

Eighth Grade ELA Study Guide

Video Title: *The Rubber Band Rule*

Theme: Digital actions have lasting effects — even deleted content can return unexpectedly.

Grade Level: 8th Grade

Time Needed: 45–60 minutes

Goal: Students will analyze digital media messages, evaluate cause and effect in online interactions, and craft written arguments and narratives about digital responsibility and consequences.

ELA Standards Addressed (8th Grade)

- **RI.8.2** – Determine a central idea and analyze its development.
- **RI.8.3** – Analyze how individuals, events, and ideas interact in a text.
- **W.8.1** – Write arguments to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence.
- **W.8.3** – Write narratives that develop real or imagined experiences.
- **SL.8.1** – Engage in collaborative discussions, expressing ideas clearly and building on others' ideas.
- **L.8.4** – Determine the meaning of unknown or multiple-meaning words in context.

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

Pre-Viewing Prompt: "What does it mean when people say the internet never forgets?"

Post-Viewing Discussion Questions:

- What is the central message of the video?
- How does the rubber band metaphor work to explain the idea of lasting digital consequences?
- Why do some people think deleting a post means it's gone forever?
- What does it mean to be a Media Master in this situation?

- How can tone, intent, and timing affect how a message ‘snaps back’?

Key Takeaway: Even when you delete something online, it might still affect your future — because people remember, share, screenshot, and repost. Think first.

Step 2: Cause, Effect, and Consequence Chain

Activity: Students create a flowchart showing how a single digital action leads to a series of outcomes — both short and long term.

Scenario Prompt: “An 8th grader posts a joke that goes viral for the wrong reasons.”

Students map:

- Action (the joke)
- Immediate reactions (likes, shares, comments)
- Emotional/social consequences (embarrassment, fallout)
- Long-term consequences (school reputation, trust, online trail)

Then, compare to a **Media Master** response:

- Pauses before posting
- Rethinks tone or impact
- Makes a more thoughtful or kind post instead

Focus: Emphasize reflection, empathy, and future consequences.

Step 3: Argumentative Writing Prompt

Prompt: “Should people be held accountable for what they post online — even years later?”

Students should:

- State a clear position
- Support it with relevant reasons and examples
- Acknowledge opposing views

- Use precise language and a logical structure
- Conclude with a persuasive final statement

Consider real-world examples (e.g., celebrities, athletes, or politicians whose old posts resurfaced).

Step 4: Narrative Writing – Snap Back Story

Prompt: Write a first-person narrative from the point of view of someone who experiences a "snap back" from a post they thought was harmless.

Guidelines:

- Begin with the digital action (e.g., post, share, comment)
- Show how the situation spirals (tension rises)
- Include emotional impact, regret, and conflict resolution
- End with the character learning and applying The Rubber Band Rule

Optional Extension: Let students choose the genre — realistic, sci-fi, mystery, or even satire — while keeping the core theme.

Step 5: Class Discussion or Structured Debate

Debate Topic: “Is it fair to judge someone today based on something they posted years ago?”

Format options:

- Fishbowl discussion
- Team debate
- Socratic seminar with student-generated questions

Encourage respectful discourse using prompts like:

“I can see your point, but...”

“Let’s consider how that would apply in a different context...”

“What evidence supports that idea?”

Step 6: Design a PSA Slide, Meme, or Reel

Activity: Students create a short digital Public Service Announcement that reinforces *The Rubber Band Rule*.

Options:

- A one-slide Canva or Google Slide with a slogan, image, and short message
- A meme showing a “Snap Back” scenario (with humor and purpose)
- A 15–30 second vertical video (scripted or animated)

Requirements:

- Clear, original message
- Visual appeal
- Connection to the video’s core idea

Wrap-Up: "Media Master or Mistake?" Challenge

Teacher presents digital behavior scenarios. Students decide:

- “Media Master” (smart, thoughtful)
- “Snap Back Risk!” (could have consequences)

Examples:

- Deleting a post after seeing it offended someone
- Posting a classmate’s funny fail without permission
- Sharing a fake news story without checking it
- Apologizing publicly for a poor choice
- Tagging a friend in an embarrassing memory

Can be played aloud, in small groups, or with digital response tools like Kahoot or Jamboard.

Optional Extensions

- **Literature Tie-In:** *Nothing But the Truth* by Avi (truth, perception, and consequences)

- **Podcast Prompt:** “What would I say to my younger self before they posted that thing?”
- **Family Homework:** Interview an adult: “What advice would you give your middle school self about using the internet?”

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