

# Digital Citizenship (Grades 6-12)



My teacher is so rude. I only got suspended because she does not have a sense of humor.

4:17 PM · Aug 14, 2019 · [Twitter for Adroid](#)

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## Overview:

Teaching students to think about their digital citizenship through the lens of integrity is important in this digital world. This lesson will give students an opportunity to discuss ways to engage an active conscience to model integrity as digital citizens.

## Character Education Objectives:

Students will:

- explore their digital footprint.
- discuss why it is important to protect your identity and reputation online and offline.
- utilize Rules of an Active Conscience to determine what to post on social media.

## Materials:

- Rules of an Active Conscience tool
- Social Media: To Post or Not To Post handout

## Lesson:

### *Journal: (5 mins)*

- Google yourself.
- Write down what you noticed about your digital footprint.

### *Whole Group Discussion (15 mins)*

- Share what you noticed about your digital footprint.
- Why is it so important to be a good digital citizen in today's world?
- Share headlines of digital footprints impacting citizens:
  - Harvard rescinded 10 offers of enrollment for students who posted explicit and racist pictures on social media.
  - Woman tweeted a racist post about her trip to Africa when she boarded the plane. She was fired by her boss before the plane landed.
  - Students photoshopped an unflattering picture of a teacher and posted it on the Internet. The students involved were suspended, legal charges were filed, and the students faced five years in jail and a \$10,000 fine.
  - A woman posted a picture of herself dressed like a Boston Marathon Bombing victim to Instagram for Halloween. She was fired because of the insensitive nature of the post.
  - Students posted a meme making light of gun violence at school and they were arrested. Students who liked the post were suspended.
- What you share on social media matters. It can impact you today and in your future plans and career. Your

digital footprint exists and can be used against you when you least expect it. Something you find funny or impulsively post can get you fired, arrested, or fined.

- Discuss in small groups how the Rules of An Active Conscience can help you decide what to post on social media.

### *Small Group Discussion (15 mins)*

- Read each Social media post on the To Post or Not To Post Handout and determine which of the Rules of Active Conscience it breaks.
- Share your findings with the teacher.

### *Exit Ticket:*

- Generate a social media post that meets the Rules of Active Conscience.
  - Use the following site to create a fake account post: <https://zeoob.com/> if students do not have one they can use.

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## **Positive Impact (Grades 6-12)**

### **Overview:**

A critical component of citizenship is doing what you can to engage with your community. Everyone has the power to use their interests and passions to make a positive impact on their community, the country, and the world. In this lesson, participants will reflect on how their interests and passions can be used to make their community a better place to live, work, and go to school.

### **Character education objectives:**

- Study how Amanda Gorman's passion for poetry allowed her to positively impact her country.
- Students will explore how their own interests and passions can make a difference in their community.
- Put the citizenship Pillar into action by crafting a plan to use their interests and passions to positively impact their school or community.

## Materials:

- Amanda Gorman's 2021 Presidential Inauguration speech
- Written text of Amanda's poem
- Goal Map tool

## Lesson Plan:

*Discussion Prompt:* With a partner, share your interests and passions. Examples could include: music, animals, sports, video games, reading, and so on.

*Activity:* At the conclusion of the partner discussion, introduce students to Amanda Gorman, the young woman who wrote and delivered the poem "The Hill We Climb" at the 2021 Presidential Inauguration Ceremony.

Watch Amanda Gorman's speech at the 2021 Presidential Inauguration (5:47)

*Optional* – have students read the written text of her poem.

At the conclusion of the video, ask students to discuss the following questions in pairs, small groups, or as a full group.

*Discussion Questions:*

- Which of the Six Pillars of Character does this poem/speech align with? Explain your answer.
- Why do you think Amanda wrote this poem?
- How did Amanda use her passion for poetry to positively

impact her community and country?

- How could you use your passions and interests to make a positive difference in your community?

Ask students to write down how they could use one of their passions or interests to make a positive impact in their community. Then, direct them to use the Goal Map tool to create a plan to put their passion to work.

