

Breaking Down Hate Speech

HATE SPEECH: Making cruel, hostile, or negative statements about someone based on their race, religion, national origin, disability, age, gender, or sexual orientation

STEREOTYPE: A simplified and often negative assumption about a particular group of people

DEROGATORY: Intentionally hurtful and harmful, designed to insult or degrade

You will learn to recognize hate speech online and offline. You will see examples of hate speech and explore how it affects individuals, groups, and communities both online and offline. Discussing these matters does **not** mean anyone approves of the statements.

Think of an incident in which you or someone you know has been the target of hate speech of any kind. If you cannot think of one, try to think of an incident in literature, on television, or in the movies. Keep your example in mind while we look at common ways that hate speech can manifest online and offline.

What are some general ways that hate speech can be used in the offline world? Some examples:

- Calling people names based on their race, religion, national origin, disability, gender, sexual orientation, or any other type of group that is disenfranchised in our society
- Saying things about people that are based on social identity stereotypes

What are some general ways that hate speech might be used online? Some examples:

- Sending an email or a text to someone that insults their religion, national origin, disability, gender, sexual orientation, etc.
- Saying derogatory things about people in a chat room, on Facebook, or Twitter, about these groups

Part 1: Recognize Hate Speech

Read the article [“Hate Speech Corrodes Online Games”](#) by Associated Press writer Nicholas K. Geraniols.

Be sure to answer the questions in the “Breaking Down Hate Speech” Questions section about this article.

How do you think you might feel if you were the recipient of derogatory messages?

Why do you think people make derogatory remarks? What might their motives be?

Some examples:

- They are ignorant or have been taught to be racist
- They dislike people who are not exactly like them

- They think it is cool or intimidating to use language like this

How are these kinds of attacks similar to or different from calling your opponent a “loser”? Some examples:

Similarities:

- Both types of statements are cruel and hurtful
- Both types of statements are publicly humiliating

Differences:

- The statements are based on fixed identity traits, not behavior
- The statements are derogatory and threatening towards everyone in the group
- The statements imply that all members of the group deserve to be treated differently (badly)

Think about why so much hate speech takes place online. Be aware that with online hate speech, the offenders often remain anonymous. They may find it easier to make derogatory or prejudiced statements or spread negative stereotypes because they are not face-to-face with the people they affect.

Part 2: Target School Hate Speech

Think about how hate speech can affect more than just the target. Understand that hate speech can create an environment in which it is difficult to learn or work, and in which members of the targeted groups may be placed at a disadvantage.

How might hate speech damage an online community? Hate speech online can quickly reach many people because information spreads rapidly to vast audiences online. Hate speech can make targeted members of an online community feel that they are not welcome. Members who are bystanders may also feel scared, trapped, or intimidated.

MEDIATION: Efforts by someone who is not part of a situation to settle disputes

There are ways to deal with hate speech when it happens online.

Read the article “Confronting Hate Speech Online” by the Anti-Defamation League

After you read the article, answer the questions about it in the “Breaking Down Hate Speech” Questions section.



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