

DIGITAL DIVIDE

Nabil recently moved to a new country. In his old country, he had limited access to technology and didn't have a computer or smartphone. His new school uses a lot of technology and is considered a 21st-century school. Nabil was a top student, but he has been struggling to adjust to his new life.

Nabil stared at the blank screen. He didn't even want to touch the keyboard. He looked down at the sheet of paper with the assignment on it. "Type an essay on the life cycle." Nabil knew the content and felt like he could write a good essay, but typing was another matter. He thought back to class when he had asked his teacher if he could write it by hand. She immediately dismissed his request, explaining that he needed to upload it to their school site where it would be scanned for plagiarism. Figuring out how to upload the assignment was going to be another obstacle.

Nabil was exhausted and annoyed. At lunch that day, everyone had been texting on their phones. He sat at a crowded table but felt as if he was the only one there. No one had been rude, but they weren't communicating or engaging with him. He felt isolated. One boy, Sam, had asked for his number so they could hang out, but Nabil didn't have a cell phone yet. He gave Sam his landline number and said that he could call the family home phone, but it didn't receive texts. Sam had given him a strange look. Nabil knew Sam wasn't ever going to call him.

Nabil's mother had suggested he take computer classes, but when he went to the first class, he was surrounded by 5-year-olds and 70-year-olds. He was mortified and told his mother he couldn't go back.

Nabil started to type his name at the top of the document. It autocorrected to "Naval" and he started again. After three more failed attempts, he finally finished writing his name. Nabil started to tear up. He felt like he was five years old again. How was he going to connect with his new classmates and succeed in school without being digitally literate?

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Guiding Questions:

- How would you feel if you were Nabil?
- What other issues will Nabil run into if he doesn't learn to be digitally literate?
- How is being digitally illiterate similar to being illiterate?
- Have you ever felt like there is something in the digital field you are having trouble to master? How do you deal with those feelings? What actions do you take?

Topic: Digital Literacy

Age: Elementary and Middle School