

Lesson 2: What Is Cyberbullying?

Preparation

Suggested time: 75-90 minutes – longer if the Writing Essentials focus is used.

Resources and materials

- Counselor Resource Letters to Teachers, Students and Parents
- Online Video Resource 1
http://www.teachertube.com/view_video.php?viewkey=05a09d33779a17adf170 (If you do not have access to the Internet in the classroom, there is an alternative scenario in Activity 1 to read aloud in class.)
- Student Activities 1,2 3, 4
- Teacher Resource 1
- Writing Essentials – Lesson 2 **Elaboration** overview
- Writing Essentials – Lesson Plan: **Elaboration Strategies Using Mentor Text**
- Writing Essentials – Lesson 2, SA1, **Elaboration Strategies**
- Writing Essentials – Lesson 2, TR1, **Annotated Elaboration Strategies**
- Writing Essentials – Lesson 2, TR2, *The Final Word/USA Today*, by Craig Wilson

Lesson goals

Students will demonstrate their understanding of these key concepts:

- What is bullying.
- Bullying behavior in a variety of forms (verbal, physical, non-verbal, direct and indirect).
- How bullies victimize people.
- Similarities and differences of bullying and cyberbullying
- The skill of elaboration within the writing process, using mentor text as a guide.

EALRs and GLEs addressed

You may find the following requirements and expectations useful in relating this curriculum to your overall educational goals.

| EALRs and GLEs | |
|--------------------|--|
| Reading 1.2 | Uses vocabulary strategies to understand text. |

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| Reading | 1.3.1 | Understands and applies new vocabulary. |
| | 1.4 | Applies word recognition skills and strategies to read fluently. |
| | 2.1 | Demonstrates evidence of reading comprehension. |
| Writing | 1.1.1 | Prewrites to generate ideas and plan writing |
| | 2.3 | Uses a variety of forms and genres. |
| | 3.1 | Develops ideas and organizes writing |
| | 3.1.2 | Uses an effective organizational structure. |
| | 3.3 | Knows and applies writing conventions appropriate for grade level |
| Communication | 1.1.1 | Applies a variety of listening and observation skills and strategies to interpret information. |
| | 2.2.1 | Uses communication skills that demonstrate respect. |
| Educational Technology | 1.2 | Use digital media and environments to communicate and work collaboratively to support individual learning and contribute to the learning of others |
| | 1.3 | Research, manage and evaluate information and solve problems using digital tools and resources |
| | 2.1 | Practice safe, legal and ethical behavior in the use of information and technology |
| | 2.2 | Understand technology systems and use hardware and networks to support learning |
| | 2.3 | Use productivity tools and common applications effectively and constructively |
| | 2.4 | Transfer current knowledge to new and emerging technologies |
| | | |

Vocabulary

General Terms

These words are introduced in this lesson.

- **accomplice:** Someone who supports a bully either by encouraging the bully or actively engaging in the bullying activity.
- **anonymity, anonymous:** The state in which a person keeps his or her identity hidden from others. Online bullies can stay anonymous with user names that hide their real names.

- **bullying:** Repeated, unwanted, hurtful, negative behavior against someone. Bullying typically involves an imbalance of power where the bully is either physically stronger or is perceived to have more power than the target.
- **bystander:** Someone who observes bullying. By their inaction or non-support of the target a passive bystander increases the target's feeling of isolation and encourages the bully who may take their inaction as a sign of approval.
- **cyberbully:** A bully who uses Internet services and devices to harass a target. Cyberbullying, online harassment, e-bullying, mobile bullying, digital bullying, Internet bullying, and cyberstalking, are all terms for hurting others using online tools.
- **cyberstalking:** When someone uses the Internet to track the activities of another to spy on and harass them.
- **direct bullying:** A verbal attack on a target in a text message, e-mail, or other communication.
- **harassment:** bullying based on some specific characteristic such as race, gender, age, ethnicity, sexual preference, and so on.
- **indirect bullying:** Aggressive actions without actual direct contact with the victim. The bully might send out a damaging photo of the target or posting it online. Or the bully might create a Web page that masquerades as the target's Web page and use it to embarrass him or her.
- **justification:** To free oneself from blame or guilt, i.e. when a bully decides his/her bullying actions are okay because the target is "weird" or different in some way.
- **target:** Someone a bully has attacked.

