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Cartoons for Teaching Elementary Students about Bullying

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Audrey C. Rule, S. R. Logan, and Frank W. Kohler

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Cartoons for Teaching Elementary Students about Bullying

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June 18, 2012

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Abstract

Bullying is a pressing concern in schools as many teachers are not being sufficiently prepared with curriculum and instructional strategies to prevent, mitigate, or halt it. This document presents classroom-tested cartoons created by graduate students that address the causes, effects, and ways of preventing or stopping bullying in an interesting and often humorous cartoon format. The cartoons are arranged into three sets for the following elementary grade ranges: grades kindergarten through second grade; grades three and four; and grades five and six. Instructions and materials for guiding students' practice of the bullying concepts through completing partly-finished cartoons and original cartoons are provided. Thirty-six complete color cartoons and nine exercises with partly-completed cartoons are included. [14 references; 63 figures]

Introduction

Bullying involves repeated acts of aggression, intimidation, or coercion against a victim who is weaker physically, socially, or in some other way (Carney & Merrell, 2001; Olweus, 1999; Smith & Ananiadou, 2003). Bullying may involve physical acts such as hitting, kicking, or pushing, verbal abuse through threats or name-calling, or social exclusion through spreading rumors, among other devices (Fekkes, Pijpers, & Verloove-Vanhorick, 2005; Merrell, Gueldner, Ross, & Isava, 2008). Bullying can also occur through online communication channels, a more recent phenomena called cyber bullying.

Unfortunately, teachers have historically not been very successful in stopping bullying that has been reported to them. One study found that only 28% teachers were effective in halting bullying cases of which they were made aware (Fekkes, Pijpers, and Verloove-Vanhorick, 2005). Teachers need more professional preparation in addressing bullying, especially at the preservice level (Bauman, Rigby, & Hoppa, 2008). They also need more readily available curricula that is engaging for students. The cartoon curriculum presented here has been successfully classroom tested and found to be motivating to elementary students with positive classroom climate effects. This curriculum is interactive, allowing elementary students to share their experiences and problem-solve together.

Development of the Cartoons and Activities

Graduate students in an introductory course on gifted education developed the cartoons as a way of combining creativity, an important skill area of gifted students, with pressing social-emotional concerns of bullying. Gifted students are often singled out and picked on for their differences from more typical students. The cartoons presented here are suitable for general elementary students.

The cartoons were created in the following manner. The course instructor (first author of this document) made cartoon backgrounds with characters using clip art and drawing functions in Microsoft PowerPoint software. The graduate

students researched information about bullying and made a list of 20 facts about it. Then they chose cartoons that appealed to them and added talking bubbles and details to transform them into cartoons that expressed the facts they had compiled. These cartoons were reviewed by classmates who ranked them and provided suggestions for their improvement.

The course instructor then collaborated with another faculty member (the second author of this document), who has experience as a school counselor, to choose those suitable for the elementary students. With discussion from the third author who then had his special education preservice teachers classroom-test them with elementary students, she designed three lessons at each grade level range. The positive results of that study are reported in Rule, Logan & Kohler (in review).

Efficacy of Teaching with Cartoons

Political cartoons have been used for quite a long time for teaching political and historical social studies concepts (Dougherty, 2002; Risinger & Heitzmann, 2008). Cartoons have been successfully used to teach science concepts to elementary students with a large effect size when compared to more traditional means (Rule & Auge, 2005) and to middle school students (Sallis, Rule, & Jennings, 2009). Students were motivated by the humor and opportunity to create their own cartoons. Preservice teachers have successfully created cartoons to teach earth science concepts (Rule, Sallis, & Donaldson, 2008).

More affective concepts have also been taught through cartoons with positive results such as ideas associated with perfectionism (Zousel, Rule, & Logan, in review) and principles of programming for gifted education (Rule & Schneider, 2009). Therefore, it seemed appropriate that cartoons be used as a medium for conveying concepts elated to bullying to elementary students.

The successfully-classroom-tested cartoons are provided here so that teachers may use these in their classrooms to teach about bullying.

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Cartoons for Teaching about Bullying

This appendix contains sets of cartoons and cartoon-making materials for three grade level sets: K-1-2, 3-4, and 5-6.

- **Cartoon Lesson Plans**
- Materials: Complete set of cartoons, sets of "blank" cartoons for each student, pencils, crayons or colored pencils
-
- **Lesson One:**
- Greet the students, welcoming them to the group session.
- Inform the students that they will participate in a small group discussion on bullying, where they will read or have read to them some material on bullying, and be given the opportunity to create some literature informing others about bullying.
- Question the students about bullying. For example: What is a bully? How do individuals bully others? How are bullying behaviors different from friendly behaviors?
- Present the first set of cartoons to the students. Give the students a moment to look them over. Depending on the grade level and reading fluency level allow the students to voluntarily read the cartoons aloud. Once the reading has concluded ask the students what new information about bullying they have learned.
- Inform the students that they will now have the opportunity to change and create cartoons communicating facts about bullying. The teacher will work with the students to "redo" one of the provided cartoons. The teacher will then instruct the students to revise one of the provided cartoons independently. Finally the students will create an original cartoon that defines bullying, describes the means by which individuals bully, or compares/contrasts bullying and friendship behaviors.
- Allow students to share their creations before dismissing the group.

- **Lesson Two:**
- Greet the students, welcoming them to the group session.
- Review information presented during the previous session (What is bullying? How do individuals bully others? How are bullying behaviors different from friendly behaviors?). Inform the students that today they will focus on understanding bullying behavior.
- Question the students about understanding bullying. For example: Why do others bully? What are the consequences for bullying others? What is the impact of bullying on those who are bullied? Are there certain places where bullying takes place or are there people who are likely to be bullied? Why does bullying continue?
- Present the second set of cartoons to the students. Give the students a moment to look them over. Depending on the grade level and reading fluency level allow the students to voluntarily read the cartoons aloud. Once the reading has concluded ask the students what new information about bullying they have learned.
- Inform the students that they will now have the opportunity to change and create cartoons communicating facts about bullying. The teacher will work with the students to "redo" one of the provided cartoons. The teacher will then instruct the students to revise one of the provided cartoons independently. Finally the students will create an original cartoon that outlines why others

bully, the impact of bullying on victims and perpetrators, instances where bullying is likely to occur, or why bullying persists.

- Allow students to share their creations before dismissing the group.

