



Essential Question: What does it mean to do the right thing online?

Learning Overview and Objectives

Overview: Students discuss their understanding of ethical behavior and are introduced to the concept of online ethics. They analyze a mock social networking page based on these ethical considerations. Students then learn about digital citizenship and the different levels of online responsibility (to self, friends and family, and community).

objectives

Students will:

- Understand the concept of online ethics as it applies to four key areas
- Define digital citizenship and identify their online responsibilities
- Explore online ethics by analyzing a mock social networking page

Digital Ethics Focus:

Self

Family and Friends

Community

Materials and Preparation

Materials

- **Judging Jeff's Profile Student Handout**
- **Judging Jeff's Profile Student Handout — Teacher Version**

Preparation

- Copy the **Judging Jeff's Profile Student Handout**, one each for four groups
- Preview the **Judging Jeff's Profile Student Handout — Teacher Version**

Parent Resources

- Send home the **Digital Life Parent/Teacher Intro Video**

Differentiated Instruction

You may wish to assign a group of Striving Students to use three to four slides in the Extension Activity presentation as opposed to six slides.

Key Vocabulary

- **Ethics:** A set of principles and morals governing people's behavior, including honesty and respect toward others
- **Online Ethics:** A set of principles and morals governing people's behavior as it relates to the Internet and digital devices
- **Digital Citizenship:** A safe, responsible, and ethical approach to functioning in the digital world



teaching plans

Introduce (10 minutes)

(Note: The four topic areas explored in this lesson correspond to the four areas of online ethics addressed in Common Sense Media's Digital Citizenship curriculum. This lesson can serve as an effective introduction to these concepts at all high school grade levels.)

TEACH the Key Vocabulary terms **ethics** and **online ethics**.

INVITE students to think of someone they believe is very ethical. This can be a family member, a friend, or a public figure that they do not know personally.

ASK *In what ways is the person you identified ethical?* (Encourage students to provide examples of ethical behavior that show honesty and respect toward others.)

ASK *What are examples of ways that people behave unethically in their dealings with others?* (Have students provide examples, and then explain why the behavior is unethical. Record student responses.)

Sample responses:

- *Lying to someone who trusts you. This is both dishonest and disrespectful.*
- *Spreading rumors about someone. This shows disrespect toward the feelings of others.*
- *Joining in bullying even when you know it is wrong. This is both dishonest and hurtful to others.*

ASK *What are examples of ways that people behave unethically in the community?* (Have students think about their school community, but also about the larger communities they belong to as part of their town, nation, or planet. You may wish to have students provide examples of ethical and unethical behavior from current news stories. Record student responses.)

Sample responses:

- *A student cheating on a test. This is dishonest and violates a community honor code.*
- *A politician lying to voters. This is both dishonest and disrespectful toward the community he or she represents.*
- *A company polluting the environment. This shows disrespect toward the community that shares the planet.*

ASK *What are examples of ways that people behave unethically online?* (Encourage students to think about what it means to be honest and respectful online, and how people can violate that ethical code.)

Sample responses:

- *Posting information about people at school that they would never want shared*
- *Pretending you are someone else in an online chat room*
- *Starting a cruel social network page about members of the community*
- *Copying and pasting parts of someone else's work into your own without giving them credit*

ENCOURAGE students to compare and contrast ethical and unethical behavior in the offline and online worlds. Students should recognize that the same kinds of principles apply in both places, but they play out in different ways.



Teach 1: Analyze Jeff's Profile (20 minutes)

INTRODUCE students to four topics that are key to online ethics. Explain that they will be further exploring these areas in the remainder of the lesson.

- 1. Privacy:** Respecting the privacy of others online
- 2. Self-Expression and Identity:** Presenting yourself in an honest and genuine way in the online world
- 3. Connected Culture:** Treating others in a kind and respectful manner, and avoiding cyberbullying
- 4. Respecting Creative Work:** Giving credit to others and/or asking their permission when you use their work as part of your own

ARRANGE students into four groups and give each group a copy of the **Judging Jeff's Profile Student Handout**.

ASSIGN each group one of the four topics you just introduced, which correspond to different parts of the handout.

EXPLAIN to students that they will be analyzing a fictional profile. They will be asked to think about the online ethics involved in some of the postings in the profile. Make sure students understand the instructions, and allow 10 to 15 minutes for groups to complete their work.