For example, if a student is passionate about caring for animals, they could use that passion to volunteer at the Animal Rescue League. Action steps to put that plan into action could be:

1. Locate an animal shelter in need of volunteers
2. Fulfill any requirements necessary for being a volunteer at their facility
  - Fill out application
  - Ensure my availability and skill set matches their needs
3. Schedule time to volunteer
  - Make sure I have transportation to and from the facility

*Follow-Up:* Several weeks after the completion of this lesson, ask students to share whether they have put their plan into action. If so, how much progress have they made on their plan? How are they positively impacting their community? If not, why?

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## **T.E.A.M.**

CHARACTER COUNTS! is designed to work in partnership with students, parents and faculty to make your school a great

place to learn. The acronym T.E.A.M (T-Teach, E-Enforce, A-Advocate, M- Model) is a process for you to use in the implementation of CHARACTER COUNTS!

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## **Resilience(Grades 6-12)**

Students need opportunities to see success and triumph in the midst of struggle. This lesson provides a video that discusses resilience from a young man who faced a lot of trials in his life. The discussion will provide an opportunity for the classroom to share ideas about trust, growth, and overcoming obstacles while building resilience for all the changes that life throws at you.

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## **Resilience and Overcoming Obstacles (Grades 6-12)**

Students need to embrace resilience as they care for one another during conflict. This lesson focuses on the caring Pillar while supplying a resource to problem-solve and build resilience.

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# Tips for Educators: An Introduction to Caring

Teachers care about the relational aspect of teaching. They take time to establish a trusting and caring connection with students, who in turn become more receptive to what's being taught. Caring is at the heart of our character and will help in creating a positive school climate. Here are our tips for educators: an introduction to caring:

## Questions to ask:

- What are your thoughts on teaching caring, kindness and empathy in the classroom?
- In what way are our students already upholding the Pillar of caring?
- Are there examples of where we could improve in words or actions on the part of students toward the Pillar of caring? How about as a staff?
- What can we do to teach students to be more caring and kind to others?

## Activities to do:

1. Write 3 classroom key beliefs around the Pillar of caring that you would like to instill in your students.
2. Write 2 key beliefs you would like to instill in students throughout the school, hallways, lunchroom, etc.
3. What instructional strategies or classroom management techniques could you use to be intentional and explicit in instilling these beliefs?
  - Positive Sticky Notes – Leave sticky notes with positive messages
  - Thank You Letter – Write (and send!) an anonymous letter to someone you respect in your school, workplace, or other community space.

- Caring Bulletin Board – Create a bulletin board in your school and provide plenty of paper in fun shapes or designs where adults and students can write down the acts of kindness they have received or benefitted from.

### **Project to explore:**

One of the effective ways to implement CHARACTER COUNTS! in a school is the creation of a school-wide project. As this lesson is on the Pillar of caring, a school could consider as a project a Campaign of Kindness. As a staff, brainstorm the following:

- Slogan for the campaign
- Agree upon at least four action items that would help to implement the Culture of Kindness campaign
- Assign responsibilities for staff, students and parents
- Establish a timeline with a specific target date for the Kindness project

For additional ideas, a great resource is Random Acts of Kindness – <https://www.randomactsofkindness.org>

**Join our CHARACTER COUNTS! Coalition to have access to more videos like this!**

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## **Goal Setting (Grades 6-12)**

Setting and reaching goals is an important skill every student needs to develop to become a more productive citizen. However, students do not always understand the difference in goal setting and goal achievement, nor do they grasp the steps it requires to achieve their goals. So, this lesson will walk students through the steps and supports needed to set and

attain their goals

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## **Embracing Diversity (Grades 6-12)**

Learning about other traditions and holidays is important to promote acceptance not just tolerance of other viewpoints, religions, belief systems, and perspectives. This lesson will discuss having integrity with a focus on fairness to promote a classroom that embraces diversity.

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## **Growth Mindset (Grades 6-12)**

Life can be busy and can create distress in the lives of families and students. Therefore, it is important to highlight the need to have a growth mindset and to manage stress to respect yourself, your health, and your well-being.

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## **Emotional Toughness (Grades 6-12)**

Students today need more opportunities to build their emotional toughness in a world that is as fast paced and ever

changing. Thus, creating conditions that allow them to take responsibility for their behavior, emotions, and responses is important in building resilience for learning and development. This lesson will have students focus on their emotional toughness and highlight the need to be responsible for our responses in emotional situations.