

# Digital Citizenship & Social and Emotional Learning

NAVIGATING LIFE'S DIGITAL DILEMMAS

# Digital Citizenship & Social and Emotional Learning

## Our Guiding Principles

Promoting Digital Citizenship means empowering students to think critically, behave safely, and participate responsibly in our digital world.

Social and emotional learning (SEL) skills are crucial to managing these digital issues with perspective.

SEL skills can be integrated into any classroom or lesson — any day of the week — to further making good decisions at home, at school, in our communities, and in the workplace.

# Using This Guide

A key aspect of Digital Citizenship is thinking critically when faced with digital dilemmas. Navigating these challenges isn't just about rules and procedures; it's about character. Students won't support someone being bullied if they don't have empathy. They won't see a problem with plagiarism if they lack integrity.

This guide will help you connect challenging digital dilemmas to social and emotional skills through discussion questions, lessons, and digital tools that target key SEL skills and build students' character.

## Our Approach: Resources for Real-Life Challenges

Every section contains materials to help students think and act proactively about a specific topic.

1

**A digital dilemma that introduces students to challenges they may face**

**TEACHING TIP:** Be sure to review each digital dilemma prior to sharing with your students to certify their appropriateness for your particular grade level.

2

**Discussion questions that focus on SEL skills and help students make wise decisions when confronted with the dilemma**

3

**Extension resources and digital tools to help build SEL skills even further**

**TEACHING TIP:** Looking for more ways to explore these topics with your school community? Check out our **Connecting Families** program to expand the conversation beyond the classroom.

# Character Strengths

Our definitions for the character strengths used throughout this guide.

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**Communication** Listening attentively and appreciatively, expressing yourself clearly and sensitively, and honoring differences.

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**Compassion** Caring about others and behaving toward others with affection, generosity, and concern.

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**Courage** Taking on challenges even when there's risk. Speaking up for what's right even if there's opposition; acting on your convictions.

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**Curiosity** Having a strong desire to learn or know something — a search for information for its own sake. Actively seeking out challenges and new experiences.

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**Empathy** Understanding the feelings and perspective of another person; putting yourself in their shoes.

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**Gratitude** Being aware of and thankful for the good things that happen in your life and taking the time to express appreciation and return kindness.

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**Humility** Not regarding yourself as more special or better than others.

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**Integrity** Speaking the truth. Acting in a sincere manner. Treating people equally and taking responsibility for your feelings and actions.

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**Perseverance** Persisting in a course of action in spite of obstacles. Steadfastness in doing something despite difficulty or delay in achieving success.

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**Self-control** Being able to appropriately manage your thoughts, feelings, and impulses. Requires paying attention to your emotions and feelings.

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**Teamwork** Working respectfully and effectively with a group and doing your share.

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# Social Media & Body Image

## Digital Dilemma

Josh clicked open his Instagram app and saw the latest version of his grade's new favorite game. Someone would post pictures of four different girls on Instagram, and others would vote for the most attractive by "liking" her picture. The girl whose picture received the fewest number of likes would be eliminated, and pictures of the other three girls were reposted for another round of voting. The sharing and voting process would continue until there was a winner. Josh said that one of the "worst" parts of the game was that the girls who lost might actually initiate another round of the game with a fresh set of girls, in the hopes of winning a separate version. Still, he didn't want to get involved. He knew that games like Hot or Not were popular in other schools, so he figured this was just his grade's version.



## Discussion Questions

### Self-Control

It's easy to think that you wouldn't participate in this game. Why do you think people might participate even though they know the game is "wrong"? Do you think there's something about social media that makes it easy for people to ignore the potential consequences of their actions?

**TEACHING TIP:** Try to get students talking about the pressures they sometimes feel to participate in peer-related activities and how it can override their self-control.

### Integrity

If your friend told you she wanted to start one of these games, what do you think would be the right thing to say to her?

### Empathy

Do you think that the pictures of girls posted in this game would be the same as pictures the girls would have posted of themselves? How and why might they be different?

