

Be
Internet
Awesome.

Digital Wellbeing Lessons

June 2023

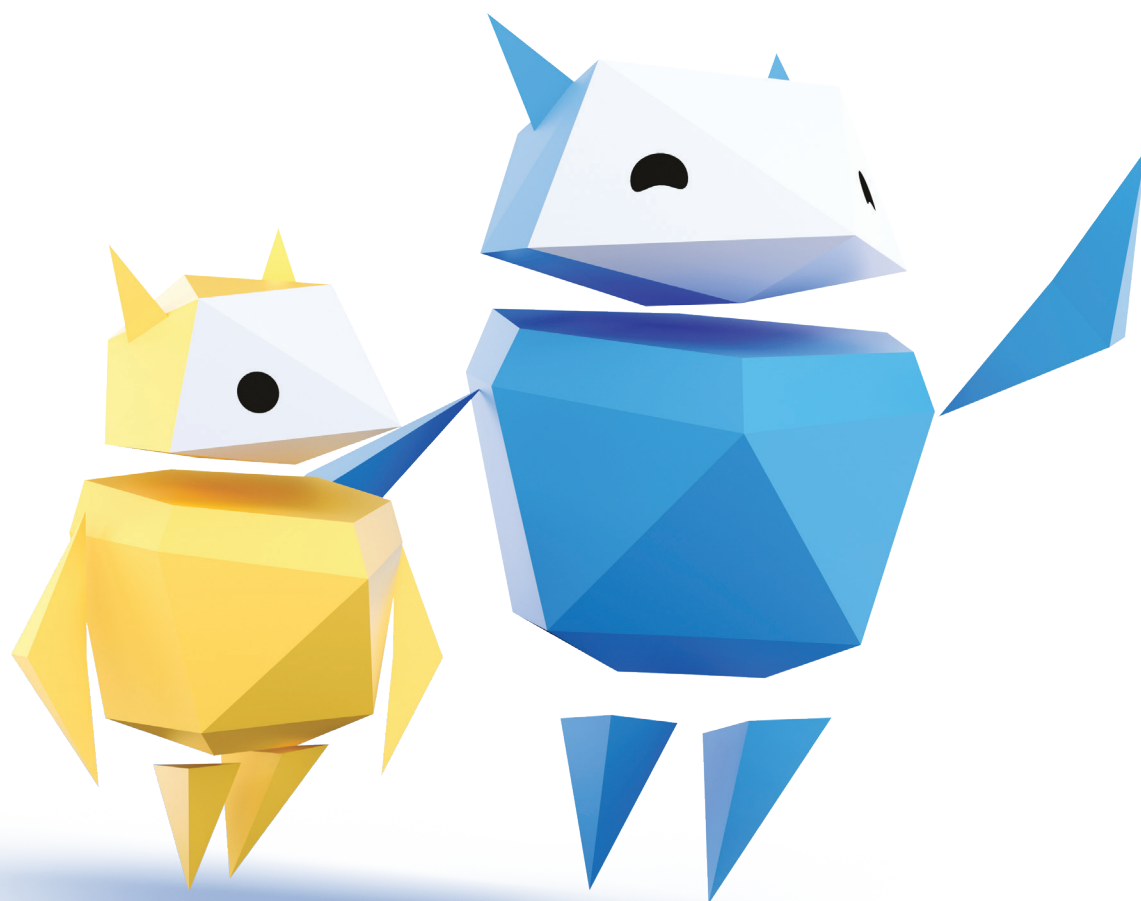


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Digital wellbeing lesson plan guide

This guide is designed to support you in introducing digital wellbeing to students in your classroom.

Helping students manage and enjoy their digital lives is a shared endeavor. Teachers play an important role in this by helping families reflect on their technology habits in a collaborative way. Learning how to have an open, practical dialogue about what digital life should look like is a great first step toward helping students find the right balance. We recommend that you use the resources in this plan alongside the Be Internet Awesome curriculum, which covers the practical skills and behaviors that enable students to be safer and more confident tech users.

For most schools, student wellbeing is already a core value. Teachers and students spend lots of hours together each week, and many teachers already check in regularly to see how kids are feeling, or keep an eye on notable mood or behavior changes. digital wellbeing is an extension of that—in other words, taking concepts and approaches you already use to support overall wellbeing and applying them to the digital world.

While developing the Be Internet Awesome curriculum, Google regularly consulted with internet safety experts and educators themselves. This ensured that the program addressed all the key elements that teachers and families need to know to support children around this topic. In building these lessons, the goal was not only to understand more about digital wellbeing. It was also about making sure the messages within these materials are aligned with children's evolving relationship with technology.

Like most new or emerging subjects, definitions of digital wellbeing tend to vary. At Google, we've worked with a wide variety of experts and looked at the best available research to clarify what is meant by the term.

There are many ways to think about wellbeing. The dictionary says wellbeing is about being "comfortable, happy and healthy." It can help us grow our resilience—anticipate difficulties, understand how they will make us feel and find ways to deal with them. Therefore, we see digital wellbeing as the state of being comfortable and confident with how technology fits into everyday life, and the confidence to make positive choices about how to interact with the digital world. When using this definition with students, it is important to consider that digital wellbeing is not a standalone topic, but needs to be considered as an element of overall emotional and physical wellbeing.

This is a well-rounded approach to introducing the concepts and ideas that form the lesson plans, while acknowledging that there is no one-size-fits-all definition. The many individual circumstances that contribute to a person's sense of digital wellbeing is unique to them, which is why teaching it will be an evolving effort and can't be done prescriptively.

The resources

Due to the nuanced nature of the topic, it would not be effective to try to teach digital wellbeing in the classroom as a set of rules. Instead, it requires reflection and discussion, both at home and at school. Students need to see examples of positive technology use and enjoyment modeled by the adults around them. They need to be supported as they develop a better understanding of how digital interactions can make them feel and why it affects them in the way it does. Becoming more aware of the impact that technology and screen use are having on their lives will help them use the resources and techniques they're learning to make appropriate changes to their behavior.

