

Lesson Skill: Summarizing and selecting details to support conclusions

Strand Reading--narrative nonfiction

SOL 6.5
7.5
8.5

Materials

- Copies of the attached essay *Don't Turn Into a Bully* by Jared Pierce
- Copies of the attached Learning Frame worksheet

Lesson

1. Lead a class discussion on bullying—i.e., the definition of *bullying* and the circumstances that may cause someone to become a bully.
2. Have students read the essay *Don't Turn Into a Bully*.
3. Put students into groups of four, and have groups discuss specific details about cyber bullying and the best ways to identify and deal with a cyber bully.
4. Have students complete the *Learning Frame* worksheet to reinforce what they learned in this lesson and determine what they would still like to know about cyber bullying. Completing this worksheet requires students to support conclusions with details and summarize.

Don't Turn Into a Bully By Jared Pierce



Perhaps the scariest feeling is waking up one day and realizing you have turned into the one thing you hoped you never would. Some people worry they will become like their parents who gripe at little kids when they fail to eat all their vegetables. Others worry that they will end up like their crazy uncle and have a cow named Betsy as a pet. These fears are not irrational. We often end up being like those we are around most when growing up. Whether we latch on to their good traits or bad ones is our choice. The problem is that kids who are bullied often end up becoming bullies themselves. If you are a student being bullied, the person you may fear becoming most is the person who treats you like your existence is useless and only for their entertainment.

A common way for kids to be bullied these days is through the Internet. Cyber bullies, as they are known, have begun to harass their victims in the realm of cyberspace because it offers them anonymity and the ability to mass-disseminate hateful or embarrassing remarks. You are no longer safe in your bedroom or behind locked doors. The best way to keep from becoming a victim of a cyber bully is to know how they operate and, if you find yourself a victim of one, how to fight back.

Experts note that the most common way kids are bullied with technology is through text messaging, but our focus is on how bullies do it through the Internet. The most widespread method of bullying other kids online is through instant messaging. Services such as AOL Instant Messenger and Yahoo Messenger afford kids the opportunity to keep in touch without phones or having to get together. However, cyber bullies use them as a way to wage a campaign of terror against their victims. They send hateful or taunting messages, disguise themselves as other individuals, and trick you into saying something embarrassing. In some cases, they get a screen name similar to yours and send hurtful messages to your friends. Some of the worst cases have been when these bullies gained access to their victim's messaging account and sent boyfriends or girlfriends of the victim messages that would end the relationship.

If instant messaging is not their method of torture, some cyber bullies will use e-mail. They send attachments meant to blackmail a victim or write vicious e-mails that hurt a victim's self-esteem. In addition, e-mails can be used to send vulgar or violent images meant to scare or sicken the victim. Cyber bullies have gone so far as to find ways to create Web sites that allow other kids to post anything about anyone on the site for all to see. They can use this as a tool for power or prestige amongst those who fear getting on their bad side. Sites have even been completely dedicated to the humiliation of one individual.

If you are a victim of any of the above circumstances or a similar one, the worst thing you can do is seek revenge. Typically, instead of going after the person who bullied you, the focus of your anger will be toward a friend or family member. One day, you may wake up, look in the mirror, and see your worst fear. The image staring back at you may be yours, but it will only serve to remind you how you became the one thing you swore never to become.

If you have received a threatening e-mail, instant message, or text message or found your name mentioned in a malicious way, be sure to catalog it. If it is an e-mail, text, or instant message, save it. In no way should you respond to cyber bullying. Simply take note of the occurrence and show it to an adult with whom you are comfortable sharing the information. Remember, it is illegal for people to send threatening messages through these means, and the proper authorities can use your saved correspondence as proof of wrongdoing. Don't wait for someone to realize that abuse is occurring and stop it; document it and report it! Rely on yourself to take a stand and put an end to cyber bullying.

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Learning Frame



Today in class, I learned about **cyber bullying**.

The first thing we learned was _____.

Next, _____.

Then, _____.

After that, _____.

I also learned that _____

The next time we study cyber bullying, I want to learn more about _____
