



Developed with Stacey Stratton, MA Ed.

Unfollowing the "social" norm?

Volume 4 | Gr. 9-12

Time: 2-3 Days



CCSS.ELA-
LITERACY.W.9-10.2

CCSS.ELA-
LITERACY.W.11-12.2

Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas, concepts, and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.

Activities

- Writing assignment
- Group or individual challenge

Materials list

- Blank paper or computer

Next Gen Standards

9-10W6: Conduct research to answer questions, including self-generated questions, or solve a problem; narrow or broaden the inquiry when appropriate. Synthesize multiple sources, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.

11-12W6: Conduct research through self-generated questions, or solve a problem; narrow or broaden the inquiry when appropriate. Synthesize multiple sources, demonstrating understanding and analysis of the subject under investigation.

CASEL's Core Competencies

Self-Awareness: The ability to accurately recognize one's emotions and thoughts and their influence on behavior.

Social Awareness: The ability to take the perspective of and empathize with others from diverse backgrounds and cultures, to understand social and ethical norms and behavior.

Responsible Decision-Making: The ability to make constructive and respectful choices about personal behavior and social interactions based on consideration of social norms, and the well-being of self and others.

Self-Management: The ability to regulate one's emotions, thoughts, and behaviors effectively in different situations. This includes controlling impulses, and working towards achieving a personal goal.

Relationship Skills: The ability to establish and maintain healthy and rewarding relationships with diverse individuals and groups.



How social are you?

It's easy to stay connected 24/7, but it's also really important to take some dedicated time away from electronics and assess how it affects you — both positively and negatively.

Write:

To help you better understand social media and how it's impacting you personally, answer the following questions on a sheet of paper:

1. What do you consider social media?
2. How much time do you think you spend on social media each day?
3. What platforms do you access on a daily basis?
4. How and why do you use social media?
5. Have you ever noticed how you're feeling when you're scrolling online?
6. What are some positive things about social media?
7. What are some negative things about social media?
8. What kind of content do you see most often?
9. Does it make you feel happy, connected, liked or fulfilled each day?
10. Or does it make you end up feeling isolated, anxious, lonely, or empty?

Reflect:

There are three common problems that come out of consuming content online:

1. **Doom scrolling** — Constant overload of negative material consumed on social media.
2. **Comparison game** — Constantly comparing yourself to others on social media.
3. **Looking for likes** — Constantly checking your account looking for positive reinforcement—to see if others “like” what you posted.

Have you ever noticed how many things on social media are *negative*? It seems like there's an abundance of complaints that are posted about people, places and things. The comment section can easily fill up with arguments and negative responses toward others, too.

Or maybe you notice a friend or celebrity that seems to have the perfect life. It makes you start to look at your own life wondering why you don't have these same things. You were fine until you saw their posts, but then you start to *wish you had more*.

It's also easy to post something online and keep checking to see what others think about it. Instead of having *instant feedback* from a friend or classmate (like saying something funny at lunch and having milk shoot out their nose), now you have to wait to see the LOL, or get a comment on your new hair color.



Write:

On the three problems listed, which one do you struggle with the most? What could you do for each one to avoid it from negatively affecting you? You can use some of the examples below or try thinking of other things you can do.

1. Doom scrolling

Being around negativity is actually a real downer. Have you ever noticed how you feel when you're around someone who encourages you or makes you laugh, compared to being around someone who's always complaining?

Choose your friends and the content you consume wisely. This can truly make a difference in how you feel each day.

Ways to help prevent doom scrolling:

- Avoid following people or sites that cause fear and anxiety.
- Try to only post uplifting and positive comments.
- Avoid gossiping and bullying type posts.
- Delete negative comments that are posted to your site.
- Stand up for others, if it's safe to do.
- Tell a trusted adult if you see comments that are very hurtful or concerning.

How to help stop doom scrolling:

Look at the type of content you're posting and sharing with the world and your friends. Is it positive and helpful? Or spreading negativity, fear, and anxiety? Post something each day that is positive or inspirational.

If it's normal to see negative posts, online bullying, or endless selfies, it's time to break the norm. YOU have the ability to make the world a better place — one post at a time.