Lesson Three:

- Greet the students, welcoming them to the group session.
- Review information presented during the previous session (Why do others bully? What are the consequences for bullying others? What is the impact of bullying on those who are bullied? Are there certain places where bullying takes place or are there people who are likely to be bullied? Why does bullying continue?). Inform the students that today they will focus on strategies for responding to bullying.
- Question the students about bullying. For example: What should one do if they are being bullied? What should one do if they witness someone being bullied? What should one do if they are a bully?
- Present the third set of cartoons to the students. Give the students a moment to look them over. Depending on the grade level and reading fluency level allow the students to voluntarily read the cartoons aloud. Once the reading has concluded ask the students what new information about bullying they have learned.
- Inform the students that they will now have the opportunity to change and create cartoons communicating facts about bullying. The teacher will work with the students to "redo" one of the provided cartoons. The teacher will then instruct the students to revise one of the provided cartoons independently. Finally the students will create an original cartoon that gives strategies for responding to bullying as the victim, bystander, or bully.
- Allow students to share their creations. Thank the participants, review what they have learned from the group meetings, ask them what they will now do differently as a result of what they have learned, and encourage them to share what they have learned with others.

K-1-2 Cartoon Materials

Lesson 1 Uses the first 2 pages and focuses on defining and recognizing bullying:

Provide examples of bullying;
Discuss different kinds of bullying;
Contrast bullying with good friendship skills.

Lesson 2 Uses the next two pages and focuses on understanding bullying behavior.

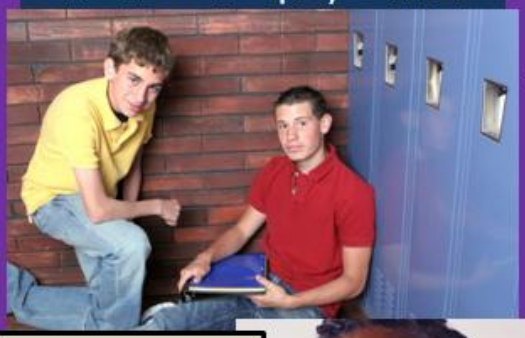
Discuss causes/reasons for bullying;
Discuss possible consequences for the bully;
Explore short term and long term consequences for the person who is bullied;
Identify situations where bullying is more likely to occur;
Explain why bullying continues and persists.

Lesson 3 uses the next two slides and focuses on strategies for responding to bullying.

Discuss the best way to respond when you are being bullied;
Discuss what to do when witnessing someone being bullied;
Discuss what to do if you realize you have been a bully yourself.

School-Wide Equity Matters

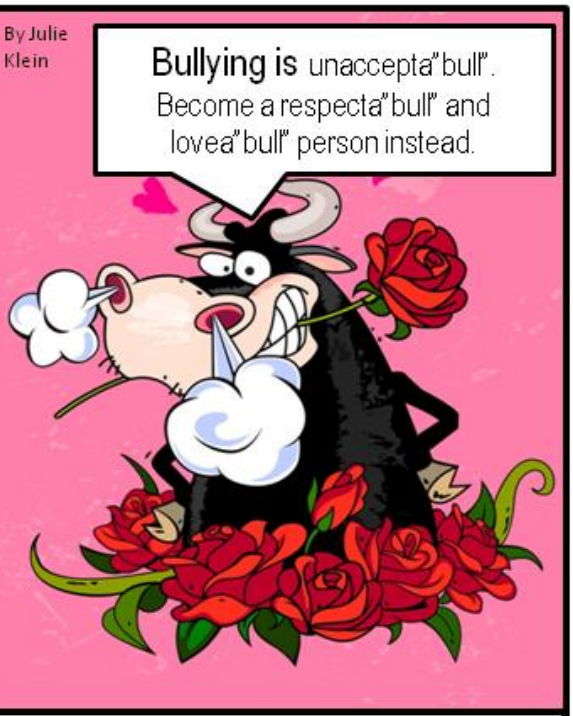
By Bobbi Jo Boggs



To prevent bullying, schools must nurture an environment of equity for all people.

Real friends don't bully you into doing things you shouldn't do.

By Julie Klein



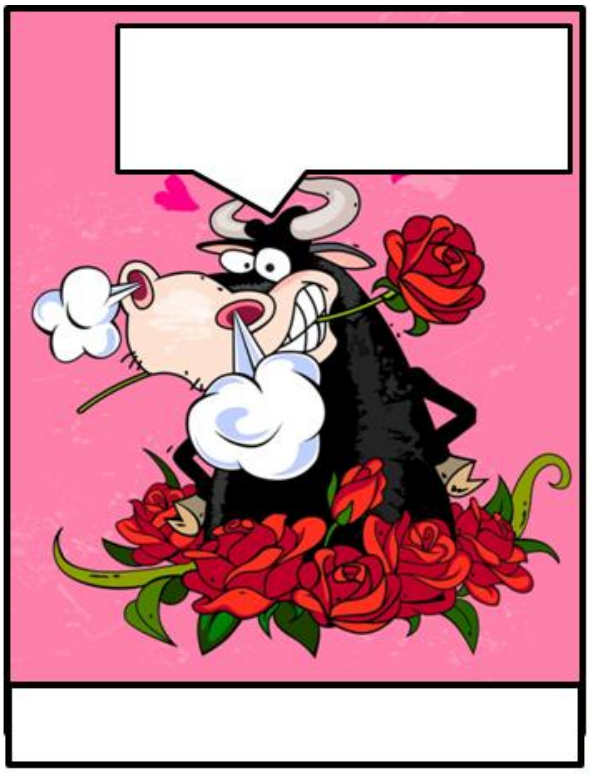
NO "BULL" ABOUT IT

One in seven students is either a bully or a victim.

The Golden Rule

By Zeina Yousof

Treat others the way you want to be treated.
Stand up for someone when he or she needs it.
When you need it, someone will stand up for you.



