

**the Gov**

“Cyberbullying: Effects on Teens  
Across the Nation”  
Social Studies Lesson Plan

**the Gov**  
is a feature of

**the News**

A daily news broadcast for High School and Middle School students  
now under development by MacNeil/Lehrer Productions



**the Gov**



Segment 4:  
“Cyberbullying: Effects on Teens  
Across the Nation”  
Social Studies Curriculum

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Winter, 2010

Dear Educator,

*the.News* online video reports for *the.Gov* provide middle and high school students with a valuable exercise in social studies and language arts with this **6:39** minute segment on “Cyberbullying –Effects on Teens Across the Nation” at [www.pbs.org/newshour/thenews/thegov](http://www.pbs.org/newshour/thenews/thegov) . Correspondent, Sam Petto investigates cyberbullying in Omaha Nebraska as experts discuss national trends.” Lessons for social studies and language arts are available to support this video in the “For Educators” section of the website. All videos and curricula have been informed by *the.News* instructional design that can be found on the website [www.pbs.org/newshour/thenews](http://www.pbs.org/newshour/thenews). The curriculum includes content-based standards, discussion questions, student activities, vocabulary and primary reference sources. A complete transcript of each video report includes time codes to assist in isolating specific segments of the video and to augment the instruction of media literacy and multimedia production. All of this material is presented as options to fit teachers’ instructional needs.

References to Larry Bell’s “The 12 Powerful Words” are highlighted in **bold** in the lesson plans and in the “thought starter” questions on the home page and educator’s page, and in the transcript (to denote where they are used in the video segment).

We have also added general topics to correlate to the lessons and video as well as concept based standards with conceptual lens and enduring understanding.

We welcome our partners at the Omaha Public Schools who have joined *the.News* in the second year of a special pilot project. We have also developed a new authoring tool for students called *YOU.edit* which gives students an online tool to remix the content of *the.News* reports, so they can create their own multimedia presentations. This editing tool can be found by clicking on the *YOU.edit* button on the home page of the website. Currently used with our OPS teacher consultants it is password protected so that it can serve as a viable educational asset that allows classroom teachers to assign multimedia projects within the security and content safety of *the.News* website.

Answers to student “**thought starter**” questions listed below the video.

- #1 The Cyberbullying Research Center describes it as “willful and a repeated harm inflicted through the use of computers, cell phones and other electronic devices.” Prof. Juan Casas call it “electronic aggression.”
- #2. Federal anti-cyberbullying legislation was introduced in Congress in 2009 and is still in the early stages of discussion.
- #3. The biggest challenges are about anonymity because it’s hard to identify the bully and where the bullying is happening.

Sincerely,

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# Cyberbullying

This lesson was designed to support *the.News* video “Cyberbullying: Effects on Teens Across the Nation”  
The video can be found online at [www.pbs.org/newshour/thenews/thegov](http://www.pbs.org/newshour/thenews/thegov)

## Omaha Public Schools Standards

<http://www.ops.org/District/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=Hbqyrrg2ydM%3d&tabid=912&mid=2006>

### U.S. History Grade 8

**Standard 1.** Identify and describe the elements of culture, the factors that shape it, and its influence on society.

**Conceptual Lens:** Citizenship/Rights  
**Enduring Understanding:** A countries political doctrines embody the basic right and principles which ensure the protection of individual rights.

### Law and Juvenile Justice Grades 10-12

**Standard 1.** Identify and analyze the structure and implementation of criminal law.

**Standard 4.** Identify and analyze the structure and implementation of tort law.

## Grade Level: 7-12

### Content Areas:

Social Studies,  
Government/Civics;  
Language Arts, A/P  
classes

### Key Concepts:

This lesson contains a series of activities that can be done sequentially or individually as conditions allow. The lesson focuses on cyberbullying, its definition, different forms and impact on individuals and communities.



Students will examine the legal implications of cyberbullying and the challenge of balancing the rights of free expression with the right to privacy and freedom from harassment. Students will build a case study examining the legal implications of cyberbullying and evaluate the claims of targets and perpetrators.

### Key Objectives:

Students will:

- **Analyze** different forms of cyberbullying and its impact in the individuals involved
- **Analyze** visual media for better understanding of the

challenges cyberbullying poses to students and schools.

- **Formulate** legal arguments for a case study on cyberbullying.
- **Conduct** a case study analyzing the legal implications of cyberbullying.
- **Evaluate** the legal claims of perpetrators and targets of cyberbullying.