### Humility

What is the difference between receiving a compliment in person and a "like" on social media? Which is more meaningful? Would you rather get one compliment in person or 100 likes on Instagram? How does each impact your self-confidence differently?

**TEACHING TIP:** Humility involves thinking beyond the surface. Encourage students to reflect on the emotions they feel when they engage in such behavior. What is it that they get from liking or not liking something?

# Social Media & Body Image

## Extension Resources

Suggested Digital Citizenship Lessons



## Digital Tools



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As teachers, we sometimes forget that little, everyday actions in the classroom have a huge impact on our students' lives.

# Cyberbullying

## Digital Dilemma

Mackayla looked away from her computer screen in disbelief. One of her friends had just sent Mackayla the link to a vicious fake page ... of Mackayla's younger sister, Remy. Someone — she had no idea who was behind it — had used Remy's picture and name to make a fake account. They filled out all of the "About me" sections making fun of Remy's interests, hobbies, and even her style and appearance. All of the tagged pictures were pictures of Remy's head superimposed on embarrassing bodies. One pictured showed Remy's face on the body of a very overweight older man, and another had Remy's head on the body of a nearly naked bikini model. Even worse, it looked like the fake page had "friended" more than half of Remy's grade. Mackayla remembered that Remy had mentioned having some issues at school and had even come home crying a couple of times, but she had not realized that it had gotten this bad. Mackayla didn't know if Remy had seen the page yet, but she was devastated and knew that Remy would be too.



## Discussion Questions

### Courage

Do you think Mackayla should say anything? If so, to whom and how?

**TEACHING TIP:** Try to get students thinking about ways in which they can stand up for their own beliefs and the welfare of others by even the smallest of actions.

### Compassion

How do you think Mackayla could help Remy in this situation, especially since the hacker is anonymous?

### Empathy

What might motivate someone to create a fake social media page? How would you feel if someone invaded your digital "space"?

### Teamwork

As a victim of cyberbullying, Remy may feel isolated and alone. What are some ways that you could remind Remy that she has a supportive network of friends who care about her well-being?

**TEACHING TIP:** The goal is to have students reflect on the importance of community and various support systems and how they can contribute to those communities.

# Cyberbullying

## Extension Resources

Suggested Digital Citizenship Lessons



## Digital Tools

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It's through the  
cultivation of empathic  
students that schools  
become communities.

# Sexting & Nude Photographs

## Digital Dilemma

Devon opened his cell phone and saw a picture of a girl without a shirt on. He couldn't see her face, but saw the text message sent with the picture: "Fwd if you think Rachil is a slut!" Rachil was in Devon's Spanish class and he immediately cringed, imagining how ugly this was going to be for Rachil at school tomorrow. Rachil had sent the picture to her ex-boyfriend Jose because he promised they would get back together if she proved she trusted him. She sent it to him and they got back together, but a few days later they had another fight and broke up. Jose forwarded the picture to his friends. Then the picture spread like wildfire.



## Discussion Questions

### Communication

Do you think that Jose is manipulating Rachil in this situation? Why or why not? Instead of sending a nude picture, what do you think would be a more appropriate way for Rachil to "prove" that she trusts Jose?

**TEACHING TIP:** Encourage students to explore alternative ways of gaining one's trust through effective communication skills.

### Empathy

How does this dilemma speak to the issue of objectifying women and girls? Why do you think Rachil is being called a slut when Jose was the one who asked for (and distributed) her nude picture?

### Integrity

Can sexting ever be a part of a healthy relationship, or are its potential consequences too risky?

### Compassion

Do you think it's Devon's place to speak up, even though he isn't directly involved in Rachil and Jose's relationship? If you were Devon, how would you respond to this picture?

**TEACHING TIP:** Talk to students about the difference between understanding what someone is going through (empathy) and having a desire to actually help them (compassion).

