



ANONYMOUS

Do you know what Anonymous is?

Do you know anything about the mask that the man is wearing?

Can you define hacktivism?

Do you know any famous Anonymous hacks?

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nr38WLiS1A>

For nearly two decades, one of the world's most infamous hacker groups has operated under the name "[Anonymous](#)." And the mysterious online community is making headlines once again. After Russia invaded Ukraine at the end of February, a [Twitter account](#) with 7.9 million followers named "Anonymous" [declared a "cyber war"](#) against Russia and its president, Vladimir Putin. Since then, the group has [claimed responsibility](#) for various cyberattacks that disabled websites and leaked data from Russian government agencies, as well as state-run news outlets and corporations.

Often called "hacktivists," Anonymous employs coordinated cyberattacks against various world governments, corporations or other groups, often in the name of social or political causes.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F98L8GgaXkw>

Watch the video and answer the following questions:

1. What is Anonymous?
2. Why is Anonymous different from other groups?
3. Where does Anonymous originate from?
4. What does Anonymous symbolize?
5. Which was the group's first big operation?
6. Which organisation did they target and why?
7. Who did they start to target after?
8. What are they fighting for?
9. What does the mask represent?
10. Who can join anonymous?
11. What is their main philosophy?

Generally, Anonymous opposes governments and corporations that it views as [participating in censorship](#) or promoting inequality. Since the group is decentralized, it has no real structure or hierarchy — so there's often [much internal debate](#) about which ideas or causes to support.

Since "Project Chanology," Anonymous members have targeted a long list of parties, including:

- the Recording Industry Association of America (RIAA) and Motion Picture Association of America (MPAA), after those organizations worked to [stop pirating websites](#) from sharing copyrighted music and movies.
- the U.S. Department of Justice and FBI, after federal authorities shut down file-sharing website Megaupload.com [in 2012](#).
- PayPal, after the online payments platform [stopped allowing donations](#) to WikiLeaks and its controversial founder, [Julian Assange](#).

- government websites in Tunisia, Egypt and other countries in the Middle East and Africa as part of the [2011 Arab Spring pro-democracy protests](#).
- ISIS, following the 2015 [Paris terrorist attacks](#).

Authorities [around the world](#) have arrested dozens of hackers with alleged ties to Anonymous, including at least [14 people charged](#) with hacking PayPal in 2011. Barrett Brown, a journalist and self-professed Anonymous spokesperson, [served more than four years in prison](#) after a 2012 arrest on charges related to cyberattacks and threatening a federal officer.

THE STORY BEHIND THE MASK

There's something admittedly spooky about the mask used by Anonymous, [the collective](#) that conducts hacking as a form of activism. Since 2008, the group has gained worldwide attention for its efforts, which include attacks against Scientology and opponents of internet piracy. And the group's fame has been helped by its impressive branding, including an emblem depicting a headless man and that spooky mask.

The mask itself has an interesting history. It pays tribute to a man [who is best known](#) for trying to blow up the House of Lords in London in 1605. Coincidentally, though, the mask was already a part of pop culture when Anonymous adopted it.

GUY FAWKES

In the early 1600s, there was a great amount of religious upheaval in England, with Protestants and Catholics battling for dominance. Fawkes was part of a group of Catholics who were unhappy with the direction the government was taking. Especially, they didn't want a protestant King (James I) so they were planning to kill him. The plan was to kill James and the members of the parliament by blowing up the House of Lords.

The plan failed and the conspirators were arrested and executed, but they became famous and the attack became known as the Gunpowder Plot that took place on November 5th 1604.

When Fawkes had mustaches and was arrested he was wearing a long black coat and a hat. Since 1700 children, on the 5th November, started to wear a mask that reminded his face begging for money.

However, it only became famous with a series of comics of the 1980s and mostly with the graphic novel, and then movie, *V For Vendetta*.

THE MASK AND ANONYMOUS

The masks had a practical use for Anonymous. In 2008, the group [needed a way](#) to leave the safety of their homes to protest Scientology, and the Guy Fawkes masks seemed the perfect disguise. It has never been officially stated, but experts have identified a scene in *V for Vendetta* where a group of protestors march on Britain's Parliament as likely inspiration. Moreover, the character of V in the movie embodies the ideology of anonymous, which is fighting against the corrupted system. So the association between the movement and the mask seemed perfect. Today, if you think about Anonymous one of the first thing that comes to mind is the mask itself.

Since 2008, Anonymous has used its collective technological prowess to launch cyberattacks at various institutions. Using its hacking power, the group became known for shutting down websites and exposing members of hate organizations. However, the group seems to have lost effectiveness in recent years as its membership has split in various directions.