



## How To Be a Good Citizen Online

Now that children understand the guiding principles of “good citizenship,” it’s time for them to think about how they might exhibit these same principles in online communities they already belong to, or might belong to in the future. Because many online communities lack guidelines or have rules that are unclear (or buried in their “Terms of Use”), it’s important to help children understand how (and why!) to be good citizens even in these digital spaces.

Key Standards—CCSS.ELA-LITERACY: W.5.2, W.5.2.A, W.5.2.B, W.5.2.D, W.5.2.E, W.5.4, SL.5.1, SL.5.1.A, SL.5.1.B, SL.5.1.C, L.5.1, L.5.1.D; W.6.2, W.6.2.A, W.6.2.B, W.6.2.D, W.6.2.F, W.6.4, SL.6.1, SL.6.1.A, SL.6.1.B, L.6.1, L.6.6. ISTE: 2a, 2b, 3d. CASEL: 3a, 3b, 3d, 4a, 4b, 4c, 4d, 5a, 5b, 5d, 5e, 5f.

## Learning Objectives

Children will...

- Reflect on the principles of good citizenship.
- Think about online communities they belong to, or might belong to.
- Consider how to apply the principles to online communities.



## Introducing The Activity

Have your children ever played soccer? Chances are most of them will have played this game, or at least have a general understanding of how soccer is played. Have them explain the rules of the game to you. Ask: *Would you enjoy playing soccer if there were no rules? What if no one kept score? What if the field had no boundary lines? How would you like it if players could foul whenever they felt like it, without any consequences?* Explain that without rules or guidelines, games like soccer are no fun or may even be dangerous to play. Challenge them to think about **how the same might apply online**. Without guidelines, rules, or principles, playing or engaging with others online can get out of control and end up being no fun too.

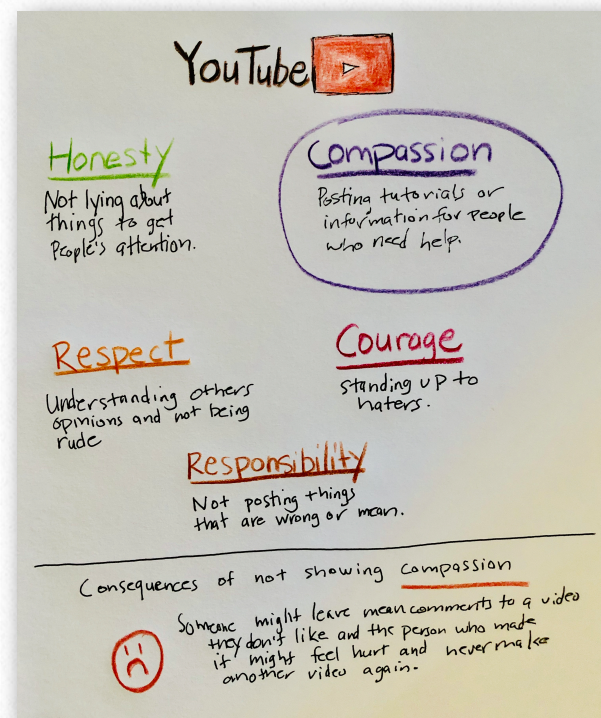
## The Lesson

1. Have children recall some of the **offline** communities they mentioned belonging to during your previous activity. Guide them as they reflect upon how they exhibited the principles of good citizenship within those communities.



## The Activity, continued

2. Explain that **an online community is any digital space where members interact and communicate with one another**. Ask your children to list some of the **online** communities people belong to today (i.e., multiplayer games, online classes, group chats, Facebook, Twitter, Snapchat, Instagram, Pinterest, TikTok, even Google Classroom!). Explain that they are about to explore how the same principles that guide us offline, help us when we are online too.
3. Choose **one** of the online communities you just discussed (it does not matter if your children actually belong to the community you choose or not).
4. Have your children use the form that follows to write down ways members of this online community might express each principle. For example, people might show “respect” in an online gaming community by not using foul language; or show “responsibility” in a group chat, by not sending text messages late at night.
5. Next, have your children choose **one** of the five principles, circle it, and then write down **possible consequences of NOT expressing that principle** within the online community they chose. For example, a possible consequence of **not** showing “compassion” on YouTube might be that a person leaves a negative or mean comment in response to a video they don’t like. The recipient of those negative comments might feel hurt or depressed, or decide never to make or post a video again! Additionally, posting negative or mean comments might encourage others to do so too. Likewise, showing compassion or kindness in digital spaces can inspire others to do the same.



Student Work

6. Discuss what your children write and wrap-up by explaining that participation in any online community is a huge responsibility. These five principles can help guide a community member’s online actions.

## Goal

To help children take responsibility for their behavior by exhibiting the principles of good citizenship whenever they engage with others, online or off.



## HOW TO BE A GOOD CITIZEN ONLINE

Your Online Community: \_\_\_\_\_

Draw the Logo (if you know it!)

How could members of your online community express each principle?

Honesty: \_\_\_\_\_

Compassion: \_\_\_\_\_

Respect: \_\_\_\_\_

Responsibility: \_\_\_\_\_

Courage: \_\_\_\_\_

Circle one of the principles above. What are some possible consequences of members of your community NOT expressing that principle?

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