

# Online vs face-to-face communication

## Year Learning Activity

### Description

Students discuss the similarities and differences between online and face-to-face communication. They also research and explore protective strategies to ensure they communicate safely using technology.

### Learning focus

Researching reliable and trustworthy health information sources.

Understanding why being informed about chatting online is important.

### Key understandings

- Reliable and trustworthy health information sources (such as websites) are available to provide help and information about safely chatting online.
- People can use strategies to make informed choices.
- Making informed choices can make us safer.

### Materials

1. Teaching Resource: *Communication* PowerPoint presentation
2. Butcher's paper and markers
3. Internet access

## Teaching and Learning Activities

### Before you get started

- Communicating online is an increasingly accessible and socially acceptable form of communication. In fact, it is the predominant form of communication for young people today. It is important that the positives of online communication are highlighted as strongly as the potential issues. The most important lesson for young people is that they learn to be responsible with technology and know how to use it safely. Refer to the [Social Media: Cyberbullying](#) and [Social Media: Cyberstalking](#) Guides for further details.
- It is possible that a student has been involved in a traumatic experience relating to online communication. It is important that teachers are familiar with the [Dealing with disclosures](#) Guide and have a risk management strategy in place.

### Whole Class

As communication via technology increases and becomes more sophisticated, it is important for young people to understand the value in face-to-face communication. This activity allows students to explore the advantages and challenges of both online and face-to-face communication and aims to highlight that both have a place in today's society.

# Online vs face-to-face communication

## Year Learning Activity

---

1. Show slide 2 of Teaching Resource: *Communication* PowerPoint presentation. Ask the students to identify the common theme in all of the images.
  - The common theme is communication. Discuss that some of the images involve face-to-face communication while the others involve communication using technology.
2. Divide the class into small groups and give each group a piece of butcher's paper and some markers. Ask them to divide the butcher's paper into four boxes.
  - The first box is to be labelled 'Positives about communication using technology'.
3. Repeat the process for the second box which is to be labelled 'Challenges about communication using technology', the third box which is to be labelled 'Positives about face-to-face communication' and the fourth box which is to be labelled 'Challenges about face-to-face communication'.
4. Have students develop their ideas under these four headings and then discuss responses and clarify any misconceptions. Highlight the importance of body language and facial expressions and stress that these are often not available when using computers or mobile phones to communicate. As a result, our messages can often be misinterpreted and conflict can occur. Also, emphasise that bullying occurs more readily online because it is easier to be hurtful online than it is during face-to-face contact, i.e. the person bullying worries less about the consequences of hurtful comments. It is, therefore, a cowardly act.

### Optional activity:

1. The above activity could be extended to include role-play scenarios by expanding on the group responses to the positives and challenges.
2. Allocate a number between 1 and 4 to each of the groups.
3. Ask each group to develop a short role play of their scenario from their previous responses. For example:
  - Group 1 creates a role-play highlighting a 'Positive situation using technology to communicate'
  - Group 2 creates a role-play highlighting a 'Challenging situation using technology to communicate'
  - Group 3 creates a role-play highlighting a 'Positive situation using face-to-face communication'
  - Group 4 creates a role-play highlighting a 'Challenging situation using face-to-face communication'.

# Online vs face-to-face communication

Year Learning Activity

---

## Independent or Small Group

This activity provides students with an example of a trustworthy internet site while providing students with engaging activities to learn how to behave appropriately online.

1. Allow pairs or small groups of students to explore the [games and quizzes](#) page of the [esafety.gov.au](#) website.
  - Encourage them to do the Cybersmart quiz and explore the comic book capers game.

## Reflection

1. Students report findings of their website exploration to the group and discuss how they might find the answers to the questions that they have posed.
2. Discuss the following questions:
  - *What was the most important thing you learnt about online communication?*
  - *How is communicating online similar to communicating face-to-face?*
  - *How is communicating online different to communicating face-to-face?*
  - *What are some safety issues to consider when communicating online?*
  - *How can you look after yourself and your friends and family if you are using your mobile phone or the internet?*
  - *If you had some bad news you had to share with a friend which would be the best form of communication – online or face-to-face? Why?*
  - *If you had to tell your friend urgently about a change of plans about a pick-up time you had planned with them earlier, which would be the best form of communication – online or face-to-face? Why?*
  - *Why is it easier for someone to say mean things about someone else online than it is face-to-face?*

## Related assets (links to sections within GDHR site)

### Teaching Note

[Dealing with disclosures](#)

### FAQ

[Why is it important to have good privacy settings on social media?](#)  
[What should you do if you know someone is being bullied online?](#)

# Online vs face-to-face communication

Year Learning Activity

---

## Background Note

[Social media: Cyberbullying](#)

[Social media: Cyberstalking](#)

## Teaching Resources

[Communication](#)

## Date printed

18 September 2019