“Cyberbullying: Effects on Teens Across the Nation”
Language Arts Lesson Plan

A daily news broadcast for High School and Middle School students now under development by MacNeil/Lehrer Productions
Segment 3:
“Cyberbullying: Effects on Teens Across the Nation”
Language Arts Curriculum

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Dear Educator,

The News online video reports for The Gov provide middle and high school students with a valuable exercise in social studies and language arts with this 6:39 minute segment on “Cyberbullying – Effects on Teens Across the Nation” at www.pbs.org/newshour/thenever/thegov. Correspondent, Sam Petto investigates cyberbullying in Omaha Nebraska as experts discuss national trends.” Lessons for social studies and language arts are available to support this video in the “For Educators” section of the website. All videos and curricula have been informed by The News instructional design that can be found on the website www.pbs.org/newshour/thenever. The curriculum includes content-based standards, discussion questions, student activities, vocabulary and primary reference sources. A complete transcript of each video report includes time codes to assist in isolating specific segments of the video and to augment the instruction of media literacy and multimedia production. All of this material is presented as options to fit teachers’ instructional needs.

References to Larry Bell’s “The 12 Powerful Words” are highlighted in bold in the lesson plans and in the “thought starter” questions on the home page and educator’s page, and in the transcript (to denote where they are used in the video segment).

We have also added general topics to correlate to the lessons and video as well as concept based standards with conceptual lens and enduring understanding.

We welcome our partners at the Omaha Public Schools who have joined The News in the second year of a special pilot project. We have also developed a new authoring tool for students called YOU.edit which gives students an online tool to remix the content of The News reports, so they can create their own multimedia presentations. This editing tool can be found by clicking on the YOU.edit button on the home page of the website. Currently used with our OPS teacher consultants it is password protected so that it can serve as a viable educational asset that allows classroom teachers to assign multimedia projects within the security and content safety of The News website.

Answers to student “thought starter” questions listed below the video.
#1 The Cyberbullying Research Center describes it as “willful and a repeated harm inflicted through the use of computers, cell phones and other electronic devices.” Prof. Juan Casas call it “electronic aggression.”
#2. Federal anti-cyberbullying legislation was introduced in Congress in 2009 and is still in the early stages of discussion.
#3. The biggest challenges are about anonymity because it’s hard to identify the bully and where the bullying is happening.

Sincerely,

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www.pbs.org/newshour/thenever
Omaha Public Schools Standards
http://www.ops.org/District/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=Hbqyrrg2ydM%3d&tabid=912&mid=2006

Reading
Grades 7-12
Standard 1. Students will read a variety of grade level texts fluently with accuracy, appropriate pace, phrasing, and expression.

Standard 2. Students will build literary, general academic, and content specific grade level vocabulary.

Standard 3. Students will extract and construct meaning using prior knowledge, applying text information, and monitoring comprehension while reading grade level text.

Conceptual Lens: Identity
Enduring Understanding: Personal identity develops as values and beliefs shift due to societal and cultural influences

Grade Level: 7-12
Content Areas: English, Language Arts

Key Concepts:
In this lesson, students will learn about cyberbullying: what it is, its impact on individuals and communities, and what can be done about it. This lesson urges students to analyze the various aspects of cyberbullying that make it a complex issue, in schools, legislation, and in their everyday lives.

This lesson will encourage students to evaluate various scenarios that constitute cyberbullying, to view these scenarios from multiple perspectives, and to discuss this sensitive topic with their teachers, classmates, and administrators. It will help to educate them on their school’s policy on cyberbullying and get them directly involved in action to spread awareness and help to prevent cyberbullying by formulating proposals and public service campaigns.

Key Objectives:
Students will:

- Examine visual media for meaning through pre- and post-viewing exercises
- Gain a well-rounded understanding of the topic of cyberbullying and its impact, especially on teens
- Write reflectively both from their own perspective on the issue, as well as by taking on the role of someone involved in cyberbullying
- Write persuasively to impact school policy/protocol for cyberbullying
- Run their own anti-cyberbullying campaign

Cyberbullying: Effects on Teens Across the Nation
This lesson was designed to support the News video “Cyberbullying: Effects on Teens Across the Nation”
The video can be found online at www.pbs.org/newshour/themoves/thegov
Key Vocabulary:

- **Bullying** (noun): repeated acts over time attempting to create or enforce one person's (or group's) power over another person (or group), thus creating an "imbalance of power". The "imbalance of power" may be social power and/or physical power. 
  (Source: wikipedia.com)

- **Cyberbullying** (noun): willful and repeated harm inflicted through the use of computers, cell phones, and other electronic device 
  (Source: Cyberbullying Research Center)

- **Anonymity** (noun): the act of remaining anonymous; that is, of unknown authorship or origin 
  (Source: merriam-webster.com)

Omaha Public Schools Standards
http://www.ops.org/District/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=Hbqyrrg2ydM%3d&tabid=912&mid=2006

Writing
Grades 7-12
**Standard 5.** Students will write for a variety of purposes and audiences in multiple genres.

Speaking and Listening
Grades 7-12
**Standard 6.** Students will develop and apply speaking skills to communicate key ideas in a variety of situations.

**Standard 7.** Students will develop, apply and refine active listening skills across a variety of situations.

**Standard 8.** Students will develop, apply, and adapt reciprocal communication skills.

Multiple Literacies
Grades 7-12
**Standard 9.** Students will research, summarize, and communicate information in a variety of media and formats.
McRel

http://www.mcrel.org/

Level III (Grades 6-8)

Writing

Standard 1. Uses the general skills and strategies of the writing process.

1. Prewriting: Uses a variety of prewriting strategies (e.g., makes outlines, uses published pieces as writing models, constructs critical standards, brainstorms, builds background knowledge).

5. Uses content, style, and structure (e.g., formal or informal language, genre, organization) appropriate for specific audiences (e.g., public, private) and purposes (e.g., to entertain, to influence, to inform)

10. Writes persuasive compositions (e.g., engages the reader by establishing a context, creating a persona, and otherwise developing reader interest; develops a controlling idea that conveys a judgment; creates and organizes a structure appropriate to the needs and interests of a specific audience; arranges details, reasons, examples, and/or anecdotes persuasively; excludes information and arguments that are irrelevant; anticipates and addresses reader concerns and counter arguments; supports arguments with detailed evidence, citing sources of information as appropriate)

11. Writes compositions that address problems/solutions (e.g., identifies and defines a problem in a way appropriate to the intended audience, describes at least one solution, presents logical and well-supported reasons)

Standard 2. Uses the stylistic and rhetorical aspects of writing.

1. Uses descriptive language that clarifies and enhances ideas

Standard 3. Uses grammatical and mechanical conventions in written compositions.
Background:

Bullies have always been around, especially in middle schools and high schools; however, in recent years, bullying has found a new and destructive outlet in the form of electronic communication. Cyberbullying, according to the Cyberbullying Research Center, is “willful and repeated harm inflicted through the use of computers, cell phones, and other electronic devices.” Cyberbullying can happen on Facebook pages or other social networking sites, on blogs, on YouTube, in chat rooms, and through text messages, email, or instant messengers. In other words, the same technology that students use on a daily basis for both educational and entertainment purposes can become a harmful weapon against other children.

While most states have laws in place that address bullying in general, the issue of cyberbullying brings up a series of complicated issues that make it a challenging problem for schools to address. It is harder to identify, takes place in large part off of school property and outside of school hours, and brings up issues of students’ free speech rights and privacy.

 Nonetheless, it is becoming clearer and clearer that cyberbullying is a severely destructive problem that needs to be addressed. Bullies can use technology to rapidly and indiscriminately spread information and to create a façade of anonymity, and it is all too easy to click a button and “send” or “submit” in a moment of heated emotion, without thinking through the consequences. Two highly publicized teen suicide cases, those of Megan Meier of Missouri (link to New York Times page http://topics.nytimes.com/topics/reference/timestopics/people/m/megan_meier/index.html) and Phoebe Prince of Massachusetts (link to Newsweek article http://www.newsweek.com/2010/10/04/phoebe-prince-should-bullying-be-a-crime.html), have been linked back to cyberbullying, all too clearly illustrating the devastating impact of this type of harassment.

In the wake of these suicides, as well as the increased in-school incidents that trickle over from electronic bullying, more schools and communities are trying to implement protocol surrounding cyberbullying specifically. A few states have passed laws that address cyberbullying, and federal legislation has been introduced in Congress. However, most experts agree that education and awareness are the most important weapons in fighting the battle against cyberbullying.