**Key Vocabulary:**

- **instant message (noun):** a message sent using instant-messaging technology to send an instant message. Sometimes used as a verb as “instant message me” meaning use instant-messaging technology to send a message.
- **text message (noun):** a written message sent by means of a mobile phone
- **Internet tool (noun):** any computer-based tool used to help the user navigate or present information on the Internet or sites featured on the Internet. Ex: browsers, email, instant messaging, YouTube, website design tools, etc.
- **social network (noun):** a website where one connects with those sharing personal or professional interests, place of origin, education at a particular school, etc.
- **cyberbullying (verb):** the act of willfully and repeatedly inflicting harm through the use of computers, cell phones, and other electronic devices on another person
- **anti-social (adj):** unwilling or unable to associate in a normal or friendly way with other people; being antagonistic, hostile, or unfriendly toward others; menacing; threatening
- **stakeholders (noun):** a person or group that has an investment, share, or interest in something, as a business or industry or a social/professional group.
- **proactive (adj):** serving to prepare for, intervene in, or control an expected occurrence or situation, esp. a negative or difficult one; anticipatory
- **restrictive law (noun):** any law that restricts a person’s behavior or actions.
- **prescriptive law (noun):** any laws that requires a certain behavior or action from someone.

**McRel**

<http://www.mcrel.org/>

**Level III (Grades 6-8)**

**Civics**

**Standard 3. Understands the sources, purposes, and functions of law, and the importance of the rule of law for the protection of individual rights and the common good**

- Understands how and why the rule of law can be used to restrict the actions of private citizens and government officials

**Level IV (Grades 9-12)**

**Civics**

**Standard 3. Understands the sources, purposes, and functions of law, and the importance of the rule of law for the protection of individual rights and the common good**

- Knows alternative ideas about the purposes and functions of law (e.g., regulating relationships among people and between people and their government; providing order, predictability, security, and established procedures for the management of conflict; regulating social and economic relationships in civil society)

Source: Dictionary.com



## Time Frame:

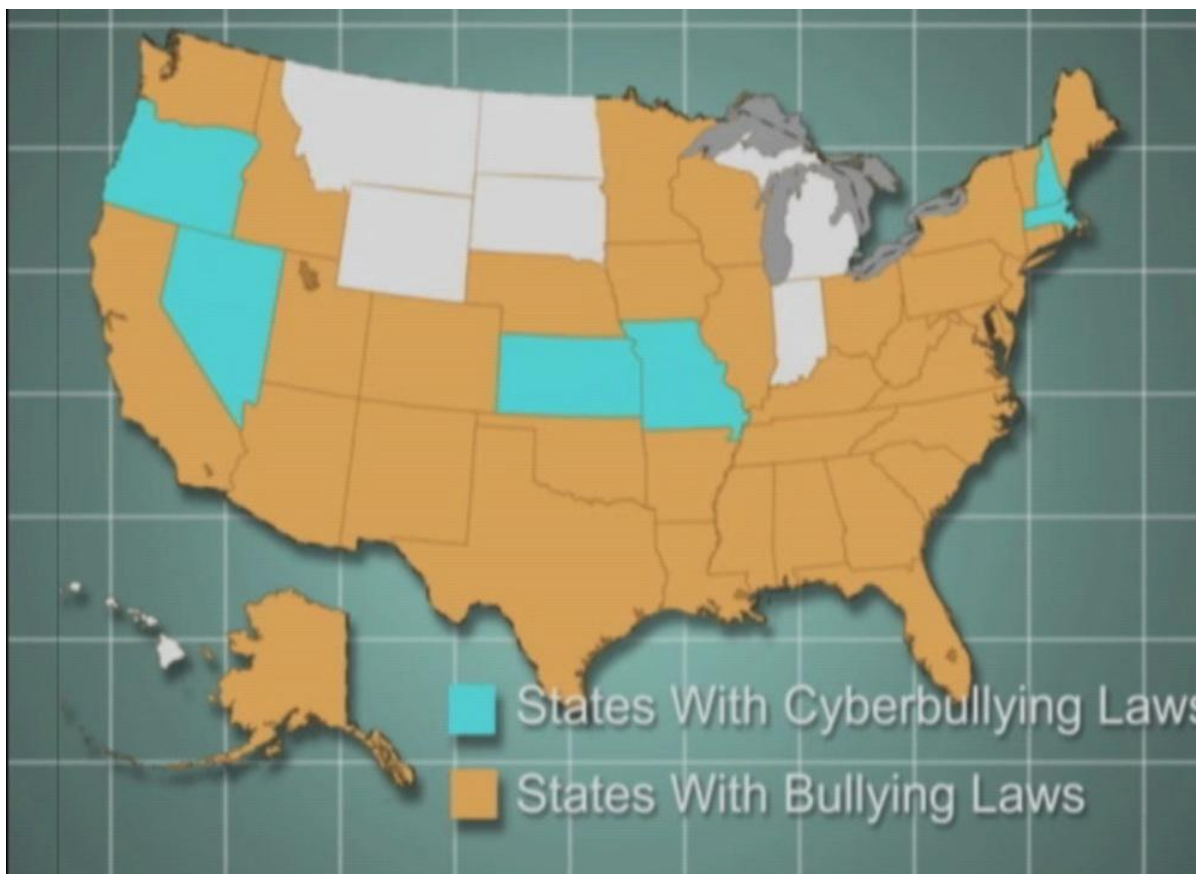
- Opening activity: 20 minutes
- Main Activity Part 1: 20 minutes
- Main Activity Part 2: one class period
- Main Activity Part 3: one class period

