomers and traffickers, confronting them about their "occupation" (as a student wrote).



## Beyond the class/ Personal Projects

How do you respond to the crimes that are described in EYES WIDE SHUT?

Express your personal response to Sarah's narrative. How do you feel? How does this contrast with your own childhood?

Write a letter to Sarah, to a trafficker, to the people who groomed her, or to a person who paid to exploit her - what do you want to say?

If you prefer to express yourself through music, poetry, artwork - create work inspired by Sarah's story. Please let us know. email: [info@thenoproject.org](mailto:info@thenoproject.org)

## Autonomous Learning & further resources

<http://antislavery.ac.uk/>

This site hosts the largest collection of narratives by people who are survivors of modern slavery - including children. Please be aware that the physical, psychological and sexual violence and exploitation that the survivors have experienced is cruel and disturbing. Make sure you read their narratives with responsibility, knowing how much you can handle yourself. Be sure to talk to friends about how you feel.

Also, see The NO Project lesson, SOMETHING DOESN'T FEEL RIGHT for signs of possible recruitment and human trafficking at airports and on flights.

<https://www.thenoproject.org/lesson-plans/>

An excellent but disturbing article about grooming in the UK of teenagers.

<https://www.theguardian.com/society/2019/jun/17/teens-county-lines-gangs>

## Taking Action: Going Public

Create a presentation about the grooming process and methods of exploitation of both children and adults. Who will you deliver this presentation to?

What is the hotline number in your country? What organizations exist in your community that look after victims of human trafficking? Can you find posters in your language that you can put up in the community or share on line?

- WHO is targeted?
- WHO are the traffickers?
- HOW are the victims targeted?
- WHERE might this take place?
- HOW LONG might the grooming process last?
- HOW are victims controlled?
- HOW are victims exploited?
- WHAT can the general public do?

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## **Credits & acknowledgements**

Contributing authors: The NO Project with S. Marsden, Electra M

Art: NO ENTRY by Gerasimos Lorandos and Myra Dracopoulos

Audio actors: Ian, Saffron, Blake, Suzy, Oli

Music: [www.elijahbossenbroek.com](http://www.elijahbossenbroek.com)

[www.50eggs.com/i-am-little-red/](http://www.50eggs.com/i-am-little-red/)

<https://snowdropproject.co.uk>

<http://www.trustconference.com/>

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/child-abuse-and-neglect/grooming>

<https://www.endslaverynow.org/blog/articles/basic-stages-of-grooming-for-sexual-exploitation>

AHRC Antislavery Usable Past Project, University of Nottingham

[www.antislavery.ac.uk](http://www.antislavery.ac.uk)

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