See the “Resources” for links to websites that provide more detailed information on cyberbullying.
LESSON PLAN

Warm-up/Pre-viewing: What do you know about cyberbullying?

Have students complete the multiple choice Pre-viewing “Quiz” (Handout #1) and discuss their responses. Use this as a baseline discussion for how the students define bullying, how they define cyberbullying, what they already know about the issue, and how they see it being addressed in their own school community.

If it seems appropriate for your classroom, it’s also an opportunity for students to discuss experiences they have had with bullying in general and cyberbullying specifically. If students are not comfortable speaking of their own experiences, they could discuss instances of bullying that they’ve heard about, or they can come up with hypothetical situations.

View the News segment

www.pbs.org/newshour/thenuews/thegov

Post-viewing

Students should return to the multiple choice “quiz” (Handout #1) and see if they would change any of their answers.

Discussion:

- Which answers did you change, if any?
- What did you learn from the video segment that you didn’t already know? What knowledge did the video reinforce for you?

Optional Extension/Homework Assignment: Provide students with the list of resources at the end of this lesson, and ask them to discover at least 2-3 new facts about cyberbullying that they can bring back to share with the class. Remind them to cite their sources.
Activity #1: Cyberbullying Scenarios

This activity will help students not only to learn what various types of electronic behaviors constitute cyberbullying, but it will also help them to empathize with all parties that are involved in a cyberbullying scenario, including the bully, him/herself and the person being bullied. It will also help them to consider the complicated issues surrounding cyberbullying.

1. Review the cyberbullying incident that Drew Hostert experienced according to the video segment. Who were the various individuals that participated in the bullying? (Point out that the main participants are the girl who recorded the conversation and the boy that helped her, but that those who continued discussing and spreading it also contributed to the bullying). Why do you think the bullies did what they did? How do you think they were feeling and what might have motivated them? How do you think Drew Hostert felt and why? (Review his comments from the video, if necessary.)

2. Arrange students into groups of 2-4. Distribute one of the scenario slips on Handout #2, or a scenario that you come up with based on your school climate, etc. (You may want to change the names on the scenario slips to ensure that none of them include the names of actual students in your class.) Have students discuss the following questions:
   - Who are the key players in this bullying scenario? What might have motivated this bully/these bullies to do what they did?
   - What role does technology play in this bullying scenario?
   - What other participants helped to facilitate this bullying? How?
   - What would you do if you heard this was happening to someone at your school?
   - How do you think this bullying may have affected the life of the student being bullied?
   - Do you think that the school could do anything to punish the bullies in this case? Why or why not?

3. Homework: For homework, have students write a diary entry from the perspective of one of the individuals involved in their assigned scenario. They could write from the point-of-view of the individual(s) doing the bullying, the student being bullied, or perhaps someone on the sidelines. Their diary entry should be at least one page and should address:
**McRel**  
**Level III (Grades 6-8)**  
**Viewing**  
**Standard 9.** Using viewing skills and strategies to interpret visual media.

1. Understands a variety of messages conveyed by visual media (e.g., main concept, details, themes or lessons, viewpoints)

6. Understands how symbols, images, sound, and other conventions are used in visual media (e.g., time lapse in films; set elements that identify a particular time period or culture; short cuts used to construct meaning, such as the scream of brakes and a thud to imply a car crash; sound and image used together; the use of close-ups to convey drama or intimacy; the use of long camera shots to establish setting; sequences or groups of images that emphasize specific meaning)

**Media**  
**Standard 10.** Understands the characteristics and components of the media.

1. Knows characteristics of a wide range of media (e.g., television news favors messages that are immediate and visual, news photographs favor messages with an emotional component)

4. The next day, have students reconvene in their small groups, share their diary entries, and discuss.

5. Have the students “jigsaw,” creating new groups that have at least one representative from each of the “scenario” groups (this is something that you should pre-arrange before class begins). Each representative should report to the new group what their scenario was, why it constitutes cyberbullying, and what some of their group’s thoughts were on the various participants in the scenario.

For younger students or those who may need more structure, provide a list of talking points on the board for each representative to cover.

**Important Note:** Participation in this activity is likely to bring up extreme emotions for some students, especially those who have participated in bullying or been bullied in any form or students who are simply emotionally fragile for any reason. The teacher should carefully monitor the students’ participation, allow students to work individually if necessary, and enforce a high standard of respect and cooperation in the classroom.

