



Chart It

Essential Question

How do you judge the aim and impact of people's words and actions online?

Lesson Overview

Students will learn to assess people's intentions and the impact of their words and actions, both positive and negative, in online environments.


Students first reflect on the benefits and drawbacks of online relationships by watching and discussing a short video. Next, they are introduced to a variety of scenarios about online relationships and physically chart each situation on an axis to identify how online communication can be helpful or hurtful, and whether it might be intentional or unintentional. Students must explain their reasoning and offer steps toward a solution.

Learning Objectives

Students will be able to ...

- imagine the motivations, feelings, and intentions of others as they relate to a variety of online exchanges.
- debate the level of harm and intentionality involved in these online exchanges.
- propose constructive solutions to online interpersonal dilemmas that exemplify ethical behavior.

Materials and Preparation

- Masking tape or string and four pieces of blank paper
-  Preview the video, “**Connected Culture Animation**,” and prepare to show it to students.
- Copy the **You Chart It Student Handout**, one for each student.
- Optional: Arrange students' desks around the room's perimeter. Make x and y axes on the floor with masking tape or string. Label the axes with paper as follows: X Axis = “Hurtful (left)” and “Helpful (right);” Y Axis = “Intentional” (top) and “Unintentional” (bottom). (This can also be done during class.)

Family Resources

- Send home the **Connected Culture Family Tip Sheet (Middle School)**

Estimated time: 45 minutes

Standards Alignment –

Common Core:

grade 6: RI.7, RI.10, W.4, W.10, SL.1a, SL.1b, SL.1c, SL.1d, SL.2, SL.6, L.6

grade 7: RI.10, W.4, W.10, SL.1, SL.1b, SL.1c, SL.1d, SL.2, SL.6, L.6

grade 8: RI.10, W.4, W.10, SL.1a, SL.1b, SL.1c, SL.1d, SL.2, SL.6, L.6

NETS•S: 1a-b, 4a-b, 5a-b

Key Vocabulary –

anonymous: having an unknown identity

social media: digital media and technologies based on social interaction and participation

ethics: a set of principles and morals governing people's behavior. (An ethical person is thought to treat others with respect, care, and dignity.)

online ethics: a set of principles and morals governing people's behavior as it relates to the online world

intentional: to do something on purpose

impact: to have an effect

introduction

Warm-up (5 minutes)

▶ **SHOW** students the “**Connected Culture Animation.**” Tell students that the video will introduce them to a variety of positive and negative ways that people interact with one another online. Remind students to notice the ways people connect over digital media, and both the positive and negative relationships that occur.

teach 1

Introduce Online Ethics (10 minutes)

ASK:

What are ways that people connect and communicate with each other through digital media?

Sample responses:

- Texting
- IMing
- Social networking
- Sharing creations

What are some of the ways that online relationships are different than offline relationships?

Sample responses:

- People are sometimes bolder or more outgoing when communicating online than offline because they are not meeting face to face.
- Aside from video chat, people usually do not have facial cues and body language online to help them understand people’s intentions.
- Mean comments may have greater impact, as they may be public, and because people are sometimes bolder when they are anonymous.

DISCUSS how when we are online, our choices can affect how we communicate with others and impact our relationships with others. Talk about how each person can be a good friend, family member, student, or citizen and do things that are helpful to others. However, when we are online we can also hurt others. Explain that sometimes we may hurt someone on purpose, but at other times we might hurt someone without even knowing it because we can’t see the effects of our actions down the line.

DEFINE the Key Vocabulary term **ethics**.

ASK:

What does it mean to act ethically? How would an ethical person act?

An ethical person is thought to treat others with respect, care, and dignity. Someone who is unethical treats others unfairly, unjustly, and irresponsibly.

INVITE students to define the Key Vocabulary term **online ethics**. Then provide the given definition.

REMINDE students that when it comes to being a good person online, it is important to reflect carefully on how our choices – as simple as a click of the mouse or the push of a button – might affect the lives of others.

teach 2

Introduce Online Ethics Chart (10 minutes)

CREATE a life-size version of the ethics grid on the **You Chart It Student Handout**. Have students move their desks to the room’s perimeter. Make x and y axes on the floor with masking tape or string. Label the axes with paper as follows: X Axis = “Hurtful” (left) and “Helpful” (right); Y Axis = “Intentional” (top) and “Unintentional” (bottom).

INTRODUCE the following four x and y axis points on the grid:

The Y Axis: The Intention

Unintentional: Even if we don’t intend to help or hurt someone, effects from the choices we make can be unintentional. Unintentional effects can happen by accident, laziness, or by simply not taking a moment to consider the possible consequences of a choice we make.

Intentional: Hurting or helping someone intentionally means that we do it on purpose; we make a choice to help or hurt.