Other terms

These terms are also relevant to the lesson.

- **24x7**
- **dominance**
- **isolation**

Technical Terms

- **post:** to publish content online, as in posting a comment on a discussion board or blog.

Teacher Background

Cyberbullying is a serious and growing problem. Physical bullying usually reaches its peak in elementary school. But according to researchers at the University of Wisconsin Eau Claire, over [30 percent](#) of middle and high school students report being the target of cyberbullying, and the percentage appears to be increasing. (You can read this research at <http://www.uwec.edu/newsreleases/06/mar/0314cyberbullying.htm>.) In fact, the prevalence of online bullying has now surpassed traditional physical bullying.

Bullying has been around forever, but when you add e-mail, blogs, instant messaging, and other electronic methods, it takes on a new dimension. Abuse can occur 24x7 and be published to a worldwide audience. The Internet also provides new media and tools to enable additional forms of humiliation.

The primary targets of cyberbullying, like offline targets, are those whom bullies perceive they *can* bully. This includes students who may lack self-esteem, or have little in the way of a support network or just a few friends. Bullies typically find an ‘easy’ target, and then choose a characteristic to justify their attack, such as body size, religion, looks, income bracket, ethnic background, intelligence, or sexual preference. Though targets often come to believe the bullying is due to their ‘flaw’ this is not the cause of the bullying; it is the justification. It is critically important to make this distinction so targets don’t feel they are at fault.

Unlike offline bullying, cyberbullies can deliver an onslaught of accusations and threats at any time of the day or night. They can stealthily take and alter photos in damaging ways or add derogatory comments. They can then post them on social networking sites (such as MySpace) or send them in e-mail messages to the target’s friends and family. Sometimes, pretending to be the target, they create fake blogs to stir up trouble with the target’s friends, to post embarrassing videos, or, in an extreme yet well-documented form of cyberbullying, to entice a predator to target the victim.

It’s also important to understand that cyber-humiliation may be permanent. The information posted by a bully online can last literally forever and no amount of apology will ever put the genie back in the bottle. Schools, employers, friends, and others who search on a name ten, twenty, even thirty years from now may come across the cyberbully’s malicious lies.




Writing Essentials for Lesson 2

The writing focus for lesson 2 is on Elaboration **Strategies Using Mentor Text**. Mentor text is a selection of writing by a professional writer, in this case Craig Wilson of **USA Today**. Students will be asked to read and analyze Craig’s article on cyberbullying to learn about specific kinds of elaboration that they can begin to use in their own writing. When you see this icon on page 22 of the Teacher Manual, that’s where we recommend you insert this writing focus.



Just a reminder to email the **Lesson 2 Letter to Parents** (MS Cyberbullying-Lesson 2 CRT.doc), and the **Lesson 2 Letter to Students** (MS Cyberbullying-Lesson 2 CRS.doc). These letters serve as an introduction to the topics covered in this lesson as well as giving strategies and encouragement.

It’s also a good time for you to read the **Lesson 2 Letter to Teachers** (MS Cyberbullying-Lesson 2 CRT) to ready yourself for teaching this lesson.

 **Note:** For more background on bullying, refer to Teacher Resource 1 Statistics on Bullying (Lesson 2 TR1).

Lesson: What Is Cyberbullying?



If your students received their **Lesson 2 Letter to Students**, this is a good time to discuss their thoughts and reactions to the letter. Then proceed with the following lesson.

Topic 1: What is bullying?

Activity 1: Watching a Bullying Talent Show

Online Video Resource 1: Cyberbullying – Talent Show

http://www.teachertube.com/view_video.php?viewkey=05a09d33779a17adf170

To play the video:

- Double-click the link above (if you are reading this online).
- Type the Web address above into your browser (such as Internet Explorer or Firefox).