## Lesson Topics:

- Social Networks
- Bullying
- Cyberbullying
- Internet Ethics
- Civil Law
- Criminal Law

## Materials:

- *the.News* video:  
<http://www.pbs.org/newshour/thenews/thegov>
- Internet access
- Student Handouts
  - #1 “Cyberbullying Scenarios
  - #2 “Graphic Organizer for *the.News* Segment (Cyberbullying: Effects on Teens Across the Nation)
  - #3 “What are the Legal Issues?”
  - #4 “Extended Scenarios”





## Background:

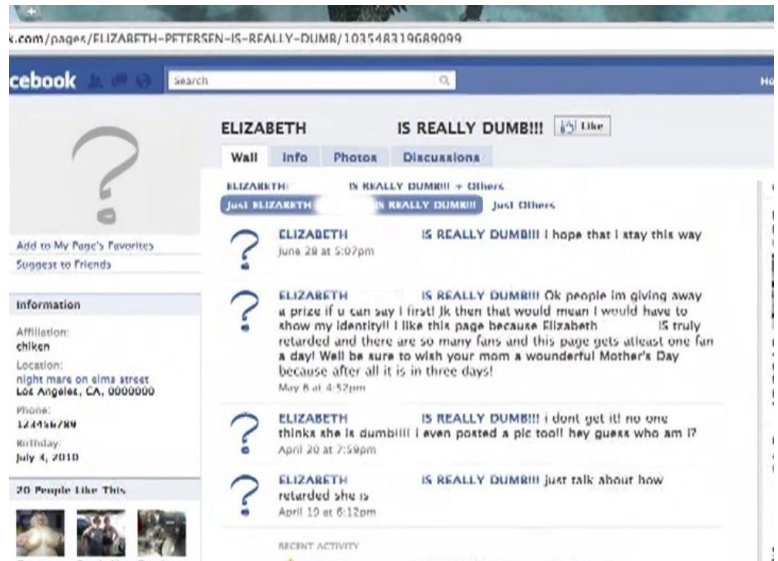
Here are the facts: According to the Pew Internet & American Life Project, 93% of young people in the United States are online and 73% have cell phones. Most of these students use **instant messaging, text messages**, belong to or frequent a **social networking** site and use these **Internet tools** throughout the day. There are also mounting evidence that many students are using this technology to bully or harass others, even to the extent as to incite violence against them. According to a study by the Cyberbullying Research Center, approximately 20% of young people surveyed reported they had experienced some form of **cyberbullying**. The Cyberbullying Research Center, defines cyberbullying as a “willful and repeated harm inflicted through the use of computers, cell phones, and other electronic devices.”

The impact of cyberbullying is familiar and chilling. Students who have difficulty making friends, were loners, had low self-esteem, or just weren't

popular enough are often the targets of bullying which results in increased feelings of alienation and anxiety. These students can often develop **anti-social** behaviors that can manifest themselves in physical sickness, depression, and violent actions. It has been reported that students who brought guns to school with the intention of using them did so because they were bullied. The suicide deaths of Megan Meier in 2006 and Phoebe Prince in 2010 were linked to cyberbullying and illustrate its tragic consequences.\*

All school community **stakeholders**—students, faculty and administrators, and parents—have an obligation to make sure that they are aware of the issues surrounding cyberbullying and that they are **proactive** in addressing them. The adult stakeholders have a duty to make sure students are safe in a learning environment that promotes their emotional well being as well as their academic progress. Students and adults also have to be attentive to free speech standards that honor students' right to free expression while ensuring that the learning environment is not disrupted.