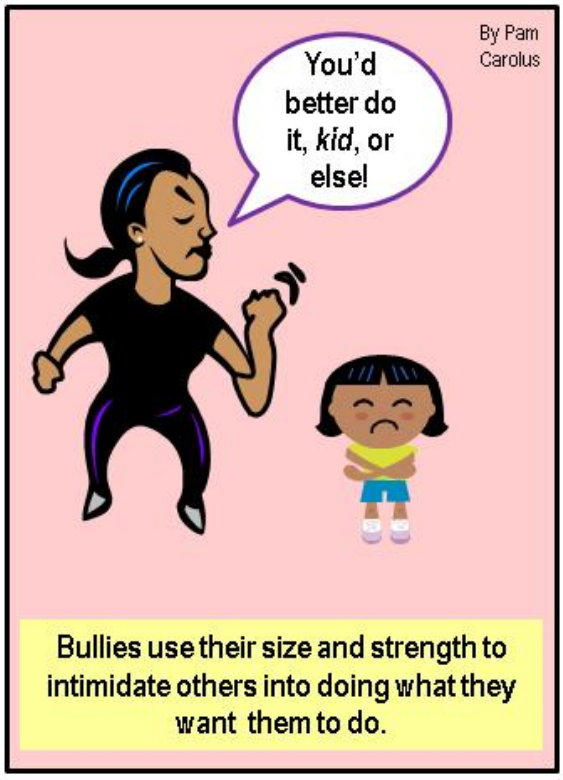
Complete these cartoons to tell what bullying is.

Make your own cartoon about bullying here.

Bully in the Schoolyard
Hey... try catching the ball, ya cry babies!
He's trying to hit us! Run!
By Christina Rose
Bullies like to feel powerful and in control.

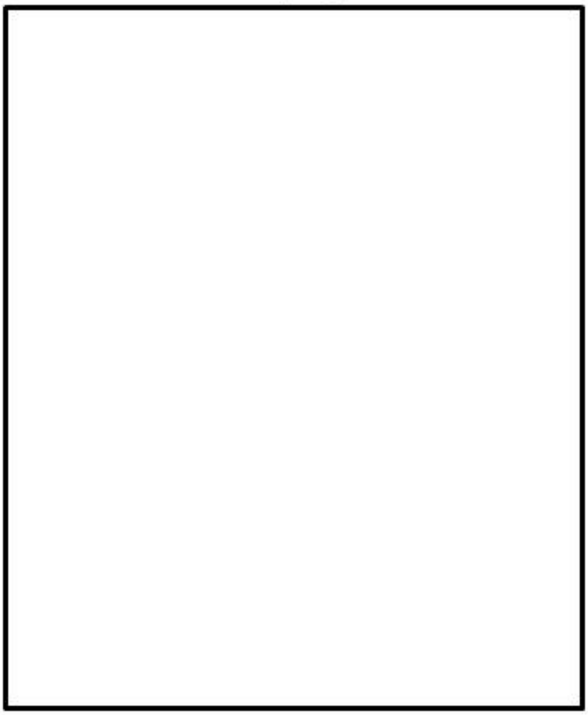
Hey, *Birdie*, you are too small and stupid to fly here! Get lost or else!
By Ksenia Zhbanova
Yeah, you little pip squeak!
I wish someone would help me!
Hey, leave the little bird alone!
Well, OK- Leave him alone.
Sometimes it takes just one person to speak up and others will follow.

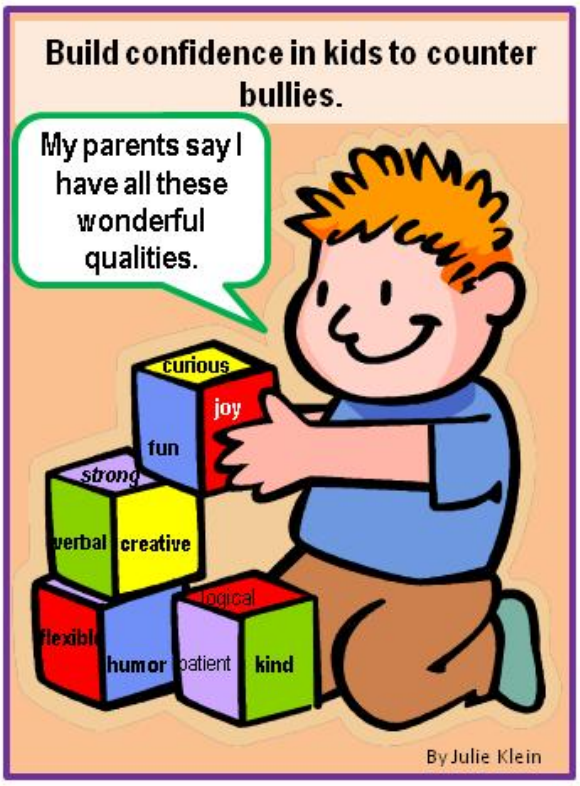
I just can't take it anymore – they all laugh at me and never let me play with them.
By Pam Carolus
Children who are bullied can grow up to be depressed – sad all the time.

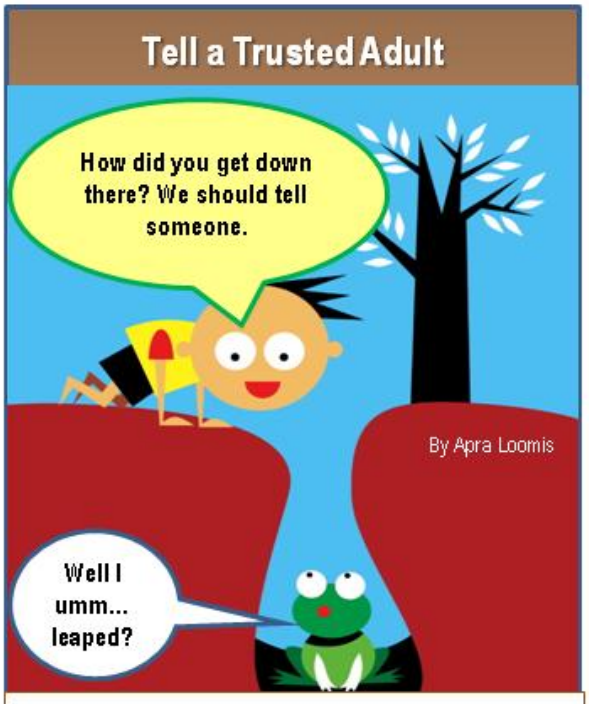

By Pam Carolus
You'd better do it, *kid*, or else!
Bullies use their size and strength to intimidate others into doing what they want them to do.

Complete these cartoons to tell causes or consequences of bullying.

Make your own cartoon about bullying here.







When bullying is reported to an adult, it is less likely to occur again.

One of the best ways to stand up to bullies is to do it all TOGETHER.

Complete these cartoons to tell ways to stop bullying.

Make your own cartoon about bullying here.

Grades 3-4
Cartoon Materials

Lesson 1 Uses the first 2 pages and focuses on defining and recognizing bullying:

Provide examples of bullying;

Discuss different kinds of bullying;

Contrast bullying with good friendship skills.

