

TIME : 20 to 25 minutes

OVERVIEW

Students talk about how viruses can affect their computer, and play a group activity called "The Virus" to demonstrate how viruses spread.

PROGRAM GOAL

Enhance the ability of children to recognize dangers on the Internet.

MATERIALS

- computer lab or computer connected to an LCD projector or television monitor
- "UYN: Don't Open That File" show
- small slips of paper and a pen for "The Virus" game

ACTIVITY

Ask one or two students to remember how they felt the last time they were sick. Then ask the class what they feel like doing when they are sick. *Do you feel like playing soccer and running around all afternoon long? Do you feel like doing your homework and cleaning your room? Do you feel like mowing the lawn? Or do you feel like curling up in bed, taking a long nap interrupted by cartoons or by your parent or guardian bringing you chicken soup?*



INTERNET SAFETY MESSAGE

I will tell a trusted adult if I come across anything that makes me feel scared, uncomfortable, or confused. I will not download anything from anyone without permission from my parents or guardian.

Show "UYN: Don't Open That File."

If a computer virus acts a lot like a human virus, what do you think happens to your computer when it gets a virus? It doesn't work as well; it slows down and sometimes even stops altogether.

It takes a while for a virus to get into our system and the same goes for computer viruses. Sometimes we don't even know how a virus has affected our computer until it has done major damage.

Students play a group activity called, "The Virus." Everyone sits in a circle and the teacher assigns roles anonymously by handing out folded slips of labeled paper to each student at random. One slip says "Baron E-File," one says "Clicky," and the rest say "Computer." The point of the game is different for each role.

The "Baron" looks around the room for "Computers" to infect with their virus. He or she infects different "Computers" by discreetly giving a sign to them, such as a wink. When "Computers" get the sign, they wait for a little while (so it's hard for "Clicky" to spot who signaled them) then exclaim, "My files have been infected!" and double over in sickness as best as they can.

Meanwhile the "Clicky" is scanning the room to see who is doing the infecting. When "Clicky" thinks he or she has caught a "Baron," he or she calls out "I've got you Baron E-File!" If he or she is correct, then he or she wins the game. If not, the "Baron" continues to infect computers unnoticed. The game ends when "Clicky" figures out who the Baron is (either because the Baron isn't sneaky enough or because he or she gives "Clicky" the sign), or when the Baron infects all of the "Computers." The activity is a fun way to demonstrate how quickly a virus can spread before we even know where it is coming from. Play the game as many times as time allows.

For more information about viruses, please visit www.staysafeonline.info, sponsored by the National Cyber Security Alliance.