

DEBATING Cyberbullying

Lesson Overview:

Students explore the impact of cyberbullying and online harm through a structured class debate. They consider whether online harm can be as serious as offline harm, using evidence, examples and respectful discussion to justify their thinking. Students reflect on the emotional impact of online interactions and consider their responsibility in creating safe and respectful online communities.

Learning Outcomes:

By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

- explain what cyberbullying and online harm can look like in different digital environments
- recognise that online harm can have significant emotional, social and psychological impacts
- participate respectfully in a structured debate by listening, responding and building on others' ideas
- reflect on their own responsibility to help create safe and respectful online communities.

Key Words

Cyberbullying, online harm, empathy, respect, digital citizenship, bystander, upstander, responsibility, wellbeing.

Lesson Resources:

[Lesson Slides](#), [Public Speaking Tips](#)

Curriculum Links

Digital Technologies

- Explain how digital systems shape online identity, relationships and communities, with a focus on ethical, safe and responsible use ([AC9TDI6K04](#))

English

- Use interaction skills to contribute to discussions, clarify and build on the ideas of others, and respond using appropriate language and evidence ([AC9E5LA01](#) / [AC9E6LA01](#))

Health and Physical Education

- Investigate how emotional responses vary in depth and intensity, and apply strategies that promote their own and others' health, safety and wellbeing. ([AC9HP6P04](#))
- Describe and apply protective behaviours and help-seeking strategies in a range of online and offline situations. ([AC9HP6P08](#))

LESSON SLIDES

Introduce:

- Watch Marty & Fadzai's provocation video on Slide 3
- Display the statement on screen:
"Online harm is not as serious as offline harm."
- Students move to one side of the room and briefly justify their position: Agree / Disagree / Unsure
- Turn & Talk:
 - What does online harm mean?
 - What are some examples of online harm?
- Explain that the purpose of the debate is to explore different perspectives respectfully, rather than to "win."

Explore:

Students...

- discuss common examples of online harm, including group chat drama, rumours, mean comments, online gaming and fake accounts
- investigate the two case studies by working in small groups to:
 - identify the online harm (if any)
 - discuss how each character might be feeling
 - consider whether the harm was intentional
 - suggest how the situation could have been handled differently
- Work in debate teams:
 - brainstorm arguments for their assigned position
 - consider the emotional, social and long-term impacts of online harm
 - develop 2–3 evidence-based arguments using examples from the scenarios
 - prepare a short opening statement
- Students then participate in a structured debate.

Optional: Watch [Public Speaking Tips from Fadzai](#)

Reflect:

Students consider the debate and share with a partner:

- If their opinion changed from the beginning of the lesson
- One argument they agreed with
- One idea that challenged their thinking

Exit Ticket:

"One thing I want my classmates to remember about online harm is..."