

Imposter Syndrome

Upper-Intermediate (B2-C1)



WARM UP

Part 1. Discuss the following questions.

1. Have you ever felt your success was more down to luck than ability?
2. Do you think people compare themselves too much to others? Why or why not?
3. Have you ever doubted yourself in a situation where others praised you?

Part 2. Complete each expression by filling in the missing word. Decide if you agree (A), disagree (D), or partially agree (P). Then, explain your reasoning.

1. Some people try to **keep up** _____ and hide their self-doubt so others won't notice.
2. I often **second-** _____ **myself** and question whether I made the right decision.
3. Many people feel they're just not **cut** _____ **for** the job they're doing.
4. When things go wrong, it's easy to **put yourself** _____ and blame yourself unfairly.
5. We often feel pressure to **measure up to** _____ who seem more talented or successful.



Part 3. Read the short dialogues and discuss the meaning of the highlighted words/phrases.

A: "I got promoted, but I still feel like a fraud."

B: "That sounds like **imposter syndrome** — doubting your own success."

A: "I spend hours on every detail and never feel it's good enough."

B: "That's being a **perfectionist**."

A: "I kept putting it off until the deadline."

B: "Classic **procrastinator** behaviour."

A: "I felt so ashamed when I made that mistake."

B: "It's normal to feel **humiliated**, but mistakes happen."

A: "There's so much to do, I can't even start."

B: "Sounds like you're completely **overwhelmed**."

VIDEO ACTIVITY

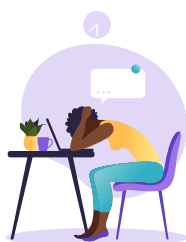
Part 1. Before watching the video, discuss the following question.

What do you think are the most common signs of imposter syndrome?

Part 2. Watch the video once. Write down the signs of imposter syndrome you hear.

Signs of imposter syndrome

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.



Part 3. Watch the video again and discuss the following questions.

- 1.What do people with imposter syndrome often attribute their success to?
- 2.How can procrastination and perfectionism be coping mechanisms?
- 3.Which famous author is mentioned as having imposter syndrome?
- 4.How is imposter syndrome linked to self-confidence?
- 5.What emotions do people often feel when they fail?
- 6.Why do comparisons with others make imposter syndrome worse?

Part 4. Read the statements and decide if they are True (T) or False (F) according to the video.

- 1.Around 70% of people experience imposter syndrome at least once.
- 2.The video suggests only women experience imposter syndrome.
- 3.Maya Angelou felt like a fake whenever she released a book.
- 4.People with imposter syndrome usually feel more talented than their peers.
- 5.The video mentions that counselling can help with imposter syndrome.

VIDEO FOLLOW-UP

Part 1. Discuss the following questions.

- 1.Why do you think even highly successful people experience imposter syndrome?
- 2.Do you think imposter syndrome is always negative, or can it sometimes motivate people?
- 3.If a close friend came to you feeling like a fraud, how would you reassure them?

Part 2. Read these quotes from the video and react: agree, disagree, or expand with examples.

- 1.“You feel like your success is because of luck.”
- 2.“Imposter syndrome is linked to low self-confidence.”
- 3.“Even Maya Angelou felt like a fake.”
- 4.“People with imposter syndrome constantly compare themselves to others.”

Part 3. Read these short reflections and answer the questions.

"I passed my exams, but I still think it was just luck."

Do you relate to this feeling? How would you reassure this person?

"I always stay up late finishing projects. I tell myself it's because I'm hardworking, but really it's because I put things off."

Do you think procrastination is laziness, or something else?

"When I see other people doing better than me, I immediately feel I'm not good enough."

Is comparing yourself to others always negative, or can it sometimes be useful?

FINAL THOUGHTS...

Part 1. Discuss the questions below to reflect on what you've learnt during this lesson.

1. Which sign of imposter syndrome do you find most relatable?
2. Has your opinion on self-doubt changed after this lesson? Why or why not?
3. What advice would you give to someone who feels like an impostor at work or school?
4. What will you remind yourself of the next time you doubt your own success?

