

LESSON PLAN

Tweens, Digital Spaces and Cyberbullying

Compelling Question: What can tweens do when they experience or witness cyberbullying?

Grade Level		Time	Common Core Standards
K-1	2-3	60-90 minutes (1-2 class periods)	Reading, Writing, Speaking and Listening, Language
4-8	9-12		

LESSON OVERVIEW

In 2020, Cartoon Network and the Cyberbullying Research Center teamed up to conduct a survey about tweens (ages 9-12) and cyberbullying. To date, most of the research on cyberbullying has focused on teenagers ages 13 and up. That is the reason why Cartoon Network and the Cyberbullying Research Center sought to collect data on pre-teenagers (or “tweens”), who are increasingly getting and using smartphones, digital devices, social media and gaming apps. The survey results indicate that nine out of ten tweens use social media and gaming apps and that one in seven tweens have been the target of cyberbullying. On a positive note, two-thirds of tweens who have seen cyberbullying said that they’ve tried to help in those situations.

This lesson provides an opportunity for students to reflect on their experiences with cyberbullying, learn from the 2020 research study, explore the different roles one can play in bullying/cyberbullying situations and consider how to act as an ally.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Students will reflect on their own experiences with social media, gaming and cyberbullying.
- Students will examine what they learn from the survey from Cartoon Network and the Cyberbullying Research Center.
- Students will explore the different roles we play when experiencing or witnessing cyberbullying.
- Students will consider actions they can take to act as an ally when they see cyberbullying.

MATERIALS AND PREPARATION

- [5 signs to post around the room](#) (one copy for each room)
- [Survey Questions](#) (one copy for each student)
- [Cyberbullying Statistics](#) (to project on board/smart board or provide one copy for each student)
- [Videos & Social Media](#)
- [Video Creation Worksheet](#) (one copy for each student)



Web Related Connections

Lesson Plans

[Anti-Bias Mini-Film Festival](#)

[Don't Let Hate Ruin the Fun: Youth and Online Games](#)

[Gossip, Rumors and Identity](#)

[Identity-Based Bullying](#)

Other Resources

[6 Ways to be an Ally](#)

[Bullying and Cyberbullying Prevention Strategies and Resources](#)

[Hate Is No Game: Hate and Harassment in Online Games 2022](#)

[What Bullying Is and Is Not](#)

Key Words

aggressor
ally
barrier
bias
bullying
bystander
cyberbullying
identity
impact
report

☆ Defining Terms

1. Explain to students that we are going to talk about bias, bullying and cyberbullying today. Elicit and explain the following terms and definitions:

Bias: A preference, either for or against an individual or group, that affects fair judgment.

(Note: We suggest you use this elementary definition, but as an alternative you can use this middle/high school definition: "An inclination or preference, either for or against an individual or group, that interferes with impartial judgment.")

Bullying: When a person or a group behaves in ways—on purpose and over and over—that make someone feel hurt, afraid or embarrassed.

(Note: We suggest you use this elementary definition, but as an alternative you can use this middle/high school definition: "Repeated actions or threats of action directed toward a person by one or more people who have (or are perceived to have) more power or status than their target in order to cause fear, distress or harm.")

Cyberbullying: The intentional and repeated mistreatment of others through the use of technology, such as computers, cell phones and other electronic devices.

Cyberbullying includes, but is not limited to, sending mean, hurtful or threatening messages or images about another person; posting sensitive, private information about another person for the purpose of hurting or embarrassing the person; and pretending to be someone else in order to make that person look bad and/or to intentionally exclude someone from an online group.

2. **Ask students:** *Have you ever experienced or witnessed bullying or cyberbullying?* Ask students to share examples but remind them not to use names of the people involved or specific details that would reveal who it was. If any of their examples of bullying/cyberbullying target aspects of identity, point that out. If not, explain to students that often (not always) bullying and cyberbullying target an aspect of the person's identity, like their race, religion, gender or another part of their identity.

