

GRADE 8

Responding to Online Hate Speech

How should you respond to online hate speech?



OVERVIEW

Kids can come across all kinds of negative content online and on social media, whether it's rude, mean, or even hateful. But what counts as actual "hate speech," and how should kids respond when they see it? Use these activities to help students identify online hate speech and discuss the best ways to respond.

Students will be able to:

- Use a circle-discussion structure to strengthen their class community.
- Explore the nature of hate speech by discussing whether it could happen at their school.
- Identify specific actions to positively affect a situation involving hate speech.

Lesson Snapshot

Estimated time: 55 mins.

Warm Up:	Favorite or Least Favorite	5 mins.
Connect:	Circle Talk	10 mins.
Discuss:	Could It Happen Here?	25 mins.
Wrap Up:	Stand Up	15 mins.

Key Standards Supported

Common Core ELA

L.8.1, L.8.2, L.8.2c, L.8.3, L.8.4, L.8.6, RI.8.1, RI.8.2, RI.8.3, RI.8.4, RI.8.10, SL.8.1, SL.8.1a, SL.8.1b, SL.8.1c, SL.8.1d, SL.8.2, SL.8.3, SL.8.4, SL.8.6, W.8.4, W.8.10

CASEL

1a, 1b, 1c, 1d, 1e, 2a, 2b, 2c, 2d, 2e, 2f, 3a, 3b, 3c, 3d, 4a, 4b, 4c, 4d, 5a, 5b, 5c, 5d, 5e, 5f

AASL

I.A.1, I.A.2, I.B.1, I.B.2, I.B.3, I.C.1, I.D.1, I.D.2, I.D.3, I.D.4, II.A.1, II.A.2, II.B.1, II.B.2, II.B.3, II.C.1, II.C.2, II.D.1, II.D.2, II.D.3, III.A.1, III.A.2, III.B.1, III.B.2, III.C.1, III.C.2, III.D.1, III.D.2, IV.B.2, IV.B.

ISTE

2a, 2b, 2d

What You'll Need

Spanish-language student and family resources available soon!

- Blank paper
- Pens or pencils
- **Lesson Slides**
- Student Handout: Scenario A: Maya **Student Version**
- Student Handout: Scenario B: John **Student Version**
- Student Handout: Scenario C: Marcus **Student Version**
- Student Handout: Scenario D: Nancy **Student Version**
- Lesson Quiz **Editable Google form Answer Key**

Take-home resources

- **Family Tips**
- **Family Activity**
- **Family Engagement Resources**

LESSON PLAN**Key Vocabulary:****anonymous**

without a name or other information that identifies who you are

cyberbullying

using digital devices, sites, and apps to intimidate, harm, and upset someone

hate speech

a verbal attack targeting someone because of a group they belong to--e.g. their race, gender, religion, ability, sexual orientation, etc.

Warm Up: Favorite or Least Favorite

5 mins.

Before the lesson:

- Review the four hate speech scenario handouts (**A, B, C, and D**) and decide which would be most appropriate or meaningful for your students.
- Please note that **Scenario A** includes the word "slut," which may trigger strong feelings and responses from students. We've included some strong words to make the scenarios more realistic to the experience of online hate speech. We recommend introducing the word beforehand and prompting students to discuss any existing experiences and feelings related to its use.
- This lesson can be taught whole-class or by dividing students into two or three groups. If you have only 45 minutes to teach the lesson, we recommend teaching it whole-class and using only one scenario for the "Apply: Could It Happen Here?" activity.
- To extend this lesson and for more resources on teaching about hate speech, see classroom materials from **Teaching Tolerance** and **Facing History and Ourselves**.

1. **Pass** out a blank piece of paper to each student and project **Slide 4**. Allow students three minutes to write a response to the reflection question.

2. **Say:** *Thank you for taking some time to reflect. You're going to get a chance to share your reflection in a moment.*

3. **Explain** to students that they will be sharing and discussing their ideas with one another using a circle format. Some of the comments might be personal, so it is important that everyone try to be their most mature self during the discussion. Review the existing discussion norms for the class or consider presenting one or more of the following norms:

1. Speak your truth.
2. Respect others' viewpoints.
3. Don't interrupt.
4. Disagree respectfully.

Provide examples and clarify any questions students have about the norms.

4. **Direct** students to form a circle by moving their chairs, standing, or sitting on desks. If necessary, adjust student positioning so every student in the circle can see each other.

