AACPS Digital Citizenship

Lesson Title: Manners: Speak Out

Grade: 5

Time: 30 Minutes

Materials:

Overview:

Students learn that, as citizens of their country, they have a responsibility to speak out on important issues and that the Internet provides easy ways to do so.

Site Preview

- U.S. House of Representatives
- Congressional Addresses
- Your Representative

Objectives:

- Explain how the Internet makes it easier to be a good citizen
- Explain how to use Email to communicate with community leaders
- Recall safety rules for protecting private information when using Web mail

Materials

- Activity sheets:

  Speak Out

- Online computer access for teacher to demonstrate
- Printer access

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.

Standard 4.0 – Technology for Communication and Expression:

Students will use technology to communicate information and express ideas using various media formats.

Activities:

Introduce

- Have students brainstorm specific problems affecting their community, region, or country (for example, problems related to hunger, homelessness, unemployment, crime, water shortages, or air pollution).
- **Ask:** *If you could choose one problem to do something about, which one would it be?* Have the class select one problem.

- **Distribute** Activity Sheet 1-*Speak Out* and read and discuss the page. Have students check each step as they complete it with the teacher.
- Go to Web Resources> Tech Connections>Digital Citizenship. Find the title of this lesson, (Manners: Speak Out) and open its links. Guide students to locate the names and E-mail addresses of their elected officials, helping them decide which one to contact. URL addresses are also included on this lesson for teacher to bookmark.

- As a class, compose a letter to the selected official, describing the problem or issue chosen. Add supporting details about how the problem affects their community. Include what the class thinks should be done to help resolve the issue.

- Enter the text of the letter for the students as an Email message. This may be done at the site provided or by using the Email software-Outlook. Remind students never to give out private information in cyberspace without permission of their parent or teacher. Use your name and Email address to represent the class so that students do not have to submit private identity information. (You can chose to submit your class create email or just model the process)
- Describe the process of writing an elected official before the Web was available (going to the library to find the names of officials and research current legislation, obtaining officials' correct addresses, typing letters, obtaining postage and envelopes, and so on). Have students compare that process to using the Web.
- Tell students that most elected officials will reply to mail, but that it may take several weeks. Show students the reply when it arrives, if you decide to submit the email.

Closure:

- **Ask:** *How does the Internet make it easier to be a good citizen?*
- **Ask:** *What steps do you take to Email an elected official?*
- **Ask:** *What should you do if a site asks for private information?*

Web site URL addresses used in this lesson:

https://writerep.house.gov/writerep/welcome.shtml

http://www.visi.com/juan/congress/

http://www.house.gov/house/MemberWWW.shtml

Name _____ Date _____
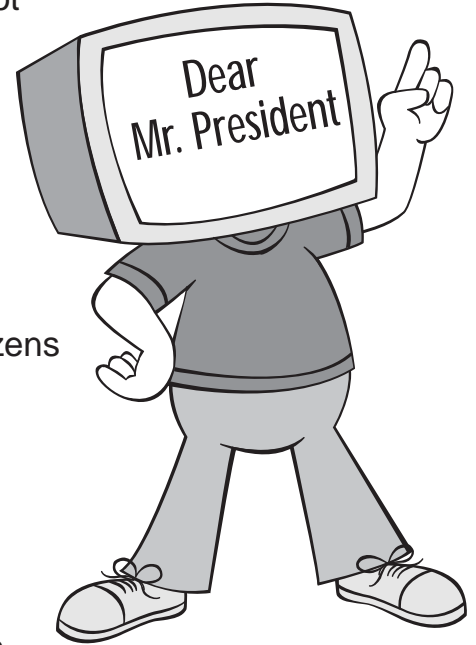
Speak Out

Be a Good Citizen

You're a citizen of your country. Good citizens obey the law and tell the truth. They do the right thing—even when others are not looking. Sometimes, good citizens have to have courage to speak out—even if other people disagree.

Tell People What You Think

Adult citizens vote to show what they believe. Kids can't vote. But you can tell the people who are elected what you think about important problems. You can also tell other citizens what you think.

Use the Power of the Internet

The Internet makes it easy to speak out. By expressing your ideas you can help make your country a better place. You can write a letter to the editor of a newspaper. You can also write to elected officials.

E-mail Your Views

Check each step as you complete it.

- ☐ Choose a problem you feel strongly about.
- ☐ Write an offline letter telling what you know about the problem. Then tell what you think can be done to solve it.
- ☐ Visit a Web site that helps people E-mail elected officials or newspapers.
- ☐ Find the E-mail address you want.
- ☐ Enter your message.
- ☐ If private information is needed, get permission from a parent or teacher.
- ☐ Send the message.