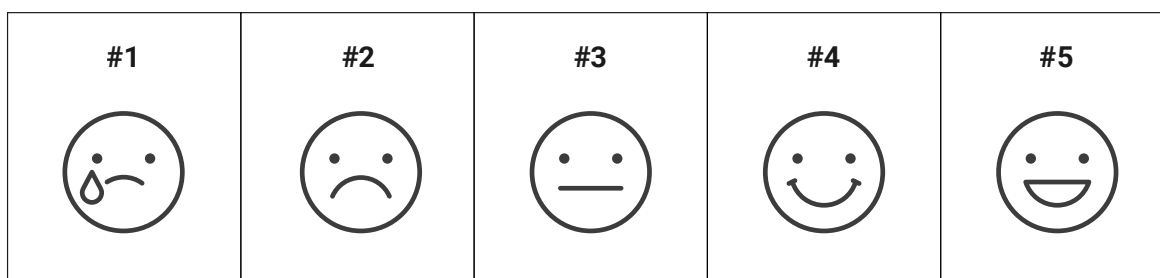
(Note to Teacher: As an alternative option for anonymity, either have students write their experiences on notecards for you to collect and share, or use [Mentimeter](#) to share their responses.)

Key Words (cont.)

social media
statistics
survey
target
tween

? How do you feel when you're online?

1. Begin the lesson by creating an imaginary line in your classroom. Use your pre-made signs from #1 to #5 and place the sign marked #1 on the further left in the imaginary line and #5 the farthest right, with #2s, #3 and #4 in between #1 and #5. It might look something like this:



2. Explain to students that they are going to position themselves on this imaginary line based on how they feel when they are online and in digital spaces. Explain what you mean by “digital spaces,” that it includes texting, gaming, direct messaging, on social media, on apps, etc. Tell students that #1 means they feel unsafe, scared, targeted, unwelcome, excluded, and/or there is a lot of bias and cyberbullying. Then share that positioning themselves at #5 means they feel safe, included, welcomed, respected, they can be themselves, and there is not much or no bias or cyberbullying. Explain that they can also position themselves anywhere else along the continuum (at #2, #3 or #4) if they feel somewhere in between or if they only sometimes feel unsafe, excluded, scared, etc.
3. After students have positioned themselves, give them 5 minutes to talk with others in the same place about why they have placed themselves in that position. After they’ve had time to talk with each other, ask students (at least one at each numbered position) why they are positioned where they are.

(Note to Teacher: If you don’t feel there is sufficient emotional safety in your classroom to do the activity in this public way, you can use [Mentimeter](#), using the “Scales” format if students have digital devices and you allow their use in your classroom. As an alternative, have students put their number (where they would position themselves using the same identifying words) on an index card, hand it in and you tabulate the results.)

4. After doing the continuum or after results are shared, engage students in a discussion by asking:
 - Was it easy or difficult to figure out where to place yourself?
 - How did you feel being in the position you placed yourself?
 - What did you notice about where students were standing?
 - How would you summarize how students in this class feel while being online/in digital spaces?
 - What questions do you have?



Classroom Survey

1. Ask students: *What is a survey?* Explain and elicit that a survey means “to gather information from or about a group of people.” Ask students if they have ever done a survey and have a few students share their experiences with surveys. Explain that surveys can give us information about a group of people based on a sample (a smaller group) of those people.
2. Explain to students that Cartoon Network and the Cyberbullying Research Center teamed up to create and distribute a survey for tweens (ages 9-12) about social media use and cyberbullying. Share that we are going to look at the results later in the lesson but first we are going to do our own survey using some of their survey questions. This survey will include only those of us in the class. Explain that in order to be considered a good sample size to make generalizations about that group, they would include a lot more people than our classroom has. For example, the Cartoon Network/Cyberbullying Research Center 1,034 children between the ages of 9 and 12 years old.

(Note to Teacher: To create a larger sample size, you can team up with other teachers/classrooms or the whole school and then pool the survey results.)