# Sexting & Nude Photographs

## Extension Resources

Suggested Digital Citizenship Lessons



## Digital Tools



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We inspire integrity in our classrooms because we want our future leaders to make honest, brave decisions that push us ever forward.

# Digital Footprints & Photo Sharing

## Digital Dilemma

When Vin sent his friend an embarrassing picture of himself on Snapchat, he hadn't expected that his friend would take a screenshot of the picture and upload it to Facebook. He didn't want to seem uptight, but he was pretty embarrassed that the picture was posted for all to see. He texted his friend: "Not cool, man. Take it down." His screen lit up: "hahahah." Vin texted back: "Nah, I'm not playing, take it off." His friend wrote back: "Whoa, chill out, I'm just playing," but he didn't take down the picture. Vin was about to go through recruiting for college sports, and while he knew the picture wouldn't get him in trouble, it wasn't exactly the image he wanted recruiters to see.



## Discussion Questions

### Communication

Compare how Vin and his friend use the word "playing." What are some consequences of words with vague definitions? Why do you think it is challenging for Vin to effectively communicate his feelings over text? Can you think of a better way for Vin to talk to his friend?

**TEACHING TIP:** The goal is to illustrate how different forms of communication can lead to effective or ineffective understanding from both parties.

### Perseverance

If Vin's friend still refuses to take down the picture after Vin's repeated requests, what are some other ways for Vin to make sure the image doesn't impact his digital footprint and his college chances?

### Courage

How might social pressure impact Vin's willingness to stand up for himself? Do you think that people would stand up for themselves more often if they weren't concerned about what others thought of them?

