



# AACPS Digital Citizenship

**Lesson Title: Cyberbullying-The Power of Words**

**Grade: 5**

**Time: 30 minutes**

**Overview:** Students consider that while they are enjoying their favorite children's Web sites, they may encounter messages from other children that can make them feel angry, hurt, sad, or fearful. They explore ways to handle a particular cyberbullying situation, learn some basic prevention rules, and propose actions to take to calm down when online language makes them angry.

**Objectives:**

- Analyze behaviors that could be considered cyberbullying.
- Generate solutions for dealing with a cyberbullying situation on a children's game Web site.
- Use creative thinking to suggest ways for students to handle feelings of anger.

**Materials:**

- Colored pencils

**Activity Sheets:**

- The Power of Words ( 2 pages)

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**Maryland Technology Literacy Standards for Students (MTLSS):**

**Standard 2.0–Digital Citizenship:**

Students will demonstrate an understanding of the history of technology, its implications on society and practice ethical, legal, and responsible use of technology to assure safety.

**Activities:**

**Introduce:**

Have students share all the ways they enjoy going online and using communications technologies such as cell phones. Discuss positive feelings they enjoy when they use children's Web sites associated with their favorite movies, TV shows, sports, and games.

Discuss all the enjoyable and productive ways they use cell phones and the Internet to stay in touch with friends, family, and their school.

### What's the Problem?

- **Distribute** the activity sheets. Have students read the scenario about Rani and Aruna receiving mean messages via a children's game Web site.
- Have students write their answers to the two questions under What's the Problem? Look for responses that show empathy for Rani and Aruna and acknowledgement that the messages are unfair to the girls and should be stopped.

### Think About It

- Have students read the Think About It section on their activity sheets. Point out that text-based messages can be more confusing or even scarier than face-to-face messages because face-to-face cues are absent.
- Invite students to share their own stories. **Ask:** *Have you seen mean messages sent to you or others online? Tell about it, but do not use real names.*

### Find Solutions

- Lead a brainstorming session by listing all students' ideas on the board or chart paper. Remind students that they are not to pass judgment on other students' ideas at this point.
- Have students discuss the entire list and decide which solutions are fair to all concerned and respectful of the rights of others.
- Assign each of the best solutions to a small group of students and allow them time to plan a role play and then present it to the rest of the class.
- **Ask:** *Imagine that the person who sent the bad messages is a classmate at school. What should this person say to Rani and Aruna? What can this person do to show that he or she wants to make up for the harm they caused? (Amends can be made by offering to do something helpful to Rani and Aruna.)*

### Take Action

- Have students follow the directions on their activity sheets. **Ask:** *What works for you when you need to calm down right away?* Allow students to practice some of these techniques at transition times during the school day (for example, when students come back from lunch/recess). (Optional)-Use desktop publishing applications to convert students' cartoons into comic books and distribute.

**Closure:**

- **Ask:** *What makes mean or scary messages a problem online?* (because they can make the person who gets them upset or angry or scared)
- **Ask:** *What can kids do when they get such cyberbullying messages?* (They can use their technique for calming down and then they can ask an adult for help.)

**Extension:**

- Explain that the mean things people say can be directed at one or two people, as in this lesson, or they can be directed at an entire group of people- for example, all women or all people of a certain race or religion. These words, often in the form of name-calling, are very powerful and can be very hateful and hurtful.

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_



## The Power of Words

Rani and Aruna rush home after school many days to play on their favorite Web site. The Web site has games, chat, and messaging for kids. Their parents let them play on the site, but Rani and Aruna haven't told their parents that every day for two weeks they see messages to them that are mean.

"I hate you!"

"You are ruining the game!"

"You are so stupid."

"You are fat."

"I am going to beat you up."

### What's the Problem?

How do you think Rani and Aruna feel when they read those messages?

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How would you feel if you knew every time you logged on to play your favorite game, you might get messages like these?

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### Think About It

There is an expression that says, "Sticks and stones can break your bones, but words will never hurt you." But is it true? Sometimes words can hurt horribly, too. They can make you feel frustrated, angry, sad, or scared.

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Kids like to go online and use cell phones to e-mail, chat, watch videos, send messages, play games, and do homework. But sometimes the language can get mean or scary. When it's repeated over and over, that's *cyberbullying*.

## Find Solutions!

Should Rani and Aruna have to put up with these messages? There are many ways they could choose to solve this problem. Brainstorm some actions they could take. Decide which one is best and most fair. Then try a role play to practice your solution.

## Take Action!

**Create a Cartoon** What can you do when you get angry? Make a cartoon below to show how you can handle it when someone makes you angry online. For example, you could stop and take slow, deep breaths. Or you could count backward from ten. Cut out your cartoon and take it home to hang up next to your computer.



## Be Cyber**Smart!**<sup>®</sup>

- If you get upset, block the bully and get offline.
- If you wouldn't say something to a person's face, don't say it online.
- Tell your parents or another trusted adult when you or someone else is being cyberbullied.
- Don't share passwords with anyone except your parents or guardian.