3. Decide in advance how you are going to conduct the survey. You could either use a paper and pencil survey of the questions ([see Survey handout](#)) or you can use [Mentimeter](#) or another polling app to conduct the survey. Give students time to complete the survey and answer any questions they have before they take the survey. Tabulate the results.
4. Share the results of the survey with students. For example, say, “Of the total students in our classroom, 26 of the 30 students said they use social media or gaming apps. This is about 87% of our total class.” (Be sure to explain what percentage means if students do not know or don’t use percentage in your explanation.)

5. After sharing all of the results, engage students in a brief discussion by asking:

- Was the survey easy or difficult to do? Please explain.
- What did you learn by doing this survey?
- What did you learn about your classmates as a group? What did you learn about yourself?
- Do any of the questions and responses stand out to you and if so, why?
- What else do you want to know?



Read the Cartoon Network/Cyberbullying Research Center Survey

1. Use the [Cyberbullying Statistics handout](#), either project the five charts/statistics from the survey or make copies for students to look at. One at a time, show the different images with the statistics to students. After showing each chart, one-at-a-time, ask these questions:

- Can someone read aloud what is said in the box? (You can have them skip the Parent Tip for those that have one.)
- What does the image or graph mean? Please explain in your own words.

(Note: If students are unable to explain the result, you can explain it for them.)

- Are you surprised or not surprised by this result? Please explain.
- What thoughts and feelings do you have about the result?

2. Then, pull out the data from the classroom survey you did previously and explore similarities and differences, noting places where your classroom results were similar or different than the Cartoon Network/Cyberbullying Research Center survey. Ask students: *Why do you think the results are similar? Why do you think the results are different?* If students don't share some of these examples, share the following:

- Smaller sample size.
- Age differences.
- We have less people in the class who are in digital spaces.
- We have less people.
- We have more or less diversity among our class than the larger sample.



Roles We Play in Bias and Bullying

1. Share with students what we saw from the fourth slide in the study, that two-thirds of tweens, when they have seen cyberbullying, have tried to help others. Explain that in bullying and cyberbullying situations, there are different roles we can play (or ways we can behave) when cyberbullying takes place. We are going to define the four different words which describe those roles or behaviors.
2. Write the four words on the board/smart board and elicit a definition for each and come to the following definitions.
 - **Ally:** Someone who helps or stands up for someone who is being bullied.
 - **Bystander:** Someone who sees bullying happening and does not say or do anything.
 - **Aggressor:** Someone who says or does hurtful things to another person on purpose and over and over.
 - **Target:** Someone who is bullied or treated in hurtful ways by a person or a group on purpose and over and over.

Post the definitions on the board/smart board so students can see and refer to the definitions throughout the activity. Explain that for each of these roles except for target, we choose to engage in this behavior.

3. Ask students to raise their hands (or quietly think to themselves, depending on classroom climate and safety) if they have ever played these roles in bullying or cyberbullying situations: (1) aggressor, (2) then target, (3) bystander, and (4). As you say each of the roles, remind students what they mean.
4. Explain that we all have probably played all of these roles at different times or may do so in the future. Explain to students that they are now going to focus on the times they have acted as bystanders. Share that in many situations of bullying and cyberbullying, there are many more bystanders than there those who are acting as aggressors, targets and allies. Have students turn and talk about a time they acted as a bystander, which means when they saw bullying or cyberbullying taking place, they didn't say or do anything. Give students 1 or 2 minutes each to share with their partner.

(Note: If you think it would be helpful to share an experience from your own life, do so before students turn and talk.)

5. After pairs have shared, reconvene the class and ask: *Would anyone like to share a time when they acted as a bystander when witnessing bullying or cyberbullying?* Remind students not to share names or specific details.
6. Then, as a group, ask students: *What are some ways you have helped in a cyberbullying situation or ways you have acted as an ally online?* Brainstorm and record their responses on the board/smart board. Examples might include things like:
 - I didn't participate when a group of friends were texting mean things about a friend.
 - I saw someone being cyberbullied and I texted/DM'ed them telling them that wasn't okay.
 - I was extra nice to the targeted person.
 - I told my older sister what I saw and she gave me some suggestions.
 - I texted the person doing the cyberbullying and told them I wish they would stop.
 - I reported the cyberbullying to the app.
7. Engage students in a discussion by asking the following questions:
 - Was it easy or difficult to come up with ways to move from acting as a bystander to acting as an ally?
 - Why do you think so many people are bystanders to bias or bullying?
 - When cyberbullying targets people in certain identity groups, how do you think that impacts others in that identity group? How does it impact online spaces and society in general?
 - What do you think would help more people be able act as allies rather than bystanders?