Many factors may impact a student's digital wellbeing—just as many factors impact wellbeing as a whole. These could include anything from personal circumstances and mindset, to the motivation for using tech, and even the time of day. Especially for younger users, it's not easy to distinguish whether certain emotions are brought about by the use of technology or whether other factors are involved—such as what's going on developmentally, within friendships, or at home. Even a segment on the news may affect how a child is feeling. It's also important to remember that young kids have grown up around technology and don't distinguish between online and offline as much as adults do. Experiences they have using technology are just as real to them as experiences that take place off screens, which is why it's important for them to understand how overall wellbeing and digital wellbeing are directly connected and equally important.

Digital habits and behaviors that improve one person's wellbeing may not have the same effect on someone else. When considering the impacts of technology use, it's important to consider what the purpose and quality level of the content or activity is. For example, one student might watch videos online to learn new skills or do something creative, which leaves them feeling proud and content. Another student of a similar age could spend the same amount of time watching videos that are distracting or distressing, leading to negative feelings. This is not about the number of minutes being spent online, but rather what they are seeing and doing while they're there.

It is important to note that, when an activity in the lesson plan refers to creating healthy digital practices, there is no intent to be judgmental toward any student's or family's existing practices. Instead, the phrase refers to the rapidly changing nature of technology, how students' technology use will evolve as they grow older, and how they can ensure they are using it in meaningful, intentional, and purposeful ways.

There are four digital wellbeing lessons in this resource:

- **Lesson 1:** What's on screen: How does it make me feel?
- **Lesson 2:** Screen time and how it makes me feel
- **Lesson 3:** Becoming a smart internet user
- **Lesson 4:** Find ways to grow digital wellbeing

Two have been written for younger students (grades 2-3) and two for older students (grades 4-6). The lessons go with the Be Internet Awesome curriculum and provide opportunities for cross-curricular learning.

When and how you introduce these resources is entirely up to you and may depend on what fits best with your curriculum planning. We find they work particularly well alongside the Be Internet Awesome fifth pillar, Be Internet Brave, which discusses how kids can both exercise their own agency and talk with trusted adults about any issues they come across online, even when they are difficult or embarrassing. We're sure you'll find the best ways to fit these materials into your classwork.

Safeguarding

You'll see that the lesson plans are structured in such a way that students are not asked to disclose their own digital practices. None of the resources place any judgment on technology use or stipulate what's right for each scenario. Instead, they create opportunities for students to reflect on the possible effects of their screen use (using scenarios to look at the concepts objectively) so they can make considered choices about their activities and routines.

To allow for student progression, the two lessons for each age group cover different aspects of the digital wellbeing journey. Lessons 1 and 3 are for grades 2-3, and start with personal awareness of tech use and encourages participants to reflect on their behaviors and feelings. Lessons 2 and 4 are for grades 4-6, and provide the knowledge and tools to create their own healthy digital habits. They can evaluate their tech use and take steps to change their behavior as needed, based on their reflections and understanding.

Every lesson starts with a baseline activity that relates to the final lesson, to help teachers assess students' progress. It's important to note that the lessons are not "pass or fail" experiences. digital wellbeing is not something kids must "succeed" at, as that would undermine the core principles of wellbeing. A successful implementation of the curriculum would mean that students feel empowered and more confident in their ability to navigate online environments rather than provide answers that are arbitrarily considered "correct." Detailed lesson plans are included to help you find the right balance.

As with all lessons, it is important to consider student safety. Each lesson plan includes a teacher guide on this subject, which we would urge you to read before starting your lesson.

These digital wellbeing resources are not intended to help address problematic behaviors in certain students, although they may support other interventions. They have been designed to raise awareness and build confidence and skills to encourage healthy habits. In an area that sparks much debate among schools,

Continued on the next page →

parents and society as a whole (whether it's excessive "sharenting," the overuse of social media by parents to share content about their children; online gaming; or streaming platforms), the resources are here to encourage reflection while recognizing they will touch on topics of concern.

Engaging parents and families

Simply put, every family is unique. The lesson plans address this sensitively by using theoretical scenarios to create more objective learning opportunities. digital wellbeing requires a degree of self-reflection and understanding of personal tech use. The activities within the lesson plans use scenarios that allow students to reflect on different situations and discuss them with their peers in a neutral way, without having to disclose their own personal habits.

Acknowledging differences in tech access

It's likely that not all your students have the same level of access to the internet or technology. They may be using different devices to access various apps, games and sites. In certain households, students may be sharing devices among multiple children. The lesson plans are designed to be inclusive and include reference to offline activities for those with less access to tech. There is also no judgment made as to what amount of tech use is seen as "good," "normal" or desirable.

Protecting the vulnerable

It's important that students understand that you are not expecting them to tell personal stories about what they do online. They should also be aware that if anything is raised that makes them feel worried, scared or confused, they can come and speak to you about it privately. As with any other lesson that relates to personal experiences, you should consider the needs of vulnerable children in your class beforehand and take care to choose activities that are suitable for them.

The lesson plans include activities that are appropriate for most students within these age groups, but of course it is important to make your own assessment based on your knowledge of the class. Make sure students know there are local and national support groups or helplines to support people in crisis or address illegal content in case the adults in their lives don't know about them. These include resources such as the CyberTipline and TakeltDown.org, NCMEC (National Center for Missing and Exploited Children); and the NAMI (National Alliance on Mental Illness) helpline. You could discuss what helplines are in class or create a list to send home with students.

Engaging parents and families is an essential part of this process, and collaboration is key. Be Internet Awesome includes a free guide that supports the whole program, helping parents and the entire family with conversations about broader internet safety topics. The resources have been developed to help parents reflect on their part in modeling positive online behavior and encouraging their children to develop

healthy practices. Parents often report feeling overwhelmed by the rapid evolution of technology and the large role it plays in their children's lives, and they will be pleased to have your support.

Remember that the lessons your students learn and take home will have a big impact and could make a real difference to their mental health, self-awareness, and sense of ease and autonomy within their world—both online and offline. Help them think of fun and positive conclusions they can share with their parents, including the useful tips they've learned and would like to try with their family.