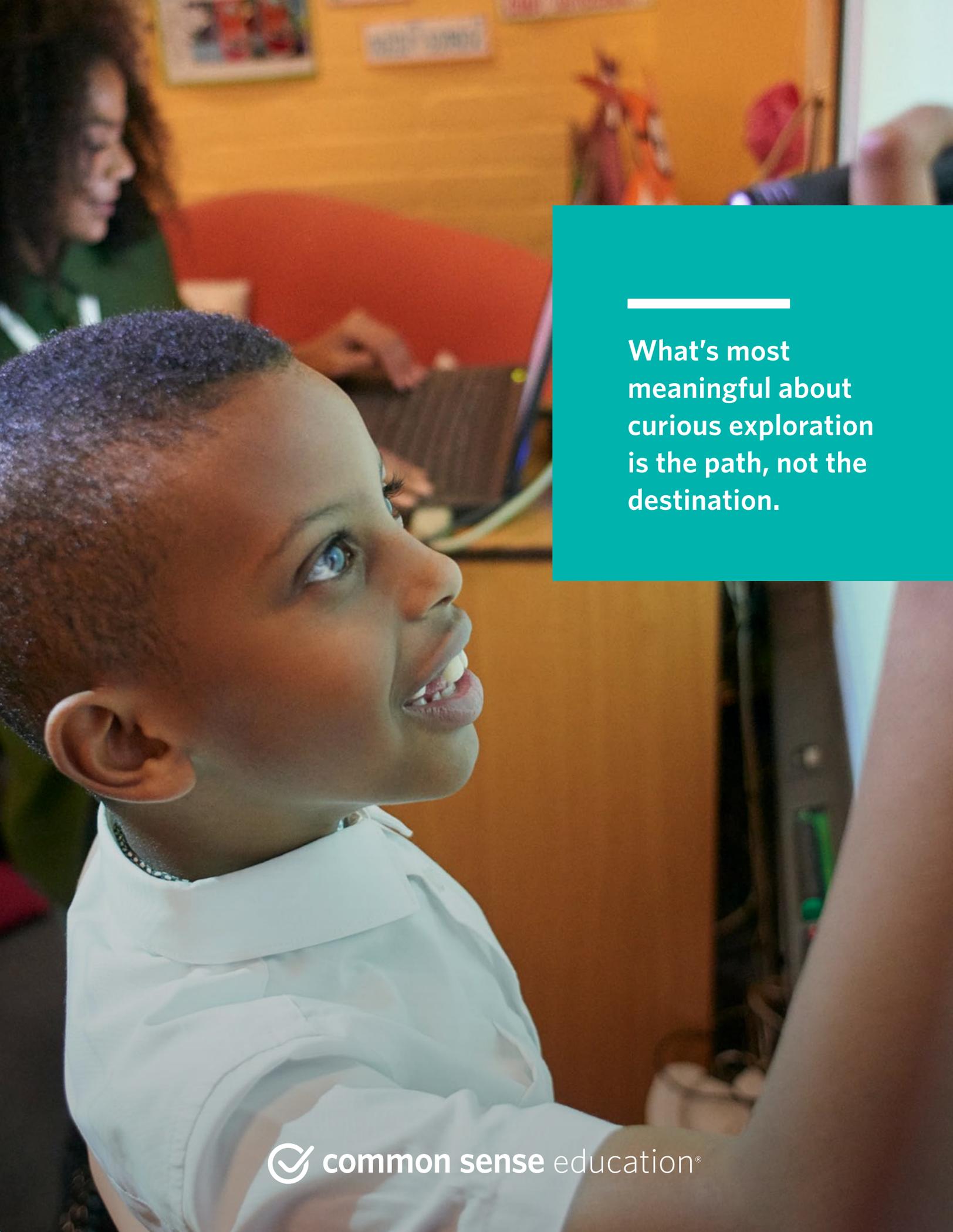
# Digital Footprints & Photo Sharing

## Extension Resources

Suggested Digital Citizenship Lessons



## Digital Tools



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**What's most meaningful about curious exploration is the path, not the destination.**

# Privacy, Surveillance & Self-Disclosure

## Digital Dilemma

Nik and his girlfriend Blair were hanging out at his house. Blair got up to go to the bathroom and left her phone on the couch. While she was gone, Nik noticed her phone light up and saw the name Matthew out of the corner of his eye. He was torn about whether or not to look, then decided he would take a quick look at the texts displayed on the main screen. But he couldn't resist: He knew her phone password, so he typed it and opened the conversation. Before he knew it, he was scrolling through Blair's conversations. He saw that she had been texting Matthew a lot. Nik was furious, but he couldn't decide whether or not to confront Blair and admit that he had looked at her text messages. Finally, he decided he was too angry to ignore it. Blair could not believe that Nik had looked through her messages — she thought that he trusted her and she felt like this was a complete invasion of her privacy.