Lesson 2 Uses the next two pages and focuses on understanding bullying behavior.

Discuss causes/reasons for bullying;

Discuss possible consequences for the bully;

Explore short term and long term consequences for the person who is bullied;

Identify situations where bullying is more likely to occur;

Explain why bullying continues and persists.

Lesson 3 uses the next two slides and focuses on strategies for responding to bullying.

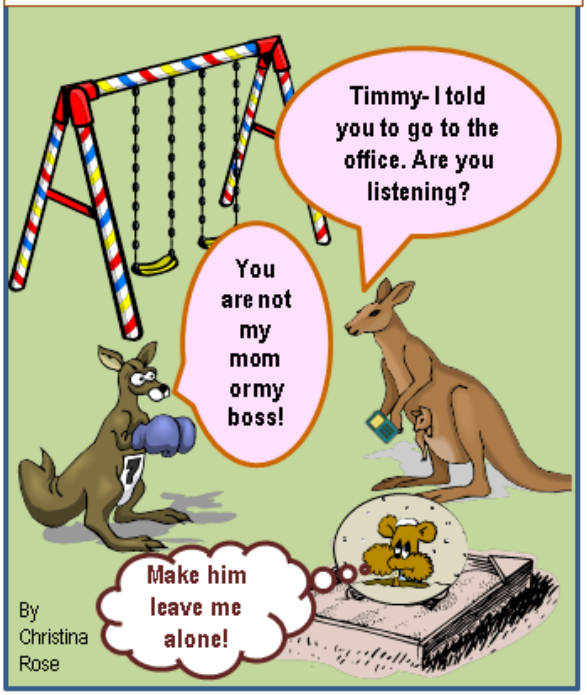
Discuss the best way to respond when you are being bullied;

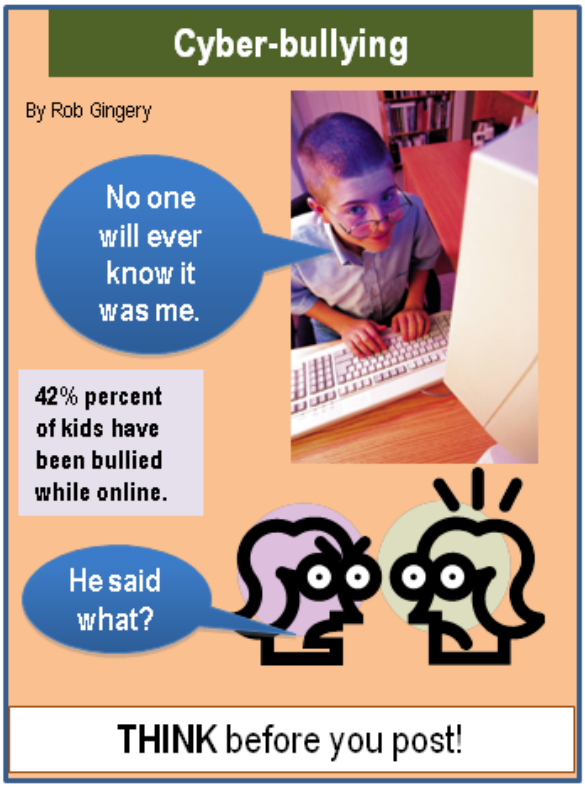
Discuss what to do when witnessing someone being bullied;

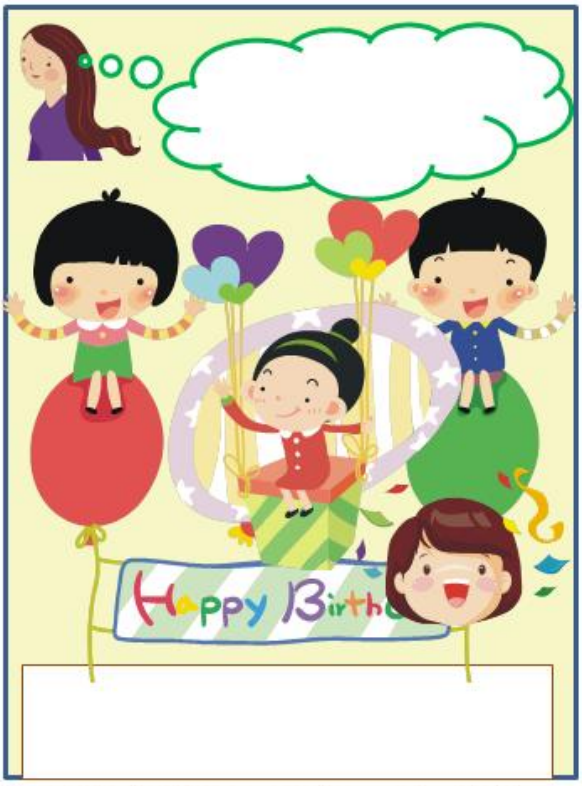
Discuss what to do if you realize you have been a bully yourself.

Be kind. Exclusion hurts.

Children who bully are often defiant toward authority figures and are apt to break rules.

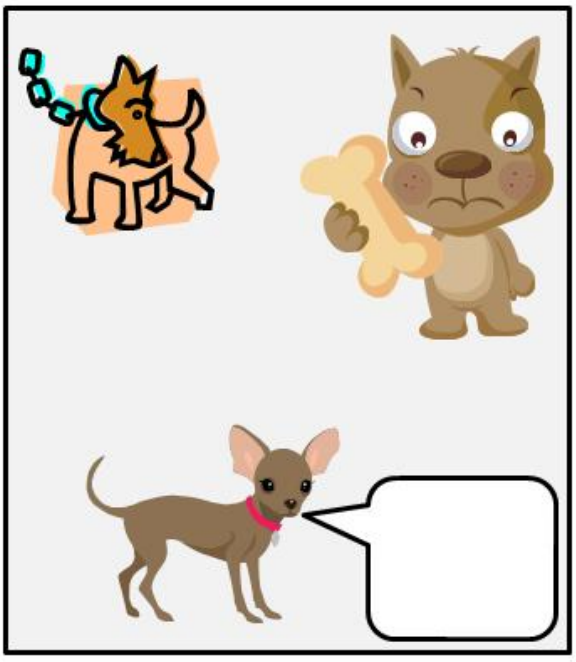






Complete these cartoons to tell what bullying is.

Make your own cartoon about bullying here.



Bullies are good pretenders, they may change their behavior in front of adults.

