



GRADE**TIME****TOPICS & SUBJECTS****6–12****45 mins.**

- Media Balance & Well-Being
- Digital Citizenship
- Health & Wellness

My Values & Tech

What are my values, and how do media and tech impact them?

In this lesson, students explore their own values and consider how today's technologies make it easier or harder to live out different values. They also learn about how making choices that align with their values can promote a greater sense of well-being.

*This is one of four lessons in our digital well-being collections for **middle school** and **high school**. If time permits, we recommend teaching all four lessons, in the suggested order, to maximize impact.*

Students will be able to:

- Reflect on their personal values and what's most important to them.
 - Consider how different values are supported and/or compromised by tech.
 - Learn about connections between our values, behaviors, and well-being.
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What You'll Need

Some resources below are available in Spanish

IN CLASS

- [Lesson Slides](#)
- [My Values Sort Handout](#)
- [Values Posters](#)
- [Virtual Values Voting](#)

FOR FAMILIES

- [Family Activity](#)
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LESSON PREP

Part 1: My Values Sort – Preview Part 1 of the lesson and choose how you want to facilitate the activity ([handout](#) or [values cards](#))

- **Optional:** If time and resources permit, you can create a deck of the values cards for each student using Page 1 of the [Values Posters](#). They can use the physical cards to complete the sorting activity.

Part 2: Tech's Impact on Values – Prep the class voting activity in advance:

- **Printable option:** Print out the [Values Posters](#) and place them on a wall in the classroom. Have something students can use for voting, each with two different colors (e.g., sticky notes, stickers, or markers).
 - **Digital option:** Use the [Virtual Values Voting slides](#) and have students vote virtually.
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Lesson Plan

Part 1: My Values Sort

20 mins.

1. Ask: *What are values, and how are they formed? What are some examples of values? (Slide 4)*

Invite students to share out. Then define **values** as *principles or personal rules that are important to us and are informed by our experiences, identities, cultures, and much more.* (Slide 5).

2. Say: *We all hold our own values. Our values are informed by our personal experiences, identities, cultures, and much more.*

There are two important aspects to think about regarding values.

- 1. We don't all value the same things, and even if we do, we may prioritize them differently. For example, we may both care about honesty and kindness, but you may feel like kindness is more important than honesty, while I could hold the opposite view.*
- 2. Our values can shift and evolve over time as we learn and grow. What you care most deeply about right now may be different from what you valued most a year ago, or what you may value a year from now.*

3. Say: *Today, we are going to reflect on our individual values and how we can act in ways that feel aligned with who we are and who we want to be. We're going to start by reviewing a set of 14 values. Just note that these are listed in alphabetical order, not in order of importance.*

Project **Slides 6–10** and review all of the values. As needed, talk through definitions.

Then, project **Slide 11** and ask: *Are there any values that you think are missing from the list?*

4. Have students complete the My Values Sort activity.

- **Printed:** Distribute the [My Values Sort student handout](#) for students to complete individually.

5. Project Slide 12 and have students share their reactions to completing the Values Sort with a partner:

- *What did you notice?*
- *What were you thinking?*
- *How did you feel?*

Part 2: Tech's Impact on Values

20 mins.

1. **Say:** *Now that we have a better idea of what we value, let's consider how growing up in a technology-centric world makes it easier or harder to live by our values.*
2. Have each value poster hung up on a wall of the classroom and give each student either:
 - A set of circle stickers in two colors (five of each circle color; ten circles per student)
 - Two different color markers (e.g., each student gets one blue, one orange)**Digital option:** Share the [Virtual Values Voting slides](#) with students (the same link for all students) and facilitate steps 3–4 virtually.

If students feel strongly about 1–2 additional values being added to the list, you can add those as part of the activity.

3. **Invite** students to walk around the room and add blue dots (or whatever first color you've provided) to values that they think are supported by technology, including social media and smartphones (**Slide 13**).

Tell students they can each add five orange dots, and they can distribute them however they'd like (e.g., five all on one value, one each on five different values, two on a value and three on another, etc.)

4. **Say:** *I know you may be tempted to discuss what you're seeing here, but first, we're going to repeat the same exercise using the orange (or whatever second color you've provided) dots to the values that you feel technology makes harder or worse.*
5. **Have** students stand back and look closely at how the group voted. Discuss their observations (**Slide 14**):
 - *What do you notice? What does this activity spark in your thinking?*
 - *Which values have mostly or only orange dots? Which have mostly or only blue dots? Are there values that have mixed orange and blue dots?*
 - *How do our phones support values that are important to us? How do they make it harder or interfere?*
 - *Think about the apps you use most. How do they support or hinder your values?*

Part 3: Well-Being Connection

5 mins.

1. **Say:** *Did you know that when we act in ways that are out of step with our values, it can leave us feeling all kinds of negative emotions? For example, if one of the values that's really important to us is authenticity, and then we find ourselves making posts on social media that don't feel genuine to us, we may end up feeling disappointed in ourselves, uncomfortable, or even guilty. If we care about being kind and considerate, but we post something that we know will probably hurt someone else's feelings, we can end up with these same negative emotions, too.*
2. **Say:** *We can support our well-being by reflecting on our values, and taking steps to make sure our behaviors line up with the values we think are important.*

Project **Slide 15** and define **digital well-being** as *experiencing media and technology in ways that support one's mental, physical, social, and emotional health.*

3. Have students complete the reflection on **Part 3** of the [My Values Sort handout \(Slide 16\)](#).

Call on students to share their responses, or have them place their reflections on sticky notes around the classroom and do a gallery walk. *If students completed the Values Sort online, they can share those reflections now.

4. **Say:** *Technology has both good and bad implications for our values. Starting to think more about the ways we use tech, and how it connects with our values, helps us ultimately act in ways that are more aligned with the things we care about. And that, in turn, helps our overall well-being.*



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