## Discussion Questions

### Empathy

Consider both Nik's and Blair's points of view. Why is Nik frustrated with Blair? Why is Blair frustrated with Nik? Do you think that one or the other has more of a "right" to be angry?

**TEACHING TIP:** It's important to illustrate how examining each perspective can reveal that many disagreements occur simply because they have different views based on their experiences.

### Self-Control

Since Blair trusted Nik with her phone password, does this give him a right to open her phone and read her texts? What do you think Nik should have done after seeing that Matthew texted Blair?

### Communication

If you were Blair, what would you say to Nik? If you were Nik, what would you say to Blair?

# Privacy, Surveillance & Self-Disclosure

## Extension Resources

Suggested Digital Citizenship Lessons



## Digital Tools

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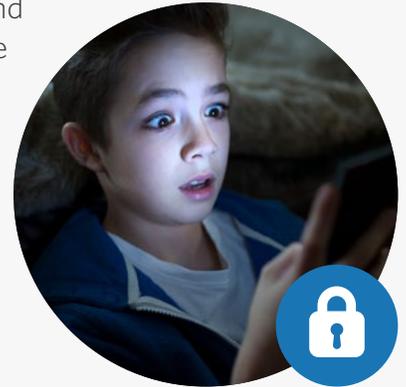
Just a small offering  
of appreciation  
can transform  
relationships and  
boost student  
self-worth.



