

Be Internet Kind

A Public Policy Quest on Digital Citizenship & Cyberbullying

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PS 38 5th Grade



Introduction:

Have you ever seen someone being treated unfairly online—like someone leaving a mean comment or sharing something without permission? That's called cyberbullying, and it's a serious issue that affects kids and adults alike. You are a Digital Defender—someone who helps create a safer and kinder internet by learning how to recognize, prevent, and respond to cyberbullying.

Digital Defenders are like real-world digital citizens and cyber safety advocates! You now work for [Common Sense Media](#), [StopBullying.gov](#), and/or school digital wellness teams! As a Digital Defender, you'll research the problem, explore public policies, and create a campaign to teach others how to stay safe and kind online. Are you ready to make a difference in your school and your community?



Task:

You and your team will:

1. Research the causes, effects, and solutions to cyberbullying.
2. Learn about public policies and school rules that aim to protect students online.
3. Create a hands-on awareness campaign with one of the following options:
 - A poster or hallway display
 - A short skit or video for the school
 - A digital presentation or comic strip using Canva or Google Slides
4. Present your work to the class or during a Digital Citizenship Week assembly.



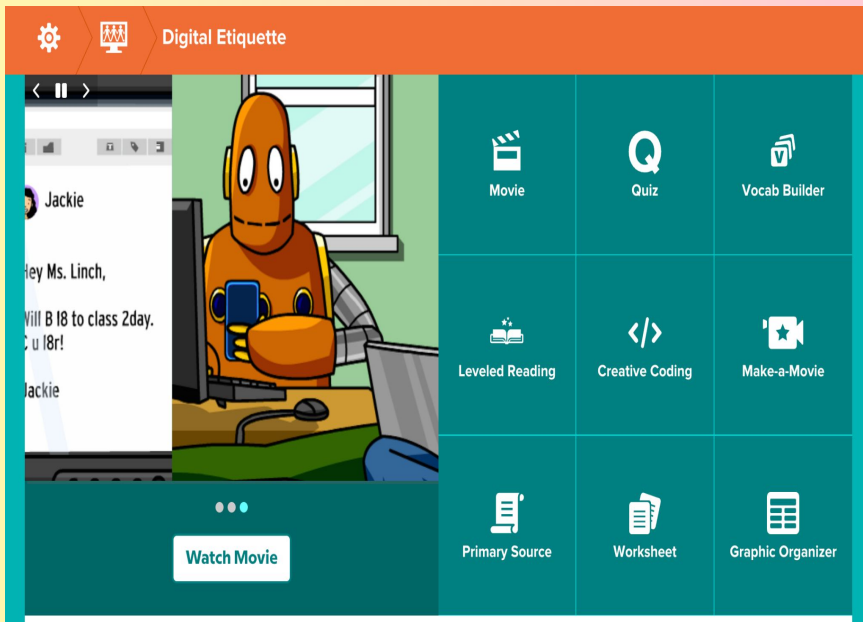
Process:

Step 1: Understand the problem

- Read and watch the following resources



[NewsELA Article: Online Bullying is a problem that's only getting worse in the USA](#)



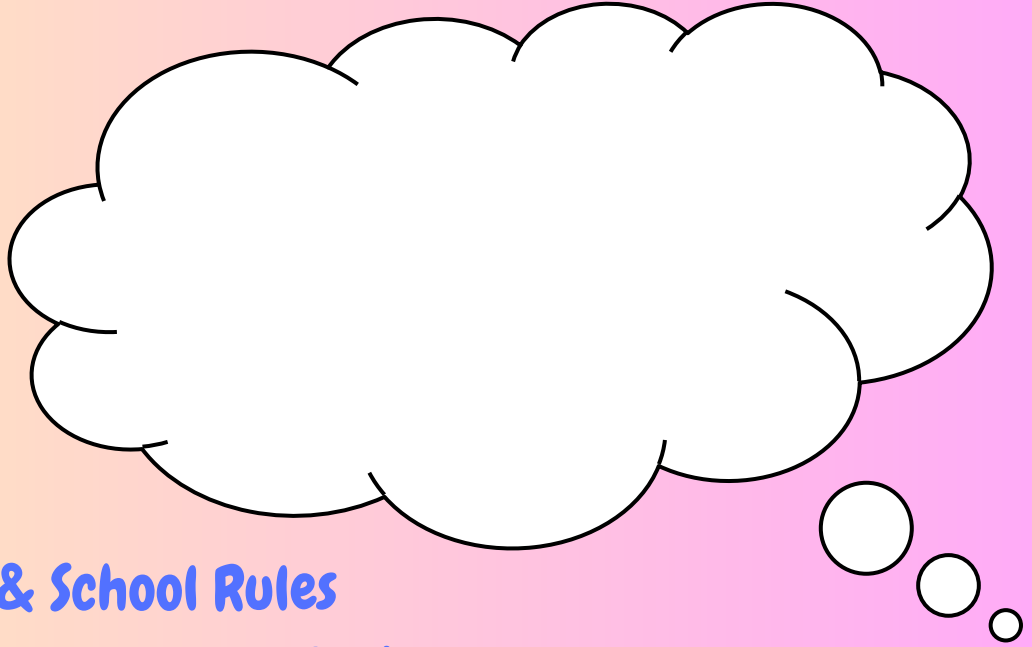
[BrainPOP Digital Etiquette](#)

