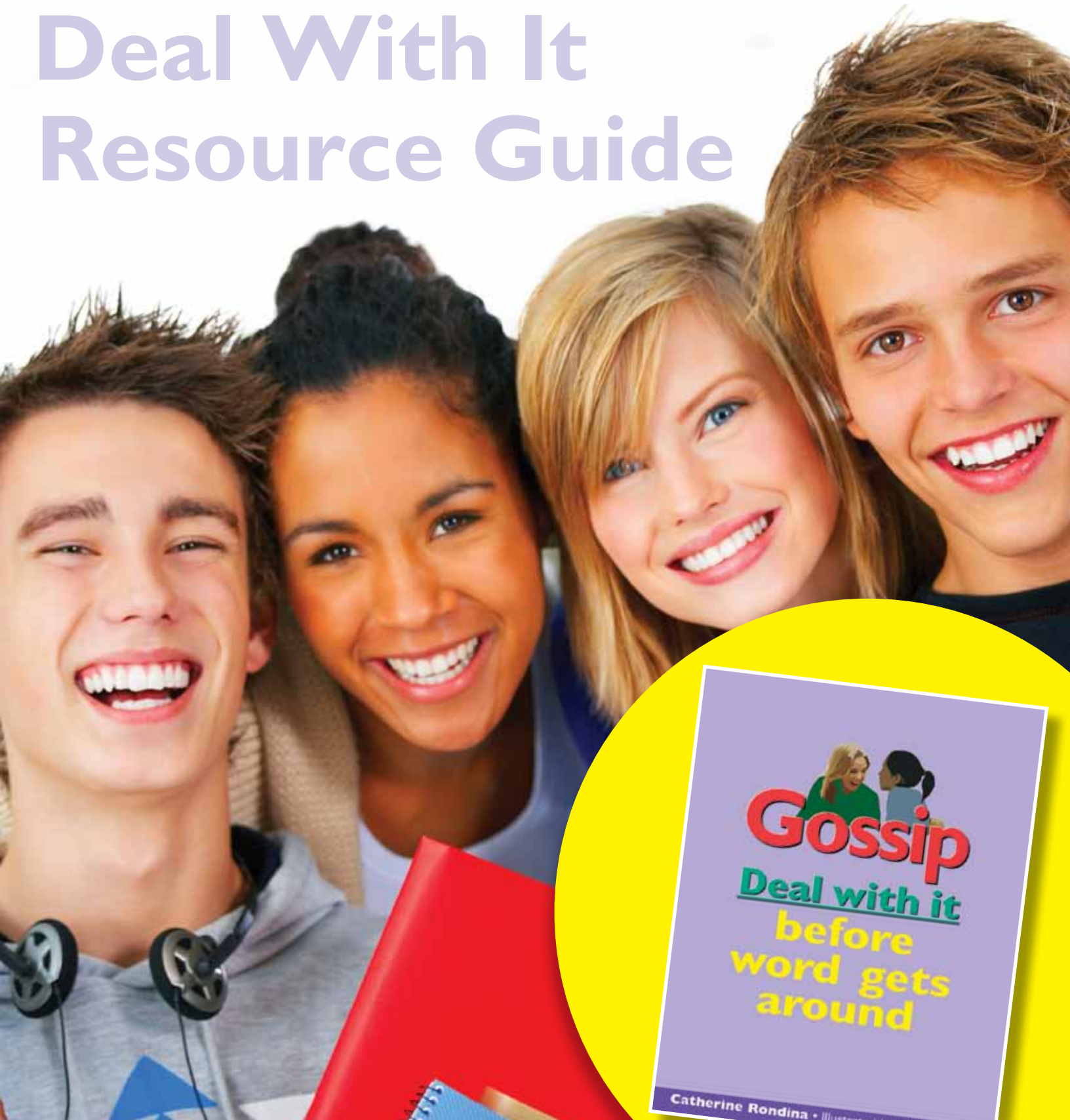


# Gossip: Deal With It Resource Guide



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# How to Use this Guide

This guide offers a number of informative and enjoyable discussion questions and teaching activities that allow for in-depth coverage of the causes of conflict from several angles.