All stakeholders need to be aware of the rights and responsibilities of using the Internet. School rules and state laws are enacted to clarify these rights and responsibilities. They can outline the students' rights to certain information and the use of certain Internet tools to access that information. Some rules and laws are **restrictive** in that they explain what individuals can't do while other laws or rules are **prescriptive** and explain what individuals are required to do. There are some rules already established that address the limits of free expression. People in the United States have the right to free expression (spoken and written word) as long as it doesn't incite





violence or overthrow of the government (federal, state, local, including schools). Expression cannot **defame** another's character through **libel** as in the case of publishing false information that is intended to hurt another person's reputation.

But the subject of cyberbullying is also fraught with questions and potential contradictions especially when it occurs in a school environment. Is cyberbullying the same as traditional bullying? What is the line between bullying someone and expressing dislike for that person? What privacy issues arise when a cyberbullying attack originates from a private computer in someone's home? What are the limits of free expression and privacy? Answering these questions will be the challenge for all stakeholders to adequately address this issue.

\* Megan Meier committed suicide in October, 2006, allegedly due to cyberbullying through a social network site by the mother of one of Megan's friends. The "Cyberbullying Prevention Act" still pending in Congress was named for her. Phoebe Prince committed suicide in January, 2010 after alleged physical and emotional abuse by classmates.

## **McRel**

<http://www.mcrel.org/>

### **Level III (Grades 6-8)**

#### **Civics**

#### **Standard 18: Understands the role and importance of law in the American constitutional system and issues regarding the judicial protection of individual rights**

- Knows principal varieties of law (e.g., constitutional, criminal, civil), and understands how the principal varieties of law protect individual rights and promote the common good
- Understands the advantages and disadvantages of the adversary system and the advantages and disadvantages of alternative means of conflict management (e.g., negotiation, mediation, arbitration, and litigation)
- Understands current issues regarding judicial protection of the rights of individuals

### **Level IV (Grades 9-12)**

#### **Civics**

#### **Standard 18: Understands the role and importance of law in the American constitutional system and issues regarding the judicial protection of individual rights**

- Understands how the rule of law makes possible a system of ordered liberty that protects the basic rights of citizens
- Understands how the individual's rights to life, liberty, and property are protected by the trial and appellate levels of the judicial process and by the principal varieties of law (e.g., constitutional, criminal, and civil law)
- Understands the effects of Americans relying on the legal system to solve social, economic, and political problems rather than using other means, such as private negotiations, mediation, and participation in the political process



## LESSON PLAN

### **Opening Activity:**

Organize students into small groups (3-4 students) and distribute Student Handout 1: Cyberbullying Scenarios. Review the directions with students, and then assign one scenario per group. Provide time for students to rate their scenario and discuss the questions at the end of the list. Then debrief the class.

(adapted from “Cyberbullying and the Law” from Media Awareness Network [http://www.media-awareness.ca/english/resources/educational/lessons/secondary/cyberbullying/cyberbullying\\_law1.cfm](http://www.media-awareness.ca/english/resources/educational/lessons/secondary/cyberbullying/cyberbullying_law1.cfm))

### **Main Activity**

#### **Part 1: *the.News* segment <insert title>**

Keep students in their same groups or create new groups. Distribute Student Handout 2: Graphic Organizer for *the.News* Segment <Cyberbullying: Effects on Teens Across the Nation>. For homework, have students do the post-viewing research at the end of their graphic organizer and report back the next class day.

#### **Part 2: What are the legal issues?**

Have students read the Background Essay to help them understand the scope of the cyberbullying issue. Form students into groups of at least four and assign each group a different scenario from the Opening Activity, Student Handout #2. Distribute Student Handout 3: What are the Legal Issues? and review the directions. Provide time for students to complete, then debrief with the following questions:

#### **Part 3: Case Study**

In this activity, students will review some extended scenarios of alleged cyberbullying. They will examine one and participate in a case study presenting their findings to the class for its evaluation.

1. Divide the class into groups of at least five students each.
2. Distribute Student Handout 3: What are the Legal Issues? to each student and review the directions and the civil and criminal issues surrounding cyberbullying on the handout.
3. Then distribute Handout 4: Extended Scenarios to each student. Have each group select or assign each group one of the case studies. Then provide time for them to complete the case study chart.
4. When all groups have finished their chart, have them prepare and present their case study to the class following the case study instructions on their handout.
5. Have the other class members evaluate the various positions presented in the case study, following the guidelines on their handout, and formulate their recommendations as to what should be done.