# Sexual Imagery & the Internet

## Digital Dilemma

Kai hopped on his laptop to look for a new remote-controlled helicopter and found a cool YouTube video showing how to make intricate aerial dives. He watched the video on repeat, trying to learn the new moves. On the side of the screen, sketchy video suggestions kept popping up, but he did his best to ignore them. When his friend Carter came by to see what he was watching, Carter told Kai he wanted to show him something: "Click on that ad over there, I bet I know where it leads." Kai clicked on one of the sketchy videos and was surprised to pull up a pornographic website. He knew he probably shouldn't be on the site, but he was instantly intrigued. Over the next couple of weeks, Kai continued to look up different sites, all with pornographic material on them. Before he knew it, he felt like he was "hooked."



## Discussion Questions

### Integrity

Who do you think Kai could talk to about the inappropriate site he found? Do you have a trusted person? What would you say to them in this situation?

### Self-Control

Pop-up video suggestions on YouTube often have nothing to do with the video you're watching. Why do you think this is? What makes it hard to stay focused on what you were originally looking for and not get distracted by other videos?

### Curiosity

YouTube makes it easy for anyone to find videos of virtually anything. This can be great, but what do you think are some drawbacks to having such easy access to so much content?

**TEACHING TIP:** Help students distinguish between the initial act of being curious and the good or bad decisions that may stem from that inquisitiveness.

# Sexual Imagery & the Internet

## Extension Resources

Suggested Digital Citizenship Lessons



## Digital Tools



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Success isn't based on who is on a team but on the culture created by the team.

# Distraction, Multitasking & Time Management

## Digital Dilemma

Carrie was sitting at her family's dining room table studying for a history midterm. She promised herself two days ago that she was going to study for a couple hours each night until the exam, which was now coming up the next day. Carrie really needed to do well on the test; at her school, the rule was that students could only compete in sports events if their grades were high enough. Carrie was supposed to play in tennis regionals at the end of the month, but she needed to boost her history grade by eight points. The last couple of days were not very productive, so Carrie was really feeling the crunch. She tried to focus, but the material was just so boring. Before long, Carrie found herself scrolling through her news feed instead of her World War I study guide. Then her phone buzzed next to her, and she looked down and noticed she had 22 text messages in her group text. This was not going well. Carrie flipped her phone on silent, turned it upside down, and decided to see if she could find any interesting history videos about World War I on YouTube. An hour later, Carrie had gotten totally pulled into Epic Rap Battles of History and had made no progress on her studies.



## Discussion Questions

### Self-Control

What suggestions would you give Carrie to help her avoid distractions from studying? How could Carrie use technology to help with — rather than distract from — her studies?

### Perseverance

How can Carrie stay motivated even though she may find the material boring? Can you think of some short-term or long-term goals that Carrie could set for herself to help her study (besides being allowed to play sports)?

**TEACHING TIP:** Students learn as much from failure as from success. Model for them how working hard is a process of ups and downs.

### Curiosity

What do you think of school policies that require high grades for sports participation? Do you think it matters what motivates students to study (playing sports vs. learning)? Other than getting good grades, what might motivate a student to do well in school?

# Distraction, Multitasking & Time Management

## Extension Resources

Suggested Digital Citizenship Lessons



## Digital Tools



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Compassion creates a culture of students who are one step closer to making real, positive change in their communities.

# Digital Drama

## Digital Dilemma

Erin was home sick from school watching a movie when she looked down at her phone and saw her screen filled with text messages written in capital letters and punctuated with exclamation points. "I HATE YOU!!! HOW COULD YOU?!" Erin panicked — she had no idea why she was receiving the flood of vicious text messages. She frantically texted two of her friends, but both were in class, and her calls went to voicemail. A few hours later, Erin pieced together what had happened. Someone had hacked into her best friend's Facebook page, acted as Erin, and sent perverted messages to the best friend's boyfriend. The best friend was furious and was convinced it was Erin, since Erin was the only person who had her password. Erin hadn't been at school to defend herself, so their other friends had already heard about the incident and were mad at Erin, too.



