

Digital Hero Book Project

Making the most of the forum

Now that you have successfully logged into the Digital Hero Book Project forum, you can begin to meet other young heroes and share your stories with them. To make the most of the interaction, please follow these guidelines and suggestions.

- Tell your hero story: you've spent a lot of time working on your hero book, now tell your story on the forum. Conversations will wander sometimes – and that's a great way to learn more about each other – but first and foremost you must engage on the topics of your Hero Books.
- Post your messages in the discussions that have been created, in this order:
 1. Hi, I am ...
 2. A Hero in my life
 3. Goals
 4. Community / Club of Life
 5. Obstacles
 6. Shining moment, tricks and tactics
 7. Reflections on the Digital Hero Book Project
- Use photos if you can. Or scan in your Hero Book pages. Attach a Powerpoint presentation, short video or even an audio file. Text is great, but if possible use multimedia too.
- When introducing yourself, be sure to include where you are from (country name), whether you're a boy or a girl and how old you are.
- Remember, everybody wants responses to their messages. We recommend you post 2 responses for every new message you post. So if you introduce yourself in one message, then post 2 other messages in response to other introductions or goals or shining moments. The key to a successful interactive network is for everyone to post RESPONSES! The responses can be as simple as "I have read your message and I think you have very admirable goals." Everyone wants to know that their message has been read!
- Post messages to everyone, not just some people. Nobody should be left out of the discussions.
- Ask questions, e.g. "Do you have any brothers or sisters?" or "Have you ever been to South Africa?" or "What are your tricks and tactics to overcome your obstacle?"
- We speak lots of different languages, so please teach each other some words and phrases. But you must always explain what something means in English. For example, you could say "'Jy is my vriend' means 'you are my friend' in Afrikaans." Don't just say "Jy is my vriend."
- The more actively involved you are, the more you will get out of the experience. This includes posting messages about yourself from your Hero Book, AND also listening to others and posting responses to their messages.

Netiquette

We do want this to be a fun experience so we will try to keep the 'rules' to a minimum, but it is important to have a few guidelines so that everyone can participate and feel comfortable. There is a good, acceptable way to behave online –

this is called internet etiquette or "netiquette". Netiquette really just means "good manners". Remember that anything you do in an online forum, such as iEARN, is seen by all the other young people using the forum, as well as their teachers. So please think about what you want to say first. Here are a few important "house rules" for participating in the forum:

- Be respectful.
 - No: "Have to go see u sexy."
 - Yes: "It was great to meet you. Chat to you soon."
- Don't swear or use mean language.
- Try not to respond harshly to other people's statements – e.g. don't say "that was stupid" -- or ignore people's comments.
- Be supportive. Going online with your hero story is a brave thing to do and you should support each other. You might say: "That is a big obstacle and you are a brave person. This is how I overcame the same obstacle ..."
- Don't type your whole message in CAPS. This is called "screaming" and it's considered rude since it tends to dominate the screen and is usually used to indicate anger.
- Be a good listener and let other people share as well. Try not to monopolize the conversation too much. You will benefit most by sharing and listening to what others have to say!
- Essentially, we need to be able to trust each other. Therefore, anything that is said during our discussions should remain only among the participants. This way, we can all feel comfortable sharing our feelings with each other and make sure to keep this a trusting, safe place to share personal thoughts and hero stories. If you do find yourself talking about your on-line experience, be sure not to use names or any identifying information.

Be safe

The internet – just like real life – can be a dangerous place. You can't trust everybody online, just like you can't trust everyone that you meet in real life, e.g. Strangers who you meet in the street. In our forum we all know each other and it is a safe place to share, learn and have fun. But we must keep it safe. So, please don't:

- Share your login and password with another person.
- Leave the website running while you are not using it. You wouldn't want somebody else behaving in a bad way when they're logged in as you. At the end of the class, log out.
- Print out information and leave it in places where others can access it.

This seems like a lot of instructions, but it's mostly common sense. You'll get used to interacting in the forum very quickly. We just want to be sure to help create a safe, fun place for you to share your hero story and learn about others stories.