



## Healthy Communications Unit Grade 5 • Ages 10-12

### TIME FRAME

Preparation: 5 minutes  
Instruction: 30 minutes

### MATERIALS

PBS Gossip and Rumors clip  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=98SChJzflD4>

RAK Journals

[Kindness Concept Posters](#) for Assertiveness and Respect

### LEARNING STANDARDS

Common Core: CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.5.1, 2; CCSS.ELALiteracy.W.5.3  
Colorado: Comprehensive Health S.3, GLE.1, EO.c; S.4, GLE.2, EO.a-d; Reading, Writing and Communicating S.1, GLE.2, EO.a,b; S.3, GLE.1, EO.a

[Learning standards key](#)

# Gossip and Rumors

Students will identify what rumors and gossip are and reflect on ways they can respond when they hear information that is untrue or unkind.

## Lesson Background for Teachers

Schoolyard Blues: Impact of Gossip and Bullying  
<http://www.apa.org/research/action/blues.aspx>.

## Key Terms for Students

Consider writing key terms on the board before class to introduce vocabulary and increase understanding.

- ASSERTIVENESS** Standing up for yourself and what you believe in while being respectful of others.
- RESPECT** Treating people, places, and things with kindness.

## TIPS FOR DIVERSE LEARNERS

Students might benefit from:

- Drawing a gossip diagram on the board that shows how rumors spread. For example, you could draw stick figures of two people talking about a third and what happens.
- Another option would be to create laminated figures that you could use to illustrate points during the discussion.

## Resources

Public Broadcasting System Website with Health information for kids:  
[www.pbskids.org](http://www.pbskids.org)

RAK lessons teach kindness skills through a step-by-step framework of **Inspire, Empower, Act** and **Share**.

The **Share** step in the first lesson of each unit is intended to set the tone for teaching kindness.



## Share (3 mins)

Ask the students what they think a rumor is and what gossiping means. Have a few students share their ideas with the class.

## Inspire

### Telephone Game (5 mins)

*We are going to start with a game of telephone. I want you all to sit in a circle. I will choose one person to go first and that person will think of a phrase or sentence. Whisper that phrase to the person sitting next to you. Then whisper it to the next person and so on until the last person has heard the phrase or sentence. The last person says the phrase or sentence out loud.*

Do the activity. Then ask the following questions:

- Ask the person who went first if that was their phrase. *Did anything change?*
- *Why do you think it changed?*
- *Do you think this can happen in real life? In what way?*

*As we saw from this activity, it can be easy to get something wrong when we communicate. Now this was a game so it didn't really matter. But what would happen if you told someone a story and they told someone else but forgot some important facts or changed them on purpose? How would you feel? Allow students to respond.*

That is how rumors and gossip get started



## Empower

### Video Clip and Discussion (15 mins)

Let's watch a video about gossip and rumors. Show PBS Gossip and Rumors clip: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=98SChJzflD4>

Then ask any of the following questions:

- What did you think of the clip?
- Was there something the students said that you agreed with? Did you disagree with anything they said?
- How would you define gossip? How would you define a rumor?
- Why do you think people gossip about others or spread rumors?
- When you hear gossip or a rumor, how can you show respect for the person talking and also the person who's being talked about?
- What can you do if you hear gossip or rumors? How can you be assertive in that situation?

If you can't play the clip: Write the following statements on the board or project them on a smart board. The Public Broadcasting System created a video about Gossip and Rumors. We can't watch that today, but I'd like to explain some of the information that students your age said about Gossip and Rumors in the video. While I read, think about whether you agree or disagree with the statements:

- Gossip is when people talk about others behind their back.
- Gossip can be between a couple of people, but doesn't need to get spread around.
- Gossip is also when you say something to someone's face they don't want to hear.
- Rumors can be true or untrue and are spread by anybody.
- A rumor is when something happens and someone tells someone else and as it spreads it turns into something that is inaccurate.



The RAK paradigm is the framework for teaching and building kindness skills.



- Rumors are spread deliberately to get someone in trouble or hurt their feelings.
- Most of the time, neither rumors nor gossip are true. In thinking about what to do when you hear a rumor or gossip, people should go ask the person being talked about if it is really true. You shouldn't tell anyone else because it's probably not true.
- If you hear about a rumor and think it's not true, just ignore it or ask the person who said it why they said it.

### Wrap Up (5 mins)

To gauge understanding of the material, choose from either the evaluation or reflection questions as discussion, writing or journal prompts. Consider providing additional time for deeper evaluation and reflection as needed.

### Evaluation Questions

- *What is gossip? What is a rumour?*
- *Why can gossip and rumours be hurtful?*
- *What is a respectful way to react if you hear gossip or a rumour?*

### Reflection

- *Write about a time when you or someone you know gossiped or told a rumor about you or someone you know. How did it make you feel? What did you do?*
- *How can we stop people from spreading rumors?*
- *How can you respect yourself and be assertive if someone tells a rumor about you?*

### Summary

*Gossip and rumours can be very hurtful and are often untrue. If you need to know if the rumor is true, ask the person directly. Spreading rumours and gossiping about others is not a kind way to treat people. Kindness comes from treating all people with respect.*



## Act (2 mins)

### Kindness Minute

*In our classroom, we look for the good in others and say what we like about them. Instead of spreading negative rumors, I want you to share "respects" with one another. Say one nice thing about one of your classmates and encourage them to share it with others!*

### Kindness in Action

Think of someone you respect. Make a word cloud of their positive qualities you really admire or appreciate about that person with their name in the middle.

