



Essential Question: How does the Internet connect you to others?

Learning Overview and Objectives

Overview: Students explore the concept that people can connect with one another through the Internet. They understand how the ability for people to communicate online can unite a community.

Students discuss the nature of the Internet, and understand that while it is not a “real” physical place, it is made up of real people. They use a graphic representation to explain the different in-person connections they have with their family, friends, and community. Students then use the same graphic model to represent how they could connect to others on the Internet by creating maps of their potential online community.

objectives

Students will:

- Consider what it means to go online and use the Internet
- Compare and contrast how they are connected to different people and places, in person and on the Internet
- Demonstrate an understanding of how people can connect on the Internet by drawing a map of their online community

Materials and Preparation

Estimated time: 45 minutes

Materials

- **Online Community Map Student Handout**
- Scratch paper and pencils, crayons, or markers

Preparation

- Copy the **Online Community Map Student Handout**, one for every student

Parent Resources

- Send parents the **Digital Life for Elementary Students Parent Tip Sheet**
- Send parents the link to the **PBS Kids Webonauts Internet Academy**, which they can play with their kids

Key Vocabulary

- **Online:** Connected to the Internet
- **Internet:** A system that connects billions of people using computers, phones, or other devices and allows them to communicate with one another
- **Community:** People who share a common neighborhood, background, or interests



teaching plans

Introduce

ASK *What does it mean to “go online”?* (Students should understand that “going online” means using the Internet.)

DISCUSS the Key Vocabulary words **online** and **Internet**.

ASK *Is the Internet a place?* (Encourage all student responses, but make sure students understand that the Internet is not a real place that you can physically visit, like a playground. However, it is made up of real people, who can connect with one another through computer connections even though they are not in the same place.)

Teach 1: Circles of Connection

DRAW three concentric circles on the board or chart paper. Label the center circle “Me.”

EXPLAIN to students that the center circle stands for them.

ASK *If the center circle is you, what people might be in the second circle?*

GUIDE students to understand that because this circle is the closest one to them, this circle should contain the people they are closest to in their lives. (You may wish to take this opportunity to make sure students understand the two possible meanings of the word “close.”) This would include family members, close friends, and other people who are important to them. Have them focus on people they see in person in their daily lives. Label the circle “My Family and Friends.”

ASK *Who might be in the outer circle?*

ENCOURAGE students to think about other people who are not as close to them but are still part of their lives.

Again, encourage them to think of people they sometimes meet in person. Write down and save their responses.

Sample responses:

- *Teachers*
- *Classmates*
- *Members of after-school groups or clubs*
- *Members of sports teams*
- *Members of their places of worship*
- *Librarians*
- *Doctors*
- *Shopkeepers*
- *Neighbors*

DISCUSS the Key Vocabulary word **community**. Then label the outer circle “My Community.”



Teach 2: Online Community Map

DISTRIBUTE copies of the **Online Community Map Student Handout**, one for each student. Also distribute scratch paper and colored pencils, crayons, or markers. You may wish to arrange students in groups so that they can share supplies.

REMIND students of the definition of the vocabulary word **community**, and explore the concept that people also have a **community** of people they connect with **online**.

INVITE students to think of any people they connect with **online** by using email with the help of a parent or other adult. Then invite them to think of people they would like to connect with **online**. Explain that as they get older and use the Internet more and more, these people will make up their **online community**. This **online community** could include people they see in person, like those on the list they created as a class in Teach 1. It could also include people they seldom or never see in person, such as relatives and friends who live in another state or country.

ENCOURAGE students to use scratch paper to list all of the people and places they connect with or would like to connect with on the Internet.

INVITE students to use the **Online Community Map Student Handout** to create a map of their online connections. They should write down or draw a simple picture of each person or place on their list, putting it in the appropriate circle, depending on whether they are close friends and family or members of their larger community.

INSTRUCT students to use lines to connect themselves to all the people in their online community. Tell them that the lines represent connections through the Internet. Even though these people might be in different places, they are connected through invisible connections. Then encourage them to think about people who might communicate with one another, and draw lines to connect them as well. For instance, they might draw a line between their grandpa and mom to show that they communicate, even if they live far away from one another.

DISPLAY students' maps and invite volunteers to use them to explain how computers connect people in their neighborhood. Help students understand how the connections they have drawn help illustrate the definition of **Internet**.

Wrap Up and Assess

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

ASK *What is the difference between your in-person community and your online community?* (Their online community includes people they may not see on a regular basis but with whom they could connect on the Internet.)

ASK *What do the lines on your maps show?* (They show the Internet connections between students and the people in the online community they would like to create.)

ASK *When you go **online**, do you really go somewhere?* (Students might explain that their bodies don't move, but that they might feel like they can visit places in their community.)



Extension Activity

Have students collaborate in groups or as a class to create a large map of their collective online community on mural-sized paper. Have them write “My Class” at the center of the map. Encourage students to find people that are familiar to most or all of them, and place them in their online community. These could be people such as other teachers or a school administrator.



Homework

Have students create a map of their family’s online community. Students can interview one or more family members and create a list of people with whom they might connect and websites or online places where they all might go. Students then create a map that shows all of the places their family goes online and with whom they connect.

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

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

5. Digital Citizenship

- b. exhibit a positive attitude toward using technology that supports collaboration, learning, and productivity

6. Technology Operations and Concepts

- a. understand and use technology systems