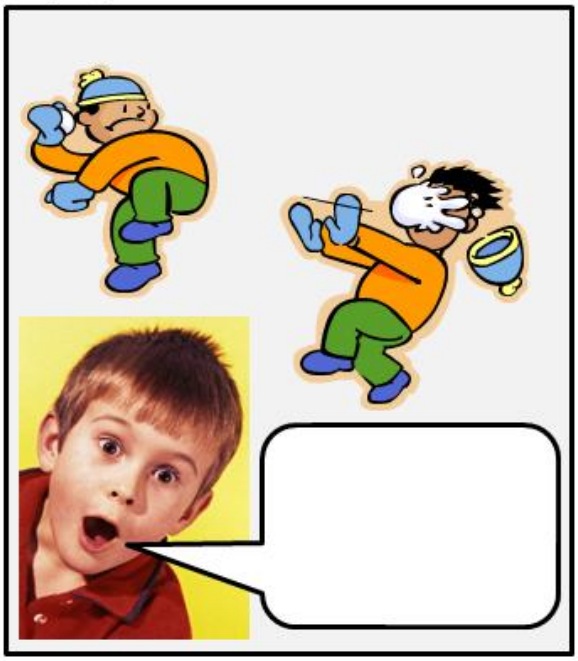
Bullies tend to focus on certain individuals. Don't let them crack you!

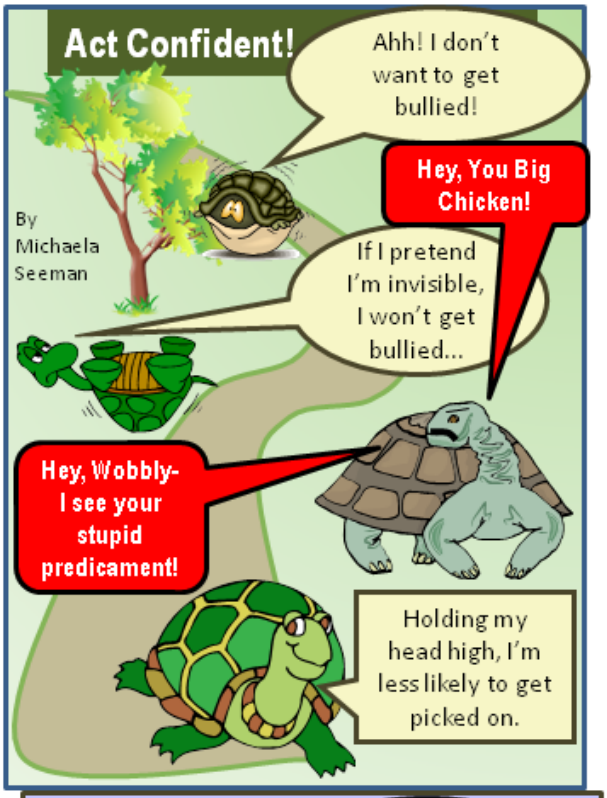
A child identified as a bully by age eight is six times more likely to be convicted of a crime by age twenty-four.

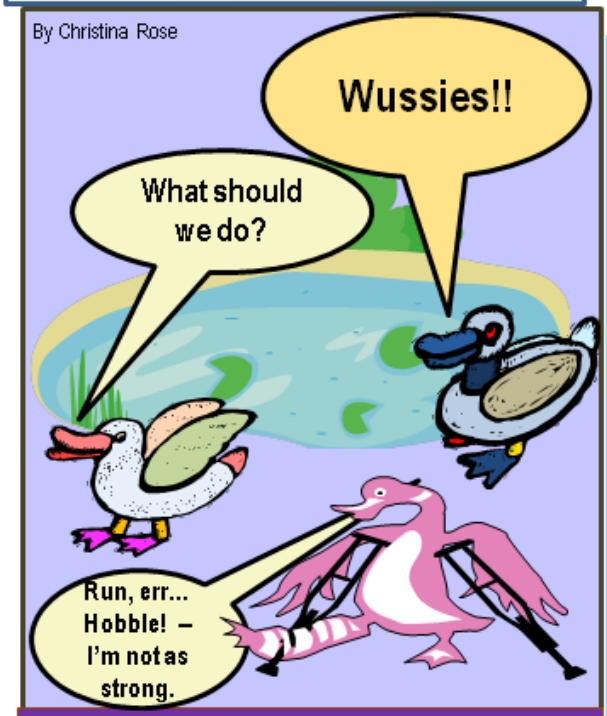
In 85% of bullying cases there is no intervention, even if the act was witnessed.. .

Complete these cartoons to tell causes or consequences of bullying.

Make your own cartoon about bullying here.

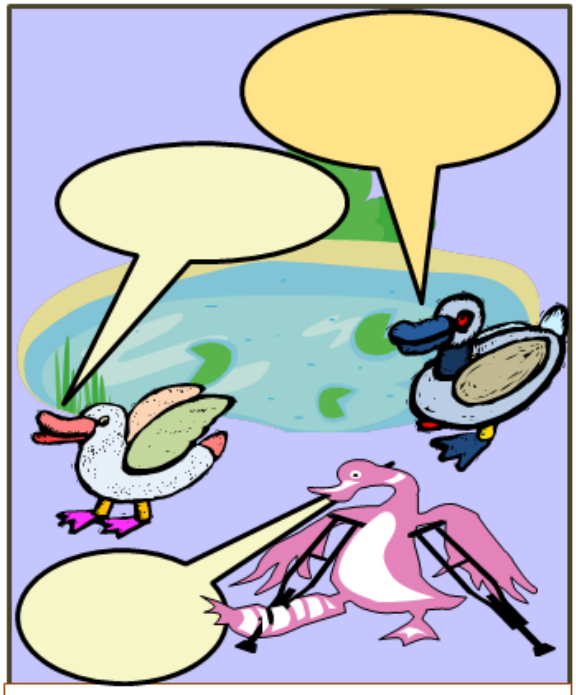






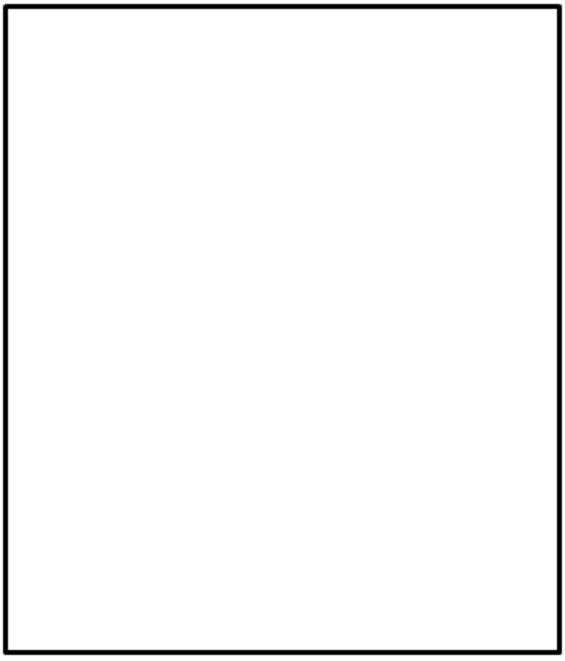
Victims tend to be weaker than their peers.