## Guide Map

This guide begins on page 3 with an introduction to the issue covered in the Deal With It book. Please be sure to read the **Before You Begin** section, which provides suggestions to help you consider the specific needs and interests of your class. It also outlines any particular scenarios presented in the Deal With It book that may be sensitive to some students.

The pages that follow correspond with the sections of the Deal With It book.

## These sections are:

- A **101** section that introduces readers to a subject (See page 4 of this guide)
- An **Instigator** section that focuses on the person who instigates the conflict (See page 6 of this guide)
- A **Target** section that focuses on the person who feels victimized in the conflict (See page 8 of this guide)
- A **Witness** section with tips for those caught in between (See page 10 of this guide)

## For each of these sections, you will find:

**Highlights** that briefly capture the main points from the Deal With It book, which you will want to review with students.

**Discussion Questions** that are designed to introduce students to the topics and encourage them to think critically about the topics at hand.

**Teaching Activities** that correspond to page numbers in the Deal With It book, and are designated as activities for Individuals (I), Pairs (P), or Groups (G).

## About the Series

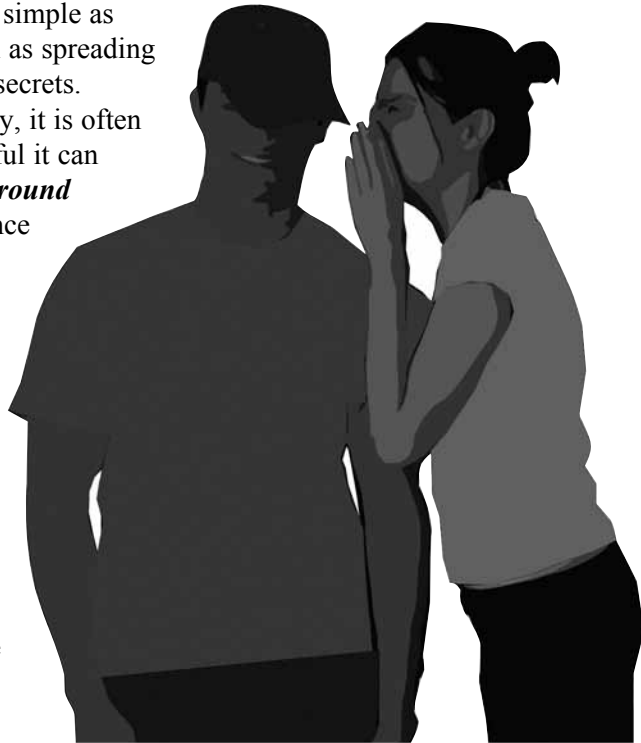
The **Deal With It** series is a set of 32-page books that empower **kids ages 9–12** to resolve conflict in their lives. Information is presented in an interactive and graphic style to engage readers and help spark discussion of issues. The information in this **Resource Guide** is intended to help educators plan lessons around conflict resolution using the **Deal With It** books.



## Gossip: Deal with it before word gets round

People spread gossip everyday. It can be as simple as dishing the latest on celebrities or as hurtful as spreading a nasty rumour or someone else's personal secrets. Because gossip is so pervasive in our society, it is often difficult for adolescents to know how harmful it can be. ***Gossip: Deal with it before word gets around*** was created to help students tell the difference between sharing information and gossiping and to give them suggestions on how to deal with gossip before it gets out of hand.

In this resource guide to ***Gossip***, teachers are given a range of discussion questions and activities to help students transfer the skills they learn in the classroom to their own lives. To get the most out of your class discussions and activities, it is important to create an open atmosphere and a positive classroom community where students feel comfortable sharing their experiences and opinions.



