

Join the national conversation!



Word Generation - Unit 3.16

Focus Words

anonymous | underlying | capacity | adequately | harassment



Weekly Passage

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

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

Cyberbullying is especially common among middle school students. An estimated 42% of middle school students are involved in cyberbullying either as a bully or as a victim. When a child is having problems in school, cyberbullying can be an underlying cause. Students who are bullied online

may be afraid to come to school, participate in class, talk to their peers, or go to recess. When people are afraid, they are less able to learn.

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

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

Unit 3.16 - Should schools protect kids from cyberbullying?

Focus Word Chart

Word	Meaning	Forms	Examples of Use	Notes
underlying	(adj.) - involved but not revealed or expressed			
capacity	(n.) - ability			
adequately	(adv.) - something done well enough			
anonymous	(adj.) - not named or identified			
harassment	(n.) - the act of verbally or physically harming or annoying someone			

Unit 3.16 - Should schools protect kids from cyberbullying?

Problem of the Week



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

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

- A) $\frac{3}{4}$
- B) $\frac{4}{5}$
- C) $\frac{17}{20}$
- D) $\frac{13}{20}$

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

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

- A) $10b = c$
- B) $c = b/10$
- C) $.1c = b$
- D) none of the above

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

Should schools protect kids from cyberbullying?

Debating the Issue



GO!

1. Get ready...

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

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

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

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

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

E _____

Be a strong participant by using phrases like these.

...because...

I disagree with part of that...

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

What part of the passage makes you think that?

2. Get set...

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

Unit 3.16 - Should schools protect kids from cyberbullying?

Science Activity



This activity is designed to help you practice thinking like a scientist and to use this week's focus words. Sometimes the data are based on real research, but they should never be considered true or factual.

Professor Lexie Kahn and Professor Paul E. Seemy suspect that teens are more likely to **harass** their classmates online than face to face because the internet gives bullies the **capacity** to be **anonymous**. Teens who bully this way cannot see their victim's reaction to their hurtful words. Some people think that without seeing the victim's reaction, bullies don't get **adequate** feedback about when they should stop bullying.

The following experiment aims to explore the **underlying** causes of persistent cyberbullying.

Question:

Are people more likely to hurt others when they cannot see the victim?

Hypothesis:

People are more likely to hurt others when they cannot see the victim.

Materials:

- ▶ Fake electric shock device
- ▶ Actor
- ▶ 2 rooms
- ▶ Subject (person who is being experimented upon)

Procedure:

Unseen victim

1. Bring subject into a room containing a fake shock device. Tell the subject this device is connected to a person in another room.
2. Instruct the subject to give a shock to the other person.
3. When the subject presses the button, the actor will scream to pretend he is in pain.
4. Instruct the subject to increase the intensity of the shock. Do this until the subject has given five shocks altogether or until he refuses to give any more. With each shock the actor will scream louder.
5. Record the number of shocks the subject agrees to give.

Visible victim

Repeat the steps above with the actor in the room with the subject. The subject will be able to see the actor's face.

Data:

Unseen Victim	
Shocker	# of shocks given
A	5
B	5
C	4
D	5
E	5

Visible Victim	
Shocker	# of shocks given
A	2
B	1
C	3
D	5
E	4

Conclusion:

Is the hypothesis supported or not by the data?

What evidence supports your conclusion?

How would you make this a better experiment?



Writing Prompt

Should schools protect kids
from cyberbullying?

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

Focus Words

anonymous | underlying | capacity |
adequately | harassment

A tool to help you think about your own writing!

Remember you can use focus words from any of the WG Units.

Check off what you accomplished:

Good Start

- ☐ Stated my own position
- ☐ Included 1 focus word

Pretty Good

- ☐ Stated my own position clearly
- ☐ Included 1-2 arguments
- ☐ Included 1-2 focus words

Exemplary

- ☐ Stated my own position clearly
- ☐ Included 1-2 arguments
- ☐ Included 1 counterargument
- ☐ Used 2-5 focus words

This image shows a full page of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page, typical of notebook paper or a document template. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the page.