We hope you enjoy using these resources in your classroom and that they provide a useful foundation for helping students establish balanced digital habits and greater confidence in their online lives.

Digital Wellbeing Packet

Lesson overview

Lesson 1	What's on screen: How does it make me feel?	Grades 2–3
Lesson 2	Screen time and how it makes me feel	Grades 4–6
Lesson 3	Becoming a smart internet user	Grades 2–3
Lesson 4	Find ways to grow digital wellbeing	Grades 4–6

Themes

It's important that kids understand they're not on their own when they see content online that makes them feel uncomfortable—especially if it looks like they or somebody else could get hurt. First, they should never hesitate to get help from someone they trust. Second, it's good for them to know they have options: There are different ways to be brave and take action. Being brave also means looking out for themselves and recognizing what makes them feel good or bad, whether it be content, general screen time, or different activities, and empowering them to understand how it all plays a part in their digital (and general) wellbeing.

Goals for students

- ✓ **Understand** how screen use can affect each person differently, and how their feelings about online activities are unique and may change over time.
- ✓ **Explore** how they can use our knowledge and tools to make personal choices to create healthy digital habits.

Standards addressed

ISTE Standards for Educators: ISTE Standards for Educators: 3a, 3b, 3c, 5b, 6a, 6d
ISTE Standards for Students 2016: 2b, 3d, 4d, 6b, 6d
AASL Learning Standards: I.a.1, I.b.1, I.b.2, I.c.1, I.c.2, I.c.3, I.d.3, I.d.4, II.a.1, II.a.2, II.b.1, II.b.2, II.b.3, II.c.1, II.c.2, II.d.1, II.d.2, II.d.3, III.a.1, III.a.2, III.a.3, III.b.1, III.c.1, III.c.2, III.d.1, III.d.2, IV.a.2, IV.b.3, V.a.2, V.a.3, V.c.1, V.c.3, V.d.1, V.d.2, V.d.3, VI.a.2, VI.d.1, VI.d.3

Digital Wellbeing Packet Vocabulary

Wellbeing: There are many ways to think about wellbeing. The dictionary says it's about being "comfortable, happy and healthy." It can help us grow our resilience—anticipate difficulties, understand how they will make us feel and find ways to deal with them.

Digital wellbeing: Being able to stay comfortable, happy and healthy—to thrive—in this very connected world and when we're online or using technology. It's part of our overall physical, emotional and social wellbeing.

What's on screen: How does it make me feel?

Encourages student awareness about how our screen use can affect the way we feel—both positively and negatively.

Note to teacher: Make sure students know who they can turn to and what to do if something they encounter online makes them feel uncomfortable. You can help students understand that it's okay to take a break from their devices; avoid looking at things that make them feel anxious just before bedtime; and not feel as though they have to reply to every message if they feel overwhelmed. You can also refer to other lessons in **Be Internet Brave: When in Doubt, Talk it Out** for more guidance. Within the school environment, students should know who can support them with concerns about their digital lives, whether that is a teacher, school counselor, or an administrator.

Highlight for your students that there's always help. Point any adults working with them to local and national support groups or helplines such as the CyberTipline and TakeltDown.org, NCMEC (National Center for Missing and Exploited Children); and the NAMI (National Alliance on Mental Illness) helpline.

Reminder: Please make sure you read the **Digital wellbeing lesson plan guide** before starting any of the activities in this lesson plan.

Goals for students



- ✓ **Understand** the feelings they may experience and how these can change.
- ✓ **Recognize** how screen use can affect each person differently.
- ✓ **Reflect** on how this could apply to their own screen use.

Let's talk



We spend a lot of time on and in front of screens—phones, tablets, TV, video games, and more. Do you feel good when you spend time playing games on a tablet, or when you watch a movie? Do you always feel that way? Screen time and how it makes you feel can have an impact on your life. Let's talk about all the ways we can experience what's happening on screens.

Activity



Materials needed:

- Whiteboard, paper, pencils/drawing utensils

This baseline activity will be revisited at the end of the session to enable students to demonstrate progress.

With their neighbor, ask students to brainstorm in one minute as many different activities as they can think of that are related to screen use (e.g. playing games on a tablet). When the minute is up, ask for volunteers to give some answers to write on the board.

1. Draw and write

Working individually, ask students to draw a simple picture of someone their age who goes to a school like theirs. Around their character, ask them to draw or write down all the different screens this person likes to use at home or school. Next, write or draw the activities this person likes to do on those devices. Finally, write or draw two things this person can do to make sure their screen use makes them feel good. Provide

some words from the following list of feelings: happy, excited, sad, upset, comfortable, uncomfortable, scared, nervous, worried, calm, silly, confident, joyful, confused, embarrassed, bored, relaxed.

2. Prompt discussion

Ask students to think about all kinds of activities they do—on or off screens—and how they make them feel, using the list of words. Activities could include dancing, swimming, reading, visiting friends and family, shopping, walking the dog, tidying their bedroom etc. Emphasize that there are no right or wrong answers. Next, ask them to think specifically about activities involving screen use and how these make them feel. e.g. gaming, watching videos, quizzes, talking to far-away relatives, etc.

Choosing one example from students, pose the questions: Can feelings change? If so, what might cause them to change? Why do you think we found different examples?

Note to teacher: *Encourage students to think about how we are all unique, with different likes, dislikes, and experiences that affect us in different ways. Something that makes one person feel excited and happy may not be the same for another person. Consider using some common, relatable anecdotes in a real-life context to illustrate, such as participating in certain activities, going to certain classes, hanging out with different people, etc.*

3. Recognizing feelings and how they can change

Ask students to identify how they think the character in their scenario might feel. Elicit responses such as tired, grumpy, distracted, happy, excited, etc. Ask them to assess how the character's actions may make them feel. You can use the list of vocabulary from #1 and suggest students draw emojis to show their assessment.

Next, choose one of the scenarios and show the evolution of what could have caused the character's feelings to change. For example...

