

Sixth Grade ELA Study Guide

Video Title: *The Rubber Band Rule*

Theme: Our online choices can have lasting consequences — think before you post.

Grade Level: 6th Grade

Time Needed: ~45–60 minutes

Goal: Students will analyze the message of the video, explore digital cause and effect, and develop narrative and argumentative writing that reflects personal responsibility online.

ELA Standards Addressed (6th Grade)

- **RI.6.2** – Determine a text’s central idea and how it is conveyed through details.
- **RI.6.3** – Analyze how key individuals, events, or ideas are introduced and developed.
- **W.6.1** – Write arguments to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence.
- **W.6.3** – Write narratives with real or imagined experiences using effective technique.
- **SL.6.1** – Participate in collaborative discussions with diverse partners.
- **L.6.4** – Determine meanings of unknown words and phrases.

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

Pre-Viewing Prompt:

“What does it mean for something to 'snap back' on you online? Can words or images really have long-term effects?”

Post-Viewing Questions:

- What is the central idea of *The Rubber Band Rule*?
- What examples support that central idea?
- Why does Steve Trash compare online actions to a rubber band?
- What consequences are possible — short-term and long-term?
- How can we apply this in our own digital behavior?

Key Takeaway: The internet keeps a record. Words and posts can return with unexpected impact — for good or bad.

Step 2: Cause & Effect Mapping

Activity: Create a multi-path cause-and-effect map showing how one online decision can result in several different outcomes.

Scenario Starter: “You post a sarcastic joke about a classmate on your private group chat.”

Students trace multiple consequences:

- Friends screenshot and forward it
- The classmate finds out and feels hurt
- A teacher reports it to the principal
- Future college admissions see it on record

Then, repeat with: “You choose not to post, and talk to the classmate in person.”

Reflect on how a single decision branches into multiple futures.

Step 3: Argumentative Writing Prompt

Prompt: “Should students be taught digital citizenship and online responsibility starting in elementary school? Why or why not?”

Students should:

- Introduce the claim
- Support it with 2–3 clear reasons
- Use specific examples or evidence
- Acknowledge a counterargument
- Write a strong conclusion

Encourage peer review for clarity and support.

Step 4: Narrative Writing – When It Snaps Back

Prompt: Write a short fictional story about a middle schooler who makes an impulsive online post and experiences the *snap back*. Include:

- Realistic characters and setting
- Clear sequence of events
- Emotional impact or lesson learned
- Dialogue and sensory detail
- A moment of reflection

This task helps students develop empathy, digital self-awareness, and storytelling skill.

Step 5: Socratic Seminar – Are You the Same Person Online?

Activity:

Hold a structured class discussion around these guiding questions:

- “Why do people act differently online than in person?”
- “Is deleting something really the same as it never being posted?”
- “What would a Media Master do when they see someone being mean online?”

Use accountable talk stems like:

“I agree with ____ because...”

“I’d like to add...”

“Another perspective is...”

Step 6: Design a Digital Poster or PSA Slide

Project: Create a Google Slide or paper poster that includes:

- A bold slogan promoting safe posting habits
- A graphic or illustration of the Rubber Band Rule
- A real-world example of a digital choice gone wrong (or right)
- 2 actionable Media Master Tips

Encourage clear layout, color use, and persuasive messaging.

Wrap-Up: Think First Scenarios

Read quick dilemmas aloud and ask students to respond:

- “Post It” – Safe, responsible, thoughtful
- “Pause It” – Could snap back; needs rethinking

Examples:

- Posting a meme that could be offensive
- Sharing a funny video without credit
- Making a TikTok venting about a friend
- Commenting encouragement on someone’s post

Use hand signs, clickers, or sticky notes for interactive engagement.

Optional Extensions

- **Reading Tie-In:** *Tricked* by Laurie Halse Anderson (digital deception)
- **Text-to-Self Prompt:** “What would you say to your future self about how to act online?”
- **Take-Home Challenge:** Students interview a parent or older sibling about something they’ve seen online that ‘snapped back’ — and share insights with the class.

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