



The Ups and Downs of Digital Life

Lesson Plan

Estimated time: 45 minutes

Essential Question: What are the possibilities and potential pitfalls of using digital media in our social, connected culture?

Learning Overview and Objectives

Overview: Students reflect on the possibilities and pitfalls of digital media for themselves, for their relationships with people close to them, and for society at large.

The class will kick off with the **Digital Life Video Vignettes – The Upsides and Downsides**, which provides an overview of the curriculum topics and introduces some of the possibilities and pitfalls of digital life through kids' stories and quotes. Using **The Upsides and Downsides of Digital Life Student Discussion Guide**, students will then discuss these upsides and downsides – for themselves, their friends and family, and communities.

objectives

Students will:

- Articulate some of the positive and negative possibilities of digital life
- Determine different ways that media impact them, their friends and families, and society
- Reflect on their use of digital media, especially those areas of digital life that can be most ethically charged

Materials and Preparation

Materials

- **Digital Life Video Vignettes – The Upsides and Downsides**
- **The Ups and Downs of Digital Life Student Discussion Guide**
- **Digital Life Parent/Teacher Intro Video**
- **Digital Life Parent Tip Sheet**

Preparation

- Download or stream the **Digital Life Video Vignettes – The Upsides and Downsides**, preview video, and be prepared to play video for the class
- Copy **The Ups and Downs of Digital Life Student Discussion Guide**, for all students

Key Vocabulary

- **Pitfall:** A trap or unnoticeable danger
- **Digital Native:** Someone who grew up with computers, video games, and the Internet from the time she or he was born and is comfortable using these technologies



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teaching plans

Introduce

Before playing the video, ask your students to raise their hands if they engage in the following activities:

- *They are part of a social networking site*
- *They use a social networking site at least three times a week*
- *They use the Internet to communicate with their friends*
- *They use the Internet to play games with others*
- *They use the Internet to post creative work*
- *They have had something good happen to them by using the Internet*
- *They have run into some kind of problem, or ended up feeling upset, because of something that happened on the Internet*

After students have indicated whether or not they have experienced the situations you raised, (and in nearly all classrooms, a large percentage of students will probably have experienced most of the situations), ask them to reflect on their Internet use and digital life in general.

ASK for volunteers to respond to these questions.

- *If the Internet, cell phones, or other forms of digital media did not exist, would your life be better or worse?*
- *How would you feel if you could not use digital media for a week? Would your life be different in any way?*

Teach 1: Watch the Video

Play the **Digital Life Video Vignettes – The Upsides and Downsides**. You may wish to play the video all the way through one time and then play it a second time, pausing after each section to ask the discussion questions.

Teach 2: Use Discussion Guide

Refer to **The Ups and Downs of Digital Life Student Discussion Guide – Teacher Version** to help students reflect on their place in the connected culture. Throughout the discussion, **GUIDE** students to think about their own digital lives, as well as the activities of their friends, families, and society at large. Have them reflect on the many positive, and sometimes negative, possibilities brought about by their participation in digital life.



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Wrap Up and Assess

End the discussion by asking students to THINK ABOUT themselves as digital citizens. What do they have to do to be good digital citizens? Does this represent a change in behavior for them? If so, in what ways? You can use the discussion responses to assess students' understanding of the video. Write this question on the board and ask students to write a few sentences in response:

With Power Comes Responsibility: What does that mean in regards to your digital life?

Review their answers to check their understanding. Have they successfully reflected some ups and downs of participating in the “connected culture”?



Extension Activity

Students create a podcast or song set in 2020 about the way that digital media has changed the world. Future Problem Solving Program International, Inc. provides futuristic scenarios for students for which students solve problems. Here is one of their scenarios that students can use as material for their podcast or song.

Sensory Overload

Musak, iPods, cell phones, visual imagery, TV, advertising, the Internet, fusion food, exotic restaurants, sports, entertainment, animated billboards, and flashing signs are just a few examples of the kinds of sensory input people receive on a daily basis. Even the average supermarket has more than 30,000 products. Scientists have discovered that this overwhelming assault on our senses impacts our brainwaves. Our senses are continually inundated in ways that would not have been thought possible in our grandparents' and great grandparents' era. We embrace multitasking in all areas of our lives, even as investigators raise questions about its effectiveness and advisability. What is the possible future impact of this sensory overload, and how will we accommodate our need to process increasing amounts of information? (From: <http://www.fpspi.org/topics.html>, with minor modifications)



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Alignment with Standards — National Educational Technology Standards for Students® 2007

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

1. Creativity and Innovation

Students demonstrate creative thinking, construct knowledge, and develop innovative products and processes using technology. Students:

- a. apply existing knowledge to generate new ideas, products, or processes
- b. create original works as a means of personal or group expression

2. Communication and Collaboration

Students use digital media and environments to communicate and work collaboratively, including at a distance, to support individual learning and contribute to the learning of others. Students:

- a. interact, collaborate, and publish with peers, experts, or others employing a variety of digital environments and media
- b. communicate information and ideas effectively to multiple audiences using a variety of media and formats

3. Research and Information Fluency

Students apply digital tools to gather, evaluate, and use information. Students:

- a. plan strategies to guide inquiry
- b. locate, organize, analyze, evaluate, synthesize, and ethically use information from a variety of sources and media
- c. evaluate and select information sources and digital tools based on the appropriateness to specific tasks

4. Critical Thinking, Problem Solving, and Decision Making

Students use critical-thinking skills to plan and conduct research, manage projects, solve problems, and make informed decisions using appropriate digital tools and resources. Students:

- 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
- d. use multiple processes and diverse perspectives to explore alternative solutions

5. Digital Citizenship

Students understand human, cultural, and societal issues related to technology and practice legal and ethical behavior. Students:

- a. advocate and practice safe, legal, and responsible use of information and technology
- b. exhibit a positive attitude towards using technology that supports collaboration, learning, and productivity
- c. demonstrate personal responsibility for lifelong learning

Common Sense Media is an independent, nonprofit resource that helps families and educators teach kids how to be safe and smart in today's 24/7 media world. Go to www.commonsensemedia.org for thousands of reviews and expert advice.