If you cannot access the video, read this scenario to the class:

A middle school girl is auditioning for a school talent contest. She walks out on the stage and proceeds to give her presentation to an audience of her peers and teachers. She says “Today I’m going to talk about Patty. Patty’s best characteristics? She’s stupid. Stupid and ugly. Everything she does is ugly. Watch her eat. Watch her stuff her face. Look at her: greasy hair, dirty fingernails. It makes me want to vomit. Her dad doesn’t work, they have no money. That’s why she wears that nasty pink sweater. Everyone hates her; even the teachers and they’re supposed to like everyone. Get a life, Patty. Thank you.”

Write the definition of bullying (shown below) on the overhead.

Bullying involves repeated, unwanted, hurtful, negative behavior against someone. Bullying typically involves an imbalance of power where the bully is either physically stronger or is perceived to have more power than the target.

With this definition and the video in mind, ask the students to consider the question below. If possible, list the student responses so everyone can see them.

What are some characteristics of a bully?

Possible answers: They have a need to dominate others. They may feel the need for power and importance. They don’t think of others’ feelings (they lack empathy). They may want to force their targets to give them something (money, valuables, etc.). They are being bullied in their home or other situations and need to express their anger towards somebody, etc.

Topic 2: Understand bullying behavior and roles

Activity 2: Finding out more about bullies

Student Activity 1 (Lesson 2 SA1.doc): A Story of Bullying

Hand out SA1. Have the students read the "Story of Bullying" and discuss the following questions. You may wish to have students work in small teams or individually as they answer the questions. Then debrief, listing student or team responses so the whole class can see them.

- What do we call what is happening here? What's going on here?
This person is being bullied.
- What types of people are likely to be targets of bullies?
People who are shy, who may possibly lack self-confidence, or who may be isolated because they don't know lots of people, etc.
- What sorts of things do bullies do? (Make sure to elicit the more subtle bullying behaviors.)
Laughing at you, shoving you, making fun of you, hitting you, insulting you, etc.
Ignoring you; lying about someone to make others dislike them, etc.
- Point out to students that everyone is the victim of bullying at some time in their lives.
Ask them to share their own experiences.

Solicit from the class explanations of how these types of bullies are different from each other: bully, accomplice, and bystander. Have students take notes on the three types of bullies on the back of SA1.

bully: The main instigator of the bullying action.

accomplice: Someone who supports a bully either by encouraging the bully or actively engaging in the bullying activity.

bystander: Someone who observes bullying. By inaction or non-support of the target a passive bystander increases the target's feeling of isolation and encourages the bully who may interpret their inaction as a sign of approval.



If you want to break this lesson into a shorter module, this would be a good place to do so.

Topic 3: Understanding how bullies justify victimizing people

Activity 3: Understanding how bullies justify their actions

On the overhead, have students read the sentence below. Ask students to work with a partner to come up with two to three sentences that explain the statement. Make sure they understand the meaning of the word *justification* before they start.

- **Targets of bullying often come to believe that they are being bullied because of some flaw within themselves. But this is not the cause of the bullying; it is the *justification*.**

Give ample opportunity for as many student pairs as possible to share their thoughts. Then, read or post the following statement to the class.

- **Bullies typically find an “easy” target and then choose a characteristic to justify their attack. An example of a justifying characteristic used by a bully would be a person who has a different religion and possibly wears clothing different than most other students.**

Then ask students, what other characteristics of a target might bullies use to justify their bullying?

Possible answers: Physical size (too small or too big), looks, family income, ethnic background, intelligence, sexual preference, athletic ability, etc.

Topic 4: Comparing bullying and cyberbullying

Activity 4: Defining cyberbullying

Student Activity 2 (Lesson 2 SA2.doc): When the Bullies Turned Faceless

Hand out or post SA2 on the overhead. Ask students to read the New York Times article. (Alternatively, you could read it aloud to the class.) Although the Internet did not create bullies, it does give them new tools.

Then post on the overhead the following questions. Lead a discussion to have students respond to these questions. You might wish to have students take notes on the back of SA2.