The X Axis: The Impact

Helpful: Being helpful when it comes to online ethics means affecting others in a positive way by the choices you make online. Helpful choices include caring behavior, such as acts of kindness, making ethical choices, contributing in a positive way to an online community, and thinking about the repercussions for others before you make a decision that might affect another person.

Hurtful: Being hurtful means that something you do or a choice you make in the digital world damages someone else’s reputation or self-esteem. We often think that hurtful behavior happens on purpose, but sometimes we can hurt someone without even knowing it because our actions affect the other person at a later time.

teach 3

Chart Ethics Scenarios (10 minutes)

DISTRIBUTE the **You Chart It Student Handout**, one for each student. Tell students that the handout is a paper version of the large chart that you have just introduced.

READ the scenarios from the **You Chart It Student Handout** one by one with students standing on the perimeter of the grid with the student handout in hand. For each scenario, ask students to consider the place along each axis that best represents the intentions (y axis: unintentional/intentional) of the person whose name is bolded and the impact of his or her behavior (x axis: helpful/hurtful). For instance, if it seems that the person whose name is bolded meant to hurt someone online and it had a very negative impact on the person, the dot on the grid would be in the very top-left corner.

Note: There is information in each scenario that is not directly relevant to the ethics discussion. This information is included because it provides a more engaging context for the scenarios.

INVITE five or six students to stand on the class-sized grid in the same spot that they marked on their grid for each scenario. (You may not have time to chart all of the scenarios as a class. Choose the ones that seem most relevant to your students.) Students will generally cluster in the same area, but it is fine if they are spread out. Some scenarios spark more varying reactions than others. Invite a different group of five to have a turn for each scenario. For each scenario ...

ASK:

Why did you choose to stand there? Was this person's intention more to help or hurt, and was the impact hurtful or helpful?

Take a few minutes to let students explain and debate their positions. It can be especially helpful to ask students who are standing furthest from one another to explain themselves first.

What more information could help you better understand the intentions of the person in bold or the impact of his or her actions?

Have students consider misunderstandings that might have occurred, or holes in the story. What other information could help them assess the intentions of the person in bold and his or her actions?

Can you think of a way to make the relationship between/among these people better, or is it okay the way it is?

Encourage students to think of clearing up miscommunication with clarifying questions or with direct online or offline discussion about the dilemma.

ENCOURAGE students to have a lively discussion of ethics, reminding them to use the facts of the scenario.

closing

Wrap-up (10 minutes)

HAVE students write two short scenarios about interactions that people have online, one that is very intentional and harmful, and one that is very unintentional and helpful. Students can read their scenarios out loud.

REVIEW that the point of the lesson was to have students think about the ethical judgments they make when they engage in relationships online by imagining the point of view and feelings of others. Tell students that it is important to think carefully about how what we post, write, text, or upload might affect the lives of others. Let them know that decisions can harm others whether they are intentional or not. Finish by telling them they have the power to make ethical decisions that are positive and benefit others, promote friendship, and strengthen online community, and that it is up to them to choose to use that power.

Extension Activity

Students come up with their own scenarios about online relationships by writing a short paragraph on a slip of paper. The name of the person whose point of view should be analyzed should be circled. Encourage students to include information in the scenarios that would clue in the reader to the intentions of the person whose name is circled, and the impact of that person's actions on others. Collect all the slips, draw them at random, read them aloud, and have students stand on the grid where they belong.

