EU proposes child social media limits

LEVEL C1


Photo: Unsplash

I. WARM-UP

1. How old were you when you joined your first social platform?
2. What online risks for teenagers worry parents in your country?
3. How should age limits for apps be checked, if at all?

II. KEY VOCABULARY

legislation
A law or set of laws formally proposed or passed by a government.

enforce
To make people obey a rule or law by using authority or penalties.

verification
The process of checking that something, like age, is true or correct.

addictive
Describing a design or feature that makes people want to keep using it.

compulsive
Hard to stop doing, even when you want to.

supersede
To replace something because a new rule or system takes its place.

infringe
To limit or break a right, such as freedom of expression.

settlement
An agreement that ends a legal case, often involving payment.

III. READING

Under the EU Kids Act, under-13s would be banned from social platforms. Teens aged 13 and 14 would use parent-controlled “mini accounts” for up to one hour a day. Only those 15 and over are to set up their own accounts. Platforms are to prove they are safe by design or face fines of up to 6% of global sales.

Ursula von der Leyen said the move would “put parents back in the driving seat” and require “no toxic or addictive features” or traps. The legislation would cover TikTok, Instagram, Snapchat, YouTube, AI chatbots and online games.

Age verification is to use the EU’s existing app, and the Commission says no personal data will be collected or shared. The rules could supersede national measures; France’s top court recently blocked an under-15 ban as it infringed freedom of expression. Enforcement is expected to be contested.

In July, the European Commission issued preliminary findings that Meta’s features encourage compulsive use. Separately, Meta reached an $18bn settlement with US states over alleged harm to children, while denying wrongdoing. An EU survey found 92% of respondents want stronger protection for children online. Australia’s under-16 ban was cited, though it has proved hard to enforce.

Reading text adapted from reporting by **BBC News***: “EU announces plan to restrict social media...”. Original article linked at theenglishwire.com.*

IV. COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

1. What would the EU Kids Act do for children under 13?
2. How much daily time would 13- and 14-year-olds get on mini accounts?
3. What is the maximum fine platforms could face under the plan?
4. Which country's top court blocked an under-15 ban?
5. Which company faced EU criticism and made a large US settlement?

V. DISCUSSION

1. Should one EU rule replace different national approaches? Why?
2. How can age verification protect privacy and still work well?
3. Are design changes or time limits better for teen wellbeing?
4. What roles should parents, schools, and tech firms each take?

VI. GRAMMAR FOCUS

Be to / be set to for official arrangements

Use be to (is/are to + verb) or be set to (is/are set to + verb) for official plans and arrangements that have been announced. For the passive, use is/are to be + past participle.

*"Platforms **are to prove** they are safe by design."*

*"Under the proposal, teen accounts **are set to be** parent-controlled."*

VII. GRAMMAR EXERCISE

Complete each sentence with be to or be set to and the verb in brackets.

1. Children under 13 (ban) ___ from social platforms. _____
2. Teen accounts (limit) ___ to one hour a day under the plan. _____
3. The new law (cover) ___ AI chatbots and online games. _____
4. Platforms (face) ___ fines if they cannot show safety by design. _____
5. Age checks (rely) ___ on the EU's existing app. _____

Teacher's Notes

TEACHERS ONLY

These notes are designed to help you get the most out of this lesson. Please do not share this page with students.


Photo: Unsplash

I. LESSON GUIDE

- Timing: 8–10 minutes warm-up, 10 minutes vocabulary, 12–15 minutes reading and comprehension, 8–10 minutes grammar, 12–15 minutes discussion.
- Pre-teach tricky items (legislation, enforce, verification, addictive, compulsive, infringe, supersede, settlement) and check students understand safety-by-design, mini accounts, and fines from context.
- Run the reading in two passes: first for gist, then for details and figures (1 hour, 6%, 92%). This lesson touches on child safety and parenting choices; preview the discussion, allow students to answer about policy rather than personal lives, and let anyone opt to speak generally.
- Differentiate by task: stronger students summarise enforcement challenges in three sentences; others map stakeholders (parents, platforms, regulators) and suggest one duty each.

II. DISCUSSION FACILITATION TIPS

1. Take a quick poll, then pair students with different views to compare pros and cons.
2. Elicit common methods first, then push for trade-offs between privacy and accuracy.
3. Board quick ideas, then ask for examples of harms each option reduces or misses.
4. Set triads and assign each role; swap roles once to broaden perspectives.

III. EXTENSION ACTIVITIES

Debate: In teams, draft a 60-second statement for or against mini accounts, then debate it.

Writing: In pairs, write a 120-word brief advising the Commission on how to enforce the act.

IV. ANSWER KEY OVERVIEW

Comprehension questions: short factual answers from the text.

Grammar exercise: Be to / be set to for official arrangements

Discussion: open-ended. Accept any reasonable ideas supported by examples and reasoning.

Answer Key

TEACHERS ONLY

These answers are for teachers only. Please do not share this page with students.


Photo: Unsplash

IV. COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

1. What would the EU Kids Act do for children under 13?
   Ban them from social platforms.
2. How much daily time would 13- and 14-year-olds get on mini accounts?
   Up to one hour per day.
3. What is the maximum fine platforms could face under the plan?
   Up to 6% of global sales.
4. Which country's top court blocked an under-15 ban?
   France.
5. Which company faced EU criticism and made a large US settlement?
   Meta.

V. DISCUSSION

Open answers. Accept any reasonable ideas supported by examples and reasoning.

VI. GRAMMAR FOCUS

Key point: Use be to (is/are to + verb) or be set to (is/are set to + verb) for official plans and arrangements that have been announced. For the passive, use is/are to be + past participle. (Example 2 constructed.)

> *"Platforms* **are to prove** *they are safe by design."*
>
> *"Under the proposal, teen accounts* **are set to be** *parent-controlled."*

VII. GRAMMAR EXERCISE

Complete each sentence with be to or be set to and the verb in brackets.

1. Children under 13 ___ from social platforms. **are to be banned / are set to be banned**
2. Teen accounts ___ to one hour a day under the plan. **are to be limited / are set to be limited**
3. The new law ___ AI chatbots and online games. **is to cover / is set to cover**
4. Platforms ___ fines if they cannot show safety by design. **are to face / are set to face**
5. Age checks ___ on the EU's existing app. **are to rely / are set to rely**