1. How could we name what happened to separate it from regular bullying?

Cyberbullying, online bullying, digital bullying, online harassment, e-bullying, mobile bullying, Internet bullying, or cyberstalking

2. What Internet services and devices can be used to cyberbully?

Services: E-mail, instant messaging, social networking sites, text messaging, blogs, etc.

Devices: Internet-connected computer, cell phone, personal digital assistant (PDA), gaming console.

3. How do bullies use Internet services and devices to bully?

Explain to students that these attacks can be **direct**, such as sending a mean text message. Or they can be **indirect**, pretending, for example, to be that person and behaving badly online to hurt his or her reputation, or spreading lies so that others don't like them.

They can send mean text messages to the target's cell phone. They can post nasty comments to a blog or discussion board pretending to be the target. They can create a Web site pretending to be the target and place inappropriate pictures or messages there. They can go after a person in an interactive online game to insult or harass them. They can pretend to be the target and break the rules of a site to get them thrown off. They can text message lies about the target to others.

4. How does the Internet give bullies more power?

They can pretend to be stronger, more attractive, or more popular than their target. They can harass a target constantly. They can make the taunting and humiliation much more public. They can stay anonymous.

5. Have any of your friends experienced this?

Explain to students that cyberbullies don't have to confront their targets in person or ever identify themselves. When **anonymous**, they can bully others with little fear of retaliation—that's part of the appeal. That anonymity can be frightening for the target. It can be especially traumatic if the tormentor pretends to be one of their friends, or pretends to be more than one friend. This leaves the target utterly unsure of whom they can trust and increases their feelings of isolation.

Extra Credit Assignment: Have students research on the Internet to find out Lori Drew's **justification** for creating "Josh" to cyberbully Megan (SA2).

Lori Drew allegedly wanted to know what Megan was saying about her daughter online, and felt that she had a right to do this because she was trying to support her daughter.

Debrief their research at the beginning of the next lesson.



If you want to break this lesson into a shorter module, this would be a good place to do so.

Activity 5: Matching bullying and cyberbullying behaviors

Student Activity 3 (Lesson 2 SA3.doc): Comparing Bullying and Cyberbullying

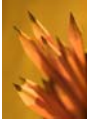
Hand out SA3. Discuss the major difference between bullying and cyberbullying as being the use of online devices used in cyberbullying. Break the class into pairs or small groups of three to work together to fill in and complete the chart.

Debrief their responses. You might want to recreate this chart in a way that it can be posted as a semi-permanent and powerful reminder to students. Then when students have finished, you can record their answers there.

| Bullying | Cyberbullying |
|--|--|
| A bully says something nasty and it's only heard when he or she says it. | A cyberbully can say something damaging online and it may be accessed practically forever. |
| The bully makes him or herself known to the target. | The cyberbully can stay anonymous. |
| The primary bully is usually physically stronger. | Physical strength is not required. |
| Bullies are usually limited to attacking at certain hours of the day. | Cyberbullies can torment their targets 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. |
| Often bullies attack face to face. | Cyberbullies are never in the target's presence when they attack. |

In most physical bullying attacks, there are relatively few witnesses.

By posting content online, it can potentially be available for access by anyone with an Internet connection anywhere in the world.



Writing Essentials: Prewriting Strategy for Elaboration

At this point in Lesson 2, you may wish to take extra time for this writing activity. This session will focus on elaboration strategies using mentor text that can be used in any writing lesson when the writer wishes to expand on a topic to make it more interesting and engaging to their audience. Keep in mind students will need to practice this strategy with you or as partners several times as they become more comfortable using the various kinds of elaboration suggested here. It's a stand-alone strategy that has been adapted to embrace this particular lesson on cyberbullying.

Journal Activity: (If the Writing Essentials focus above is not used, then this journal activity will conclude this lesson.)

Student Activity 4 (Lesson 2 SA4.doc): Vocabulary Review

Hand out SA4. Using words from the vocabulary list, ask students to begin a Journal by writing a paragraph of five to seven sentences in their journals about what they think are the most significant differences between offline and online bullying and why. This could be done during class, if time permits, or as a homework assignment.