List 3 things you can start doing differently TODAY!

2. Comparison game

It's easy to wish you had what someone else has, especially when they post their highlight reel. They aren't showing you the bad parts of their day, only the good (and that might be a bit exaggerated).

We are all unique. We don't have the same gifts and talents that other people have. We have our OWN gifts and talents. The fun is finding what they are, and the fulfillment will be when we are actually living in them.

Ways to help prevent the comparison game:

- Pay attention to who you're following and why their posts make you feel bad.
- Stop following people that make you feel jealous or "less than."
- What are some things you are grateful for, that you have in your own life?
- Are there things you can improve in your own life? How can you build friendships, increase your sports ability, achieve higher grades, develop new skills?

How to help stop the comparison game:

Look at the content you're posting. Have you ever posted anything to try to make other people jealous? Have you ever exaggerated how you were feeling or the fun you were having? It's OK to post things you're proud of achieving or receiving, but don't make it your main focus.

Look through the people or content you are connected to on social media. Unfollow anything or anyone that makes you feel bad or jealous.

List 3 things you can start doing differently TODAY!

3. Looking for likes

Are you obsessed with being “liked” on social media? How often are you checking to see how others are reacting to the things you post? Are you often ignoring the people and situations around you because you’re busy checking your phone?

Stop focusing on the phone when you’re around others. How does it make you feel when you’re talking and someone isn’t paying attention to you?

Ways to stop looking for likes:

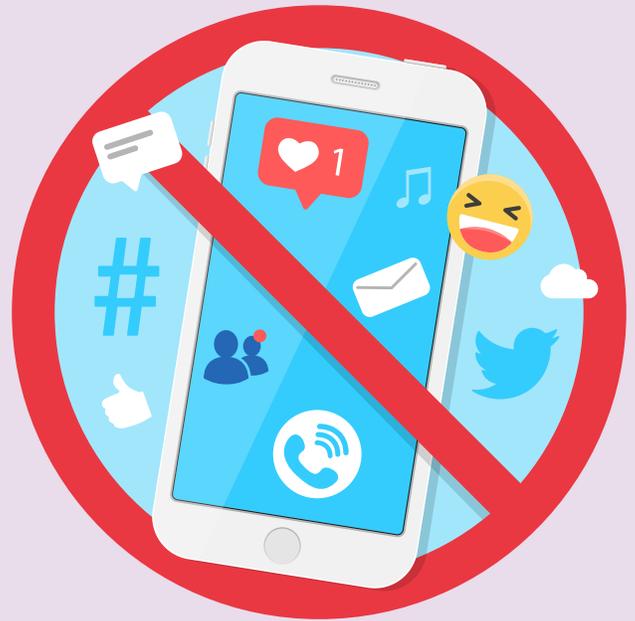
- Pay attention to the time you’re spending online. Track it on your phone and try to cut that number in half. You could be using that time instead to strengthen your gifts and talents or studying for that test.
- Find ways to spend quality time with friends and family.
- Try calling or FaceTiming your friends and family instead of texting them.
- Only check your electronics at certain times throughout the day.
- Put your phone away when you’re around others.

How to help stop looking for likes:

You can get instant feedback from others by spending time with them. Plus, you’ll be able to see their body language, eye contact and also hear the tone of their voice. (How many times have you taken a text the wrong way?)

When you give people your undivided attention and they know you’re truly listening to them, it will help strengthen your relationships, too.

List 3 things you can start doing differently TODAY!



Try a digital detox

Get away from social media and electronics for a set period of time.

- You pick the time, but try to challenge yourself.
- Example: For one weekend (48 hours), I’m going to eliminate all electronic usage except for emergencies. If I need to make a plan with a friend, I will call or FaceTime them, not text them. I will focus on being present with the people I’m around and not check my phone. If I’m bored, I’ll work on improving a skill or work on a hobby I enjoy, instead of just mindless scrolling on my electronics.
- Try finding different ways to connect with your friends and family. Spend time outdoors, play board games or take up a new hobby together. The goal is to have fun in new ways that involve physically connecting with your friends and family without electronics distracting you.

Can you do it?