INVITE the groups to report to one another on their topic. They should both summarize the content of their part of Jeff's profile and share their responses to the questions. Refer to the **Judging Jeff's Profile Student Handout – Teacher Version** for guidance on leading the discussion.

Teach 2: Introduce Digital Citizenship (10 minutes)

Teach the Key Vocabulary term **digital citizenship**.

INVITE students to complete this sentence: *A good citizen of the digital world ...* Students should consider their responsibilities – as digital citizens – to themselves, their family and friends, and their community. Encourage them to recall the four topics they explored in Teach 1, and address these topics as they complete the sentence.

Sample responses:

- *Respects other people's privacy online*
- *Represents himself/herself honestly online*
- *Posts things that won't harm himself/herself or others*
- *Properly cites the work of others for assignments*

RECORD the student responses and have volunteers create a list to display in the classroom.

 As a high-tech option, capture students' responses in a word cloud, using Wordle (www.wordle.net) or Tagxedo (www.tagxedo.com).

ENCOURAGE students to think about guidelines that could be put into place in schools to help students become better digital citizens. Students may suggest the following ideas:

- Form a peer advising group to help students having problems online
- Institute anonymous reporting of harmful incidents
- Include anti-cyberbullying language in school policy
- Have a clear school policy on plagiarism, including guidelines for students to follow



Wrap Up and Assess (5 minutes)

You can use these questions to assess your students' understanding of the lesson objectives. Alternatively, ask students to write a text or tweet that answers each question. Messages should be no more than 140 characters.

ASK *What are some ways to behave ethically when you are online?* (Look for responses that span the four online ethics topics: privacy, self-expression and identity, connected culture, and respecting creative work.)

Sample responses:

- *Protecting your privacy and respecting that of others*
- *Presenting yourself sensibly and appropriately*
- *Treating others with respect and kindness*
- *Getting credit for your work and citing that of others*

ASK *What are examples of unethical online behavior?* (Again, encourage students to cover the four online ethics topics. You may also wish to have them supply a concrete example of each type of behavior, either from their own experiences or from current events.)

Sample responses:

- *Sharing embarrassing information about someone in an online forum*
- *Creating a profile with false information and tricking people with it*
- *Posting a cruel remark about someone on a social network*
- *Using the work of someone else in a mash-up without citing it*

ASK *What are some of your responsibilities to yourself, your friends and family, and your community when you are online? What happens when you don't fulfill your responsibilities as a digital citizen?* (Responses should be based on the day's activity as well as on personal experience.)



Extension Activity

Have students work in small groups to create a six-image presentation using PowerPoint or Prezi (<http://prezi.com>) that answers the question: *What does it mean to be a good digital citizen?* Groups should then give their presentations to the whole class. The catch is that you (the teacher) will be running the slides, and you must change them every 30 seconds so that the presentation is efficient and energetic.



Homework

Have students analyze their own online social networking profile (or another type of profile they have created online) to determine if there are exchanges or posts that reflect either good or poor digital citizenship. Encourage them to modify their profiles to improve their record of digital citizenship. Alternatively, have students work in pairs to analyze each other's profiles and make recommendations for changes. Have students report back to the class on any changes they made to their profiles.

**Alignment with Standards – National Educational Technology Standards for Students® 2007**

(Source: International Society for Technology in Education, 2007)

1. Creativity and Innovation

- a. apply existing knowledge to generate new ideas, products, or processes
- d. identify trends and forecast possibilities

2. Communication and Collaboration

- a. interact, collaborate, and publish with peers, experts, or others employing a variety of digital environments and media
- d. contribute to project teams to produce original works or solve problems

3. Research and Information Literacy

- b. locate, organize, analyze, evaluate, synthesize, and ethically use information from a variety of sources and media
- d. use multiple processes and diverse perspectives to explore alternative solutions

4. Critical Thinking, Problem Solving, and Decision Making

- a. identify and define authentic problems and significant questions for investigation
- b. plan and manage activities to develop a solution or complete a project
- c. collect and analyze data to identify solutions and/or make informed decisions

5. Digital Citizenship

- a. advocate and practice safe, legal, and responsible use of information and technology
- b. exhibit a positive attitude toward using technology that supports collaboration, learning, and productivity