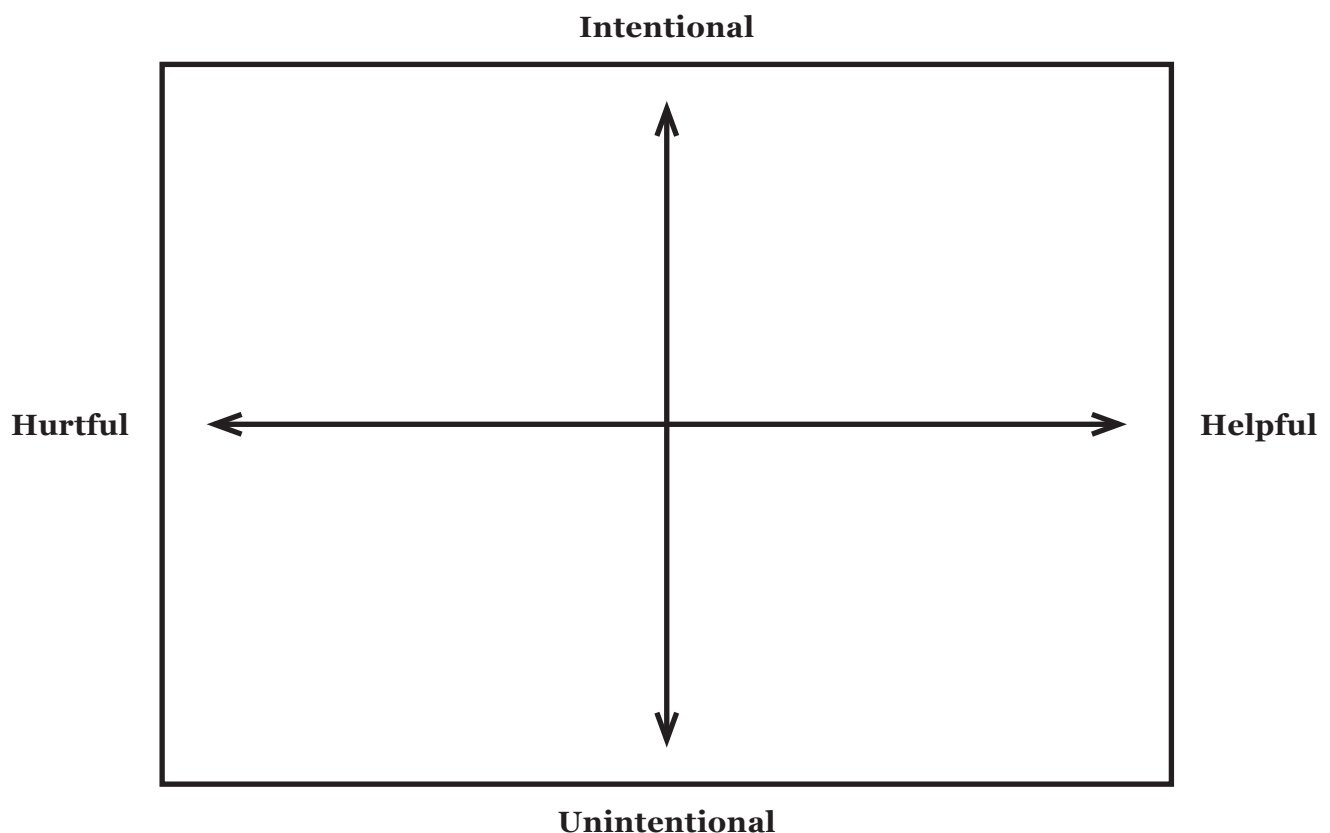
At-Home Activity

Students create four new Chart It scenarios with their parents. Students bring home the **You Chart It Student Handout** they completed during class. They explain what the axes mean, and create and plot four scenarios – one for each quadrant. The scenarios should illustrate behavior that is hurtful/intentional, hurtful/unintentional, helpful/intentional, and helpful/unintentional.

Chart It

Directions

Read the stories below about different types of online relationships. For each of these situations, take the point of view of the person in bold. Imagine a point on the y axis that stands for how intentional this person's actions are. Then imagine a point on the x axis that stands for how helpful or hurtful that person's actions are. Now imagine lines that stem from the two dots meeting in the middle. Place a dot there.



Use Common Sense

Reflect on these questions when interacting with others online:

- Is what I am saying helping or hurting someone?
- What positive or negative consequences might come from this interaction?
- If my name was on this communication and a lot of people would end up seeing it, how would I feel?

