Grades 6–12

Thinking Traps

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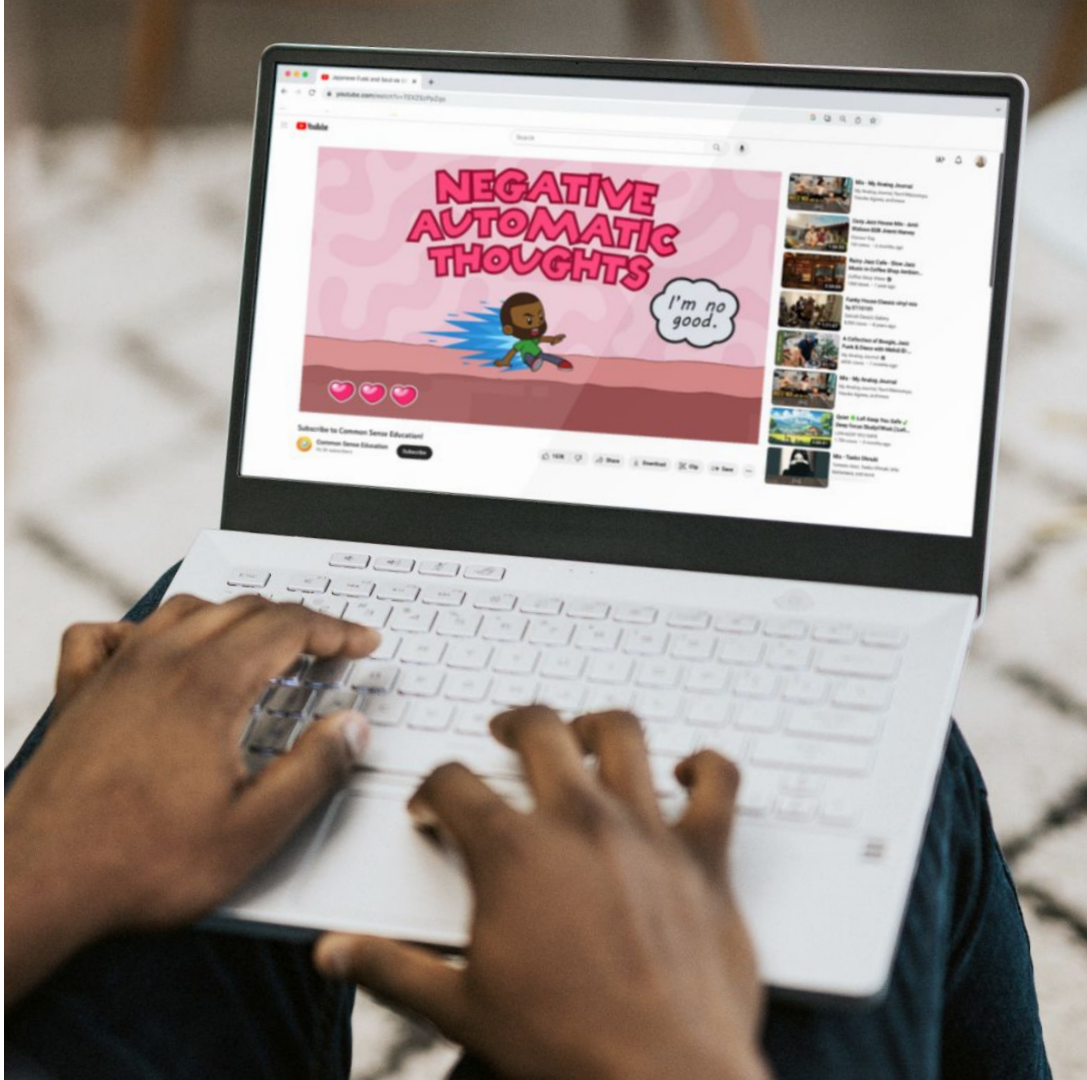

Essential Question

What are *thinking traps* and how can they affect our well-being when using tech?

