Dark pattern

EAE Learning objectives for this lesson
Vocabulary, reading and listening comprehension, the present simple and the present continuous.

Preparation time
30 minutes

Introduction – Questions and Answers
With your partner or teacher, ask and answer the questions below

1. What are your favorite websites?
2. When you visit a website, do you sometimes click on a new page because it looked interesting?
3. Do you sometimes buy things online that you had no intention of buying? Explain.
4. Do you know what a dark pattern is?

Activity One – Vocabulary
match the vocabulary on the left to its synonym on the right

Trick	Enticement
Upgrade	Cheat
Account	Income
Realise	Understand
Bait	Customer
Profit	Update
Concern	Quality
User	Trap
Feature	Worry
Mislead	Profile

Activity Two – Reading Comprehension
Read the article and answer the questions at the end.
Dark Pattern Design — It's Downright Unethical & Irresponsible

What is dark pattern design? Dark patterns are tricks on a website or application that mislead the users so they do something they have no intention to do. For instance, sharing their data and upgrading their account. Apart from these, tech companies design their product in a way that its users easily become addicted to it. Businesses that are using dark pattern design only have their own interest in mind. They treat their users as fish at the sea and their dark pattern design serves as the bait. Profit is their only concern when designing their product.

Examples of dark pattern design:

Some travel booking sites overuse persuasive message in its interface design, for instance, "5 other people are looking at this property now", "This property sold out 10 minutes ago", "20% off today only", "Last seat at this price" and so on. When users see these kinds of messages, normally they would think if they don't book the room or ticket now, they would lose the bargain. This sort of design seems to be helping their users save money but messages like "This property sold out 10 minutes ago" — do the users even need to know? Isn't it better to simply remove this listing in the search result? The website or app displays such a message, is it trying to manipulate its users?

Social media apps, fitness apps and many others on the market has a feature called "push notification". The intention of it is good: the app notifies you instantly whenever you receive a new message, reminder or update. However, do you realise that this sort of notifications makes you totally addicted to the app? Do you notice that you check your phone all the time, no matter if you are at work or in the gym? You may think that's what normal people do nowadays but is this true?

Businesses are manipulating their users as they know exactly how we behave. We feel special when our social media posts receive lots of likes, more notifications mean more likes, more messages and more attention. We all love attention and that's normal. What's not normal is we check our phone 150 times a day = 6.25 times per hour = once in about 10 minutes. What do the business gain from our "addiction"? Engagement. Better user engagement means more advertising income. You may think that it's our fault that we check for notifications every 10 mins but if you think a bit deeper — Did your grandma and grandpa check their postbox that often when apps and mobile phones did not exist?

To see other examples and the entire article: https://uxplanet.org/dark-pattern-design-its-downright-unethical-irresponsible-c2a3612a1640
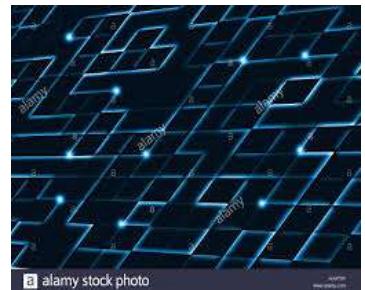
Comprehension questions and discussion

- What is the only concern of companies according to the article?
- What is a 'push notification'?
- What is the result of 'engagement'?
- How many times a day do you check your applications (apps)?
- What are other examples of dark patterns that you see on websites?
- Do you agree that dark patterns are unethical? Why?

alamy stock photo

Activity Three – Present simple VS Present Continuous

Remember the rules?

Present Simple	Present Continuous
Stative and Action Verbs 1, To express facts 2, To talk about your routine 3, To talk about your status	**Action verbs only** 1, To express a current action 2, Temporary project

Stative Verbs	Action Verbs
be, have, like, seem, prefer, understand, belong, doubt, hate, and know,	run, walk, talk, work, do, make, teach, learn, etc...

Explaining Action verbs and Stative Verbs: https://www.thoughtco.com/stative-verb-1692139

Present simple	Present Contiunous
Write an example sentence _____ _____	Write an example sentence _____ _____

2

Activity Four – **Answer the multiple choice questions.**

A dark pattern (1)_____"a user interface that has been carefully crafted to trick users into doing things. Users (2) _____ insurance with their original purchase. Dark pattern's goal (3) _____ to name and shame deceptive user interfaces.

1. a) are b) is c) is being	2. a) buy b) are buying c) buys	3. a) are b) is c) is being

Activity Five – **Discussion**
Discuss why your answers were right or wrong from activity four.

Activity Six – **Interview**
Interview your partner about dark patterns. Us present simple and present continuous interview setting. Questions and answers have to use both tenses.

Activity Seven – **Correct the sentences. They are all wrong!**

- I am liking the new security software I installed.
- I am knowing someone who had a problem on the internet
- I am believing that the internet is a dangerous place.

If something is in the moment (now) can we use the present simple? Correct the sentences.

- I speak to you.
- We learn English now.
- You wear a red top.
- What are you do now?

Activity Seven – **Listening Comprehension**
Listen to the video and answer the comprehension questions below
'Senators Introduce Bill to Stop 'Dark Patterns' Huge Platforms Use to Trick Users'
https://gizmodo.com/senators-introduce-bill-to-stop-dark-patterns-huge-plat-1833929276
(The first 4 minutes)

1) Where would you first look to delete your amazon account?
2) What is the definition of this kind of dark pattern?
3) Who coined the term 'dark' pattern and when?
4) What other examples of dark pattern does he show?
5) What does the company use the colour green to make you do?
6) How does booking.com make you feel that your purchase is urgent?

Activity Seven – **Role plays**
Act out one of the role plays with your partner or teacher

- Imagine that you are a website and the user of that website is trying to close their account. Give your clients misleading offers and promotions so that they don't close their account.
- You are a company who wants to stop dark patterns on websites. You discuss what is happening now and what needs to happen to make it stop.