**Assessment:**

Students can be assessed on their completion of the student handouts and level of detail and analysis in case study presentations and evaluations.

**Extension Assignments:**

- Have students look into their school's policy on cyberbullying and determine after their experience with this lesson whether the policy should be revised. They can research other examples of cyberbullying policies from the Resources listed in this activity.
- Have students set up a cyberbullying blog site with definitions, legal interpretations, general info, resources on further information and assistance.

**Partnership for 21st Century Skills**

<http://www.21stcenturyskills.org>

*Civic Literacy*

- Participating effectively in civic life through knowing how to stay informed and understanding governmental processes

*Creativity and Innovation*

- Use a wide range of idea creation techniques (such as brainstorming)
- Elaborate, refine, analyze and evaluate their own ideas in order to improve and maximize creative efforts

*Reason Effectively*

- Use various types of reasoning (inductive, deductive, etc.) as appropriate to the situation

*Make Judgments and Decisions*

- Effectively analyze and evaluate evidence, arguments, claims and beliefs
- Analyze and evaluate major alternative points of view
- Interpret information and draw conclusions based on the best analysis

*Communication and Collaboration*

- Articulating thoughts and ideas clearly and effectively through speaking and writing
- Listen effectively to decipher meaning, including knowledge, values, attitudes and intentions
- Utilize multiple media and technologies, and know how to judge their effectiveness a priori as well as assess their impact

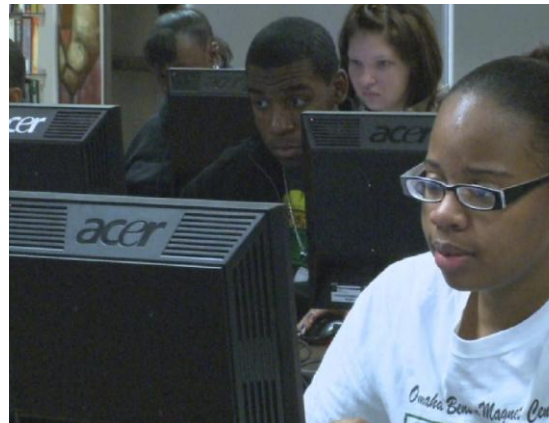


**Resources:**

- PBS NewsHour's *the.News* <http://www.pbs.org/newshour/thenews/>
- Cyberbullying Research Center <http://www.cyberbullying.us/>
- Education.com section on Bullying <http://www.education.com/topic/school-bullying-teasing/>
- Anti-Defamation League "ADL Curriculum Connections" [http://www.adl.org/education/curriculum\\_connections/cyberbullying/](http://www.adl.org/education/curriculum_connections/cyberbullying/)
- Media Awareness Network Curriculum Resources on Cyberbullying <http://www.media-awareness.ca/english/resources/educational/lessons/cyberbullying.cfm>
- eBasedPrevention.org Cyberbullying Legal Issues <http://www.ebasedprevention.org/toolbox/bullying/cyberbullying-legal-issues>
- Center for Safe and Responsible Internet Use <http://www.cyberbully.org/>
- The Children's Partnership "Empowering Parents through Technology" <http://www.childrenspartnership.org/AM/Template.cfm?Section=Home&section=Technology1&template=/CM/ContentDisplay.cfm&ContentFileID=3425>
- FindLaw A rundown on cyberbullying laws [http://blogs.findlaw.com/law\\_and\\_life/2010/01/cyberbullying-suicide-shows-need-for-cyberbullying-laws.html](http://blogs.findlaw.com/law_and_life/2010/01/cyberbullying-suicide-shows-need-for-cyberbullying-laws.html)
- Life Lessons: Addressing School Bullying <http://www.cbsnews.com/stories/2011/01/09/sunday/main7227783.shtml?tag=contentBody:featuredPost-PE>

**Activity Designer:**

Greg Timmons is a former social studies teacher now freelance writer and educational consultant.





## Student Handout 1: Cyberbullying Scenarios

Each of the scenarios\* below contains a form of expression by someone about someone else and is presented electronically in some form for many people to see. The question arises, “Is this an acceptable form of free speech or is it cyberbullying?” After your group has been assigned one of the following scenarios, **analyze** it in your small group taking into consideration the factors listed below. Then rate the scenario on a 1 to 5 scale with one being totally acceptable and 5 being totally unacceptable. Be sure you can **explain** your rating. Then discuss the questions at the end of the list. Be prepared to share your findings with the class.