Creating Videos: Advice in Acting as an Ally

1. Ask students: *When you think about what a safe, inclusive and respectful digital space looks like, feels like, sounds like, what words or phrases come to mind?* Record their responses on the board.
2. Explain to students that they are going to work in groups of 2-3 students to create videos to share a message about cyberbullying in general or ways people can act as an ally when they see cyberbullying taking place. Remind them about the words and phrases they used to describe safe, respectful and inclusive digital spaces; that is what their videos will be helping to create. You can assign the groups or have students choose. If you want to give your students some examples of short videos on this topic, you can share a few of these student-made videos in advance: [Videos & Social Media](#)
3. Divide students into their groups of 2-3 students. When they are situated in their groups, invite them to talk together about what the main message they want to convey in their video (i.e., what they want to tell their audience).

4. Distribute copies of the [Video Creation Worksheet](#) to each student. Invite students to plan their videos by talking together and answering the following questions about their video. The questions in the worksheet are as follows:
 - Who is your audience (the people you want to watch it)?
 - What is the overall message of your video? What do you want to tell your audience?
 - Where will you record your video? What do you want to include in the background, if anything?
 - Will you use any props? If so, what props do you need and how will you get or make them?
 - How many people will be speaking or doing something in the video? Who will play those roles?
 - When will you do the practice session?
 - When will you record the video?
 - Write the script (the words that the people will say and what people will be doing in the video)
5. Over the next few days or weeks, provide time in class and time for homework for students to plan and create their videos. Check in with them regularly to review their worksheets and review their scripts before they create the video. If possible, watch and listen to their practice sessions and provide feedback. If time permits, engage the class in a process where students also watch the practice sessions and provide feedback to their peers. When completed, have students share their videos with the class and consider inviting parents/families in to view them as well.

Closing

Have students share one or two sentences aloud about what their message in their videos will be.

Additional Reading and Resources

- [Cartoon Network Anti-Bullying Campaign Spreads to TikTok](#) (Next TV, March 2, 2022)
- [StopBullying.Gov](#)
- [Tween Cyberbullying in the United States](#) (Cyberbullying Research Center, October 7, 2020)
- [Tween Statistics: 9- to 12-year-olds](#) Cyberbullying Research Center

Common Core Anchor Standards

CONTENT AREA/STANDARD
Reading
R7: Integrate information presented in different media or formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively) as well as in words to develop a coherent understanding of a topic or issue
Writing
W3: Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details and well-structured event sequences. W4: Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience. W5: Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach
Speaking and Listening
SL1: Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively. SL2: Integrate and evaluate information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally. SL3: Delineate a speaker's argument and specific claims, distinguishing claims that are supported by reasons and evidence from claims that are not.
Language
L3: Apply knowledge of language to understand how language functions in different contexts, to make effective choices for meaning or style, and to comprehend more fully when reading or listening L5: Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings.

CASEL's SEL Competencies

COMPETENCIES
Self-Awareness: The abilities to understand one's own emotions, thoughts, and values and how they influence behavior across contexts.
Social Awareness: The abilities to understand the perspectives of and empathize with others, including those from diverse backgrounds, cultures, & contexts.
Relationship Skills: The abilities to establish and maintain healthy and supportive relationships and to effectively navigate settings with diverse individuals and groups.
Responsible Decision-Making: The abilities to make caring and constructive choices about personal behavior and social interactions across diverse situations.

Survey

1. Do you use social media or gaming apps?

yes

no

If you have used social media or gaming apps, please share which games, apps, social media and other sites you use.