Step 2: Gather Evidence

- Interview a teacher, counselor, or classmate about safe internet use.
- Collect data by creating a short anonymous survey in class about students' online habits.

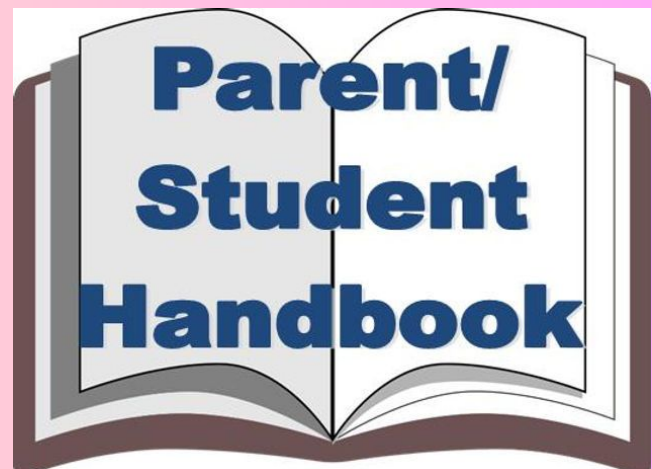
Step 3: Investigate the Cause

- Why do people cyberbully?
- What role do social media, gaming platforms, and messaging apps play?
- How do digital tools both help and hurt communication?



Step 4: Public Policies & School Rules

- Read about NYC Department of Education's Internet Acceptable Use Policy.
- Explore:
 - StopBullying.gov - Laws
 - School's student handbook rules on technology and kindness (found in your agenda)