6. Come together as an entire class and reflect on the activity.

- Do you think any of these scenarios happen/would happen in your school? Why or why not?
- What was it like to put yourself in the position of one of the key players in a cyberbullying situation? What did you learn? What did you have to do to be able to see things from his/her perspective? Was it uncomfortable for you? Why or why not?
- Why do you think technology allows for this kind of bullying to happen? In what ways are these hypothetical bullies using technology to harass their classmates, and how might situation differ if technology weren’t involved?
• At what point do these situations become something that the school should deal with? How should they deal with it, in your opinion? Where do issues of free speech and privacy come in?

McRel  
http://www.mcrel.org/  
Level IV (Grades 9-12)  
Writing  
Standard 1. Uses the general skills and strategies of the writing process.

1. Prewriting: Uses a variety of prewriting strategies

5. Uses strategies to address writing to different audiences (e.g., includes explanations and definitions according to the audience’s background, age, or knowledge of the topic, adjusts formality of style, considers interests of potential readers)

6. Uses strategies to adapt writing for different purposes (e.g., to explain, inform, analyze, entertain, reflect, persuade)

8. Writes fictional, biographical, autobiographical, and observational narrative compositions

9. Writes persuasive compositions that address problems/solutions or causes/effects (e.g., articulates a position through a thesis statement; anticipates and addresses counter arguments; backs up assertions using specific rhetorical devices [appeals to logic, appeals to emotion, uses personal anecdotes]; develops arguments using a variety of methods such as examples and details, commonly accepted beliefs, expert opinion, cause-and-effect reasoning, comparison-contrast reasoning)

11. Writes reflective compositions (e.g., uses personal experience as a basis for reflection on some aspect of life, draws abstract comparisons between specific incidents and abstract concepts, maintains a balance between describing incidents and relating them to more general abstract ideas that illustrate personal beliefs, moves from specific examples to generalizations about life)

Activity #2: Email to Principal/Superintendent/School Board: School Policy

This activity will help students to identify their school’s policy on cyberbullying (and, possibly, their state’s legislation, if applicable) and to use the power of persuasive writing to convince their principal/superintendent/school board to revise the policy, hold an event, and/or sponsor an awareness campaign to educate the student body and/or faculty or community about cyberbullying.

1. As a homework assignment, have students research their school’s bullying policy. Direct them to the Student Handbook or wherever the school posts rules and protocol. Ask students what they discovered:
   • Does our school have a policy for bullying? How does our school define bullying? What are the consequences of bullying? What is the protocol for reporting bullying, if any?
• Does our school’s policy specifically address cyberbullying? If so, how is it defined? Does it fall under the same protocol as regular bullying? What if it is happening off of school grounds? Does the policy address this?

Continue to discuss how the topic of cyberbullying has been addressed—if at all—at their school:
• Have teachers or administrators discussed the topic of cyberbullying with you before now? In what context?
• Do you think the school is effectively educating students on what constitutes cyberbullying and what its effects can be? Why or why not?

2. Tell students that they will use their newfound knowledge of cyberbullying to craft a thoughtful email to the school principal/superintendent/school board to propose any or all of the following:

   a. A revised school policy that specifically addresses cyberbullying, which may include protocol for reporting cyberbullying, disciplinary consequences, etc.
   b. An assembly or other school-wide function or campaign to educate students and/or faculty about the topic
   c. Anything else that they think the school/district/community could do to help address this problem

Depending on the context of your class and what you have covered in terms of writing skills, you may want to spend a class period or two discussing the elements of persuasive writing.

Distribute Handout #3 and have students work on their email in class or for homework.

*For an additional challenge:* Have students research any legislation that has passed or is in negotiation in their state and integrate their research into the letter, using appropriate citations. This is particularly useful for addressing the usefulness of research in persuasive writing.
3. **Optional Extension Activity:** In order to maximize the “real world” potential of this activity, select 4 or 5 of the strongest letters and share them with the whole class. Have the class vote on which one should actually be sent to the intended audience(s) and perhaps make it from the whole class, if you feel that is appropriate.

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**Activity #3:**

**Public Service Campaign**

This activity encourages students to spread the word about cyberbullying and use multi-media outlets to create awareness in their school and community.