- a. Emily has been playing an online game for three hours, without taking a break.
- b. Sandeep is trying to research something for her project, but keeps watching YouTube videos instead.
- c. Michael is having a video chat with his Aunt Tina who lives in Australia.
- d. Lola's friend sends her texts in the middle of the night, and it keeps waking her up.
- e. Dami is trying to show his older brother a new toy he has been given, but his brother doesn't pay attention because he's messaging his friends on his phone.
- f. Louise uses the internet to learn how to make something really cool!

Taking the first example, Emily and gaming: **Excited** ↔ **Tired**

What could have changed Emily's feelings? (Possible answers: She was winning, then started losing / she is hungry and needs a drink / she is tired / zoned out / she has missed a trip to the park with her sister / she is making mistakes).

Ask students to recreate this example with a scenario (**a-f**) of their choice and show what could have happened and how the character's feelings may have changed.

Compare scenarios and ask the class to reflect on the different answers. Ask students if they think everyone would feel the same. Can they give examples of how someone else might feel different in the same situation? Encourage open-ended responses and discussion. Emphasize that we are all unique and things will affect people differently.

4. Recognizing emotions

Using the list of feelings from #1, display the words (happy, excited, sad, etc), or show a list of emojis depicting them and ask students to choose one for each scenario.

Next, remind students of Dami's (**e** in #3) scenario and discuss how his brother's behavior may have impacted Dami's feelings.

Ask them to draw a short three-box cartoon strip showing how his brother could impact Dami's feelings positively instead.

5. Keep it positive

Remind students of Emily's scenario and how she feels. Provide them with suggestions of helpful and not-so-helpful strategies she could use to make herself feel more positive while gaming. Students should discuss how effective each of the suggestions are in helping Emily, and rank them in order of usefulness. You can also encourage them to give their own suggestions.

Next, explore what Emily could do if she were experiencing feelings that worried her. Discuss students' responses and ensure that "seeking help" is identified. Suggest ideas about who could help Emily with her feelings and what she should do, such as: tell someone who cares about her, ask a friend for help or ask a teacher or adult at school.

6. Take it further

Using their chosen scenario, students should give suggestions for how the character can feel more positive about how they're using technology. These ideas should be ranked in terms of usefulness, with supportive reasoning for the ranking choices.

Ask students to think about times when screen use had a positive impact on them. Ask them to reflect on something that has made them feel...

- proud they achieved or learned something new
- more relaxed and happy
- that they had fun and enjoyed themselves

Next, ask the class to think of three examples of who can help them or what they could do if they're worried about any of the feelings they are experiencing.

Revisit content from #1. In a different colored pen or pencil, students should add anything new they learned from the session.

Takeaway

It's important to understand that everyone feels differently about what they do on their devices. What makes you excited could make someone else nervous, or what upsets you could make someone else happy. Feelings and reactions can also change—and it's okay if they do. The more aware you are of how activities make you feel, the better you will be at making them positive for you.

Digital Wellbeing Packet: Lesson 2

Screen time and how it makes me feel

Students learn what digital wellbeing means, and how—just like offline experiences—online ones impact how we feel too.

Note to teacher: Make sure students know who they can turn to and what to do if something they encounter online makes them feel uncomfortable. You can help students understand that it's okay to take a break from their devices; avoid looking at things that make them feel anxious just before bedtime; and not feel as though they have to reply to every message if they feel overwhelmed. You can also refer to other lessons in **Be Internet Brave: When in Doubt, Talk it Out** for more guidance. Within the school environment, students should know who can support them with concerns about their digital lives, whether that is a teacher, school counselor, or an administrator.

Highlight for your students that there's always help. Point any adults working with them to local and national support groups or helplines such as the CyberTipline and TakeItDown.org, NCMEC (National Center for Missing and Exploited Children); and the NAMI (National Alliance on Mental Illness) helpline.

Reminder: Please make sure you read the **Digital wellbeing lesson plan guide** before starting any of the activities in this lesson plan.

Goals for students



- ✓ **Discover** what digital wellbeing means to them.
- ✓ **Explore** how screen use, activities and habits can affect people in different ways—with both positive and negative impacts on digital wellbeing.
- ✓ **Reflect** on how this might apply to our own screen use.

Let's talk



What is “digital wellbeing”? Or just “wellbeing”? What does it mean to you, and when do you notice that you feel really comfortable, happy and healthy? Things we do and say online affect our lives more than we might realize. Let's discuss what wellbeing means and how to recognize when what we do on screens affects our lives overall.

Activity



Materials needed:

- Whiteboard, paper, pencils/ drawing utensils
- Optional: sticky notes

This baseline activity (#1) will be revisited at the end of the session to enable students to demonstrate progress.

1. Prompt Discussion

Ask students to write down anything they know about digital wellbeing, what they'd like to find out about it, or any questions that they have. If they don't know, get the conversation started by asking them to make some educated guesses. Suggest they think about things they've discussed with friends or family, heard on the news, or seen themselves while spending time online.

Based on the responses, discuss the words “digital” and “wellbeing” and address any misconceptions. Explain that looking after your wellbeing means doing things that make you feel comfortable, happy and healthy and that this can relate to both your body (physical wellbeing) and mind (mental wellbeing).

Ask students who or what affects someone’s wellbeing. Answers might include, family, friends, media, school and personal choices. Ask the class to discuss whether someone can feel comfortable, happy and healthy all the time? Reflect on the responses and emphasize that everyone’s feelings can change. Having a strong sense of wellbeing means knowing how to identify the things that make us feel comfortable and happy and being able to resolve or change things when we feel stressed or unhappy.

Ask students to write their own definition of wellbeing, so they can refer to it throughout the lesson. Now extend this to “digital wellbeing.”

2. Think. Pair. Share.

Ask students to spend a few minutes thinking about activities that someone around their age might like doing, including some that involve using technology or being online. Students can discuss in pairs and then share with the rest of the class. Write their answers on the whiteboard. Emphasize that we all do many different things that involve tech and screens, for work, school, entertainment, to keep in touch with family and friends, etc.