### Before You Begin

Here are some tips and suggestions to help plan your Gossip unit:

- Gather as much material as you can about gossip, including ***Gossip: Deal with it before word gets around*** (see More Help on page 32 for a listing of materials).
- Decide on the scope of your study, depending on the grade level you teach and the needs of your students.
- Display books for children on this topic. In addition, prepare a bulletin board for posters, pictures and, as the theme develops, your students' work.
- Decide on the amount of time that you plan to spend on this theme.
- Have students brainstorm a list of emotions that they have felt because of gossiping and post the words on the bulletin or on a poster in the classroom. At the end of the unit, ask students to brainstorm a list of words that describe feelings that they have when they handle gossip well.
- Be aware that some of the subject matter covered in the book and resource guide may not be suitable for all students. Carefully review the content and be aware of any sensitivity before presenting it in your classroom.

# Gossip 101

## Highlights

- Gossip is talking or spreading rumours about someone else. It can range from talking about people because we care or are concerned about them, to sharing a good story, to digging up and spreading nasty information about them.
- Rumours and gossip can include:
  - ☛ speculation
  - ☛ secrets
  - ☛ slander
  - ☛ insinuation
- Gossip can be started by:
  - ☛ telling someone else's secret
  - ☛ making up a story or lying about someone
  - ☛ criticizing people behind their backs
  - ☛ sharing news that may not be true
  - ☛ starting or spreading a rumour
  - ☛ guessing something might happen and telling people it already has
- Gossip can happen to anybody anywhere: at school, in the workplace, and at home. It is important to think about what you say about other people to make sure that you are not causing harm with your words.

## Discussion Questions

- How would you define gossip? What are some of the reasons why people might gossip? How is gossip different from talking to a mutual friend about someone you care about? Explain your thinking.
- Have you ever participated in gossip at your school? How did it make you feel? How do you think the target of the gossip would feel if he or she knew about it? Did this gossip have consequences for the people who were spreading it or the person they were gossiping about?
- What do you do when you hear gossip about someone? Do you tell the story to someone else or do you ignore what you heard? Does it depend on the people and the story involved? Explain your thinking?
- Do you think adults are affected by gossip as much or more than children? Why or why not?
- What role do the media play in encouraging gossip? Have you ever visited celebrity gossip Web sites or watched entertainment TV shows? Why do you think so many people are interested in the lives of celebrities?
- What might some of the negative effects of gossip be on the person being talked about? What negative effects might gossip have on the person spreading it?
- How could you let a Gossiper know you weren't interested in hearing the rumours without offending or hurting them? How else might you deal with gossip in a positive way?

# Teaching Activities

I = Individual      P = Pair      G = Group

Section	Subject Area	Activities
pp. 2–5	Language Arts/ Guidance and Career Education (G)	Have students demonstrate how a story can be distorted as it is passed around by having them play a game. Tell one student a story and have him or her whisper it to another student. Continue this until the story has made its way through all the students. Ask the last person to hear the story to repeat it to the entire class and discuss how stories can become distorted as they are passed between people.
pp. 2–5	Media Literacy/ Social Studies (G)	Have students visit the PBS Kids website ( <a href="http://pbskids.org/itsmylife/quiz/rumors.html">http://pbskids.org/itsmylife/quiz/rumors.html</a> ) and take the Raging Rumours quiz. As a class, discuss the reasons given for some of these rumours being so enduring: fear and the “yuck factor.” Have students share their thoughts on why some urban legends stick around so long they are taken as fact and the influence of the Internet on spreading gossip.
pp. 6–7	Language Arts (G)	Write the headings “Speculation,” “Secrets,” “Slander,” and “Insinuation” on four sheets of chart paper and post them around the room. Divide the class into groups and have each group write an example of gossip under each heading. Discuss the examples given as a class and brainstorm ways to deal with each example in a positive way.
pp. 8–9	The Arts (drama) (G)	Working in small groups, have students choose a question from the quiz and role-play a positive solution to the problem. When each group is finished, discuss the situation and solution as a class, asking for other ways they might bring the situation to a positive resolution.
pp. 8–9	Language Arts/ Media Literacy (I)	Create a class blog for students to share their thoughts and ideas about gossip. Encourage them to discuss topics they address in class as well as examples of gossip they see in the media. Remind students that this is a forum for them to use to help them deal with gossip in a positive way and not a place for them to spread their own gossip.
pp. 10–11	Language Arts/ Social Studies (I/G)	Divide the class into two groups to debate the statement: “Girls gossip, boys don’t.” Allow each group time to research and prepare their arguments. Conduct the debate (you may wish to invite another class to moderate and judge the debate). After the conclusion, discuss how students might combat this and the other myths given about gossiping.
pp. 12–13	Language Arts/ Guidance and Career Education (I)	Ask students to write a recipe for gossip. Encourage them to think about what gossip is and why people might gossip. Have them include a list of ingredients and instructions on how to make gossip really juicy. Ask them to include a description of what their recipe will yield, including the negative consequences. Gather the recipes into a class Gossip Cookbook and use it as a reference for examples of gossip’s negative effects.



