Activity 3: Computer Rules Committee

Designing Fair Policies for School Technology (Grades 3-5)

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> **❗ Teacher Overview**
>
> Students form a "Computer Rules Committee" to design policies for a new school safety system. They wrestle with real trade-offs: helpful technology vs. privacy, automatic responses vs. human judgment, keeping everyone safe vs. trusting students. AI participates by explaining what it can and can't do.
>
> **Duration**: 35-40 minutes **Grade Levels**: 3-5 **Group Size**: Small groups (3-4) or whole class **Technology**: Teacher device for AI consultation (student devices optional)

Learning Goals

Students will:

- Design rules that balance **safety** with **fairness**
- Consider how **different people** might feel about technology rules
- Understand that **someone has to decide** what computers do automatically
- Practice **group decision-making** about technology

CYBER.org Standards Alignment (3-5)

- **3-5.DC.ETH**: Technology ethics and responsibility
- **3-5.DC.PRI**: Privacy concepts
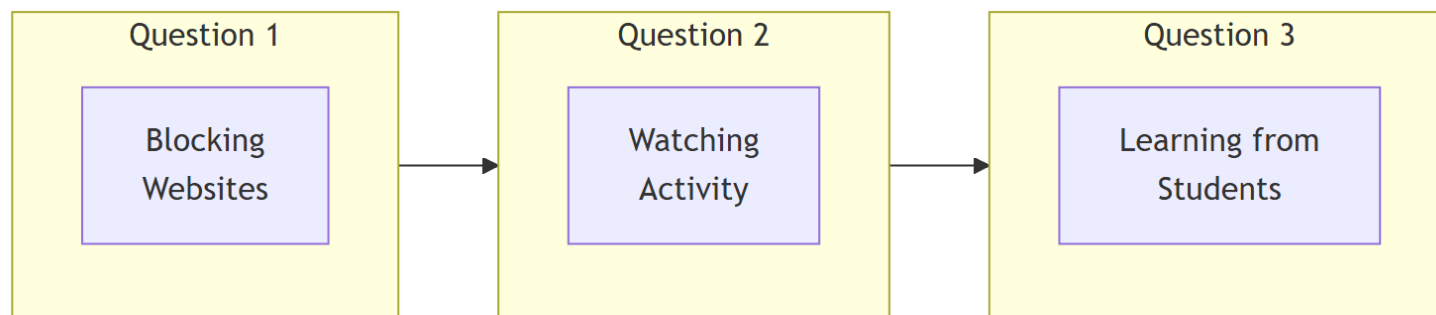- **3-5.DC.CIT**: Digital citizenship

The Scenario

Welcome to the Computer Rules Committee!

Background: Your school is getting a new computer system called "SchoolGuard" that helps keep students safe online. But before it starts working, the principal wants STUDENTS to help decide the rules!

What SchoolGuard Can Do: - See what websites students visit on school computers - Block websites it thinks are dangerous - Send alerts to teachers about student activity - Learn what's "normal" for your school and flag unusual things

Your Job: Decide what SchoolGuard should do automatically, what it should ask about, and what it shouldn't do at all.

The Policy Questions

Question 1	Question 2	Question 3
Blocking Websites	Watching Activity	Learning from Students

Policy Committee Process

Question 1: Blocking Websites

The situation: SchoolGuard can automatically block websites it thinks are dangerous or inappropriate.

But consider: - What if it blocks a website you need for a project? - What if it thinks a game site is "dangerous" but it's actually educational? - Should students be able to ask for sites to be unblocked?

Options:

Option A	Option B	Option C
Block everything SchoolGuard thinks is bad	Block dangerous sites, but let students request unblocks	Only block if a teacher agrees

Your committee's decision: _____

Why we chose this: _____

Question 2: Watching Student Activity

The situation: SchoolGuard can watch what students do online and tell teachers if something seems wrong.

But consider: - What if a student is researching something personal (like their parents' divorce or a health question)? - What if SchoolGuard misunderstands and thinks something normal is "wrong"? - Would knowing SchoolGuard is watching change how you use the computer?

Options:

Option A	Option B	Option C
SchoolGuard watches everything and alerts teachers automatically	SchoolGuard watches but only alerts teachers for serious safety concerns	SchoolGuard doesn't watch individual students at all

Your committee's decision: _____

Why we chose this: _____

Question 3: Learning from Students

The situation: SchoolGuard can learn what's "normal" at your school and get better at spotting problems.

But consider: - To learn, it has to remember what students do - Is it okay for a computer to remember your activity? - What if SchoolGuard learns something wrong?