### Factors to consider:

- Was the subject of the scenario kept anonymous? If so, does this make the action more acceptable? Why or why not?
  - Did the creator of the expression reveal their identity? If so, would this make their action more acceptable in this scenario? Why or why not?
  - Was anyone’s reputation negatively affected by this action? **Explain.**
  - Do you believe the intent of the action was to hurt someone else or just express an opinion? **Explain.**
1. A student posts a story on a social networking site making fun of a teacher, suggesting that he is unqualified to teach. The teacher’s name is not used, but he is clearly recognizable to anyone who knows him.
  2. A student creates a Web site that is intended to mock another student in her class that will likely lead to the student being harassed at school. The site was not created at school and is not hosted on school computers (though it can be accessed from them).
  3. A student uploads to YouTube a video of his band performing a song that makes fun of teachers. No specific teacher is named or is identifiable from the song.
  4. A student creates a fake Facebook profile in the name of another student in the class. The other student is Asian and the profile accuses her of cheating on tests. The profile contains anonymous comments from other students accusing the Asian girl of cheating to explain her high grades.
  5. A student finds that photos of her, which were taken by her (now ex) boyfriend, have been uploaded to his MySpace page. Then they were copied and reproduced in many more places, including photo-sharing sites. Her ex-boyfriend says that he is not responsible for what was done with the photos after he uploaded them.
  6. A teacher asks students in her class to help write holiday greetings in a variety of languages for the school’s Web site. Without the teacher’s knowledge, one of the students’ contributions is a false and insulting statement against another teacher.



7. A student discovers that other students in his class have created an online forum in which students are invited to vote on whether or not the first student should be beaten up.
8. A student creates a Web site in which she criticizes school policies and suggests that several teachers, whom she names, are overly strict in their discipline.
9. A student creates a Facebook group in which he states that one of his teachers is a space alien who is scheming to abduct students and take them to her home planet.
10. A teacher discovers that students are being pressured by a popular student to remove an unpopular student from their Facebook “friends” lists.

### Discussion Questions

After you’ve reviewed and rated your assigned scenario, debrief your group by discussing the following questions.

- **Describe** your rating on the scenario and reasons why.
- **Compare** and **contrast** the seriousness of the actions in the scenario if they were public for anyone to see or private so only the target saw the message. Would the action be more acceptable if the target’s privacy was maintained?
- **Describe** what you would do if you were the person targeted in this scenario.
- **Describe** what you would do if you discovered this activity and knew the people involved.

\*Adopted from “Cyberbullying and the Law” from Media Awareness Network [http://www.media-awareness.ca/english/resources/educational/lessons/secondary/cyberbullying/cyberbullying\\_law1.cfm](http://www.media-awareness.ca/english/resources/educational/lessons/secondary/cyberbullying/cyberbullying_law1.cfm)



## Student Handout 2: Graphic Organizer for *the.News* Segment “Cyberbullying”

**Directions:** Answer the questions below from the news segment “Cyberbullying” on *the.News* website at [[www.pbs.org/newshour/thenews/thegov/](http://www.pbs.org/newshour/thenews/thegov/)]

1. After seeing the story of Drew Hostert, **describe** the costs and benefits for the bully and the victim of posting a private conversation on a social networking website.

	Costs	Benefits
<b>Bully</b>		
<b>Victim</b>		
<b>Compare and contrast</b> the costs and benefits of both the perpetrators and victims of posting a private conversation on a social networking website.		
<b>Explain</b> why you think someone would do such a thing.		

2. **Summarize** the definition of Cyberbullying according to the Cyberbullying Research Center.

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3. According to national research studies and the two students at Omaha Benson High School, Cyberbullying is the most common form of bullying. Why do you think cyberbullying is done more often than face-to-face bullying?

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Summarize the factors that make cyberbullying so difficult for school authorities to stop.	

4. Because of these challenges, it's hard for school authorities to discipline students who are cyberbullies. Under what circumstances do school authorities have a right to address cyberbullying?

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**Post-viewing Activity**

Research the following and report back to class:

- **Describe** the Megan Meier Cyberbullying Prevention Act. What is the current status of the bill?
- Has your state legislature addressed the issue of cyberbullying? If so, **describe** the action taken.
- What is the code or rule about bullying in your school? Is cyberbullying included in this code or rule? Do you think it should be and why or why not?