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LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. Learn about *"thinking traps"* and how they can impact us when we use tech.

2. Recognize and label common thinking traps, like *mind reading* or *all-or-nothing thinking*.

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Key Vocabulary

Thinking Traps — Exaggerated or irrational negative thought patterns that can lead us to believe things that aren't necessarily true.

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Key Vocabulary

Digital well-being — Experiencing media and technology in ways that support one's mental, physical, social, and emotional health.

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WATCH + DISCUSS

Part 1: What Is a Thinking Trap?

How do thinking traps affect how you see yourself?

To watch the video on YouTube, click here.

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Key Vocabulary

Negative Automatic Thought –

Negative thoughts that pop up in our minds, which may not be true or helpful to us.

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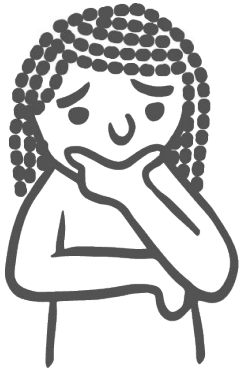
All-or-Nothing Thinking

When you make big generalizations.



Example Thought

All my friends have better lives than me.

Keywords: *all, always, never, none, everyone, nobody, etc.*

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Labeling

When you use negative labels for yourself.

Example Thought

My post didn't get that many likes. I'm a failure.

Keywords: *"I'm a..." followed by a negative word.*

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Mind Reading

When you assume you know what someone else is thinking or feeling.

Example Thought

My friend didn't reply to my text. She is clearly mad at me.

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Negative Filter

When you focus only on the negatives.

Example Thought

I can't stop thinking about that one negative comment.

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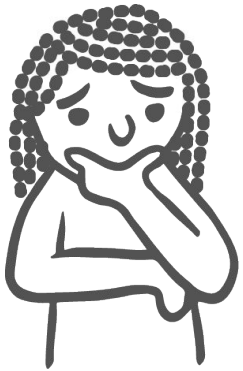
Shoulds

When you think about what you “should” (or shouldn’t) do or be like.



Example Thought

I should respond to friends’ messages immediately.

Keywords: *should or shouldn't*

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Personalizing

When you put the blame on yourself or assume something is about you.

Example Thought

My friend posted that they're feeling sad. It must be my fault.

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Fortune-Telling

When you assume you know what's going to happen, and it's going to be bad!

Example Thought

I was up late last night playing video games instead of studying for my test. I know I'm going to fail my test later today.

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Part 2: Matching Thoughts to Traps

Directions: Read through the definitions of the thinking traps in the bank below. Then, match each thought in the table with the thinking trap you think best applies.

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Part 3: Class Voting

Which traps do you think are most important to learn about before someone gets their first phone or starts using social media?

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REFLECT

Class Voting Reflections

1. What do you notice?
2. What are your reactions?
3. What is it about social media and devices that can make it more likely to fall into thinking traps?

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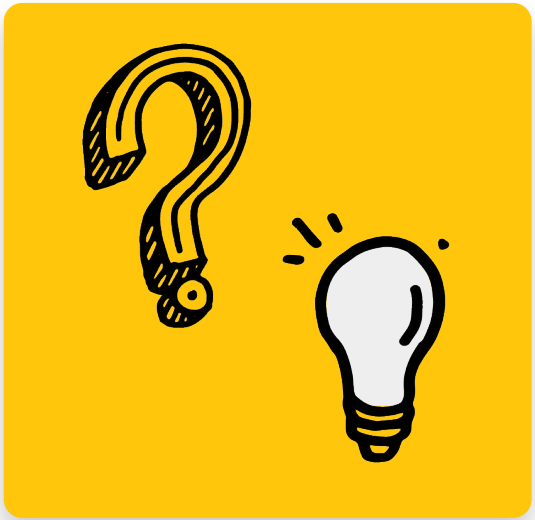
Reflect

What is one thing we talked about today that you hadn't considered and/or want to remember?



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