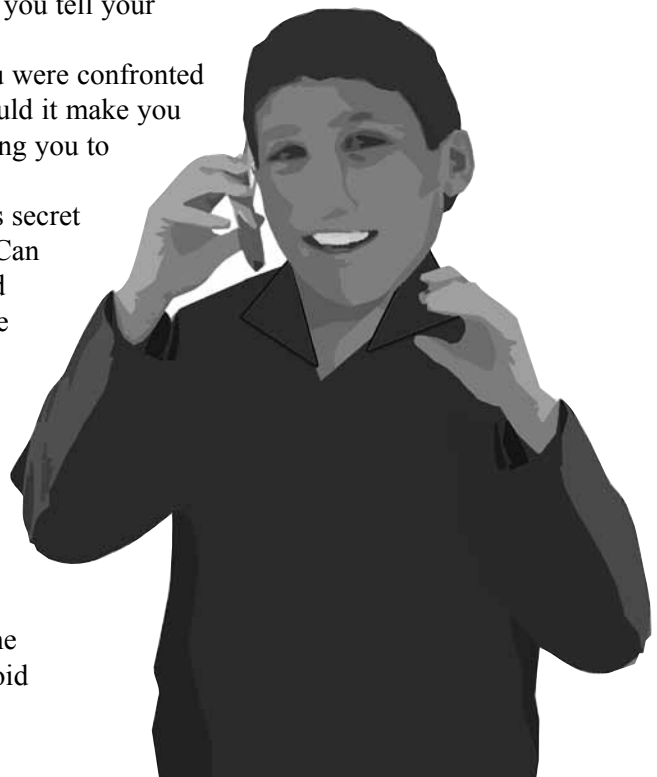
# The Gossiper

## Highlights

- Gossipers are people who love to be the first to know all the gossip. When they hear something really juicy about someone, even if they're not sure it's true, they itch to tell someone else.
- The Gossiper might not think there is any harm in telling his or her friends the rumours going around.
- You can help stop the spread of gossip by:
  - ☛ avoiding people who gossip and letting them know you aren't interested in their rumours
  - ☛ thinking before you speak. Question who the information might harm, why this rumour is being spread, why you would want to pass this information on, if this gossip will hurt someone else, and would the person be hurt if they knew what was being said about them
  - ☛ putting a stop to rumours and harmful gossip by refusing to pass it on
  - ☛ respecting other people's privacy
  - ☛ not listening to gossip that is mean or harmful
  - ☛ standing up to gossip bullies by telling them you think it is wrong to use their words to try to hurt others

