



Essential Question: What can you do when someone is mean to you online?

Learning Overview and Objectives

Overview: Students learn that children sometimes can act like bullies when they are online. They explore what cyberbullying means and what they can do when they encounter it.

Students first read a scenario about mean online behavior. They then discuss what cyberbullying is, how it can make people feel, and how to respond. Then they use their knowledge to create a simple tip sheet on cyberbullying. Students recognize that it is essential to tell a trusted adult if something online makes them feel angry, sad, or scared.

objectives

Students will:

- Analyze online behaviors that could be considered cyberbullying
- Explain how to deal with a cyberbullying situation
- Recognize the importance of engaging a trusted adult when they experience cyberbullying

Materials and Preparation

Estimated time: 45 minutes

Materials

- **STOP Cyberbullying Student Handout**

Preparation

- Copy the **STOP Cyberbullying Student Handout**, one for every student
- Preview the scenario in Teach 2 and be prepared to present it to the class

Parent Resources

- Send parents the **Cyberbullying Parent Tip Sheet**

Key Vocabulary

- **Online:** Connected to people or websites on the Internet
- **Cyberbullying:** Doing something on the Internet, usually again and again, to make another person feel angry, sad, or scared

teaching plans

Introduce

ENCOURAGE students to share what they know about bullying.

ASK *What kinds of things count as bullying?* (Students should understand that bullying is behavior that is purposely mean or scary to someone else – for example, making fun of how someone looks, telling lies about them behind their back, or threatening to do something bad to them.)

ASK *How does bullying make other people feel?*



Sample responses:

- *Bad*
- *Sad*
- *Upset*
- *Scared*
- *Hurt*
- *Angry*

ASK *What is the best thing to do when you feel bullied, or when you see someone else being bullied?* (Students should know to always tell a trusted adult when they experience or witness bullying.)

EXPLAIN to students that they will be learning about a kind of bullying that can take place when they use the Internet.

Teach 1: What Is Cyberbullying?

TEACH the Key Vocabulary word **online**.

DISCUSS the fact that some kids don't go online very much at all, either because of their parents' rules or because they don't like it very much. Other kids do go online to do different things.

ASK *What do you do online, or what do you think you might like to do?* (Students may mention sending emails, instant messaging, and playing games.)

SHARE with students that most of the time when they go online it is to do fun or interesting things. But sometimes people can be mean to each other online and this is called **cyberbullying**.

TEACH the Key Vocabulary word **cyberbullying**.

Students should understand that when children are mean to someone else online, even if they only do it one time, it isn't nice. Also stress that cyberbullies usually bully repeatedly, with the intention of causing hurt feelings. When children do something very mean and/or scary, or do it over and over again, then they are **cyberbullying**.

SHARE with students some examples of **cyberbullying**. These might include:

- sending a mean email or IM to someone
- posting mean things about someone on a website
- making fun of someone in an online chat
- doing mean things to someone's character in an online world like NeoPets or WebKinz

ASK *Did you ever see someone make someone else feel bad online?* (Tell what happened, but don't use real names.)

EXPLAIN to students that they will be learning more about how **cyberbullying** occurs, and what to do when it happens to them or to someone they know.

Teach 2: What to Do About Cyberbullying

DISTRIBUTE the **STOP Cyberbullying Student Handout**, one for every student.

GUIDE students through the scenario on the handout. After allowing students time to read it on their own, you may wish to read it aloud.



Jada's parents let her play on a website where she can take care of a pet pony and decorate its stall. Her friend Michael has played with her in the past and knows her user name and password. One day Jada goes to the site to care for her pony. She finds that her pony's stall is a mess and that there are some things missing.

ENCOURAGE the class to answer the questions on their handouts. Invite them to share their answers.

- *What do you think happened?* (Students should conclude that Michael went to the website himself and messed up the pony's stall.)
- *How do you think this made Jada feel?* (Students should recognize that Michael's behavior probably made Jada feel upset, sad, angry, or let down by her friend.)