1. Have students work in small groups to create a public service campaign with the purpose of educating their peers about the following:

   - What constitutes cyberbullying?
   - How it can be damaging to individuals and the community?
   - What to do if they are being bullied or know about bullying that is happening
   - What are the consequences of cyberbullying?

Distribute Handout #4 and encourage students to divide up responsibilities in their group and they come up with their campaign proposal. Students may also use the resources at the end of this lesson to inform their campaign. They should fill in and turn in their proposal outline (Handout #5). Be sure to determine what length of time students will use for the campaign (ie, one week, one month, a semester, etc.) and to have students take that into consideration while coming up with a proposal.

2. Once students have submitted their proposal and had it approved by the teacher (and, if necessary, other administrators), they should carry out the campaign in the determined amount of time and keep their campaign journal. Depending on the length of the campaign, you may ask students to make daily journal entries, or to do so once or twice a week.

3. At the end of the designated time, have students complete the final journal entry, which can serve as an assessment of their overall knowledge and understanding of this topic.
Note to Teacher: This lesson provides an opportunity for you to explore with students the general issue of bullying and in particular cyberbullying. Be aware that some students might not feel comfortable with this subject, especially if they have experienced some of its more negative effects. At the same time, encourage students to express their opinions and ideas on how best to address this problem.

McRel
http://www.mcrel.org/
Level IV (Grades 9-12)
Listening and Speaking
Standard 8. Uses listening and speaking strategies for different purposes.

2. Asks questions as a way to broaden and enrich classroom discussions

3. Uses a variety of strategies to enhance listening comprehension (e.g., focuses attention on message, monitors message for clarity and understanding, asks relevant questions, provides verbal and nonverbal feedback, notes cues such as change of pace or particular words that indicate a new point is about to be made; uses abbreviation system to record information quickly; selects and organizes essential information)

6. Makes multimedia presentations using text, images, and sound (e.g., selects the appropriate medium, such as television broadcast, videos, web pages, films, newspapers, magazines, CD-ROMS, Internet, computer-media-generated images; edits and monitors for quality; organizes, writes, and designs media messages for specific purposes)

Assessment:
Students’ knowledge and skills should be assessed based upon:
- If/how they change their responses on the pre-viewing “quiz”
- Active participation in discussions, both whole-class and small group
- Persuasiveness and general writing skills reflected in the email to the principal
- Thoughtfulness of campaign journal entries

Resources:
- Common Sense Media
  http://www.commonsensemedia.org/cyberbullying-tips
- Cyberbullying Research Center
  http://www.cyberbullying.us/
- Facing History and Ourselves: Choosing to Participate
- Online Guard: “Stand Up to Cyberbullying” (video)
- Center on Media and Child Health ("Research Toolbox: Bullying and Cyberbullying Resources")
Activity Designer:

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McRel
http://www.mcrel.org/
Level IV (Grades 9-12)
Viewing
Standard 9. Using viewing skills and strategies to interpret visual media.

1. Uses a range of strategies to interpret visual media (e.g., draws conclusions, makes generalizations, synthesizes materials viewed, refers to images or information in visual media to support point of view, deconstructs media to determine the main idea)

7. Understands how images and sound convey messages in visual media (e.g., special effects, camera angles, symbols, color, line, texture, shape, headlines, photographs, reaction shots, sequencing of images, sound effects, music, dialogue, narrative, lighting)

8. Understands effects of style and language choice in visual media (e.g., use of long-shots to signify both real and metaphoric isolation; rapid editing in a television commercial; juxtaposition of text and color in a billboard; words in headlines intended to attract attention)
McRel
http://www.mcrel.org/

Level IV (Grades 9-12)
Media

Standard 10. Understands the characteristics and components of the media.

2. Understands how different media (e.g., documentaries, current affairs programs, web pages) are structured to present a particular subject or point of view.

3. Understands aspects of the construction of media messages and products (e.g., the significance of all parts of a visual text, such as how a title might tie in with main characters or themes).

10. Understands the influence of media on society as a whole (e.g., influence in shaping various governmental, social, and cultural norms; influence on the democratic process; influence on beliefs, lifestyles, and understanding of relationships and culture; how it shapes viewer’s perceptions of reality; the various consequences in society of ideas and images in media).