2. Have you experienced cyberbullying in the following ways (check all that apply; leave blank if none)

I have been cyberbullied

I have witnessed/seen cyberbullying

I have cyberbullied others.

3. When I experienced cyberbullying, I have tried to stop it by

Blocking the person

Telling a parent or trusted adult

Ignoring the person

Reporting it to the website/app

Walking away/taking a break

4. When you have seen cyberbullying happening to someone else, have you tried to help?

yes

no

5. If you haven't tried to help, what are the reasons you didn't try to help?

I'm afraid I'll make things worse

I don't know what to say or do

I don't know how to report it online.

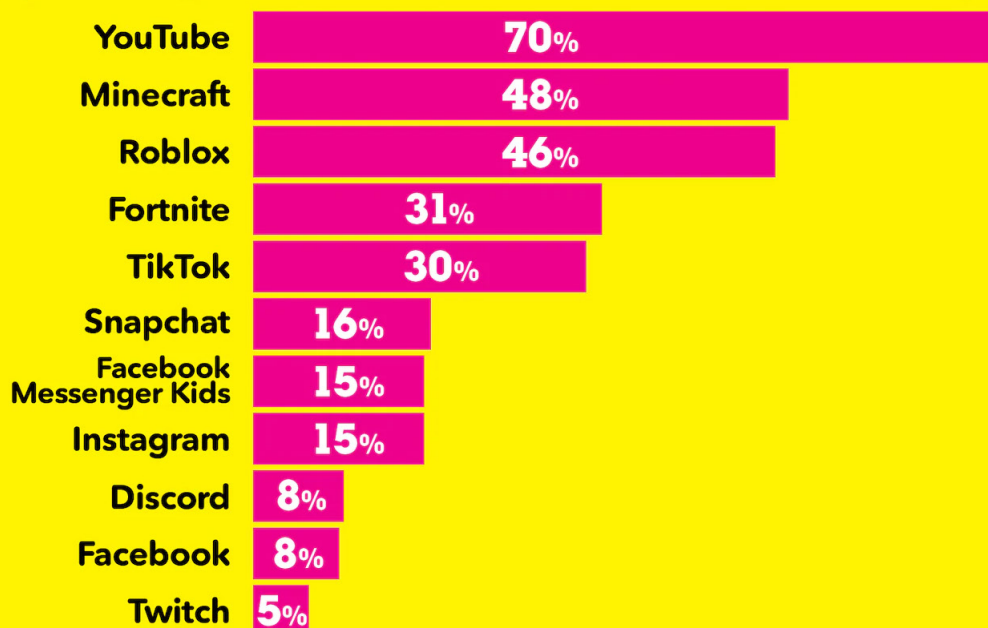
Another reason

Cyberbullying Statistics

#1: Use of Social Media, Gaming Apps

9 OUT OF 10 TWEENS USE SOCIAL MEDIA & GAMING APPS

Apps and games tweens have used in the last year



	BOYS	GIRLS
Snapchat	11%	21%
TikTok	23%	37%
Minecraft	61%	35%

Source: Tween Cyberbullying in 2020, Cyberbullying Research Center and Cartoon Network



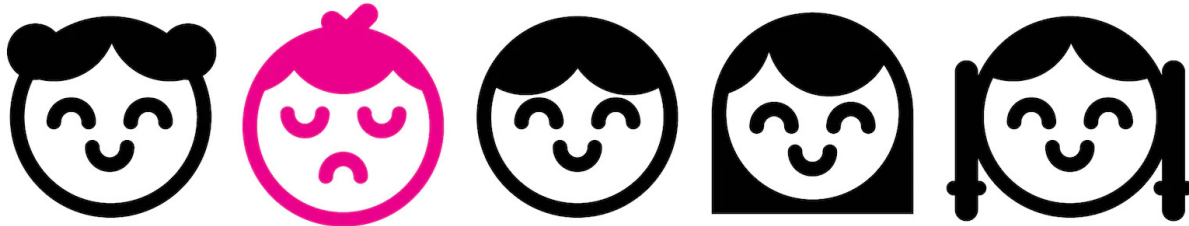
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#2: Experiences with Cyberbullying

