

Netiquette Badge

Purpose: Learn how to make and keep your online world a positive space.

Step 1: Explore the “oops” and “wow” moments

Sometimes, when emotions run high, people react quickly and can hit the send button before they have had a chance to calm down and think about the impact of their words. Talk with your family or friends about times when they may have been involved in one of these kinds of “oops” moments. You can find stories about this happening to celebrities as well. Sometimes the things we say online have effects that can last a very long time. Not every story is an “oops,” though. Online communication can have a good impact as well. Spend some time talking about and researching times when people have been uplifted through social media.

Step 2: Dig into stories of “ouch”—and repair some hurt if necessary

It can be hard to convey tone, feeling, and emotion through text, and sometimes our message gets lost in translation, leading to an “ouch” moment. Go through your own messages and see if you would phrase things the same way in person. Could someone read your text in a different tone that changes its meaning? After your review, clear the air if you need to, and have a conversation over the phone or through a video messaging app and see if your communication improves! You can also set a kindness goal and send uplifting messages to your friends and family to help improve communication and your relationships with the people who mean the most to you.

Step 3: Look at email, commenting, or blogging

Everyone uses the Internet differently; we have to know the best way to interact in each forum to create the most constructive environment. Email is most often used for business and more formal online communications, and being able to use it effectively will give you an advantage. Interview several adults on what they think proper email etiquette is. You may be familiar with leaving comments on various forms of social media. Explore what you think makes a good comment and how you can engage online in a positive way using the comment section.

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Step 4: Decide what makes a great social media profile

Social media is a great way for people to get to know you; however, you have to be responsible with the information you share. Explore what makes a great social media profile by imagining what would be the profile of a famous character from a book or movie. Think of some good and some not-so-good details that character might share. You can also get some feedback from friends and family about your own profiles if you already have one. Review your privacy settings and see if you are making responsible choices about who can have access to your information.

Step 5: Spread better practices

You have learned a lot in the last four steps. Take some time to spread the information. Turn your netiquette tips into a social media pledge and share it with your friends and family. You could create a top 10 list, poster, video, or skit that illustrates your tips. Present it to your friends and family in person or on an online video chat!

Congratulations! You've earned the Netiquette badge!

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