11. Understands legal and ethical responsibilities involved in media use (e.g., censorship; copyright laws; guidelines for Fair Use; Creative Commons licenses; FCC regulations; protection of the rights of authors and media owners; standards for quality programming; regulations for broadcast repeats; forms of media self-control; governmental, social, and cultural agencies that regulate media content and products).

12. Understands the role of the media in addressing social and cultural issues (e.g., creating or promoting causes: U.N. military action, election of political parties; use of media to achieve governmental, societal, and cultural goals).

13. Knows safe and ethical behaviors in personal electronic communication and interaction.
Partnership for 21st Century Skills
http://www.21stcenturyskills.org
Core Subjects and 21st Century Themes

Health Literacy
- Understanding preventive physical and mental health measures, including proper diet, nutrition, exercise, risk avoidance and stress reduction
- Understanding national and international public health and safety issues

Information, Media, and Technology Skills

Media Literacy
- Understand both how and why media messages are constructed, and for what purposes
- Examine how individuals interpret messages differently, how values and points of view are included or excluded, and how media can influence beliefs and behaviors
- Apply a fundamental understanding of the ethical/legal issues surrounding the access and use of media

Create Media Products
- Understand and utilize the most appropriate media creation tools, characteristics and conventions
- Understand and effectively utilize the most appropriate expressions and interpretations in diverse, multi-cultural environments
Directions: Select the statement that you think best answers the question, based on what you already know. After watching the segment from *the News*, go back and reconsider your answers. Change them if you feel inclined and be prepared to discuss.

1. Which of the following constitutes cyberbullying?
   a. Bullying that happens on Facebook or another social networking site
   b. Bullying that happens through text messages
   c. Bullying using unauthorized video footage
   d. All of the above.

2. In most schools, cyberbullying is more common than other types of bullying.
   a. True
   b. False

3. Cyberbullying can happen anonymously.
   a. True
   b. False

4. Which of the following might an individual who is cyberbullied experience?
   a. Depression and anxiety
   b. Suicide
   c. Dropping out of school
   d. All of the above

5. How many states have laws that specifically address cyberbullying?
   a. none
   b. 32
   c. 50
   d. 6

6. There is a federal anti-bullying law.
   a. True
   b. False

7. When can a school administration intervene and impose disciplinary action for cyberbullying?
   a. Anytime that it occurs, no matter when or where
   b. When students are discussing it in school
   c. When a student feels unsafe coming to school
   d. B and C only
Cyberbullying: Handout #2
English Language Arts

Teacher Instructions: Distribute one slip below to each group for Activity #1. Change names if necessary.

Scenario #1:
In response to a dare, Cynthia secretly uses her phone to record video of Angela changing in the girls’ locker room after gym class. She posts the video to YouTube, adds a nasty comment about Angela, and sends the link to all of her friends, encouraging them to post similar anonymous comments.

Scenario #2:
Anthony’s girlfriend Melanie breaks up with him and begins dating his friend, John. Anthony begins sending daily text messages to both John and Melanie, calling Melanie nasty names and John a “traitor.” He also updates his own Facebook status everyday to reflect these same comments.

Scenario #3:
Brianna and her friend Jasmine are gossiping about another friend, Alicia, while instant messaging one night. Jasmine is angry with Alicia because of an argument they had earlier in the day, and airs her anger to Brianna, ranting about Alicia and calling her a variety of names. The next morning, Brianna has spread print-outs of the instant message conversation all over the school and everyone—including Alicia—is reading the comments that Jasmine made in her private online conversation with Brianna.

Scenario #4:
William goes to the principal to turn in another boy, Allan, who has been dealing drugs in the school’s parking lot. Allan finds out that William has turned him in and sends him an email from his computer at home that night, threatening to physically harm him if he doesn’t go back to the principal and tell him that it was just a joke.

Scenario #5:
Christopher and Brian are a couple who decides to come out by attending the junior prom together. Over the weekend, a group of students create a “hate page” on Facebook with pictures of the two boys dancing at prom and a series of anti-gay comments. By Monday morning, about 50 students have become “fans” of the page and have posted derogatory comments about the Christopher and Brian.

