Unit Overview
Thanks to our ever-increasing access to high-speed Internet, today’s teens are constantly tuned in to news feeds about current events, popular culture, and their social lives. Youth worldwide are using digital and social media to collaborate, communicate and unite. Today's teens use digital media to:

- Share personal updates and political views through social media
- Organize community events and weekend dates
- Catch up on their favorite TV shows, or stream movies
- Work together toward common goals in online gaming worlds

Many teens need help navigating the digital world to make sure that these powerful new tools are used responsibly and ethically. Digital interaction often takes place under a cloak of anonymity. While this empowers teens to express themselves more freely, it also makes it easier for them to engage in cyberbullying, online cruelty, and hate speech. Through the Connected Culture unit, students learn how to respect others when using digital and social media: de-escalating online cruelty, avoiding sexting and other forms of risky self-disclosure and fostering positive online communities. When teens take time to consider the different motivations that drive their digital interactions, they begin to connect with the digital world in constructive and promising ways.

Slide 1
- **Ask students: How do you stay connected with your culture?** (They might respond...Facebook, texting, IM, etc...)

Slide 2: Read the objectives of this unit

Slide 3
- **Ask students: What is social media?** (They might respond...Online communications that promote user interaction, feedback, and content sharing)
- **Ask students: How do these technologies fostered online community?** (They might respond...They allow postings, tags, forums, videos, etc... from people that you want to be in contact with.)

Slide 4
- **Ask students: Social media is designed to foster positive communities by allowing individuals to get involved, feel welcome and share interests. Although social media is designed to connect people, can it sometimes break down a community? How?**
  - Encourage students to think about what might happen if these sites were full of negative, disrespectful, or inaccurate content...Would fewer people want to interact?
  - Discuss how some of this content is inevitable on a site where people are mostly free to post whatever they want. And that it takes both the USERS and the WEBSITE to foster a positive community.

Slide 5 and 6
- Watch the two videos on Cyberbullying
- **Ask students: Do you say things online that you would not say in person? Have you ever encountered online cruelty? How did you/do you...**

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think it makes someone feel? (Students might respond...upset, hurt, angry, alone, trapped, etc...)
- Explain to students that targets of online cruelty may feel that they can be bombarded with negative comments at any time, anywhere. When more offenders join in the online cruelty, the situation gets even worse.

Slide 7
- Watch video on Overexposed
- **Ask: Do you think this happens?** Students can share stories. (do not reveal names)
- **Say:** Remember when you are using Skype, FaceTime, or video chat people can capture images or videos without your knowledge.

Slide 8
- **Ask students:**
  - How many of you use email? Do you use formal or informal tone?
  - Go over the email etiquette rules with the students
  - Explain to them that when you are sending or responding to an email, you must always take into account your audience.

Slide 9
- **Ask students:** What is wrong with this email?
  - **Informal**
    An email to your professor isn't like posting something on your friend's Facebook wall; different communication contexts carry different expectations. Your message should be formal. It should open with a salutation ("Dear Professor Smith") and close with a proper signature ("Best, Kate" or "Thanks in advance, Jacob"). The rules of grammar, spelling and capitalization all apply. There should be a clear subject line that should be appropriate to the content of the email (otherwise, your professor may reject your email as spam).
  - **Inappropriate**
    The email shown here is wholly inappropriate for student-professor correspondence. There's a halfhearted attempt at an apology and a thinly veiled reference to being hung-over on the day of class. Here, as with any communication, it's important to analyze your audience. There are some things you can say to your friends that you shouldn't say to your professor. Review your draft before you send it; if you think you've written something that you think might offend your audience, take it out!
  - **Demanding**
    Many professors complain that student emails are becoming increasingly pushy in tone. Recipients of poor grades send nasty notes, absent students demand teaching notes, and many students send more than ten emails a day, expecting their professors to be available around the clock. This is partly due to the fact that the impersonality of email makes it easier to act rudely; students are demanding things via email that they wouldn't have the gall to demand in face-to-face interactions.

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