3. Recognize how you—and others—can feel and how it can change

Read the scenarios below out loud in class and discuss how they might make these people feel. Ask students to give their own opinion and see if other students have an alternative answer. Be clear there is no single correct or “wrong” answer. Ask students to think about how these feelings relate to digital wellbeing. Do the scenarios seem to have a positive effect on digital wellbeing? If so, how?

- a. Jenny does a video chat with her best friend who moved to another city. They tell each other jokes and laugh a lot.
- b. Asha loves to learn new skills. She wants to build a website and uses online instruction videos to teach herself computer coding.
- c. Luke has been working on a school project all week, and it’s finally turned in. He goes home to play his favorite computer game and gets his best score yet.

(Possible answers: proud, happy, close to their friend, in touch, impressed, sense of achievement, relief)

To support students, you may choose to write a list of the possible answers on the board for them to choose from. As a stretch activity, ask students to come up with one more scenario of their own that could have a positive effect on a person’s digital wellbeing—and to give a reason why.

4. How does it affect me?

Ask students to write down how they think these situations would make these people feel, and remind them that there isn’t one correct answer. Ask the class to think about how it may affect their digital wellbeing. Emphasize that some situations may

involve a mixture of positive and negative outcomes and involve conflicting feelings. Ask students to list any positives and negatives to further highlight that conflicting emotions/feelings are okay to have and, if they're comfortable, share their thoughts or ideas with the class.

- a. Maria opens her phone and sees there are 400 messages in a group chat. (Possible answers: overwhelmed, FOMO (fear of missing out), distracted, anxious, excited—for all answers, ask why)
- b. Sebastian has been staying up late playing an online game during the school week. (Possible answers: tired, distracted, anxious, sleepy, irritable, happy to reach a high score, proud)
- c. Rachel scrolls through photos of friends having fun at a party she couldn't go to. (Possible answers: upset, left out, lonely, anxious, annoyed, angry, frustrated)
- d. Kathy is at a café with friends, and they're all on their phones. (Possible answers: annoyed, angry, frustrated, irritable)
- e. Tim's friend texts him in the middle of the night with gossip. (Possible answers: excited, distracted, annoyed)
- f. Ahmed finds a great music video from a new band he's never heard of before. (Possible answers: inspired, excited, motivated)
- g. Monica is doing research online for a school project but keeps watching cat videos. (Possible answers: guilty, distracted, lost track of time, annoyed, frustrated, bored)
- h. Fiona is crossing the street to catch the school bus while reading a funny message thread with her friend on her phone. (Possible answers: distracted, scared, lost track of where you were, happy, amused)
- i. Charlie reads a piece of very distressing news about something that happened in his city. (Possible answers: upset, worried, anxious, annoyed, frustrated, sad)
- j. Isabella is learning how to make something cool for her science project by video tutorials on the internet. (Possible answers: proud, inspired, motivated, excited, pleased)
- k. Freddie's close friend moves away to another city. He has a video chat with him to stay in touch. (Possible answers: excited, happy, comfortable, relieved, sad/emotional)

Reflect as a class on how students may have chosen different emotions for each scenario—sometimes a mixture of positive and negative. Emphasize that we are all unique—things will affect us in different ways, and conflicting emotions are okay to have.

Assign half of the class Monica's scenario (g) and half the class Charlie's scenario (i), and ask students to give Monica or Charlie some advice on what they could do to improve their digital wellbeing. As a whole group, discuss the suggestions and why they'll be effective.

5. Reflecting on digital wellbeing and what we've learned

Taking into consideration what we have now learned about what digital wellbeing means, and referring to the prior scenarios, ask students to reflect on an example of an activity they did using a screen. Ask them whether the activity made them feel...

- proud that they've achieved something or learned something new
- that they had fun and enjoyed themselves
- more relaxed and happy

Next, ask them to think of two new things they can do to support their own digital wellbeing. Revisit the baseline assessment and ask students, "What do you now know about digital wellbeing?" Did they find answers to any questions they had? If not, how might they answer these questions/find the answers. Incorporate new learning from the session.

Takeaway

We've done a lot of work to think about all the screens we interact with everyday, and how any one activity can make people feel many different things. It's important to understand that while everyone feels differently about screen activities, there's no one right way to feel. What makes you excited could make someone else nervous, or what upsets you could make someone else happy. Feelings and reactions can also change over time—and it's okay if they do. Think of activities that make you feel good and not so good. The more aware you are of what activities make you feel good, the better you will be at creating digital experiences that support your wellbeing online and offline.

Becoming a smart internet user

Students learn more about the mental and physical impacts that certain screen habits can have on us all. They will also explore various tools to create their own healthy digital practices.

Note to teacher: Make sure students know who they can turn to and what to do if something they encounter online makes them feel uncomfortable. You can help students understand that it's okay to take a break from their devices; avoid looking at things that make them feel anxious just before bedtime; and not feel as though they have to reply to every message if they feel overwhelmed. You can also refer to other lessons in **Be Internet Brave: When in Doubt, Talk it Out** for more guidance. Within the school environment, students should know who can support them with concerns about their digital lives, whether that is a teacher, school counselor, or an administrator.

Highlight for your students that there's always help. Point any adults working with them to local and national support groups or helplines such as the CyberTipline and TakeltDown.org, NCMEC (National Center for Missing and Exploited Children); and the NAMI (National Alliance on Mental Illness) helpline.

Reminder: Please make sure you read the **Digital wellbeing lesson plan guide** before starting any of the activities in this lesson plan.

Goals for students



- ✓ **Recognize** some practices that do, and don't, make them feel positive about using technology.
- ✓ **Identify** how people can have many different feelings at the same time.

Let's talk



Teacher tells students that in this lesson they will be looking at how both online and offline habits can affect the way that someone feels. Begin by telling them about "Dan." Dan is about their age and loves street dancing. He wants to get better at it so that he can join a local street dance crew who have an audition for a television talent show.