(For large classes, consider dividing students into two or three smaller circles. Smaller circles allow students more of a chance to talk and increased comfort but may also present management and facilitation challenges.)

Connect: Circle Talk

10 mins.

1. **Project Slide 5** and read the directions aloud. Encourage all students to share when it is their turn, but if any are reluctant, they can just say "pass." Emphasize that only one person should be speaking at a time and that students must speak loudly enough for everyone in the circle to hear.

The purpose of this share-out is to provide a foundation for the next activity, where students use the circle structure to consider a scenario that involves hate speech. For this first round, the goals are to:

- Practice the circle structure.
- Have every student speak (even if it is just to say "pass").
- Have students learn a little about each other.
- Begin to raise some of the important characteristics, both positive and negative, of your school's culture.

It's OK if students provide only surface-level answers during this first round.

2. **Allow** 10 minutes, or as much time as it takes, for all students to share. Discourage students from asking follow-up questions or discussing, as the purpose of this round is only to take turns sharing and listening.

3. **Say:** *Thank you, everyone, for sharing. That was really interesting! I learned something new about a lot of you. I hope you all learned things about each other, too.*

Provide a couple of examples of things you heard that you didn't know about students.

4. **Say:** *Next, we're going to do a second round of discussion. We've started to talk about the culture at our school, and in this round, we're going to discuss that further.*

Explain that you're also going to be talking about a specific scenario involving something called **hate speech**. Hate speech is a *verbal attack targeting someone because of a group they belong to -- for example, their race, gender, religion, ability, sexual orientation, etc. (Slide 6)* It can appear in many ways, but one common way is online, as in this scenario. Often when it is online, it is also **anonymous**, which means *it is without a name or other information that identifies who it is*. This can make the hate speech even more difficult to respond to, and it can make it more difficult to identify the perpetrator(s).

Discuss: Could It Happen Here?

25 mins.

1. **Pass out** your selected scenario handout to each student. Have a student read the scenario aloud as other students in the group follow along. Then read the "Reflect" question aloud and allow students a minute or two to gather their thoughts.
2. **Project Slide 7** and read the directions aloud. Invite a volunteer to go first. Explain to students that they will have a chance to discuss each other's responses after each person has had a chance to share.
3. **Allow** 15 minutes for each person to share, with each student getting one minute and then passing clockwise. Students who are reluctant to share can say "pass" instead.

If a large number of students are hesitant to share or are only sharing one- or two-word answers, consider pausing the circle and interjecting. Encourage richer responses by doing one or more of the following:
 - Ask students to consider a specific, related incident that happened at school: *How did you feel when _____ happened?*
 - Model sharing your own personal reactions to and thoughts about the scenario.
 - Rephrase the "Reflect" question to be: *How would you feel if this happened at our school? How would you react?*
4. **Project Slide 8** and read the directions. Point to the norms and "Think Critically" questions on their handouts and review each of them. Invite one student to provide the first follow-up comment to begin the discussion. As students discuss, provide support by posing follow-up questions and reminding students of the norms.

Wrap Up: **Stand Up**

15 mins.

1. **Say:** *Thank you for being open to sharing your ideas and for having a respectful discussion. Hate speech is a very sensitive topic, and I really appreciate that everyone brought their best selves to the conversation.*

Explain that the scenario you looked at is also an example of **cyberbullying**, which means *using digital devices, sites, and apps to intimidate, harm, and upset someone.* (Slide 9) In any situation involving hate speech or cyberbullying, it is important that we think about our own role and how we should act.

2. **Ask:** *In the scenario, what are some ways that students could have responded?* Capture student responses on **Slide 10**.
3. **Explain** to students that there are many different ways to respond and it's not always possible or realistic to directly confront the perpetrator. Highlight any of the actions on **Slide 10** that represent being an upstander, including:
 - Confronting the bully.
 - Defending the person being targeted.
 - Reaching out to the person being targeted to see how they're feeling.
 - Telling a trusted adult about the situation.
 - Raising general awareness about the issue at school or in your community.

Explain that these actions all seek to make a positive impact on the situation for the people involved and for the community as a whole. It takes courage to be an upstander, but if you don't do it, you may later regret having stayed silent.

4. **Have** students complete the Exit Ticket questions on their handouts.
5. **Have** students complete the **Lesson Quiz**. Send home the **Family Activity** and **Family Tips**.



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