## Discussion Questions

- Do you like to hear a good story about someone even if it is gossip? How does hearing or spreading gossip make you feel? Why do you think gossip gives you these feelings?
- Do you know someone who passes on information even though he or she knows it may hurt someone? How might you encourage someone not to gossip without hurting their feelings?
- Have you ever heard gossip about one of your friends? How did it make you feel? How did you respond to it? Did you tell your friend? Why or why not?
- Imagine that you were spreading gossip and you were confronted about the rumour you were spreading? How would it make you feel? How would you feel about the person asking you to stop spreading gossip?
- Do you think it is all right to tell someone else's secret if you think it is good news? Why or why not? Can you think of a situation in which spreading good information about someone would get you or the other person into trouble?
- Imagine that one of the popular groups at school likes to gossip about people outside of their group. Do you think that this would be a good group to join? Would you join in on gossip to be popular? How might you deal with this group in a positive way?
- How can you tell if information you hear is gossip or not? What are the signs that someone is gossiping? How could you make sure you avoid gossiping about others?



# Teacher Activities

I = Individual

P = Pair

G = Group

Section	Subject Area	Activities
pp. 14–15	Language Arts/ Guidance and Career Education (G)	Have students work in small groups to read and discuss the “Dear Dr. Shrink-Wrapped” letters and responses. Encourage them to discuss why their responses might be different than those given. Using this as a starting point, have students create a Top Ten Tips list of ways to deal with gossip in a positive way. Compile the lists into a class book or have students present their tips to younger students.
pp. 14–15	Language Arts/ Guidance and Career Education (G)	As a class, have students draft a pact to cut down on gossiping. Ask them to write out the goals of the pact and the steps they will take to help each other curb the amount of gossip they spread. Encourage all students to sign the pact and display it in the classroom. Check in with students periodically to see if they are following the pact and which of their behaviours they are finding most difficult to curb.
pp. 16–17	Language Arts/ The Arts (drama) (G)	Divide students into small groups and ask them to play charades using the situations found in the quiz. Have each group act out a different situation and ask the rest of the class to guess what they represent. After each group is finished, discuss the positive and negative affects that the situation might have on the people involved.
pp. 16–17	Language Arts (P/G)	Have students work with a partner to read through the quiz and determine which of the categories from p. 6 each statement falls under. Ask volunteers to present their ideas to the class and discuss as a group.
pp. 18–19	Media Literacy/ Social Studies (P)	Have students work in pairs to research news stories about Internet gossip and cyberbullying. Have them write a brief summary of one example and give suggestions on what the people involved might do to resolve the situation in a positive way. Ask volunteers to present their findings to the class.
pp. 18–19	Language Arts/ Media Literacy (G)	Ask students to work in small groups to find out more about a gossip or tabloid magazine, or an entertainment news TV show. Encourage them to find out their format and philosophy, what types of stories they feature, and the stories behind some interesting headlines. Based on their findings, have them create their own magazine or news show devoted to preventing gossip and rumours. Have students present their magazine or show to the class.
pp. 18–19	Language Arts (I)	Have students write a newspaper editorial on the effects of gossip. Encourage them to consider the negative affects gossip might have, how to stop the spread of gossip, and examples to support their argument. Compile the articles into a class paper.

# The Subject

## Highlights

- The Subject is the person who is being gossiped about.
- The Gossiper usually picks a victim who they know others will be interested in chatting about, such as:
  - ☛ popular kids
  - ☛ unpopular kids
  - ☛ smart kids
  - ☛ disadvantaged kids
  - ☛ kids who are different in any way
- If you find yourself the subject of gossip, you can:
  - ☛ investigate the cause to try to find the source and the reason for the gossip
  - ☛ stay cool and don't let the bully get to you
  - ☛ avoid resorting to revenge to solve the conflict
  - ☛ protect your privacy to make sure that your private information stays private
  - ☛ don't gossip about others
  - ☛ keep your good friends close and treat them with respect

## Discussion Questions

- How would you feel if you were the Subject of gossip? What could you do to help protect yourself from gossip? How might you stop gossip once it has started?
- Why do you think someone might pick on people because they are different in some way? How do you think the Gossiper feels when they spread a juicy story about someone else? How do you think the Subject feels?
- Imagine that you heard a member of the popular group gossiping about your best friend. What might you say to the Gossiper? What would you say to your friend?
- What are some ways in which gossip is spread? How could you minimize your chances of becoming the Subject of gossip spread in these ways?
- How might technology be used to spread gossip? How could you use technology to tell people about the negative effects of gossip and encourage them to avoid gossiping?
- Who could you talk to if you were the Subject of gossip? How might they help you?