Ask students to call out answers: what healthy habits can students suggest that will help Dan get better at street dancing? List and classify responses as "helpful habits" and "unhelpful habits" on the whiteboard. Some examples teachers could suggest are:

- **Unhealthy**—staying up really late to practice; dancing all night with no break; not seeing friends or family because he is practicing too much, etc.
- **Healthy**—regular practice; dancing with friends; watching videos online to get inspiration, etc.

Explain that Dan has mixed feelings. He wants to practice all the time, but also wants to go and play with his friends. What advice would students give him?

Explore with students the ways that Dan's scenario also applies to everyone's screen habits and how we use the internet. Ask the class if they can think of any examples of how they might modify or change their screen use that would lead to healthier habits? For example, if they dedicated less time playing video games, what would that mean they could spend more time doing?

Activity



Materials needed:

- Whiteboard, paper, pencils/drawing utensils
- **Optional:** sticky notes
- Handout: “Raj’s digital diary”

In this activity, students will learn how to recognize what makes them feel good—or bad—when it comes to screen time and work through examples of how to create healthier habits they can apply to their own activities and lives.

Note to teacher: *Where an activity refers to creating healthy digital practices, this is not meant to be judgmental. Instead, it refers to how students can ensure they are using technology in meaningful, intentional and purposeful ways.*

1. Explore different screen times for different people

Ask students to look through the activity diary template that shows 8-year-old Raj’s screen use over one week. Next to each activity they can see how long Raj spent doing it, and an emoji to express how it made him feel. In pairs, ask the class to look at Raj’s chart and answer the following questions:

Note to teacher: *Pass out “Raj’s digital diary” to use as a basis for discussion.*

Prompt questions

- Which activities made Raj feel good? Which ones made him feel not so good? What did Raj spend the most time doing?
- Did he have conflicting feelings about what he did?
- Did you notice any activities that you think Raj should be doing more or less of?
- Which activity gave him the opportunity to connect with someone?
- What do you notice about the activities he did when he usually does his homework?
- Which activity do you think made him proud?
- Does Raj have healthy digital habits?

Get feedback and answers, and discuss as a class.

2. How does it affect me?

Explain to students that this activity is about creating healthy habits and learning how to do what’s right for them. Because everyone is different, what we do on screens will affect us differently. The goal of the activity is to help students think critically about the ways that certain online activities they find positive or exciting may not be experienced the same way for someone else.

Discuss: Think back to Raj’s digital diary. As a class, talk about some healthy habits we could all try to help us feel better when using screens.

Examples:

“Raj’s healthy screen habits could be...”

- To always talk to someone if he needs help or support, or if he is feeling unsure or upset about something he sees online or when using tech.
- Keeping his phone or tablet out of the bedroom at night so he gets enough rest. Silencing message notifications at certain times to avoid waking up or having his sleep disturbed.

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- Setting a timer before playing video games to see how long he spends playing and when it's time for a break. [*Emphasize how video games are designed to make you want to keep playing and that it's really easy to lose track of time.*]
- Recognizing when there are conflicting feelings about tech use, and trying to make the best choice.
- Putting his phone or tablet in another room or turning off notifications during designated times to minimize distractions such as when it's time to do homework.
- Discuss: What does being distracted mean? Can anyone provide an example of something that can easily distract them?
- Finding online games or activities to do together with siblings or family members so that using technology can support spending quality time together.
- Suggesting to friends and family that we don't have devices out while we're eating so we have a chance to catch up and talk.

3. Recognizing our differences

Ask students to identify some things that might make it difficult for Raj to create healthy tech use. Can they think of solutions to these challenges? What can we do if we're worried about how our use of screens is making us feel?

Note to teacher: *Help students understand it's okay to take a break from (or entirely turn off) their devices; choose not to look at things that make them feel anxious, especially just before bedtime; and not feel as though they have to reply to every message if they feel overwhelmed. Refer to other lessons in **Be Internet Brave: When in Doubt, Talk it Out**. Students need to know they can talk to you or another trusted adult if anything is worrying them. Remind them of the last lesson, where they thought of some helpful strategies Emily could use. How can Raj help himself, and who else could help him? Ask students to rewrite Raj's diary showing different, healthier practices. For example, doing homework before texting friends or limiting his time online. Ask the class to identify the benefits that being online has for Raj.*

4. Thinking about what we've learned

Ask students to come up with three actions they would suggest to Raj based on their answers in activities 2 and 3. How can they help Raj make sure his screen use is helping him feel happy and positive, and that he's making the right choices?

Revisit activity #1. Write on paper (or sticky notes) in different colors new learnings from the session, including any new healthy screen practices that the class has identified. Use a big sheet of poster paper to place all the sticky notes to create a place for showing all the things they've learned can help them create healthy digital practices.

Takeaway

There are many ways we can positively affect our own wellbeing. We all have lots of choices when it comes to screens and doing activities that make us feel good! Ask yourself, "Does this make me feel good?" when you spend time online. If you are worried about how something is making you feel or could use some help deciding if an activity is good for you, talk to an adult you trust.

Raj's digital diary

Monday

8:30am messaging friends 😄

5pm research for Egyptian homework project 😊

6:30pm-7pm Skype call with Auntie in Italy 👍 😊

Tuesday

3pm-3:30pm watching cat videos

5pm-9pm video games 😞

Wednesday

5pm-5:30pm research for Egyptian homework project

7pm-8pm video games 👍 🙌

Thursday

5pm making slides for homework project 😞

7pm-9pm video games

10pm-11pm messaging friends 😄 😞

Friday

7pm-10pm messaging friends 😄

11pm messaging friends

Saturday

10am Skype call with Auntie in Italy 😊 😄 😄

10pm-1am video games 😞

Sunday

2pm-4pm homework research 👍

8pm-8:30pm video games 😊

10pm-10:30pm online math homework 😞 😞

Find ways to grow digital wellbeing

Students learn about the tools and knowledge that can be used to help enhance digital wellbeing by creating their own healthy digital habits and making choices that work for them.