**Resources:**

- GovTrack.us <http://www.govtrack.us/>
- Cyberbullying.us State Cyberbullying Laws [http://www.cyberbullying.us/Bullying\\_and\\_Cyberbullying\\_Laws\\_20100701.pdf](http://www.cyberbullying.us/Bullying_and_Cyberbullying_Laws_20100701.pdf)
- Bullying No Way.com <http://www.bullyingnoway.com.au/talkout/spotlight/cyberBullyingSchools.shtml>



## Student Handout 3: What are the Legal Issues?

**Directions:** In this activity, you will examine a scenario describing an alleged instance of cyberbullying. Review the civil and criminal issues surrounding cyberbullying below. Then read your assigned scenario from Student Handout 4 and complete the chart below.

### CIVIL AND CRIMINAL ISSUES SURROUNDING CYBERBULLYING

#### Forms of Cyberbullying

- **Insulting:** Posting or spreading false information about a person that will cause harm to that person or that person's reputation.
- **Targeting:** Singling someone out and inviting others to attack or make fun of her or him.
- **Identity theft:** Pretending to be someone else to make it look like that other person said things he or she doesn't believe or that aren't true about him or her.
- **Uploading:** Sharing images of a person, particularly in an embarrassing situation, without his or her permission, or sharing emails without the writer's permission.
- **Excluding:** Pressuring others to exclude someone from a community (either online or offline).
- **Harassment:** Repeatedly sending someone nasty, mean and insulting messages.

**Applying Cyberbullying to the Law** Cyberbullying can be addressed under civil law or criminal law, based on the situation.

**CIVIL LAW:** Deals with property rights, personal dignity, and freedom from personal injury. In defamation cases, the target can file a suit against the person making the statement and take them to court. If the suit is successful, the person making the statement will have to pay damages (money) to the target.

Under civil law, defamation is defined as causing harm to one's reputation by intentionally spreading false information about the person for that purpose. This can come in the form of **slander** (a speech or live broadcast) or as **libel** where the defamation is published in some form.

The following conditions must be proven for an act to be considered defamation (slander or libel) under the law—

- The target must be identified in the statement.
- The statement must be false and made public to people other than the person making the statement and the target.
- The statement must do harm to the target's reputation.
- It must be proven that the perpetrator spoke or published the statement with the intent to do harm to the target.

**Defense for defamation:** A person accused of libel may defend him or herself by proving that the statement was true, that it was a fair comment (a genuine criticism, not a personal attack), or that he or she innocently reproduced the statement without knowing what it was.



**CRIMINAL LAW:** This branch of law determines which actions are crimes against the state, in other words, a law passed by a legislative body. A perpetrator may be accused of creating an unsafe environment by making the target feel that he or she cannot go to school or work without facing violence, teasing or exclusion. Areas where criminal law may apply to cyberbullying are in the area of harassment, instigating violence against another, coercion, obscenity, or hate crimes.

**The following types of actions might be prosecutorial under criminal law\*:**

- Making threats of violence to people or their property or inciting others to do so.
- Harassing someone either in person or electronically (telephone calls, email, text messaging).
- Committing any of the above when motivated by prejudice against someone’s race, color, religion, national origin, ethnicity, sexual orientation or physical or mental disability (hate or bias crime).
- Engaging in coercion (trying to force someone to do something he or she doesn’t want to do).
- Creating or sending sexually explicit images of underage persons. (child pornography).

\*adopted from “Cyberbullying: Legal Issues <http://www.ebasedprevention.org/toolbox/bullying/cyberbullying-legal-issues>

**CASE STUDY CHART**

<b>Perpetrator(s) (identify this person or these people are from the scenario)</b>	<b>List the type of cyberbullying and explanation of how it applies to this scenario.</b>	<b>Describe a possible defense for the perpetrator for these actions.</b>
<b>Targets (identify this person from the scenario)</b>	<b>Describe the possible feelings held by the target</b>	<b>Identify any civil or criminal charges against perpetrator?</b>