The most effective strategies to stop bullying involve the entire school as a community to change the climate of the school.



Complete these cartoons to tell ways to stop bullying.

Make your own cartoon about bullying here.



Grades 5-6
Cartoon Materials

Lesson 1 Uses the first 2 pages and focuses on defining and recognizing bullying:

Provide examples of bullying;

Discuss different kinds of bullying;

Contrast bullying with good friendship skills.

Lesson 2 Uses the next two pages and focuses on understanding bullying behavior.

Discuss causes/reasons for bullying;

Discuss possible consequences for the bully;

Explore short term and long term consequences for the person who is bullied;

Identify situations where bullying is more likely to occur;

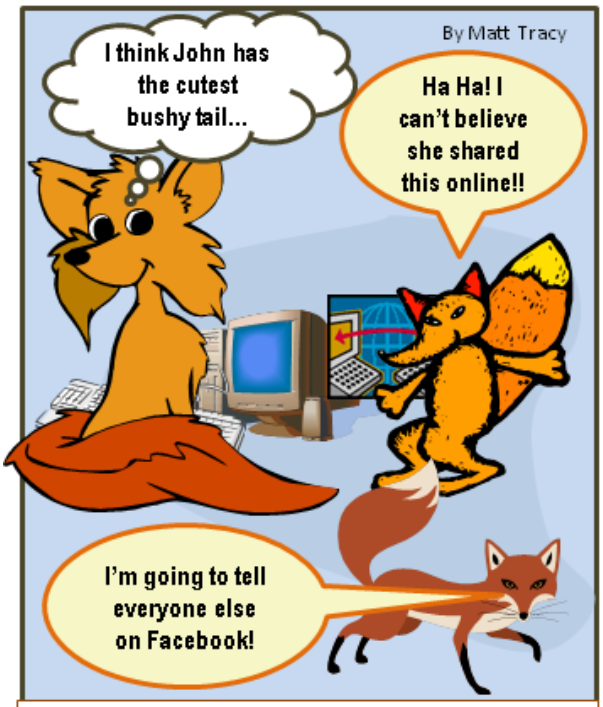
Explain why bullying continues and persists.

Lesson 3 uses the next two slides and focuses on strategies for responding to bullying.

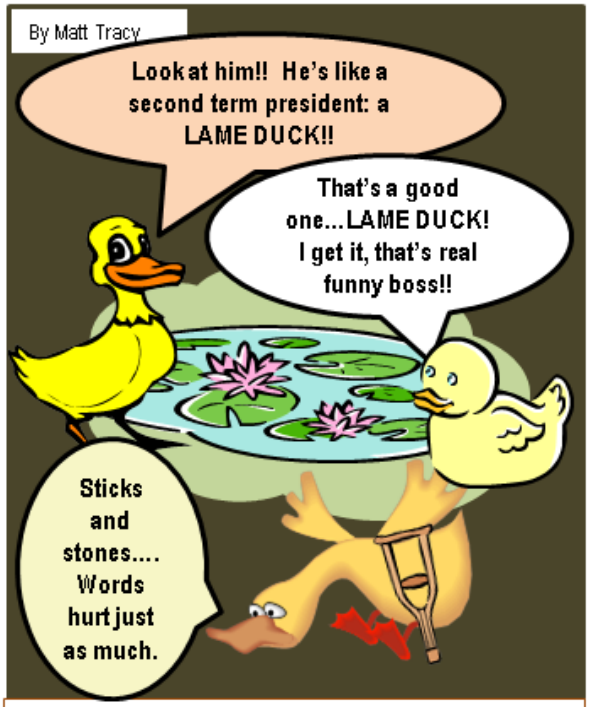
Discuss the best way to respond when you are being bullied;

Discuss what to do when witnessing someone being bullied;

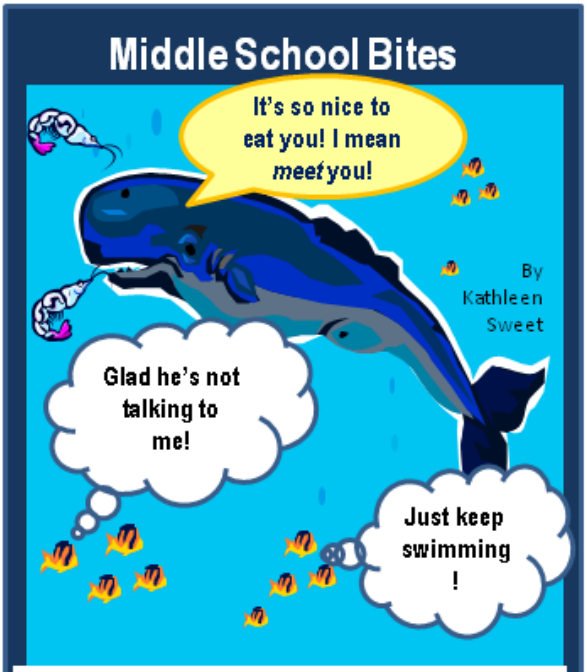
Discuss what to do if you realize you have been a bully yourself.



Bullying is not only face to face; in this digital world, there is also online bullying.