## Discussion Questions

### Integrity

If you were Erin's best friend and realized that you had falsely accused Erin of hacking into your Facebook page, what do you think you should do or say? Do you owe Erin an apology, or was your reaction justified?

**TEACHING TIP:** When dealing with the "right thing" to do, there's hardly ever one answer. Make sure to treat all student answers with an open mind.

### Communication

Do you think it was reasonable for Erin's best friend to assume that Erin was the one who hacked her? How can jumping to conclusions lead to miscommunication?

### Empathy

Why do you think a person might impersonate someone online? What might cause that person to seek attention or cause chaos in this way?

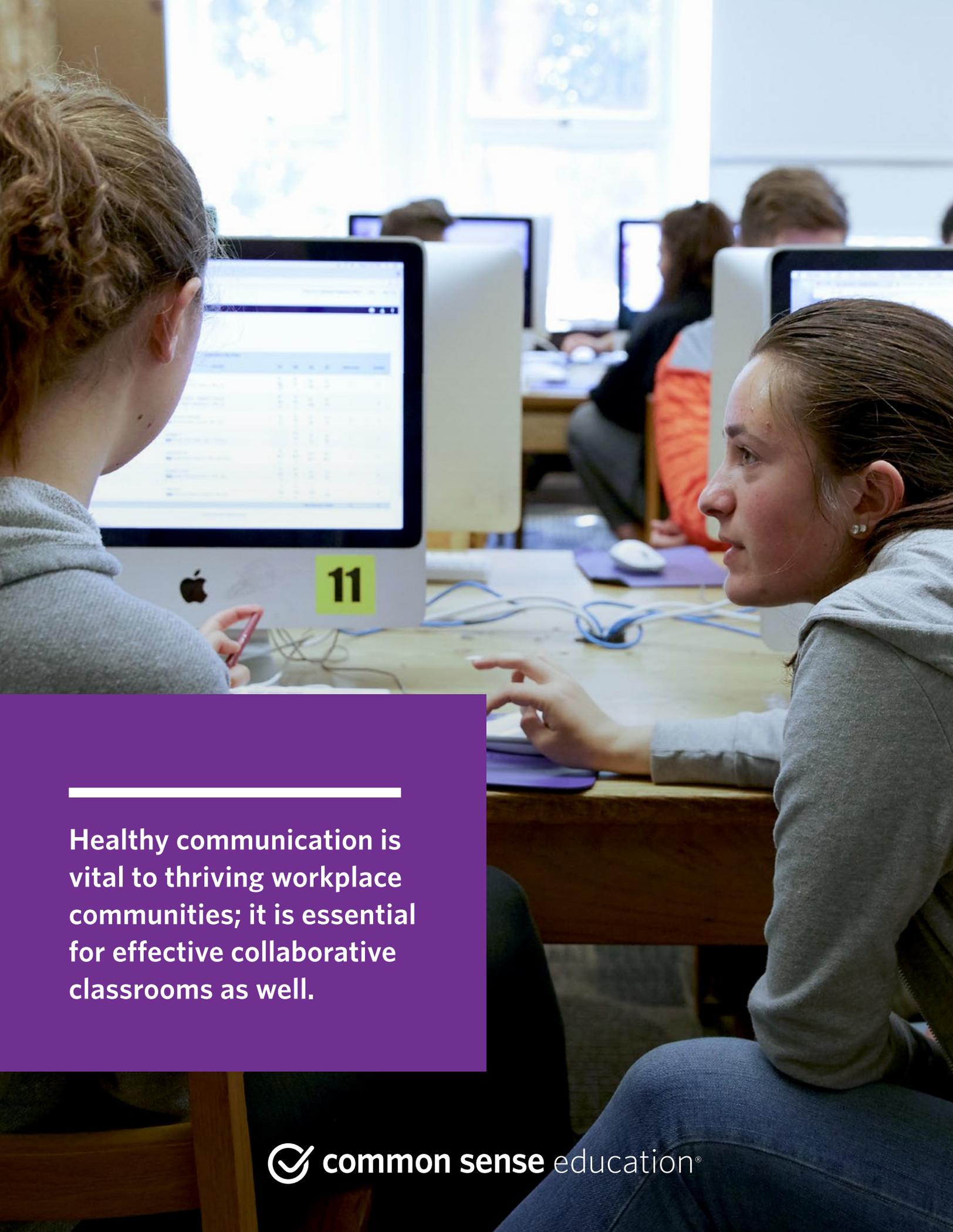
# Digital Drama

## Extension Resources

Suggested Digital Citizenship Lessons



## Digital Tools



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Healthy communication is vital to thriving workplace communities; it is essential for effective collaborative classrooms as well.

# Video Games & Violent Content

## Digital Dilemma

Jaden isn't a "hardcore gamer" compared to many other kids he knows, but he does have a few video games that he loves. His latest favorite is Doom Battle. Jaden's parents are constantly bugging him about how much time he spends gaming, but from Jaden's perspective, he spends way less time playing than most of his friends. Plus, he finds it's a great way to unwind and relax after a long day at school. Jaden's parents tell him to "do something productive" or "at least go hang out with your friends." Yet Jaden doesn't see gaming as a waste of time, and he often plays with his friends. Lately, his parents have been threatening to put time limits on his video game playing, and Jaden feels like he's being punished when he hasn't done anything wrong.



## Discussion Questions

### Empathy

If you were a mediator, how would you help Jaden and his parents consider each other's points of view? What do you think would be a good compromise between Jaden and his parents?

**TEACHING TIP:** Try to get students thinking about what experiences, perspectives, or biases a parent might have to make them more or less willing to allow video game time; pose some possible scenarios for the class.

### Communication

If you were Jaden, how would you explain your point of view to your parents? If you were Jaden's parents, how would you explain your point of view to Jaden? Why do you think it is difficult for Jaden and his parents to see eye to eye?

### Gratitude

Appreciating one another can impact people's abilities to resolve conflicts. In Jaden's case, how do you think being grateful for his parents might play a role in their conversation about video game screen time?