Note to teacher: Make sure students know who they can turn to and what to do if something they encounter online makes them feel uncomfortable. You can help students understand that it's okay to take a break from their devices; avoid looking at things that make them feel anxious just before bedtime; and not feel as though they have to reply to every message if they feel overwhelmed. You can also refer to other lessons in **Be Internet Brave: When in Doubt, Talk it Out** for more guidance. Within the school environment, students should know who can support them with concerns about their digital lives, whether that is a teacher, school counselor, or an administrator.

Highlight for your students that there's always help. Point any adults working with them to local and national support groups or helplines such as the CyberTipline and TakeltDown.org, NCMEC (National Center for Missing and Exploited Children); and the NAMI (National Alliance on Mental Illness) helpline.

Reminder: Please make sure you read the **Digital wellbeing lesson plan guide** before starting any of the activities in this lesson plan.

Goals for students



- ✓ **Explore** which technology practices enhance a person's wellbeing.
- ✓ **Recognize** strategies for managing digital wellbeing.
- ✓ **Identify** sources of support for managing digital wellbeing.

Let's talk



Teacher draws a scale from 0-10 on the board and explains to the class that, in this exercise, "0" is not confident at all, and 10 is "very confident."

Ask students to think about how confident they feel in being able to improve their digital wellbeing based on what they know so far—and remind them that there is no wrong answer for where they'd rank themselves.

Ask the class to raise their hand when you call out the number group in which they rated themselves:

- 0-3
- 4-7
- 8-10

Form groups based on where they ranked themselves on the 0-10 scale. Ask the class to discuss in these groups what digital wellbeing means, and to write some definitions on paper (or sticky notes).

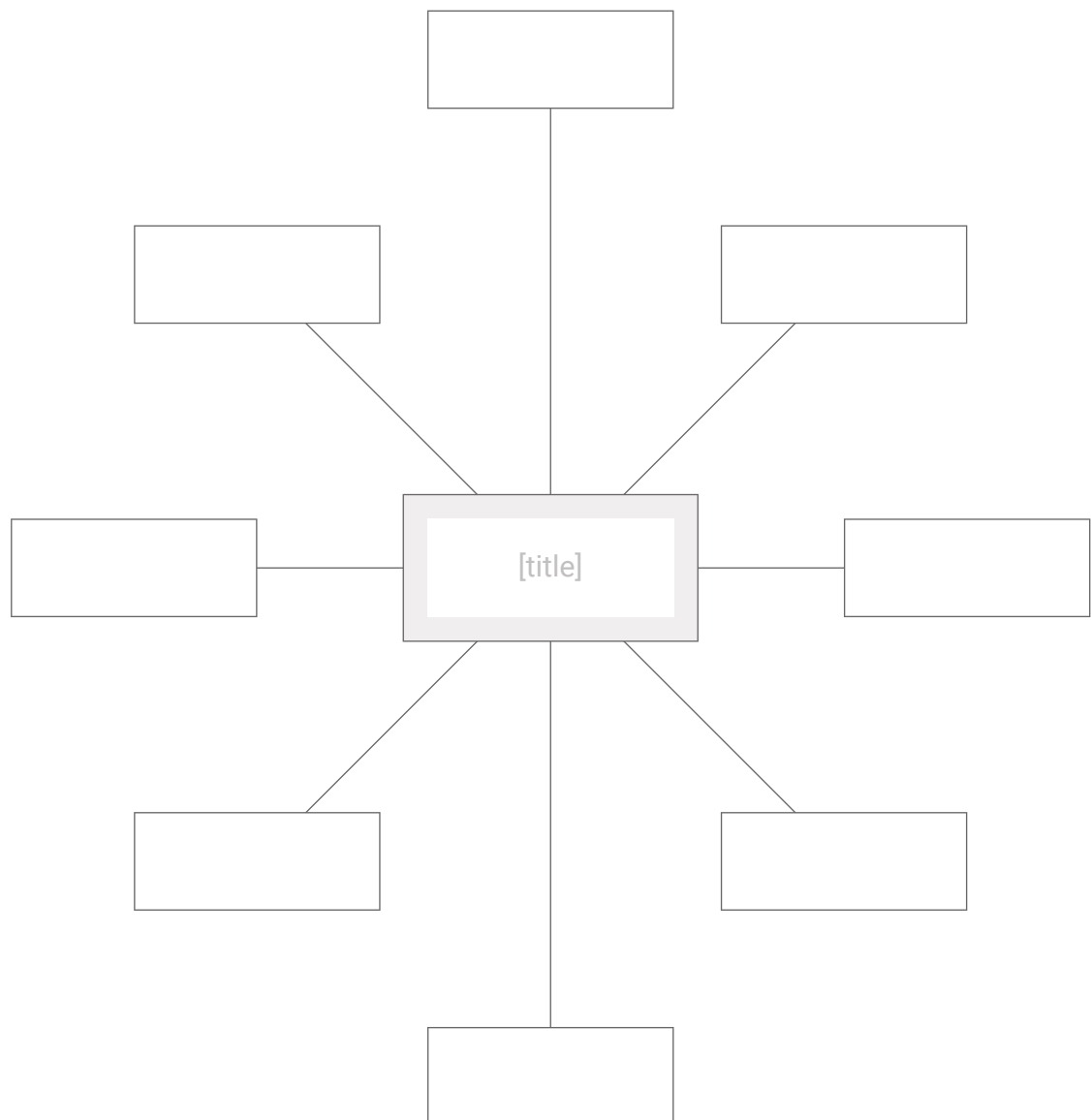
Invite someone from each group to bring up their paper/sticky note ideas and add them to a display board. Summarize and share what students have written.

Working individually, but remaining in their groups, have students draw two spider diagrams on a piece of paper.

- The title for one is “**Screen Activities**,” e.g., playing computer games, watching videos, etc.
- The title for the other is “**Offscreen Activities**,” e.g., going to soccer practice, reading books, etc.

Have students write down as many activities for each as they can think of, leaving room next to each activity. Then introduce digital wellbeing to the exercise. Ask students to identify some things they like and some things they don't like about each activity, and give examples of how these might affect a person's wellbeing. Share some answers as a class.

