Digital Detectives: Escape Room

The students take on the role of "digital detectives," racing to stop a rogue AI bot that's spreading harmful posts online. To crack the code, teams must complete a series of challenges related to cyberbullying, deepfakes and online kindness. After finishing each challenge, they will receive a clue with one letter. Once they've collected all the clues, students will decipher the word or phrase spelled out by the letters. The first team to correctly complete the final challenge wins. Along the way, they'll practice identifying misinformation, thinking critically about technology and working together.

Grades: 4 - 6

Learning objectives:

- Identify different types of harmful online content/behaviour
- Practice empathy, digital citizenship and "think before sharing"
- Explore how AI tools influence what they see and do online

Materials:

- Envelopes numbered one to four (enough copies of each for several small groups of students). Each envelope should contain one letter to spell the code word "KIND." (All envelope ones will contain the letter "K," all envelope twos will contain the letter "I" and so on.)
- Printed copies of each challenge

Instructions

Divide students into small groups and have each group come up with a detective team name. Explain that a mischievous AI bot is spreading hurtful posts online and the students' job is to solve clues by completing five challenges to unlock the code that will shut it down before the posts go viral. Each completed task reveals one letter of the final code. Once students collect all four letters, they must put them together to spell the code word. The first team to complete all the activities and decipher the code wins.

Questions for class discussion

Once students have completed all the activities, lead a short class discussion:

- Which puzzle was hardest and why?
- What did you learn about how online content can fool us?
- Why do kindness and critical thinking matter when interacting online and with AI?

Puzzle #1: Spot the cyberbullying

Review each example below and discuss the questions with your group. Think about tone, intent and audience. Once you've completed this puzzle, hand it in to your teacher to receive your next clue, then move on to the next puzzle.

Example 1: Sarcasm or support?

Post A

Nice job on the science project, Jay! I didn't think you could actually finish it! 😅

Post B

Jay worked really hard on this project! Looks awesome! 👏

Questions:

1. Which post sounds like sarcasm? _____

2. How can you tell if a joke has gone too far online? _____

_____

_____

3. Circle which post(s) cross the line into cyberbullying.

Example 2: Public vs. private

Post A

Lin totally messed up her solo today. Classic Lin 😂

Post B

Hey Lin, I heard your solo didn't go as planned today. Good on you for doing your best in front of everyone, I know that can be hard! You'll get it next time!
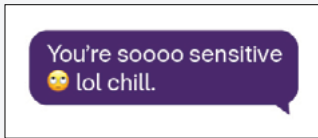
Questions:

1. Why is it hurtful to post someone's mistake publicly? _____

_____

2. What's the difference between teasing with friends in person and posting it online?
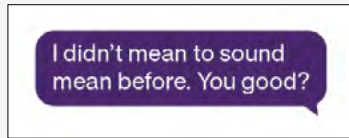
_____

_____

3. Circle which post(s) cross the line into cyberbullying.

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Example 3: Mixed messages

Post A

> You're soooo sensitive 😵 lol chill.

Post B

> I didn't mean to sound mean before. You good?
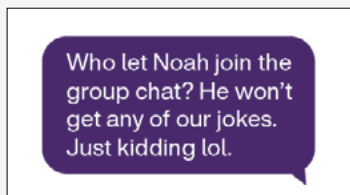
Questions:

1. Why can "lol" or emojis sometimes hide hurtful words? _____

_____

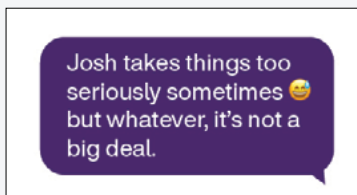2. How do you know if a message is meant as a joke or not? _____

_____

3. Circle which post(s) cross the line into cyberbullying.

Example 4: The "just kidding" excuse

Post A

> Who let Noah join the group chat? He won't get any of our jokes. Just kidding lol.

Post B

> Josh takes things too seriously sometimes 😅 but whatever, it's not a big deal.

Questions:

1. Does saying "just kidding" or "it's not a big deal" make a mean comment okay to say?

_____

2. What could the sender say instead to keep things friendly and kind?

_____

_____

3. Circle which post(s) cross the line into cyberbullying.

Would you rather...

Have your prom DJ'd by AI?

OR

Have your principal DJ your prom?

See a human doctor you've known your whole life?

OR

See an AI doctor that has immense medical knowledge but doesn't know you?

Have an AI system decide what universities you get into?

OR

Have human committees decide what universities you get into?

Let AI name your first child?

OR

Let a social media poll name your first child?

AI pick movies you'll like but never watch anything surprising?

OR

Argue with friends about what to watch, but find something incredible?

Think about it! Some of these questions are silly, but they highlight something important. Every choice with AI has pros and cons. Choosing an AI doctor over a human doctor might mean getting faster help but losing the personal connection.

Most situations aren't simply good or bad – maybe the best answer is a human doctor who uses AI to help them. Asking yourself questions can help you spot when things are more complicated than they first seem.

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⊘ Real or fake? ⊗

Review the three pairs of images and determine which ones are real and which ones are fake. Circle elements that suggest the images might be fake. Once you've completed this challenge, hand it in to your teacher to receive your clue, then move on to the next challenge.

Image 1

Image 2

⊘ Real or fake? ⊗

Image 1

Image 2

✓ Real or fake? ✕

Image 1

Image 2

⊘ Real or fake? ⊗

Answers:

Image 2

Unrealistic blur and pixelation

Misaligned and unusual-looking hands

Skin looks too perfect

Image 1

Art doesn't look real and is digitally manipulated

More digital manipulation

People are pixelated and clearly digitally manipulated

⊘ Real or fake? ⊗

Answers:

Image 1

Edges of lights look too crisp and perfect

Wrinkled texture

Lighting is too bright and colours in the reflection don't match

Added colours in reflection

Ditch the Glitch

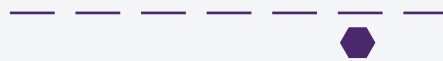Decode these important phrases to complete the hidden message.

Together, we can keep AI

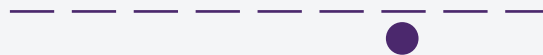__ __ __ __ __ __ __ !
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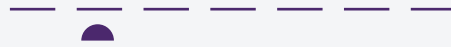
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