# Teaching Activities

I = Individual      P = Pair      G = Group

Section	Subject Area	Activities
pp. 20–21	The Arts (visual) (G)	As a class, discuss the “Do’s and Don’ts” section. Have students work in small groups to choose one Do and one Don’t. Ask them to create a poster demonstrating how to use this Do and Don’t to deal with being the Subject of gossip.
pp. 20–21	Language Arts/ Guidance and Career Education (I)	Have students write a journal entry about how they deal with gossip now and how they could deal with gossip in a more positive way. Ask them to include three steps that they will take to help them achieve their goal.
pp. 22–23	Language Arts (G)	As a class, review the letters to Dr. Shrink-Wrapped and discuss the responses. Have students write their own anonymous letter asking for advice on dealing with gossip. Collect the letters and redistribute them. Have students write a helpful response to the letter they receive. Gather all the letters and responses together in a class scrapbook.
pp. 22–23	Language Arts/ Media Literacy (G)	As a class, discuss the ways that technology can help spread gossip faster than word of mouth. Then, discuss ways that students can help protect themselves from gossip spread using technology. Have students create a brochure for younger students, warning them about the hazards of Internet gossip and cyberbullying and giving them tips on how they can protect themselves.
pp. 24–25	The Arts (drama) (G)	Have students work in small groups to role-play one of the ways they can deal with being the Subject of gossip. When each group has presented, ask students to suggest ways they can incorporate these tips into their own lives.
pp. 24–25	Language Arts/ Media Literacy (G)	Have students work in small groups to find a scene in a movie or TV shows that deals with gossip. Ask students to rewrite the scene so that the characters deal with gossip in a positive way following suggestions given in this book. Students can create a storyboard for their scene or act it out for the class.