Sample spider diagram:



Activity



Materials needed:

- Whiteboard, paper, writing utensils
- **Optional:** sticky notes
- Handouts: “Freddie’s digital dairy” and “Sophia’s digital diary”

This activity is to understand your students’ grasp of digital wellbeing and their confidence in assessing and improving their own, while reviewing examples they can apply to their own habits and lifestyles.

Note to teacher: *Where an activity refers to creating healthy digital practices, this is not meant to be judgmental. Instead, it refers to how students can ensure they are using technology in meaningful, intentional and purposeful ways.*

1. Comparing digital diaries

Have students remain in groups to look at the two charts that track screen usage for two characters: 10-year-olds Freddie and Sophia, over one week.

The class will discuss the following questions about the charts:

- During the week, which activities made Freddie feel positive and happy? How about Sophia?
- Which activity do you think Sophia might have regretted spending so much time on? Was there anything you think Freddie might want to spend more time doing?
- Did any of the activities make them feel more connected to others? (friends and family)
- Did any of the activities get in the way of them connecting or spending time with others?
- Did any of the activities positively or negatively impact their school work? (any distractions?)
- Did any of the activities give them energy or make them feel tired?
- How do they think Freddie and Sophia’s digital wellbeing compare?

2. How do we create healthier digital habits?

Refer back to the definitions of general wellbeing and digital wellbeing from lesson 1. Does anyone remember the three key words? (happy, healthy, and comfortable).

Explain that the following activity is about creating healthy practices so we can improve our digital wellbeing. Emphasize that we’re all different and that what we do on screens will affect us in different ways. Something that makes a friend feel good may not be the same for us, and sometimes we may have conflicting emotions—both positive and negative—about the same activity. This is perfectly normal.

Ask students to think about Freddie and Sophia’s digital diaries, and create a “digital checkup” with questions that Freddie and Sophia could ask themselves in the future to keep track of their digital wellbeing. Examples to help prompt students around “digital checkup” questions:

- Is this making me feel good? If not, how is it making me feel?
- Does it feel like I’m wasting my time?
- Am I getting something good out of it?
- Am I feeling tired or bored?

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- Is it making me feel bad about myself? Jealous of other people? Sad? Angry? Scared? Nervous? Is it negatively impacting my mood?
- Am I learning something new?
- Am I connecting with friends or family?
- Am I being creative?
- Am I helping others?
- Is it getting in the way of something important I need to do? (e.g. schoolwork, practicing the guitar, helping out a friend)
- Has my tech use changed in any way, for better or worse? If so, why?
- What can I do if I'm worried about how my screen use makes me feel?

For the final question, you may decide to write up various examples of what students can do, and ask them to rate these in order of how useful they are. Ask: "Who or what can help us have a better experience with our tech?" Ensure that seeking help is included in students' responses. Support them with examples such as: tell someone who cares about us; ask a friend for help; ask a teacher or adult at school. You could also provide them with directions to websites and services that can offer help.

Note to teacher: *Students should understand that it's important to talk to someone if something is upsetting or worrying them. They should also become familiar with the tools and settings they can use that help reduce distractions or the amount of time they spend online. This could mean tracking time spent on certain sites so they don't lose track, turning off notifications for messages at certain times of day or learning how to block or report mean or creepy people on a favorite game.*

Optional homework to get parents involved

As a way to get parents involved and think about this with their kids (and for themselves!), the classroom could work together to make one version of the digital checkup that the students could take home to do a checkup themselves or with parents for a weekend or evening.

3) Advice for my future self

Note to teacher: *Make sure your students know you are a resource and outlet for them when discussing the following prompts, especially when considering negative feelings they have about being online. Help students think about how they feel after spending time doing a certain activity, e.g., connecting online with a long-distance friend or relative, which may make them feel very happy, comfortable and pleased. You could ask them how spending long stretches of time scrolling through images or videos makes them feel. Guilty? Bored? Annoyed? Anxious? Maybe jealous of people they see in images or videos because of the way they look or how happy they seem?.*

Prompt discussion as a class. Ask students: How can we ensure that what we do on screens makes us feel good? What can we do when other people's screen use and actions affect us?

Discuss strategies such as leaving groups, deleting comments, not replying, and talking to someone who cares about them, including you. If another person's behavior online becomes very negative, students should consider prioritizing their wellbeing by removing themselves from the situation—unfollowing someone or blocking them. It's important for students to feel empowered and in control of their own digital lives—to know they aren't required to be part of interactions that make them uncomfortable.

Ask the class to reflect on what they have learned in the lesson and to write down three pieces of advice they will remember and use to help them improve their own digital wellbeing. Revisit the scale they filled in at the beginning of the lesson in the baseline activity. Where would they rate their confidence level now from 0-10? You could ask students to create a poster with their top tips for creating healthy digital habits.

Takeaway

Your wellbeing is important—and when it comes to how you use technology and how much, you definitely have options if you feel it's having a negative impact on you. You have the power to choose what's right for you to create your digital wellbeing! Make sure to ask questions about how certain screen use makes you feel, and know there are people you can talk to if something makes you feel bad.

Freddie's digital diary

Monday

8-9pm texting with friends 😊

10pm-11pm homework research 🤔

Tuesday

6pm-7:30pm video call with friend in Canada 😊

Wednesday

6pm-7pm watching videos online about car racing 👍 👍 👍

Thursday

5pm-6pm homework research 👍

Friday

6pm-8pm video call with cousin in Canada ❤️ 😄

8-10pm texting with friends 😊 🤔

Saturday

3pm-4pm watching videos online about car racing ❤️

Sunday

10am-12pm video games with friends 😊 😄

8pm-9pm homework research 😊

Sophia's digital diary

Monday

8:30am-9am messaging friends 🙌🙌

Tuesday

6pm-10pm video games 😴

Wednesday

6pm-8pm watching funny videos online 😂

Thursday

5pm-8pm watching videos online 😱👎😐

Friday

8pm-9:30pm video call with a friend who moved to another state ❤️😄

Saturday

10am-11:30am video games ❤️😊

7pm-9pm watching a movie with family 😊

Sunday

7am-9am messaging friends in a group 😴😐