DIRECT students' attention to the four rules for dealing with cyberbullying at the bottom of their **STOP Cyberbullying Student Handout**. Use the following questions to guide discussion.

ASK *How will you know when someone is cyberbullying you?* (Students should recognize that they may be experiencing cyberbullying whenever someone does something online that makes them feel sad, scared, angry, or upset in any way.)

ASK *Why do you think it is important to stop using the computer when someone starts cyberbullying you?* (Students should realize that if they stay online, the cyberbullying may continue or get worse.)

ASK *If someone makes you feel angry, sad, or scared online, which grown-ups can you tell and ask for help?* (Students may name parents or grandparents, an older sister or brother, a teacher, or the school nurse or counselor. If students cannot think of someone right away, help them brainstorm and identify an appropriate adult.)

ASK *Why is it important to go online only with an adult, or when an adult says it is OK?* (Students should recognize that adults can help guide them online and keep them safe from cyberbullying.)

ASK *How can you decide whether you should play or chat with someone online?* (Students should acknowledge that they need adult guidance in deciding who to connect with online. If someone is very mean to them, or is mean repeatedly, then that person is a cyberbully and should not be contacted online. Remind students that they should never talk to strangers online either without asking a trusted adult, even if that person is nice or has shared interests.)

ASK *Which of the four things do you think is the most important?* (Students should recognize that telling an adult is the single most important thing they should do if they experience or witness cyberbullying.)

REVISIT the question you asked at the end of Teach 2. Now what do they think Jada should do after Michael messes up her pony's stall? Encourage students to apply the S-T-O-P rules to the scenario:

- Jada should STOP using the computer.
- Jada should TELL an adult she trusts what happened.
- Jada should not go back ONLINE or return to the pony website until an adult says it is OK.
- If Jada and Michael are good friends, Jada may want to tell Michael how his actions made her feel, after she gets advice from an adult. But if Michael continues cyberbullying her, she should PLAY with other kids who don't take part in cyberbullying.



Wrap Up and Assess

You can use these questions to assess your students' understanding of the lesson objectives.

ASK *What is cyberbullying? How does it make people feel?* (Students should recognize that cyberbullying is any kind of online behavior that makes people feel sad, scared, angry, or upset.)

ASK *What four things can you do to help stop cyberbullying?* (Students should be able to explain each of the four rules on the **STOP Cyberbullying Student Handout**.)

ASK *What is the most important thing to do if someone starts cyberbullying you?* (Students should understand that telling a trusted adult is the most important response whenever someone makes them feel sad, scared, or angry online.)



Extension Activity

Introduce the following additional scenarios involving cyberbullying, and have students use the rules on the **STOP Cyberbullying Student Handout** to describe how the children in the stories might feel when this happens, and how they should respond.

Kyle keeps getting IMs from someone saying mean things about him. The person who is sending the messages doesn't use a real name, but Kyle can tell the messages are coming from someone who also makes fun of him at school in gym class.

Sasha is a new girl at school and she is making a lot of friends. Then Sasha finds out that another girl sent around an email that had a picture of a cow with Sasha's name on it.



Homework

Have students choose a trusted adult member of the family whom they could tell about any cyberbullying that might happen to them. Have them work with the adult to turn the S-T-O-P rules into a poster to hang in their room.

Alignment with Standards – National Educational Technology Standards for Students® 2007

(Source: International Society for Technology in Education, 2007)

2. Communication and Collaboration

- a. interact, collaborate, and publish with peers, experts, or others employing a variety of digital environments and media

5. Digital Citizenship

- a. advocate and practice safe, legal, and responsible use of information and technology
- d. exhibit leadership for digital citizenship

Common Sense Media is an independent, nonprofit resource that helps families and educators teach kids how to be safe and smart in today's 24/7 media world. Go to www.commonsensemedia.org for thousands of reviews and expert advice.