

# Fifth Grade ELA Study Guide

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

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

**Grade Level:** 5th Grade

**Time Needed:** ~45–60 minutes

**Goal:** Students will interpret the message of the video, explore cause and effect in digital choices, and develop structured arguments and narratives about digital responsibility.

## ELA Standards Addressed (5th Grade)

- **RI.5.2** – Determine the main idea of a text and explain how it is supported by key details.
- **RI.5.3** – Explain relationships and interactions between ideas (e.g., cause/effect).
- **W.5.1** – Write opinion pieces on topics or texts, supporting a point of view with reasons and information.
- **W.5.3** – Write narratives with clear event sequences and character responses.
- **SL.5.1** – Engage in collaborative discussions.
- **L.5.4** – Determine meaning of words/phrases based on grade-level reading.

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

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

"How can what you post online affect you in the future?"

**Discussion Questions After Watching:**

- What is the *main message* Steve Trash wants us to understand?
- What examples show how online actions can "snap back"?
- How does this relate to real-life experiences you or someone you know might have had?
- What kind of person do you want to be online?

**Main Idea:** The things you do online — kind or unkind, public or private — can come back to affect you in the future.

## **Step 2: Cause & Effect Web**

### **Activity:**

Use a graphic organizer to build a web of possible outcomes from a single online action.

### **Prompt:**

“Posting a mean comment about someone online.”

### **Example Effects:**

- That person gets upset
- Others join in or screenshot it
- A teacher or parent finds out
- Your online reputation is damaged
- You feel regret

**Extension:** Students create their own cause/effect webs based on different digital choices.

## **Step 3: Opinion Writing Prompt – Why Should You Think First Online?**

### **Prompt:**

“Do you think it’s important to be careful about what you post online? Explain why or why not.”

Students should:

- State an opinion clearly
- Support it with 2–3 reasons and examples
- Use transitions and precise language
- End with a strong conclusion

Encourage peer editing and revision before publishing their final copy.

## **Step 4: Narrative Writing – The Snap Back Story**

**Prompt:**

Write a short fictional story about a kid who posts something without thinking... and it snaps back! Include:

- Characters and setting
- The post or action
- The chain of consequences
- What the character learns
- A resolution showing growth

This blends digital citizenship with narrative skills and empathy-building.

**Step 5: Group Activity – What Would a Media Master Do?**

Each group receives a realistic online dilemma. They discuss:

1. What's the potential "snap back"?
2. What would a *Media Master* do instead?
3. Why is the Media Master's choice better?

**Example Situations:**

- You see a classmate post an embarrassing video of someone.
- You're angry and want to comment on a friend's post.
- Someone sends you a link to a private photo.

**Challenge:** Groups act out both the "Snap Back" version and the "Media Master" version.

**Step 6: Media Master PSA Posters or Videos****Project:**

In small groups, create a public service announcement (poster or video) that teaches the Rubber Band Rule.

Poster must include:

- A short slogan (e.g., "Click Smart, Think First!" or "Kind Posts Only!")

- A visual showing a digital choice and its consequences
- At least one tip for being a responsible digital citizen

## Wrap-Up: Think First Lightning Round

Teacher reads quick online scenarios. Students hold up:  
SNAP BACK – Risky or unkind  
MEDIA MASTER – Thoughtful and kind

Example scenarios:

- Posting a joke that makes fun of someone → SNAP BACK
- Asking before tagging someone in a photo → MEDIA MASTER
- Sharing something without checking if it's true → SNAP BACK
- Pausing before replying in anger → MEDIA MASTER

## Optional Extensions

- **Reading Connection:** *Bullying in Cyberspace* by Heather E. Schwartz
- **Text-to-Self Prompt:** “Describe a time when you or someone you know learned a lesson about being careful online.”
- **Family Extension:** Send home a “Digital Footprint Reflection” worksheet to discuss with adults.

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