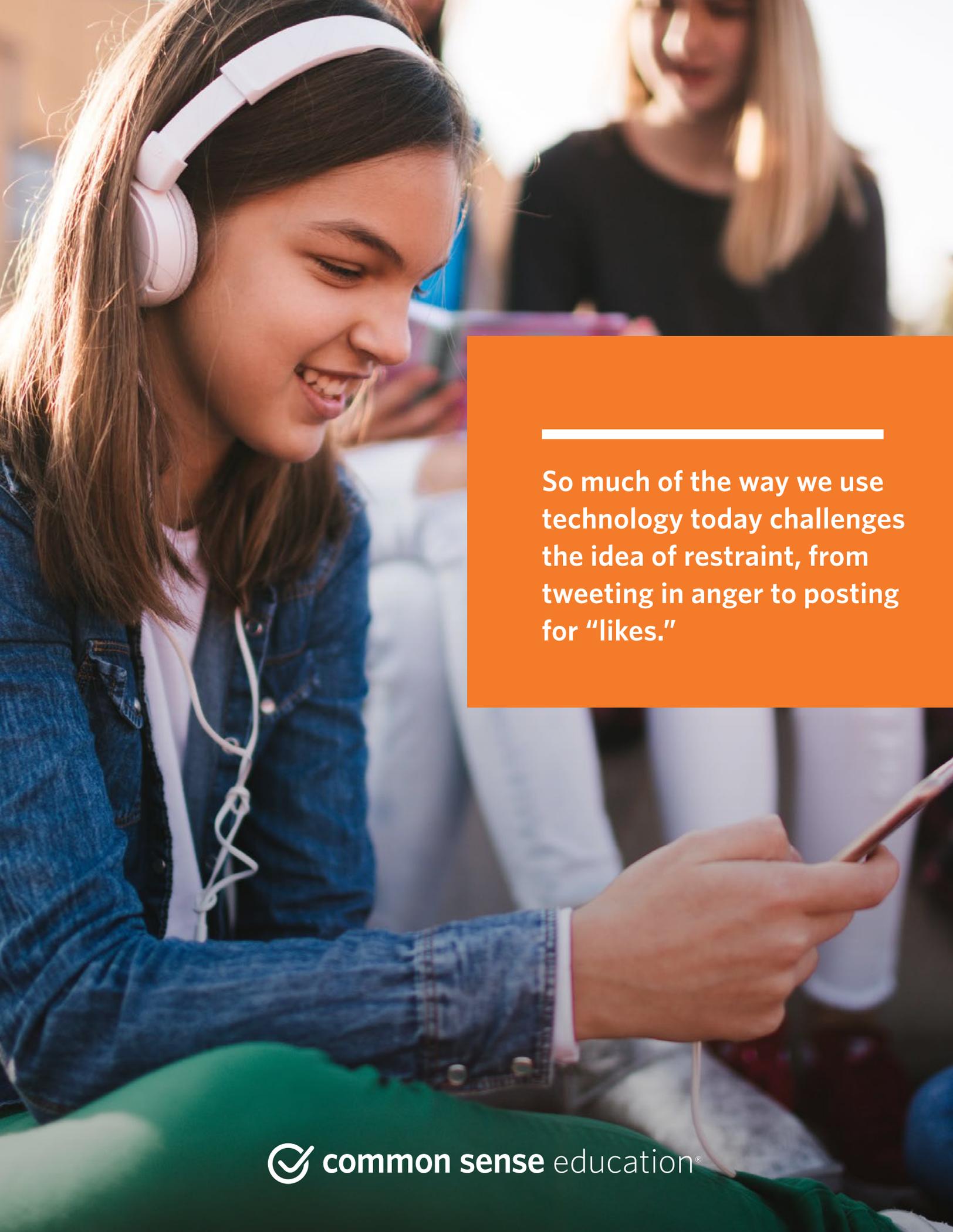
# Video Games & Violent Content

## Extension Resources

Suggested Digital Citizenship Lessons



## Digital Tools



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So much of the way we use technology today challenges the idea of restraint, from tweeting in anger to posting for “likes.”

# Selfie Culture

## Digital Dilemma

Dylan’s friend Jamie was completely addicted to posting selfies. Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, Facebook, you name it — Jamie’s page was covered in selfies. Dylan had tried to ignore it, but it was only getting worse and a few things were especially driving Dylan crazy. One: Their other friends had started making fun of Jamie’s posting. Dylan didn’t know what to do — defend Jamie or join in? Tell Jamie about their friends’ teasing, or just stay quiet? Two: Whenever they were hanging out, Jamie would be snapping selfies or asking for Dylan’s opinion about which picture to post and what to make the caption. It started to seem like it was all about Jamie, all the time, and Dylan was exhausted.



## Discussion Questions

### Perseverance

If Dylan asks Jamie to tone down the selfie posts but Jamie ignores his request, what do you think Dylan should do next (without nagging his friend)?

### Empathy

Selfies aren’t necessarily a bad thing. What are some good aspects of selfies? Where would you draw the line between in-control and out-of-control selfie-taking?

### Self-Control

Why do you think Jamie is “addicted” to posting selfies? What reason(s) might someone have for constantly posting pictures of him/herself?

### Humility

What role do you think social media plays in people’s evaluations of themselves? Do you think that the pictures people post on social media are accurate reflections of themselves and their lives? Why or why not?

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**TEACHING TIP:** Point out to students that addiction and self-control are related, but are not the same thing. Ask them what they think the difference is.

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**TEACHING TIP:** Try to get students thinking about the bigger picture. How do they see themselves around friends? How do they see themselves as part of a larger, global community?

# Selfie Culture

## Extension Resources

Suggested Digital Citizenship Lessons



## Digital Tools



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You don't have to stop using the tools you love or toss out your lesson or curricular plans to start developing SEL.