Scenario #6:
Ashley and Zach have been friends for a long time, but when Ashley tries to pursue a romantic relationship with Zach, he turns her down. As revenge, Ashley creates an online persona named “Christy” who frequents the forums and chat rooms that Zach enjoys. “Christy” makes a connection with Zach by claiming to share his interest in fantasy and science fiction literature and when it’s clear that Zach develops a crush on “Christy,” she then proceeds to insult Zach and make fun of him, using the personal information that Ashley knows about him to taunt him and make him feel bad about himself.
To: School Principal  
Subject: Cyberbullying

Writing Persuasively to Impact School Policy

Your Task: Now that you have researched our school’s policy on cyberbullying, you will apply your knowledge about cyberbullying to propose a change, revision, or addition to the school policy in the form of a thoughtful, carefully crafted, persuasive email to the principal/superintendent/school board.

Write an email that proposes any or all of the following:
- A revised school policy that specifically addresses cyberbullying, which may include protocol for reporting cyberbullying, disciplinary consequences, etc.
- An assembly or other school-wide function or campaign to educate students and/or faculty about the topic
- Anything else that you think should be done to help address this problem

Email content guidelines (“what you say”):
- Reveal your knowledge about the school’s current policy and protocol (or lack thereof) surrounding bullying in general and cyberbullying in particular
- Define cyberbullying and outline its negative impact on individuals and the school community (be sure to cite sources where you’ve obtained information)
- Propose your changes/additions and explain your reasoning behind them

Email form/style guidelines (“how you say it”):
- Address your audience (ie, “Dear Mr./Mrs. ______”) and sign your email with your full name
- Use proper grammar, punctuation, and mechanics
- Keep your audience in mind; maintain a formal and respectful tone
- Include a “subject” line

Persuasive Writing Tips:
- Establish yourself as an authority on the topic by providing personal anecdotes and/or research on the topic
- Make an emotional appeal, but balance it also with logic; present your audience with both an emotional and a logical reason for accepting your proposal
- Use specific, concrete examples (real and/or hypothetical; personal and/or general)
- Be very specific about what you would like to see change
**Handout #4**  
**English Language Arts**

**Spreading Awareness:**  
**Create your own Anti-Cyberbullying Campaign**

**Your Task:** In your group, you will propose and execute a campaign to spread awareness about cyberbullying throughout the school.

**Guidelines:**
- The campaign should effectively define cyberbullying and make students aware of its impact, but should also have another unifying message (for example, related to the consequences of participating in it or protocol for what to do if you experience it, etc.)
- You should use both powerful language and eye-catching images to spread your information/message
- Your group’s campaign should utilize at least 3 of the following outlets:
  - Facebook or another approved website (create a page, update your status to reflect your message, etc.)
  - School discussion forum(s)
  - Flyers posted or distributed throughout the school
  - A short video or audio segment (consider how you would distribute it)
  - School announcements
  - School radio or TV station
  - A special meeting or event
  - Anything else you can think of the would help to spread the word (get approval first)

**Part 1:** As a group, use the Proposal Outline sheet (Handout #5) to submit a proposal for your campaign.

**Part 2:** Once your proposal has been approved, carry out your campaign (ie, post your flyers, share your video, hold your meeting, etc.). This must occur throughout/within our determined time frame.

**Part 3:** Individually, you must keep a series of half-page journal entries that track and respond to your campaign. Topics for your journal entries include:
- Your individual explanation of your group’s campaign components
- The role that you are playing in implementing the campaign
- How you observe other students reacting to your campaign
- What successes or drawbacks your group experiences in implementing the campaign
- Anything else you think is important to address

**Part 4:** At the end of the campaign time frame, your final journal entry should address the following questions:
- What have you learned about cyberbullying?
- How successful do you think your campaign was? Explain.
- What did you notice other campaign groups doing and what do you think was particularly successful or effective?
- Do you think cyberbullying is a problem in our school? Why or why not? Do you think your campaign will help in some way? Explain.
Spreading Awareness: Create your own Anti-Cyberbullying Campaign

PROPOSAL OUTLINE

Your Task: Using the project guidelines provided (Handout #4), fill in the outline below as a group.

I. How will you define cyberbullying and what will you attempt to communicate about its impact?
   A.
   B.
   C.

II. What will your unifying message be? Write a succinct statement below summing it up.

III. What three outlets will you use to spread your message? Beneath each one, explain in more detail how exactly you will make use of it.
   A.
   B.
   C.
IV. How will you divide up the campaign responsibilities within your group? (Be sure that each person has a specific task.)

A.

B.

C.

D.

V. What is the timeline for this campaign? Create a calendar to lay out your group’s schedule and attach it to this sheet.