

# Essay

Ruby, Level 28, 780L

**Text Type:** Exposition

**Summary:** This essay describes forms of cyberbullying, the effects of cyberbullying, and how it can be prevented.

**Themes/Ideas:** recognise forms of cyberbullying and how cyberbullying affects victims; understand how to prevent cyberbullying

**Text Features:** bold and italicised text, subheadings

## Vocabulary:

- **anonymous:** having an unidentified source/author
- **block:** (social media) can limit/stop another user from following you, sending you messages, or tagging you in photos
- **blogs:** personal websites through which people share experiences/opinions
- **digital footprint:** the trail of data created when someone uses the internet
- **privacy settings:** controls available on social networking sites that limit who can access your profile and what visitors can see
- **social media:** websites and applications that let users create and share content or take part in social networking

# Cyberbullying



**Focus Question:** Why is cyberbullying a serious and growing problem?

## PREPARE & READ

- Ask what the word *cyber* might mean (as related to computers and technology).
- Discuss what “cyberbullying” is.
- Ask students to read the essay.

## READ CLOSELY

### Key Ideas and Details

How is cyberbullying different from typical forms of bullying? What led to the development of this new form of bullying? 1 2

### Author’s Purpose/Intention

In the essay, the author addresses the reader directly and suggests that he or she might have been a cyberbully or a victim of cyberbullying. Who is likely the author’s target audience? 3

### Make Inferences

The author claims that it is important to do something if you know someone who is being bullied. Why is it important to do something? 4

... It could be important because the person being bullied may not be able to fix the problem on their own. The author also states that once a bully realises that someone has support, “often the bully becomes scared and backs away”. Sometimes supporting the victim is enough to stop the bullying from happening.

### Words and Phrases in Context

The author includes an image with the phrase “You never get to the top by pulling others down”. What does this phrase mean and why did they use it? 5 7

... I think it means that you shouldn’t need to make others feel bad just to feel good about yourself. You can never be really happy (or feel “on top” and in control of your life) unless your happiness comes from inside you.

### Make Inferences

The text states that “many employers check the online background of people they want to employ”. Why would this be a wise thing for employers to do these days? 6

### Text Features

What features does the author use to format the essay? Why is it helpful to have the sections divided by headings and subheadings? 1–6

# Cyberbullying

**1** Cyberbullying is using technology to try and harm others. Sometimes it is hard to recognise it is happening. Bullies may use formats like games or online chatting to attack others. Victims need to recognise what cyberbullying is ... and to know what they can do to stop it.

## What does cyberbullying look like?

- hurtful online gossip or chat
- nasty messages, pictures or videos
- cruel texts or emails
- imitating someone else online
- cutting people out from social groups



## What can you do if you are a being cyberbullied?

There are many ways you can get help from others. There are also practical things you can try to stop the bullying.

The first thing you can do is **change your privacy settings** on your phone or computer. Block the bully from sending things directly to you. If bullying happens on social media you can also take action. Contact the company and explain what is happening. Sometimes they can step in and shut down pages or accounts for you. Try not to respond to bullying by becoming a bully yourself. This could make things worse.

**Talk to someone you trust.** It might be a friend, teacher or parent. A bully knows it is easier to attack just one person or two people. As soon as you have support around you, often the bully becomes scared and backs away.

**Keep a record of bullying** that happens. Keep the mobile phone messages or print out conversations where bullying has happened. This makes it easier for police and other organisations to find out who is responsible. Even when you can't tell who is sending messages, police can trace the source of the messages.



## What can you do if you know someone who is being bullied?

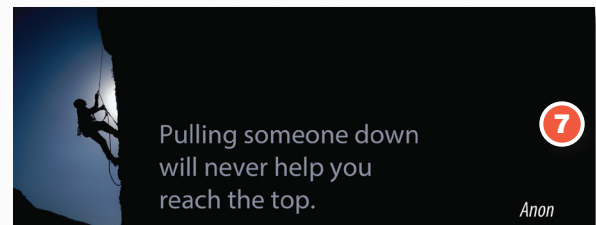
If you know someone being bullied it is important to act. **Try talking** to the person about what is happening. Let them know you are there if they need you. **Don't join in** the bullying by commenting on posts or images that hurt others. Refuse to forward or share posts that will injure others. **Report the bullying** to a trusted parent or teacher. If you are worried about doing this you could even report the bullying anonymously, so the person being bullied can start to get some help.

## Are you a cyberbully?

People who use cyberbullying to attack others often have many problems in their own lives. **Think about why** you feel the need to pull others down to make yourself feel better.

Do you realise that cyberbullying leaves a digital footprint? Your **digital footprint** is the information you leave behind whenever you use the internet. This means that what you do now online may come back to haunt you for many years to come. Many employers check the online background of people they want to employ.

People need to be 'cyber smart' these days. **Think before you post or message online.** You are painting a picture of yourself that could be around for a long time!



## DISCUSS

*These questions can be used for paired discussion. Ask students to use the text to support their reasoning. Then ask them to share their conclusions with the group.*

- Think about the author's purpose for writing the essay. Why does the author separate the essay into sections with subheadings?
- The author warns that when you post/message online you are "painting a picture of yourself that could be around for a long time". What did the author mean by this?
- Digital footprints that children leave on the internet can stay with them even when they are adults. How could this be controlled? Should children be a certain age before they start using social media? Could this be monitored effectively?

## WRITE

*Have students choose either one of the following options for writing, or do both.*

- Based on the information in the essay, create a list of "don'ts"—activities that should be avoided because they are considered to be cyberbullying. **(Information/Explanation)**
- Do you think that cyberbullying will become a bigger problem than traditional bullying? Why or why not? Write a well-developed opinion statement and support it with specific details from the text. **(Opinion)**