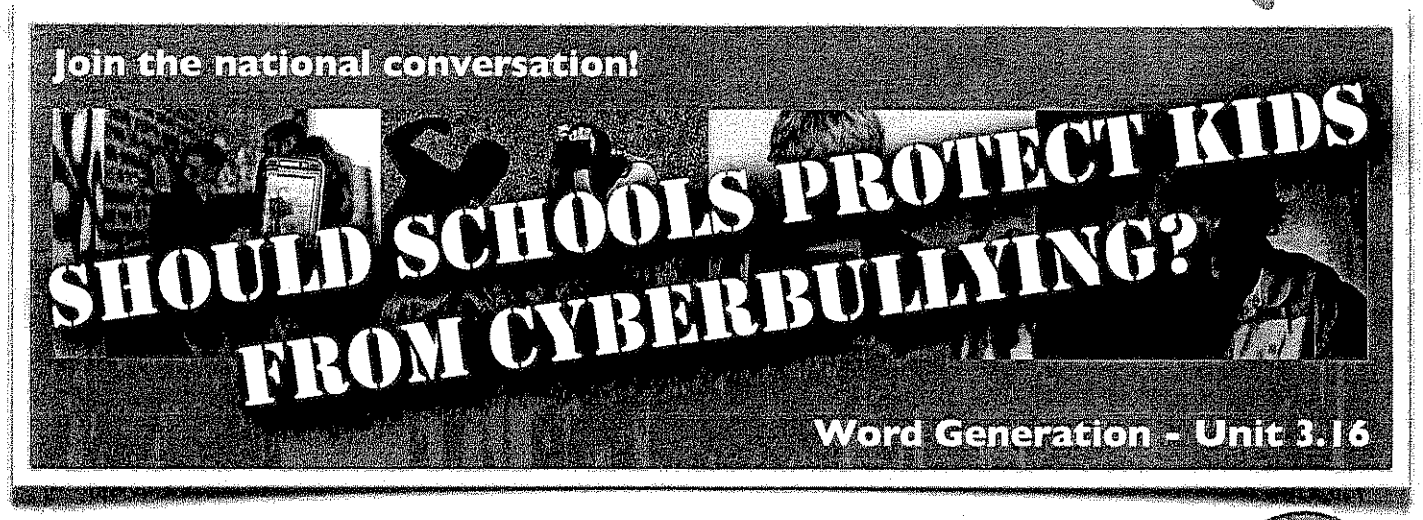

Focus Words

anonymous | underlying | capacity | adequately | harassment

WEEKLY PASSAGE

Sixteen-year-old Megan Meier was thrilled when she started chatting with Josh Evans on Facebook. Before she had been sad and lonely, but Josh was good-looking and very kind to her. He even told her that she was his "number one." However, one day Josh's messages suddenly turned from nice to cruel. Megan was devastated. She was so hurt and upset by the way he treated her that she committed suicide. Later, Megan's parents learned that Josh Evans was not a real person. Neighbors had created the false profile to harass Megan.

Whereas bullying has existed in schools for years, cyberbullying is a new method that bullies use to harm their victims. Cyberbullies use text messages, instant messages, email, or sites like Facebook to send harmful messages. Cyberbullying also includes spreading rumors and manipulating photographs online.

Cyberbullying is especially common among middle school students. An estimated 42% of middle school students are involved in cyberbullying either as a bully or as a victim. When a child is having problems in school, cyberbullying can be an **underlying** cause. Students who are bullied online may be afraid to come to school, participate in class, talk to their peers, or go to recess. When people are afraid, they are less able to learn.

Perhaps schools should get involved to help stop cyberbullying. Some say school police officers should investigate cyberbullying as a crime of **harassment**. Others say teachers should talk with students about cyberbullying. Class discussions could address how to stay safe on the internet, how to handle cyberbullies, and where to get help if you are hurt by cyberbullies.

Some people say schools should only be concerned with what happens at school, not with what happens out of school. They point out that schools have limited resources and do not have the **capacity** to **adequately** address cyberbullying. Since many of the harmful comments come from **anonymous** sources, teachers and principals do not have time to investigate who the cyberbullies are. Besides, some people say parents are the only people responsible for keeping teens safe on the internet. Do you think schools should protect kids from cyberbullying?

BY-NC-ND

Unit 3.16

Should schools protect kids from cyberbullying?

FOCUS WORDS OF THE WEEK

underlying : (adjective) involved but not revealed or expressed

FORMS:

EXAMPLES OF USE:

NOTES:

capacity : (noun) ability

FORMS:

EXAMPLES OF USE:

NOTES:

adequately : (adverb) something done well enough

FORMS:

EXAMPLES OF USE:

NOTES:

anonymous : (adjective) not named or identified

FORMS:

EXAMPLES OF USE:

NOTES:

harassment : (noun) the act of verbally or physically harming or annoying someone

FORMS:

EXAMPLES OF USE:

NOTES:

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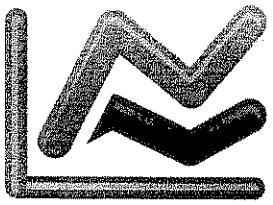
Unit 3.16

Should schools protect kids from cyberbullying?

