

# Fourth Grade ELA Study Guide

**Video Title:** *The Rubber Band Rule*

**Theme:** Think before you post — online actions have lasting consequences

**Grade Level:** 4th Grade

**Time Needed:** ~45–60 minutes

**Goal:** Students will analyze the message of the video, explore cause and effect in digital interactions, and develop written and spoken arguments about online responsibility using grade-appropriate ELA skills.

## ELA Standards Addressed (4th Grade)

- **RI.4.2** – Determine the main idea and explain how it is supported by key details.
- **RI.4.3** – Explain events, ideas, or concepts in a historical or scientific text (cause/effect).
- **W.4.1** – Write opinion pieces supporting a point of view with clear reasons and evidence.
- **SL.4.1** – Engage in collaborative discussions with diverse partners.
- **L.4.4** – Determine the meaning of words/phrases based on grade-level texts.

## Step 1: Watch the Video – "The Rubber Band Rule"

**Pre-Viewing Prompt (on board):**

“What happens when something you say or post online doesn’t go away?”

**Discussion Questions After Watching:**

- What is the main message of the Rubber Band Rule?
- What examples did Steve Trash use to show how something can snap back?
- Why do you think this rule is especially important for kids your age?
- How can *thinking first* help prevent trouble?

**Main Idea:** Your words and actions online matter — they’re permanent, and they can affect your future.

## Step 2: Cause & Effect Chain Reaction

### Activity:

Students work in pairs to map out cause-effect relationships from the video using a graphic organizer.

Example:

- **Cause:** A student shares a silly meme without thinking.
- **Effect 1:** Someone gets embarrassed.
- **Effect 2:** Others comment mean things.
- **Effect 3:** The student gets in trouble at school.

**Extension:** Students create an original "chain" story with a different online choice and outcome.

## Step 3: Opinion Writing Prompt – Is Thinking Before You Post Really That Important?

Prompt:

**“Should people be more careful about what they post online? Why or why not?”**

Student writing should include:

- A clear opinion
- At least two supporting reasons (with evidence or examples)
- Logical organization and transitions
- A strong concluding statement

Sentence starters:

“In my opinion...”

“One reason is...”

“Another reason is...”

“That’s why I believe...”

## Step 4: Group Discussion – Rubber Band Situations

Break into small groups. Assign each group a realistic digital dilemma. They discuss and present:

1. What's the possible snap back here?
2. What could a Media Master do instead?

Example Situations:

- You're mad at someone and want to post about it.
- A classmate sends you a joke you think is offensive.
- You take a funny photo of a friend and want to post it.

**Bonus Challenge:** Each group creates a short skit to act out their "Snap Back" vs "Media Master" decision.

## Step 5: Design a Media Master Motto Poster

Individually or in teams, students create a poster with:

- A catchy motto (e.g., "Think Before You Snap Back!" or "Be Smart. Post Smart.")
- An illustration
- A tip for how to *THINK FIRST* online

Create a classroom gallery walk to showcase the posters.

## Wrap-Up: Snap Back or Smart Choice? – Lightning Round

Teacher reads actions aloud. Students vote:  
SNAP BACK – might have negative consequences  
SMART – thoughtful and respectful

Sample actions:

1. Sharing a video of someone tripping without asking them → SNAP BACK
2. Asking yourself if something is kind before posting → SMART
3. Posting while angry → SNAP BACK

4. Checking with a parent before using a new app → SMART

## Optional Extensions

- **Reading Connection:** *But I Read It on the Internet!* by Toni Buzzeo
- **Text-to-Self Prompt:** “Describe a time you said or did something that came back to you later. What did you learn?”
- **Family Take-Home:** Send home a one-page “Digital Responsibility Agreement” for families to discuss and sign.

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