1 IN 5 TWEENS HAVE EXPERIENCED CYBERBULLYING IN SOME FORM



Percent of tweens who say they have ever:

Been cyberbullied
themselves

15%

Witnessed
cyberbullying

15%

Cyberbullied
others

3%

Any of these

21%

Source: Tween Cyberbullying in 2020, Cyberbullying Research Center and Cartoon Network



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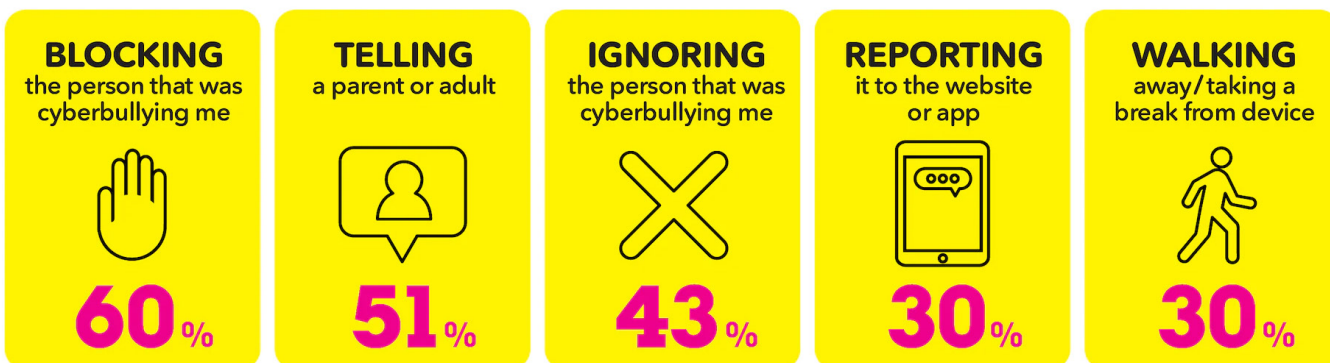


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#3: How Tweens Stop Cyberbullying



TOP FIVE WAYS TWEENS HAVE STOPPED CYBERBULLYING



Source: Tween Cyberbullying in 2020, Cyberbullying Research Center and Cartoon Network



PARENT TIP:

Help your tween understand how to mute, block, report, unfollow, and filter within the app or game they love. Also chat with them about how they can be resilient when faced with meanness.



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#4: Tried to Help Others

TWO-THIRDS OF TWEENS WHO HAVE SEEN CYBERBULLYING SAY THEY'VE TRIED TO HELP OTHERS



"A person was making fun of another person's looks, and bodyshamed them just because they were different. I helped by standing up for them, and caused the cyberbully to quit making fun of the girl a few moments later." (11-year-old girl)

Source: Tween Cyberbullying in 2020, Cyberbullying Research Center and Cartoon Network

PARENT TIP:

Continually remind your tween that their voice and actions have power, and that they should support cyberbullying targets in the moment or at least check up on them afterward to make sure they are okay.



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#5: Barriers to Helping

**TOP THREE BARRIERS TO HELPING
AMONG TWEENS WHO HAVE
SEEN CYBERBULLYING****35%** Afraid they'll make things worse**34%** Don't know what to do or say**27%** Don't know how to report it online

Source: Tween Cyberbullying in 2020, Cyberbullying Research Center and Cartoon Network

PARENT TIP:

Tweens often freeze when they see cyberbullying. Talk them through scenarios (and even role-play with them!) so that they have an action plan before it actually happens to them or a friend.



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Video Creation Worksheet

Group Members:

Who is your audience: the people you want to watch the video?

What is the overall message of your video? What do you want to tell your audience?

Who will be speaking or doing something in the video?

Will you need any props?

What props will you use?

Date for practice session:

Date for recording the video:

Where will you record your video? What will you have in the background?

Write the script here (the words that people will say and what people will be doing in the video):

#1



#2



#3



#4



#5