PROBLEM OF THE WEEK



Option 1: In 2009, Phoebe Prince was a 15-year-old freshman at South Hadley High School in Massachusetts. Her bright smile hid **underlying** pain. She was **harassed** by her classmates, both online and in school. Online, bullying can get out of hand because bullies can be **anonymous**. This anonymity gives bullies even greater **capacity** to be cruel. Their cruelty makes their victims feel **inadequate** and alone. In January of 2010, Phoebe committed suicide.

The average life expectancy for an American woman is 80 years. What fraction of Phoebe's life still lay ahead of her?

A) 3/4

B) 4/5

C) 17/20

D) 13/20

Option 2: When Phoebe Prince committed suicide after months of online **harassment**, several of her classmates were brought up on criminal charges. In high profile cases like this one, courtrooms often fill to **capacity** with families of both the accused and the victim. While many students harassed Phoebe, prosecutors only had **adequate** evidence to prosecute a few. Many of her bullies will remain **anonymous**. Even so, they may carry **underlying** feelings of guilt for the rest of their lives.

Say that for every 10 students who bullied Phoebe Prince, only one was brought up on charges. Say that b = the number of bullies and c = the number of students brought up on charges. Which equation is true?

A) $10b = c$

B) $c = b/10$

C) $.1c = b$

D) none of the above

Math Discussion Question: The internet offers new ways for people to engage in bullying and **harassment**. People who are usually kind may discover an **underlying capacity** for meanness when they are online, where they feel **anonymous**. Some people suggest rules to help others to remember to be kind. For example, "Don't say something online that you wouldn't say in person." Is this rule **adequate**? What are some other good rules for online interactions?

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Unit 3.16

Should schools protect kids from cyberbullying?

THINKING SCIENTIFICALLY

Students in Mr. Seemy's class were discussing widespread bullying and **harassment** at middle schools across the United States. The students believed teachers could not spend **adequate** time on arguments among students, so problems tended to get worse and sometimes even caused fights on campus. Everyone agreed that something ought to be done. But what?

Aliyah and Jacky were members of a Peer Mediation Club, where they had been specially trained to work with other kids to solve conflicts amongst themselves. These students believed that increasing students' **capacity** to deal with problems on their own saves teachers' time, and is more likely to solve problems permanently.

"We take the time to find out the **underlying** reasons for the problems in our mediation meetings. Sometimes kids are arguing over the same crush, or have arguments that go back to elementary school," said Aliyah.

Chris wasn't so sure. "But kids take adults more seriously. Plus teachers can assign detention or consequences and kids can't."

Jacky said, "Let's see if Peer Mediation is as effective as we think it is. We'll ask everyone to take an **anonymous** survey and then tally the results."

Question:

Are peer mediators more effective at solving student conflicts than teachers?

Hypothesis:

Students will be more likely to solve conflicts with support from kids their own age rather than teachers or other adults.

Data collected from the survey:

Who would you rather go to if you someone were harassing you, another student or a teacher?

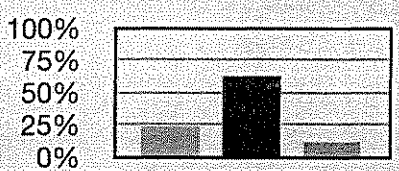
another student: 53% a teacher: 47%

If a peer has mediated a problem with you, did the process solve the conflict permanently?

yes: 76% no: 18% not sure: 6%

If a teacher has mediated a problem with you, did the process solve the problem permanently?

yes: 24% no: 63% not sure: 12%



Conclusions:

What do you think? Based on the survey results, are student mediators more effective at solving problems? Do you think the results would be similar if a survey like this were done at your school?

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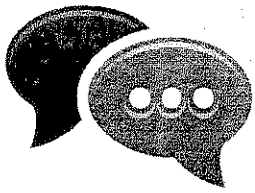
Should schools protect kids from cyberbullying?

DEBATING THE ISSUE



1. Get ready...

Pick one of these positions (or create your own).

A Schools should only be concerned with student learning. If they are responsible for disciplining cyberbullies, teachers and principals may not have time to do their job of helping students learn.

B Even though cyberbullying might not happen at school, it affects the students. Students need help from schools to address out-of-school problems that may affect their learning.

C Parents are the only people who can actually stop cyberbullying. They need to limit their children's computer time and monitor their messages.

D Schools should not discipline cyberbullies, the police should. Cyberbullying should be a crime. Cyberbullying is serious and cyberbullies should face serious consequences.

E _____

_____

_____

2. Get set...

Be ready to provide evidence to back up your position during your class discussion or debate. Jot down a few quick notes:

_____

_____

_____

GO!

Be a strong participant by using phrases like these.

...because...

I disagree with part of that...

An example might help convince me. Can you give me an example?

What part of the passage makes you think that?

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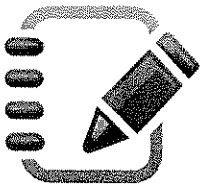
Unit 3.16

Should schools protect kids from cyberbullying?



WRITE ABOUT IT

Support your position with clear reasons and specific examples.
Try to use relevant words from the Word Generation list in your response.

Focus Words

anonymous | underlying | capacity | adequately | harassment

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