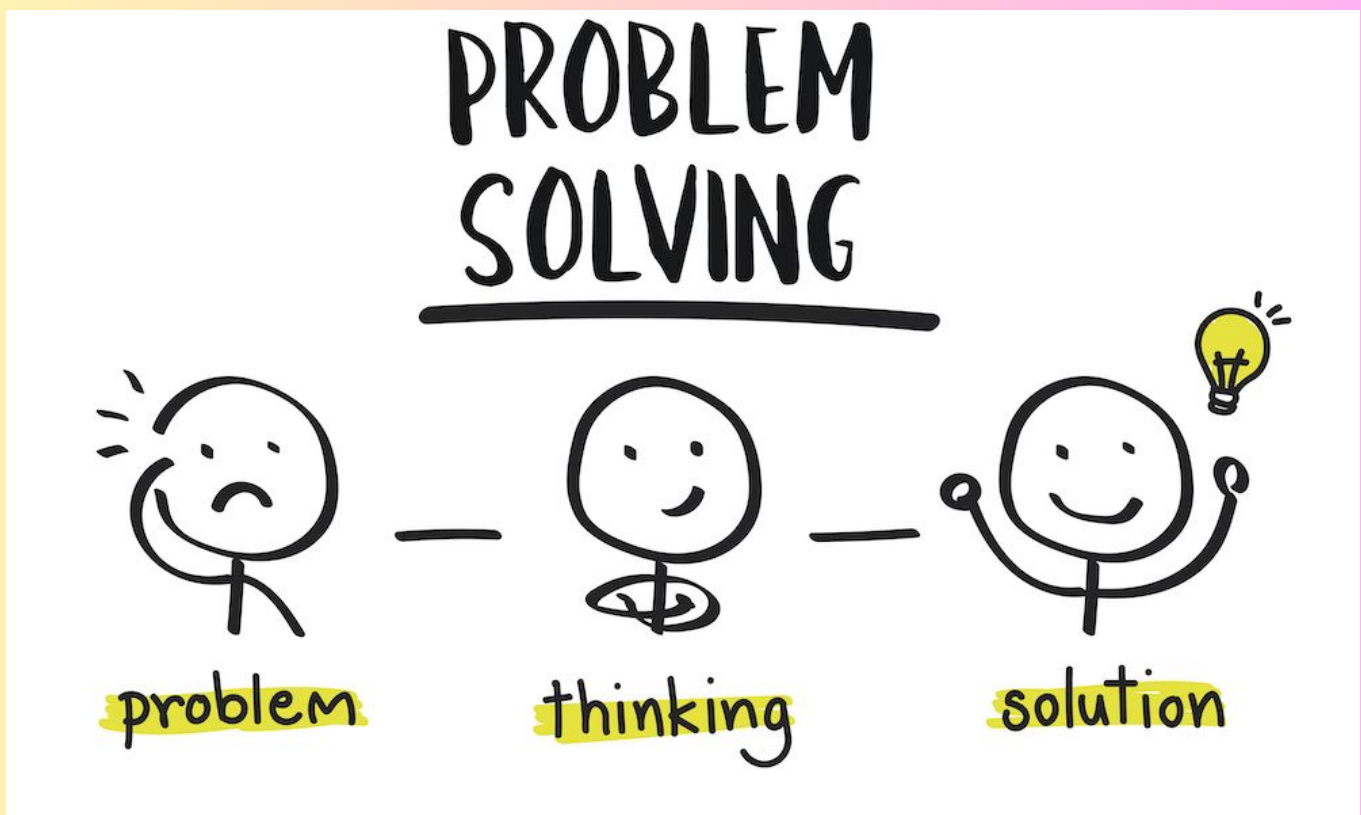


Step 5: Develop Solutions

Now that you've learned about cyberbullying and studied how schools and governments try to stop it, it's time to create your own ideas for how to make the internet safer for kids!

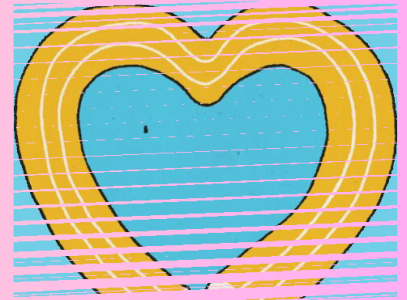
Ask yourself:

- What rules or programs could help students stay safe and kind online?
- Could schools create new lessons about digital citizenship?
- Should there be more adults (like digital safety monitors or online peer leaders) helping students online?
- Could a new school-wide policy or campaign be made to stop cyberbullying?



Your team will brainstorm 2–3 realistic solutions that schools, cities, or even the government could use to help prevent cyberbullying and promote kindness online.

Tip: These ideas should be fair, realistic, and help protect students' rights!



Step 6: Select the Best Public Policy Solution

Now it's time to choose the one best idea your team thinks will really work to make a difference.

Think about:

- Which solution is the most fair and helpful for everyone?
- Which one would be easy for schools or leaders to put into action?
- Which idea would have the biggest positive impact on students?