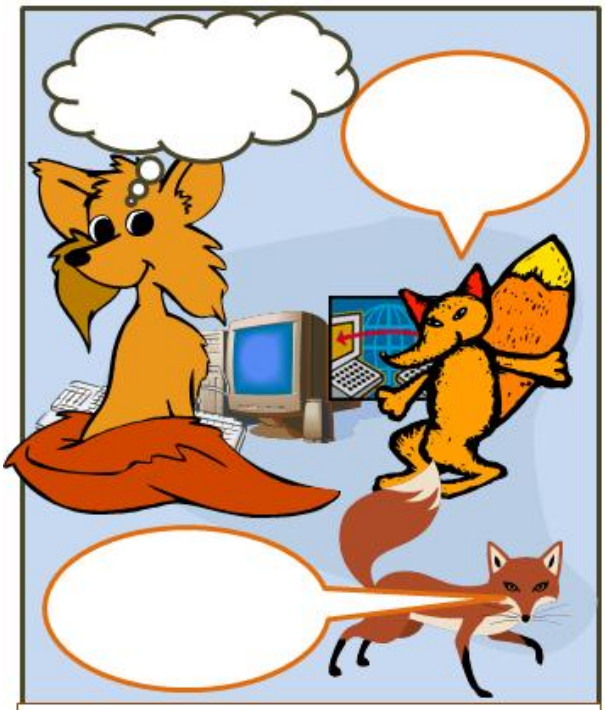


LANGUAGE matters. What we say can and does have an effect on someone else and we need to be cognizant of that.



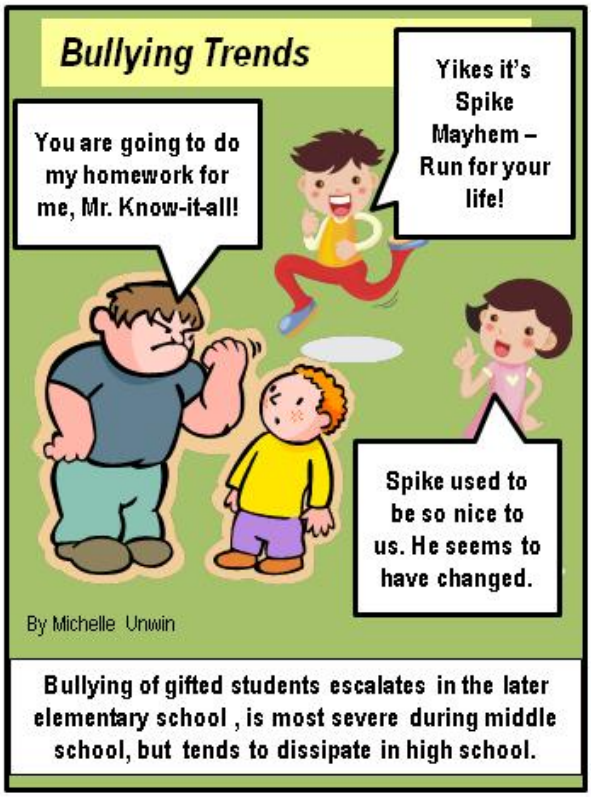
19 % of students reported having been bullied. Bullying occurs most frequently from sixth to eighth grade.

Each day, more than **160,000 students** don't go to school because they are **afraid**.

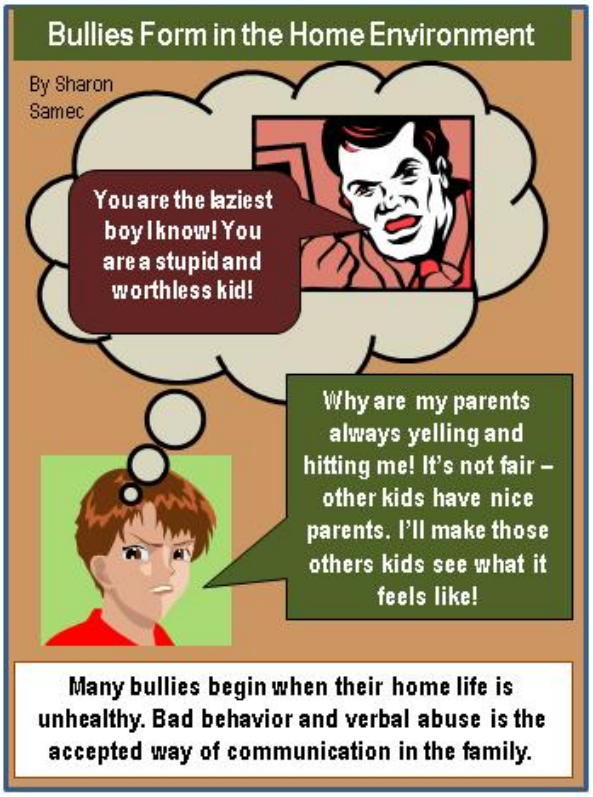


Complete these cartoons to define and explain bullying.

Make your own cartoon about bullying here.



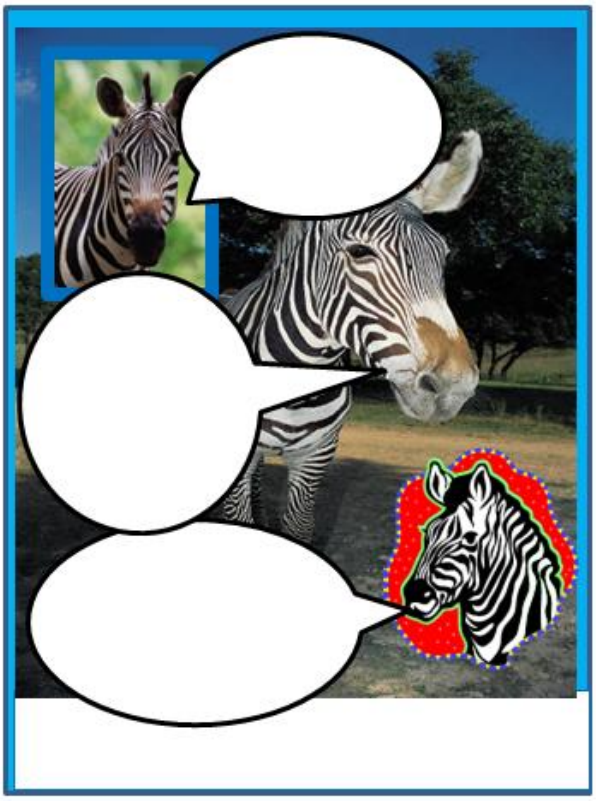
Bullying of gifted students escalates in the later elementary school , is most severe during middle school, but tends to dissipate in high school.



Many bullies begin when their home life is unhealthy. Bad behavior and verbal abuse is the accepted way of communication in the family.

Nearly a third of all students ages 12-18 reported being bullied in school in 2007.

Girls are more covert when bullying, while boys are more overt.



Complete these cartoons to tell causes or consequences of bullying.

Make your own cartoon about bullying here.

"Purr"fect Self-confident Body Language

By Julie Klein

Kids who appear self-confident are less likely to be the targets of bullies.