Chart It Scenarios

<p>1. Sammy takes photos of the school Spring Fling dance on his phone, including an extreme close-up nostril shot of his friend TJ that Sammy thinks is hilarious. He sends the photos to a few friends. The next day at school, some kids laugh and point at TJ. One student says, “Hey, booger man!” TJ can’t figure out what they are talking about. Later, when his friend forwards the offending shot, he discovers that Sammy is the culprit.</p>	<p>5. Jeff and Trey are collaborating on a paper for class, but Jeff is procrastinating on doing his part. Trey IM’s Jeff the night before: “Hey, I need you to add your part of the paper.” Jeff pulls some chunks of text from other online papers, pastes them into his paper, and IM’s Trey: “Done!” Trey realizes what Jeff has done, but doesn’t want to get him in trouble because they are good friends. They end up getting a C-, which really bothers Trey. The teacher never realizes that some of the paper is plagiarized.</p>
<p>2. Jenna loves cats. She posts links and responses to recent articles about kitten care on her blog. Someone who is looking for information about kitten care comes across Jenna’s blog and asks Jenna how to bathe a kitten. Jenna shares her knowledge and experience about how to bathe a kitten. A few days later, the person replies by saying that she did manage to bathe her kitten but that some of the information Jenna told her was wrong, according to her veterinarian.</p>	<p>6. Megan has been assigned to write a big research and opinion paper on censorship in the United States. She is unsure of what she will write about. Mohammed, another student in her class, posts his idea and asks friends to help lead him to useful resources. After seeing his post, Megan decides to use that same position in her paper. She doesn’t say anything to Mohammad or respond to his post.</p>
<p>3. Kayla and Marcie don’t like Aimee, the new girl at school. They send some texts to friends at school spreading information about Aimee that isn’t true. They make comments such as, “I heard she was kicked out of her last school” and “The guys LOVE Aimee and I know why.” Word gets around to Aimee about this and she feels terrible. She wonders who said these things. How could someone say these things when they don’t even know her? How is she going to fit in now?</p>	<p>7. Emma takes a photo with her phone of her friend Shara kissing her boyfriend, Vince. Because Emma is kind of disgusted by their excessive PDA (public display of affection), she labels the photo “lovebirds – sickening” and sends it to her friend Kelly. Kelly’s mom (who is Shara’s mom’s best friend) sees the photo and forwards it to Shara’s mom. Shara gets in trouble because she lied to her mother about the fact she was dating when she knew she wasn’t allowed to date.</p>
<p>4. Slick88 is in a chat room with people interested in airplanes and pilots. Chris, also known as racer355, joins the chat room. “My dad is a pilot,” Chris writes. “Yeah? What kind?” says someone else. “Commercial, for Delta,” says Chris. “Evry1 knows Delta pilots are a bunch of drunks,” Slick88 says. “Ha ha, i hrd they hit the bottle before taking off,” someone else in the room chimes in. Chris feels slighted, and he leaves the chat room.</p>	<p>8. Tyrone has submitted a video he created about “Youth Living Green” to an online youth video contest. His friends, family, and even strangers leave positive comments, ratings, and reviews. But there is one user he doesn’t know who leaves negative comments, such as “This sucks!” and “Worst video ever.” Tyrone signs in as an anonymous user and responds: “You stink! Let’s see you do better. I challenge you.”</p>

Chart It

1. Read the answer choices below and decide if posting the phrases on a friend's social network profile would be good for or hurtful to your friend's reputation. Then write the letter of each answer choice in the correct space on the chart below.

- a) "I'm never taking your advice again. You ruined my science experiment!"
- b) "You're so right ... she's CRAZY! Why does she act like that?"
- c) "I know why all of the boys like you ..."
- d) "I loved the story you read in class. I wish I could write like you!"
- e) "Guess who got an A on the test? Thanks for giving me the answers ;)"
- f) "I got an A on the test! Thanks for quizzing me before, it really helped."

Good for a friend's reputation	Hurtful to a friend's reputation

2. Rosie and Hannah got into an argument after hockey practice. Their teammates saw the whole thing. That evening, Rosie went online to update her status. Instead of writing something about herself, she changed her status to say: "... we all know that you don't deserve to be on the team."

True or false: Rosie *intentionally* updated her status to hurt Hannah's reputation.

- a) True
- b) False

3. The word *ethics* describes a set of beliefs that guide your behavior. Ethics help us see right from wrong, and good from bad. Based on what you know about ethics, which of the following answer choices is correct?

- a) An ethical person believes it's important to be polite, and posts respectful comments online.
- b) An ethical person believes it's important to be honest, and does not cheat on a test in class.
- c) Both a and b

Chart It

1. Read the answer choices below and decide if posting the phrases on a friend’s social network profile would be good for or hurtful to your friend’s reputation. Then write the letter of each answer choice in the correct space on the chart below.

- a) “I’m never taking your advice again. You ruined my science experiment!”
- b) “You’re so right ... she’s CRAZY! Why does she act like that?”
- c) “I know why all of the boys like you ...”
- d) “I loved the story you read in class. I wish I could write like you!”
- e) “Guess who got an A on the test? Thanks for giving me the answers ;)”
- f) “I got an A on the test! Thanks for quizzing me before, it really helped.”

Good for a friend’s reputation	Hurtful to a friend’s reputation
d, f	a, b, c, e

2. Rosie and Hannah got into an argument after hockey practice. Their teammates saw the whole thing. That evening, Rosie went online to update her status. Instead of writing something about herself, she changed her status to say: “... we all know that you don’t deserve to be on the team.”

True or false: Rosie *intentionally* updated her status to hurt Hannah’s reputation.

- a) True
- b) False

Answer feedback

The correct answer is **a**. Rosie updated her status to make Hannah feel bad. Even though the status doesn’t mention Hannah’s name, Rosie intentionally posted a mean comment about her.

3. The word *ethics* describes a set of beliefs that guide your behavior. Ethics help us see right from wrong, and good from bad.

Based on what you know about ethics, which of the following answer choices is correct?

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- b) An ethical person believes it’s important to be honest, and does not cheat on a test in class.
- c) **Both a and b**

Answer feedback

The correct answer is **c**. Being polite and being honest, whether online or offline, are examples of ethical behavior.