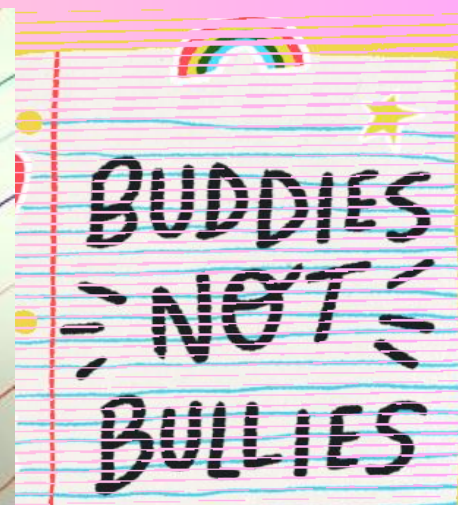
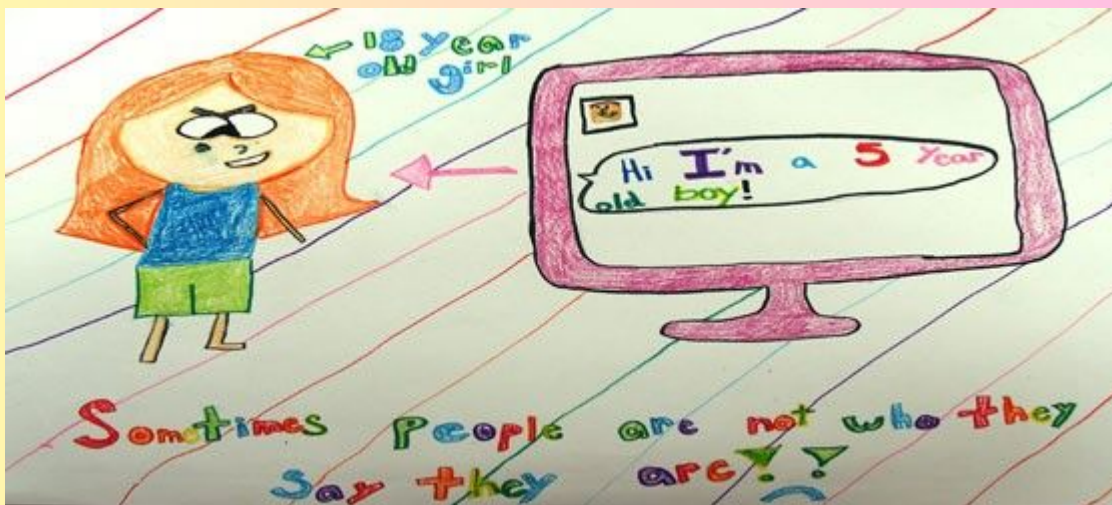
You'll explain why you chose that idea, then use it to build your awareness campaign for the school.

Your campaign should teach others about the problem and show how your solution helps stop it.

Step 7: Create Your Awareness Campaign

Choose your project:

- **Art/Poster Group:** Design posters with messages like “Be Internet Kind” or “Think Before You Post”
- **Skits & Video Group:** Write and perform a short skit showing how to stop cyberbullying
- **Digital Creators Group:** Make a comic strip, animation, or Google Slides PSA



Conclusion:

Now that you've explored how cyberbullying affects others and what rules and policies are in place to keep people safe online, you're ready to step fully into your role as a Digital Defender. Just like real-world digital safety leaders at organizations like Common Sense Media and StopBullying.gov, you've learned how to spot problems, find solutions, and take action to protect your community.

As a Digital Defender, your job doesn't end here. You now have the knowledge and tools to lead others in building a safe, respectful, and kind digital environment—starting right here at PS 38.

Whether you speak up when you see cyberbullying, help a friend make good choices online, or share your campaign project with your class, you are making a real-world impact.

How will you use your voice to defend kindness and safety—online and in person—every single day?



Evaluation:

Category	5 Points (Excellent)	3 Points (Satisfactory)	1 Point (Needs Work)
Research & Understanding	Demonstrates a strong understanding of cyberbullying and digital citizenship; includes accurate facts, definitions, and examples from multiple sources.	Shows basic understanding of the topic; includes some facts or examples, but may be unclear or missing important details.	Shows little understanding; includes few or no facts, or information is incorrect or off-topic.
Creativity & Presentation	Project is engaging, well-organized, and visually or verbally creative; presentation or design is original and polished with attention to detail.	Project is clear and understandable but has limited creativity or basic visuals/design; may need more polish or focus.	Project is unclear, messy, or rushed; little to no effort shown in making the presentation engaging.
Teamwork & Participation	All team members were actively involved and worked collaboratively throughout the process; roles were clearly shared.	Some team members contributed, but participation was uneven or not all students had a clear role.	One or two students did most of the work; there was little collaboration or effort to work as a team.
Policy Connection	Project makes a clear, thoughtful connection to at least one real-world policy or school rule, with accurate explanations or examples.	Project mentions a policy or rule, but explanation is vague or not clearly connected to the campaign topic.	Project does not reference any policies or rules, or connection is incorrect/confusing.

Standards:

English Language Arts

- **RI.5.1:** Quote accurately from a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences.
- **W.5.2:** Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas and information clearly.
- **SL.5.4:** Report on a topic or text, present an opinion, sequencing ideas logically and clearly.
- **W.5.7:** Conduct short research projects that use several sources to build knowledge about a topic.

Social Studies

- **5.6 Civic Ideals and Practices:** Students will investigate key ideals of democratic citizenship (e.g., rights and responsibilities, civic participation).
- **5.6a:** Active citizenship includes advocating for the rights of others.
- **5.6b:** Students will develop an understanding of the need for rules, laws, and policies in schools and communities.
- **5.10:** Students use evidence to develop claims in discussions and projects.