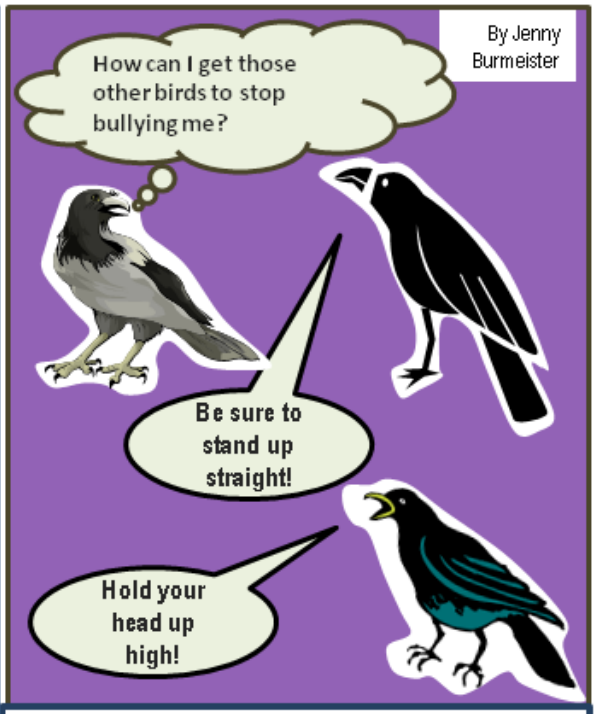
Be the middle of the target that stops everything from continuing.

By Laura Meyer

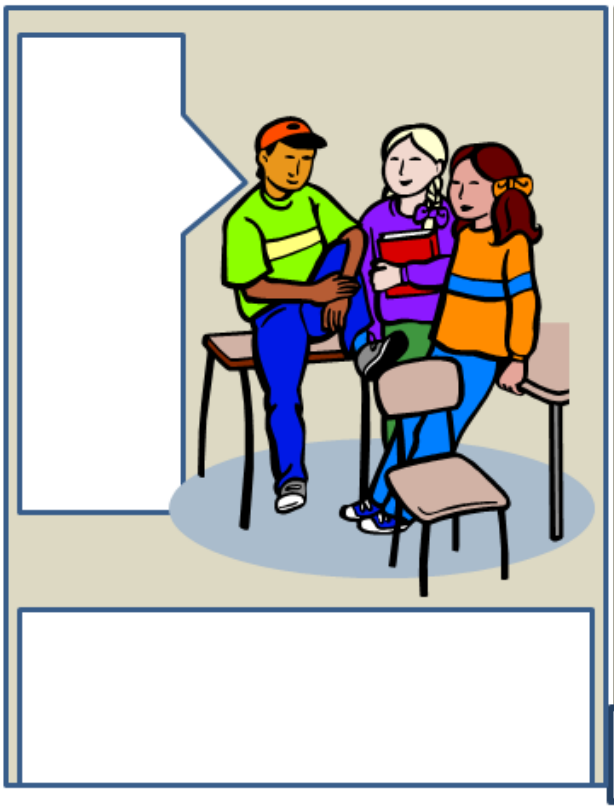
Ongoing Behavior: Bullying goes on and on and on until someone stops the cycle. It takes a brave person to do this.

By Pam Carolus

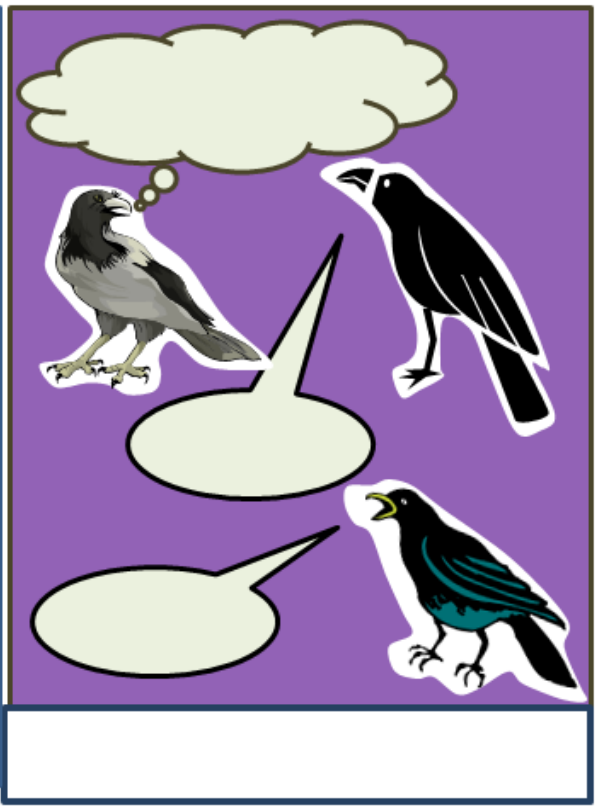
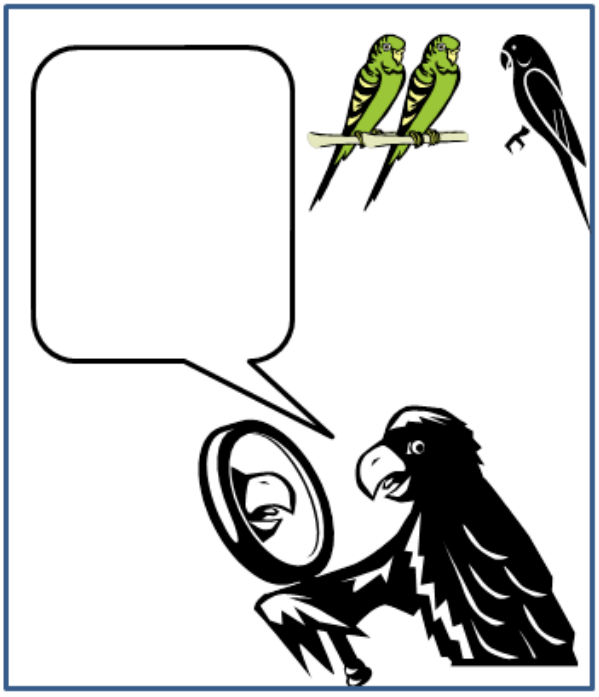
One way to stop a bully is to stand up to him or her. Helping others in a bullying situation reduces the success of the bully.



Confident body language can help deter a bully.



Complete these cartoons to tell ways to stop bullying.



Make your own cartoon about bullying here.