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# BYSTANDER REVOLUTION

## RECOMMENDED LESSON

### **Bystander Effect**

This lesson outlines one simple way to integrate the Bystander Revolution Bystander Effect video playlist and discussion questions into an elementary school classroom setting.

**Grade Level:**  
Elementary School

**Estimated Time:**  
45 minutes

**Common Core  
ELA Standards  
Grades 3–5:**  
SL.1.B, SL.1.C,  
SL.1.D, SL.2, SL.3,  
SL.5, W.2.A, W.2.B,  
W.2.C, W.2.D,  
W.2.E, W.2.F,  
W.3, W.4

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## OVERVIEW

Students will discuss the meaning of the term “bystander” and how it applies to bullying situations. Students will watch videos from celebrities and students introducing the idea that “it only takes one” person to help with bullying and discuss ways to be an active bystander. The lesson concludes with an opportunity for the educator to recap the lessons learned and present an optional homework assignment.

## OBJECTIVES

**Students will be able to:**

- Define the word “bystander.”
- Summarize solutions heard from celebrities and students.
- Compare and contrast different intervention strategies.
- Apply the strategies to becoming active bystanders in their lives.

## MATERIALS NEEDED

- Computer & internet access
- LCD projector (optional)
- [Bystander Effect video playlist](#)
- Pens/pencils & paper

## PREPARATION

- First, watch the Bystander Effect video playlist.
- Familiarize yourself with the definition of a bystander.
- Familiarize yourself with the Bystander Effect, which is “a social phenomenon that refers to situations in which individuals do not offer help to a victim when other people are present. The greater the number of bystanders, the less likely it is that any one of them will help.” For more information before you teach this lesson, you can watch our [video](#) with Dr. Philip Zimbardo, psychologist and professor emeritus at Stanford University.

## PROCEDURE

### Introduction

*(5 minutes)*

**Introduce the topic by asking students the following questions:**

- How many of you have heard the word “bystander”?
- What do you think a “bystander” is?
- When there’s a big group of people seeing someone get bullied, what do the bystanders usually do?
- What are examples of other things bystanders can do?

### KEY QUESTION

What is a bystander, and how can they help when they see bullying?

### DEFINITION

**A bystander is:**  
a spectator or onlooker, someone who is present at an event or incident but is not taking part.

Then explain to students that a bystander is: *a spectator or onlooker, someone who is present at an event or incident but is not taking part.*

## Videos & Discussion

(25 minutes)

Introduce the video and discussion segment by explaining to students that they are about to watch short videos from celebrities and students talking about their personal experiences as bystanders and offering solutions for bystanders. Instruct students to think about a time they have been a bystander to bullying and whether the advice in the videos could have helped.



### FEATURED SOLUTION

#### SET A GOOD EXAMPLE

A good example is contagious. If you model positive behavior in your own life, you can pass it on to the people around you.

Play videos 1-2 of the [Bystander Effect playlist](#). After viewing these videos, you can use the sample questions below to lead a conversation, as time permits. Each sample question has several follow-up questions that may be useful in the discussion.

**1. Can you think of a time when you saw something happen you knew was wrong but you didn't do anything about it?**

- How did it make you feel?
- Is it hard to get involved when you're standing on the side?
- Is it harder when you're alone or in a group?

**2. What are some reasons you might not help when you see someone being bullied?**

- Do you think you would assume someone else was going to help?
- Could you be afraid of getting bullied yourself?
- Might you be afraid to be the first one to step in?
- Would you be worried about what other people watching would think?

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**3. What are examples of things you can do if you sense that someone needs help?**

- Can you ask them if they're okay?
- Can you ask them if they need help?
- Can you tell an adult?

Play videos 3-4 then continue the discussion:

**4. What did Neiko mean when he was talking about Superman and Batman waiting for the other superhero to act first?**

- Did he mean that either Superman or Batman could help, but if they both think the other person is putting out the fire, nobody actually does it?
- What would happen if Superman and Batman both waited for the other to do something before helping?

**5. Elizabeth Banks talks about the importance of courage. What does courage mean to you?**

- Does it mean doing the right thing, even if it scares you a little?
- Do you think it ever takes courage to help others?
- Can thinking about the person being hurt, and how they feel, help you understand why they might need help?
- Do you think finding courage and helping someone will feel good?
- Is it important to trust your gut? If you know something is wrong, should you act or ignore it?

Play videos 5-6 then continue the discussion:

**6. If a situation seems dangerous, what are examples of things you can do?**

- Can you tell a teacher or another trusted adult?
- When should you call 911?

**7. What do you think the phrase "it only takes one" means?**

- Could it mean that it only takes one person to make a difference?
- Could it be that when one person begins to help, others are more likely to join in?
- If I spilled my lunch on the ground and (name someone in the class) started to help me clean it up, do you think you would be more likely to jump in and help too?

**8. If people consistently see others helping, do you think they would be more likely to help too?**

- Could performing small acts of kindness, courage, or inclusion make a difference?
- Do you think if you always did the kind thing when you had the choice, it would become a habit?
- Can one person make kindness cool? How?

**SUGGESTED STRATEGY**

Giving someone who has been bullied an excuse to walk away can help interrupt bullying before it gets out of hand. If it feels safe, you could announce to everyone that you are going to do something else (like playing soccer or getting food).

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## WRITING ASSIGNMENT

*(5 minutes)*

Ask students to write two sentences about something they would do differently, or could improve upon, if they are a bystander in a bullying situation in the future. If time permits, ask students to share what they've written with the class.

## CLOSING

*(5 minutes)*

Recap what students can do if they witness bullying and aren't sure what to do. Ask students when they would consider the following strategies:

When would you...

- tell a teacher, parent, or other trusted adult?
- speak out against bullying?
- give support to the person who was bullied?
- act and not ignore?

## OPTIONAL HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENTS

### 1. Watch a video and reflect in writing

Have students visit [bystanderrevolution.org](http://bystanderrevolution.org) and watch another video of their choosing. Ask students to write a letter to the person in the video, telling them why they agree or disagree with the advice presented. Ask them to tell the person how they might apply what was said to their own life.

### 2. The Weekly Stand

The Weekly Stand is a list of 52 simple, fun, transformative actions bystanders can take to reduce bullying and improve school culture. Each action contains helpful background information, suggested strategies and phrases to use, and a video for inspiration.

Have students go to [bystanderrevolution.org/weekly](http://bystanderrevolution.org/weekly), choose one of the actions to complete, and then turn in proof that they did it through some creative means: a photo, a screenshot, a short video, an essay, or even a comic strip.

### ABOUT BYSTANDER REVOLUTION

Bystander Revolution is an online resource offering practical, crowdsourced advice about simple things individuals can do to take the power out of bullying.