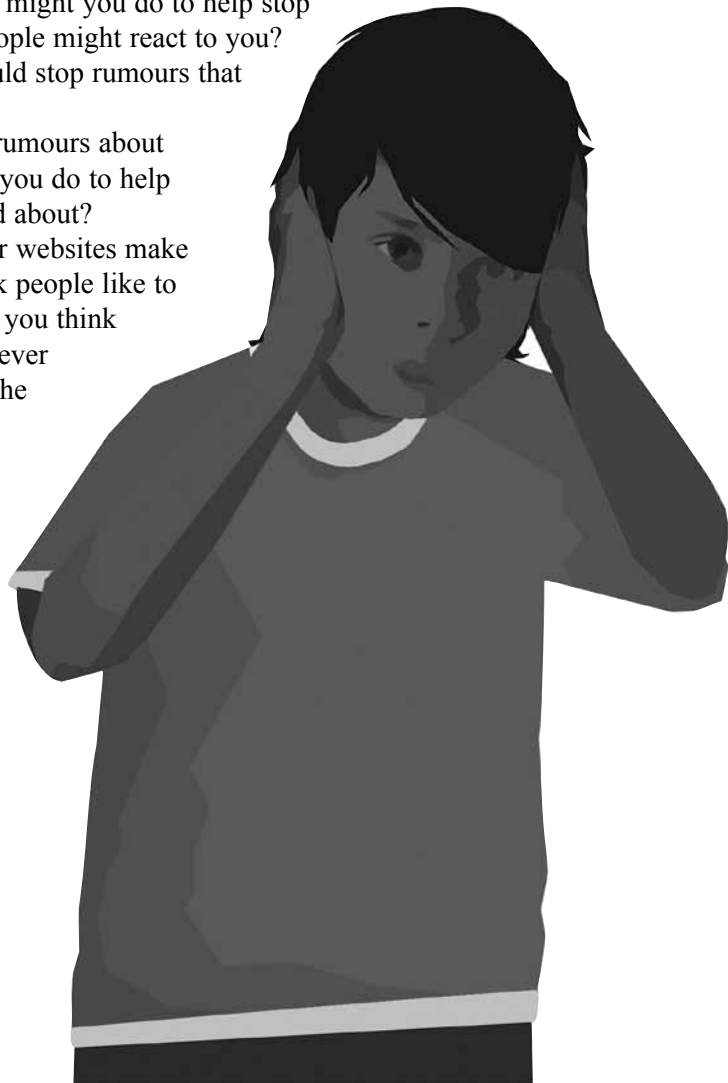
# The Witness

## Highlights

- The Witness is a person who hears gossip. He or she might not know if what they have heard is true or what to do with the information.
- When you witness gossip, you have can chose to:
  - ☛ spread the stories you have heard and propagate the gossip
  - ☛ tell your friends to stop gossiping until they know what really happened.
  - ☛ find out what really happened and get the facts straight
  - ☛ ignore the gossip and rumours

## Discussion Questions

- Have you ever been around when someone told a story about another person? What did you do? How did it make you feel?
- Have you ever stood up to someone spreading gossip? What happened? How did you feel?
- Imagine that a new student comes to your school and people start gossiping about him and what happened at his old school. How do you think that might make the new student feel? What might you do to help stop the gossip? How do you think people might react to you?
- What are some ways that you could stop rumours that you hear?
- How do you feel when you hear rumours about someone you know? What could you do to help support the person being gossiped about?
- Does reading gossip magazines or websites make you a Witness? Why do you think people like to read gossip about celebrities? Do you think that these magazines or websites ever go too far? What might some of the consequences be for the celebrity involved or for the magazine or website?



# Teaching Activities

I = Individual      P = Pair      G = Group

Section	Subject Area	Activities
pp. 26–27	Language Arts/ Guidance and Career Education (G)	Have students draft an agreement with their friends and family members to deal with gossip in a positive way. Ask them to include tips on how to avoid gossiping. Encourage them to get as many friends and family members as they can to sign the pact to stop gossiping.
pp. 26–27	Language Arts/ Guidance and Career Education (G)	Have students work in groups of five to prepare a presentation about gossiping for a younger class. Encourage them to create games or skits that would appeal to younger students. Ask groups to perform their presentations for the class for feedback and then present them to a younger class.
pp. 28–31	Mathematics (G)	Using the quizzes in this book as a guide, have students create a survey to find out how their peers feel about and deal with gossip. Encourage them to think about what questions they can ask to find out how students deal with gossip and what kind of initiatives they think might work to help reduce gossip in your school. Have students conduct their surveys and record their results. Ask them to present their findings and discuss them as a class.
pp. 28–31	Language Arts/ Guidance and Career Education (I)	Have students write a persuasive letter to their principal encouraging him or her to help stop gossip in your school. Encourage students to include at least three reasons why they think the principal should try to reduce gossip and suggest one or two ideas on what could be done. Have students peer edit their classmates' letters and then submit them to the principal.
pp. 28–31	Guidance and Career Education (I/G)	Have students write three things that they want to make sure they do when they find themselves Witnesses to gossip. Encourage students to keep their lists handy and try to implement them. Revisit the lists occasionally throughout the year to see if students are implementing their changes, how they feel about gossip, and how people react to them when they avoid gossiping.

## Additional Resources

- [www.bullyboy.ca](http://www.bullyboy.ca): The Misadventures of Bully Boy & Gossip Girl website offers sections for teachers and kids.
- <http://pbskids.org/itsmylife/quiz/rumors.html>: The PBS Kids website includes a gossip quiz.

### About the Author of this Guide:

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