



Lesson Time: 20–30 minutes

## Compassionate Responses

### Objectives & Outcomes

**Lesson Objectives:** Students will write a journal entry from the perspective of a target, bully, or bystander and suggest a compassionate response to a bullying scenario.

**Lesson Outcomes:** *Students will be able to...*

- identify the roles of bully, target, and bystander.
- suggest a compassionate response to a given bullying scenario.

**Subject Area Connection:** Language Arts

### Background

Bullying conduct peaks during the middle school years. This means that the primary and elementary school years are the time to lay the foundation for appropriate conduct and compassionate responses. By recognizing the feelings and choices of the people involved in a bullying scenario, students will be empowered to take an active role in creating a bully-free environment.

This lesson will define and illustrate the roles of target, bully, and bystander and ask students to reflect on a bullying scenario from all three perspectives. Students will work together to decide on a compassionate response based on their shared understanding of the circumstances and the people involved. Students will gain knowledge and insight to help them make compassionate choices in the future.

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### Getting Ready

**Teacher Preparation:** To prepare for this lesson, read the bullying scenario in the *Procedure* section and modify it (if necessary) according to the particular needs, sensitivities, and experiences of your students.

**Materials Required:**

- chalkboard or whiteboard
- chalk or marker
- paper
- pencils
- crayons (optional)

### Introduction and Modeling

Write the definitions of *target*, *bully*, and *bystander* as given in the Key Vocabulary section on the board. Read each one and talk about what that role looks like in a given situation (e.g., If Max pushes Tracy off the slide during recess every day and Sonja sees it happen, then Max is the *bully*, Tracy is the *target*, and Sonja is the *bystander*). Invite students to share any prior knowledge of or experience with bullying and the roles involved.

### Key Vocabulary

**compassion:** sympathy or concern for another.

**target:** a person hurt by a bully.

**bully:** a person who makes a choice to hurt someone.

**bystander:** a person who sees bullying happen.

## Procedure

1. Read the following scenario to your class:  
“What is fifteen times twenty-three?” Mrs. Johnson asked her class. “Tristan, do you know?”  
Tristan knew the answer, but he dreaded speaking in front of the class.  
“Th-th-thr-three hundred and f-f-forty-f-f-five,” Tristan said.  
Some of the kids giggled. As she did every time, Cecile whispered so that Mrs. Johnson wouldn’t hear her, “G-g-g-good j-j-j-job, T-t-tristan.”  
Pablo felt bad for Tristan. He thought it wasn’t very nice of Cecile to imitate Tristan that way.
2. Ask students to identify the bully (Cecile), target (Tristan), and bystanders (Paul and the rest of the class) in this story. Write the names on the board next to the correct terms. For the purposes of this lesson, Paul should be listed as the bystander since he is the only named bystander in the story.
3. Talk briefly about each character and his or her feelings and motivations. Then divide the class into thirds and assign Tristan, Cecile, or Paul to each section.
4. Pass out paper and pencils.
5. Explain that students should write a journal entry from the perspective of their assigned character describing the incident and including feelings, motivations (if appropriate), and what the character plans to do about the bullying.
6. As a class, discuss each character, allowing students to share from their journal entries. Then lead the class to think about what each character *should* do about the bullying (e.g., Tristan should tell Mrs. Johnson about Cecile’s actions). Emphasize that each person has the power to stop the bullying.

## Discussion Questions

- Is bullying a problem in our class or school?
- In the story we read, who is being hurt? (Tristan, Cecile, and Paul)
- Do you think that kids who bully can change?
- If you were in the class with Tristan, what would you do?
- Who are the adults that could help you in a bullying situation?

## Evaluation

- After the class discussion, ask students to explain the best responses for each of the three characters and how each could prevent this scenario from recurring. Students in lower grade levels may share their thoughts during a class discussion. Students in higher grade levels may write their answers in paragraph form.

## Tips for Tailoring this Lesson

### For Higher Grade Levels

- Have students write a journal response for each character in the story and compare them in small groups. Ask groups to make a list of appropriate responses to the bullying situation for each character.
- Ask students to decide what Mrs. Johnson should do when this incident is reported to her.

### For Lower Grade Levels

- Instead of writing a journal response, ask younger students to fold their paper into thirds and use crayons to draw a picture of one of the characters in each space. Ask students to show through their pictures how each character is feeling.

## Alignment to Standards and Frameworks

### Common Core State Standards: College & Career Readiness

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#### Anchor Standards for Speaking and Listening

**CCRA.SL.1** Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

**CCRA.SL.2** Integrate and evaluate information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally.

#### Anchor Standards for Writing

**CCRA.W.3** Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences.

**CCRA.W.4** Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

### Social and Emotional Core Competencies

Social and Emotional Core Competencies: the five interrelated sets of cognitive, affective and behavioral competencies associated with social and emotional learning as identified by CASEL. Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning [www.casel.org](http://www.casel.org)

#### Self-management

Students are asked to describe a compassionate response to a given situation.

#### Social Awareness

Students are asked to use verbal, physical, and context cues to identify the feelings and motivations of others and use this knowledge to describe the others' perspectives.

#### Relationship Skills

Students are asked to identify why conduct that hurts others is wrong and to describe how to seek and offer help when needed.

#### Responsible Decision Making

Students are asked to consider safety, respect, and compassion in deciding how to respond to a bullying situation as a target, bully, or bystander.