## Student Handout 4: Extended Scenarios

1. A student posted a story at the beginning of the year on her social networking site making fun of a teacher and identifying him by name. The story's author was a former student and claims the site is only her opinion based on the year she was in the teacher's class. The story describes the teacher as unqualified to teach evaluating him on several critical areas, such as knowledge of the subject matter, clarity in explanations, fairness in discipline, and student test scores. The story is based on anecdotal comments made by other students, all of whom expressed disdain for the teacher personally or negatively comment on his classroom style. None of the students who contributed to the story identified themselves. The author claims the critique fairly evaluates the teacher by following an online teacher evaluation format used by several other districts, though not by this district. Since the story was posted three weeks ago, several parents have asked their children be transferred out of this teacher's class and into other teachers' classrooms. The teacher accuses the author of hurting his reputation and threatening his standing with the parents and students.
2. A student has admitted to creating a Website that mocks another student in her class. The site makes critical comments about the other student's hair and clothes using photos of her taken at school without the girl's knowledge. The site's author asks other students to point out these shortcomings to the girl when they see her claiming that this will help the girl improve. The site was not created at school and is not hosted on school computers (though it can be accessed from them). Since the site was posted, several students have made harsh and insulting comments to the girl anonymously and in person. Her locker has been vandalized. There has been a noticeable downturn in the girl's behavior—sitting by herself at lunch, being absent from school, not interacting with other students even when being asked, and doing poorly in her school work. Her parents are very concerned and have asked the school to block the site on the school's system, which they have, but students can access the site on their cell phones and at home. The site is updated every night. The parents accuse the student who created the website of ruining their child's middle school experience.
3. A student has created a fake Facebook profile in the name of another student who is new to the school. The new student is Middle Eastern and the profile contains photos of him altered to look like a Taliban fighter in combat gear. The profile quotes the student as supporting terrorism and wanting to commit "jihad" against other students and faculty members. The Middle Eastern student denies he ever made these comments or that he supports terrorism. There are also supposed "authentic" documents that show the student is a citizen of Afghanistan, though he claims to be from Turkey. No student at the school has reached out to the student and even some faculty members have been noticeably distant and unfriendly to him. The fake Facebook page gives no clue as to the profile's real author although several of his friends know his identity as he has bragged and admitted to them he is the author. When the Middle Eastern student found out about the site and the identity of its creator, he openly condemned them both in loud and threatening terms. He has vowed to take revenge on the website's author.
4. A student discovered that revealing photos of her at parties and during a weekend at the beach, taken by her (now ex) boyfriend, have been uploaded to his MySpace page. She admits that she allowed her boyfriend to take the pictures, as she really liked him and thought it would be fun to pose that way. However, the photos were soon copied and reproduced in many more places, including photo-sharing sites, by other students at the school. Several other social networking pages have been created featuring the photos of the girl and suggestive quotes as captions. The girl's ex-boyfriend says that he thought he only allowed himself and the girl to view them on his page. But he claims to be innocent to what happened afterwards, claiming he is not responsible for what was done with the photos after he uploaded



them. The girl has faced some scorn from her friends (now her former friends) who either believe she helped post the sites or was foolish to allow her boyfriend to take the pictures in the first place. The girl wants her ex-boyfriend to be held responsible for the original postings and their “going viral” on the Internet.

5. A student, who has a reputation for being tough, discovers that some students in his class have created an online forum where they invite other students to vote on whether or not he should be beaten up. The forum contains exchanges between students who identify themselves and accuse him of being a bully. The forum contributors describe in detail instances where they have been harassed or picked on by the student. Many of the instances are familiar to most of the students at the school because they witnessed them or heard about them from friends. The site has been frequented by many students, a large majority whom have voted that someone should kick “the bully” around some. The student has reported numerous instances of verbal and physical harassment (insulting comments and pushing in the halls) since the site went up, though he can’t say exactly who is responsible because it happens in crowded hallways between classes. The students who created the site claim they have a right to contribute to the forum and that all the instances are true. The student fears the forum is encouraging the attacks against him and that soon someone or several students will complete the act. He wants the forum blocked by the school and the students held accountable for their prank.

### **Instructions for Case Study**

1. Divide your group into the different roles described below:
  - a. Perpetrator(s)
  - b. Target
  - c. Bystanders (people who know the perpetrator, the target and saw the alleged cyberbullying example.
  - d. Adults (teachers, parents, school administrators)
  - e. Law enforcement authorities (police and prosecutors)
2. Prepare a presentation of the circumstances in the case study and the positions taken by the different roles (from above) featured in the scenario.
3. Make your case study presentation to the class.

### **Guidelines for Evaluating the Case Studies**

1. Listen carefully to the presentations. Take notes on the details. Ask questions for clarification after each case study is presented.
2. Determine the following:
  - a. What actions are most offensive in this scenario?
  - b. Who is most responsible for the problem faced by the “target?”
  - c. What are the possible civil or criminal laws involved in this case?
  - d. How would you rule in this case if you were in a position to do so?