Options:

Option A	Option B	Option C
Yes, SchoolGuard should learn and remember	SchoolGuard can learn but must forget after one week	SchoolGuard shouldn't learn about specific students

Your committee's decision: _____

Why we chose this: _____

Ask the AI (10 minutes)

Teacher prompts the AI (or groups take turns):

> "You're SchoolGuard, a school safety system. Students are deciding what rules to give you. For each question, tell us: What are you GOOD at doing? What CAN'T you understand? What do you think is fair?"

Example AI responses to discuss:

On blocking websites: > "I'm good at recognizing known dangerous sites quickly—much faster than a human could check. But I make mistakes with new sites or sites that look suspicious but are actually fine. I once blocked a science website because it had 'chemical' in the name! I think I should be able to block the really dangerous stuff fast, but someone should check my work on the uncertain ones."

On watching students: > "I can spot patterns humans might miss—like if someone is being cyberbullied or looking at worrying content. But I can't understand context. A student researching 'depression' might be doing a health assignment, supporting a friend, or experiencing personal struggles. I honestly can't tell the difference. A human needs to make that judgment."

On learning: > "Learning makes me better at my job. But I understand why that feels uncomfortable—it means I'm remembering what you do. I think you should decide how long I remember things, and you should be able to ask what I know about you."

Consider Different Perspectives

Discuss: How would these people feel about your rules?

Person	What they might think
A shy student who researches private things	
A teacher trying to keep students safe	
A student who was cyberbullied	
A parent who wants their child protected	
A student who values privacy	

Did this change any of your decisions?

Present Your Policies

Each group shares:

1. Our three decisions
2. The hardest choice we made and why
3. One thing SchoolGuard told us that changed our thinking

Reflection Questions

1. **Was it easy or hard to make these rules?** Why?

2. **Did different people in your group want different things?** How did you decide?

3. **Should students get a say in real school technology rules?** Why or why not?

4. **What would happen if SchoolGuard made its own rules?** Would that be okay?

Assessment Rubric

Skill	Beginning (1)	Developing (2)	Strong (3)
Considered trade-offs	Chose without discussing pros/cons	Discussed some trade-offs	Thoughtfully weighed multiple perspectives
Included different viewpoints	Only considered own perspective	Considered 1-2 other perspectives	Considered many different people's needs
Understood AI's role	Didn't consider AI capabilities/limits	Some understanding of AI's role	Clear understanding of what AI can/can't do
Group collaboration	One person decided	Some group discussion	True group decision-making

Assessment Connection

This table shows how activity elements connect to the Human-AI Collaboration Rubric criteria:

Rubric Criterion	Developed Through	Evidence Source
AI Partnership Framing	"Ask the AI" consultation about SchoolGuard's perspective	Student responses to AI perspective sharing
Complementary Strengths	AI explains "What I'm GOOD at" vs. "What I CAN'T understand"	Written "Why we chose this" explanations
AI Limitation Awareness	SchoolGuard acknowledging its own limitations	"One thing SchoolGuard told us that changed our thinking"
Synthesis Quality	Balancing AI capability with human values in policies	Final policy decisions and rationale

Variations

For 3rd Grade

- Do as whole class instead of small groups
- Reduce to 2 policy questions
- Focus on "fair vs. unfair" framing

For 5th Grade

- Let groups design their own additional policy question
- Have groups debate different policy options
- Research real school technology policies

Low-Resource Option

If no AI access, use these printed AI perspective cards:

SchoolGuard says about blocking: "I'm fast but not perfect. I can block bad sites in milliseconds, but I sometimes block good sites by mistake. Last week I blocked a Wikipedia page because it mentioned 'hacking'—but it was about the history of computers! I need humans to check my uncertain decisions."

SchoolGuard says about watching: "I see patterns, not meanings. I might notice a student looking at sad things online, but I can't know if they're sad, researching for class, or helping a friend. Only a human can understand the difference and know what to do."

SchoolGuard says about learning: "Learning from data makes me smarter, but you should decide how much I remember. Some schools have me forget everything each week. Others let me remember longer. There's no perfect answer—you have to decide what feels right for your school."

Teacher Notes

Key Concepts to Reinforce

- **People make the rules for AI** — computers don't decide on their own

- **Trade-offs are real** — more safety might mean less privacy
- **Different people have different needs** — good rules consider everyone
- **AI has limitations** — it can see patterns but not understand meaning

Connections to Real Life

- School content filters that students experience daily
- Parental controls on home devices
- Social media content moderation

Preparation

☐ Decide: small groups or whole class
☐ Test AI access OR prepare perspective cards
☐ Create voting/recording system for decisions
☐ Prepare to facilitate respectful disagreement