

Classroom Activity

Impact Chain - Secondary School Activity

Objective

To help pupils understand how words (positive or negative) can create ripple effects that impact individuals, relationships and wider communities - both online and offline.

Pupils explore a scenario (e.g. online comment; compliment in class; public message) real, or fictional, and map the potential ripple effects on themselves, their relationships and mental health.

Time

15-20 minutes + reflection time

Age Group

KS3/4

Example Scenario

Scenario A (negative):

- A pupil posts a hurtful comment on a group chat: 'You're so weird, no one likes you.'
- **Impact Chain:** The person feels embarrassed > stops engaging online > confidence drops in class > feels isolated from friends

Scenario B (positive):

- A pupil says to a classmate: 'You were brilliant in that presentation'.
- **Impact Chain:** The person feels proud > volunteers more in lessons > grows in confidence > inspires others to try

Instructions:



1. Divide pupils into small groups (3-5)
2. Give each group a scenario card (you can provide a mix of positive/negative examples)
 - Possible scenarios:
 - A pupil compliments another's artwork in class
 - A rumour is spread about someone on social media
 - A teacher praises a group for teamwork
 - A classmate rudely tells someone to 'shut up' during a discussion
 - A friend sends a supportive message before an exam
3. Draw a simple chain or ripple diagram on large paper (or mini-whiteboards)
4. Start with the original word/comment/scenario in the centre
5. Add the first impact (how the person feels immediately)
6. Keep adding further links in the chain - what might happen next, and next?
 - Encourage groups to think 3-4 steps ahead
7. Use arrows to show the direction of impacts (they can branch out if needed)

Sharing:

- Groups stick their chains to the wall, or share verbally
 - Teacher highlights:
 - Negative words often spiral into wider harm
 - Positive words often ripple into more opportunities and confidence
 - Everyone has the power to start a positive chain!
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Reflection:



- Quick discussion questions:
 - “What surprised you about the impact chains?”
 - “Which chain felt most powerful - positive or negative? Why?”
 - “How might this change the way you choose your words?”

Optional Extension:

- Pupils write their own ‘chain starter’ - a positive word or phrase they want to use this week that could spark a positive ripple.
 - Display these in class or combine with the school’s speech bubble activity
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