

# DON'T FEED THE TROLLS!

In the days before the Internet, the word “**troll**” had two different meanings. As a noun, “a troll” was an ugly, **bad-tempered** creature that appeared in Scandinavian fairy tales like those written by the Brothers Grimm. As a verb, “to troll” means to fish using a line pulled slowly behind a boat. On the end of the line is the **bait** - a worm or something similar - which is there **to tempt** the fish. Perhaps it’s easy to see why the word “troll” has changed over time to describe anonymous individuals who, from the darkness of their bedrooms, “fish” for **victims** by **deliberately insulting** and attacking people in online forums. Online trolls **seek out** politicians, celebrities, vloggers and, of course, ordinary people like you and me. Their favourite **target** is anyone who they can **mock** for being different to them in terms of image, ethnicity, beliefs or opinions.

A man who was once a troll, himself, wrote about his experiences online and explained that there are two main reasons for a troll’s **behaviour**. The first is **boredom**. Trolls **lack stimulation** in their everyday lives and so **seek satisfaction** by attempting **to humiliate** and harm others. They are often **insecure at heart**, so having someone respond to their hurtful attacks, brings a **bizarre** kind of meaning to their lives. As the ex-troll, pointed out, he wouldn’t have been trolling if he had had anything better to do with his time. As well as being **at a loose end**, these people **desire** attention. They want people to react to them **regardless** of whether the response is negative. They are happy to be hated, as long as they are being replied to and written about.

**Dealing with** online trolls requires self-control and **thinking ahead**. It is human nature to want to respond when someone makes a personal attack on you, but remember why it is that trolls troll. They are **attention seeker**, so by **engaging with** them we are actually giving them exactly what they want. Don’t feed the trolls! If you had rats in your house, you wouldn’t leave food out for them, so it’s worth applying the same logic to these **malicious** online pests.

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**Shrug them off** and avoid becoming the fish that takes the bait! Instead, leave them starved of attention. If engagement is still tempting, think what the probable result will be. They are unlikely to change either their minds or their behaviour, so arguing with them will simply **put you at risk** of suffering further abuse. A more **sensible approach** is this: delete, block, report, move on. Adopt this plan and stick to it **at all costs**.

Those who are suffering **at the hands of** trolls or because of online bullying can seek help in various ways. The first place to turn for support might be friends and family. Talking to someone we trust, and who loves us and all the positive things about us, can be of great help. There are also support communities which exist to help victims of online bullying and abuse from trolls. As numerous victims writing online have reported, visiting these organisations' websites and joining the conversations there has allowed them to stay informed and **at the same time** to hear positive stories from people dealing with similar **issues**. Victims should also remember that any threats of **violence** made online are illegal and can be reported to Internet service providers, or the police.

Given the size of the online community and the anonymity that the Internet allows, it is unlikely that the problem of trolls will ever disappear completely. For now perhaps the best we can do is **starve them of the attention** they seek by following the golden rule: don't feed the trolls!





## Find the synonyms in context

1. To make fun of = \_\_\_\_\_
2. Bored or with nothing to do = \_\_\_\_\_
3. Cruel or harmful = \_\_\_\_\_
4. Ignore and move past = \_\_\_\_\_
5. To get joy from something = \_\_\_\_\_

## Matching

1. troll	a. принижувати
2. humiliate	б. бути в пошуках задоволення
3. at a loose end	в. троль (інтернет-хуліган)
4. feed the trolls	г. залишити без уваги
5. malicious	ґ. підгодовувати тролів
6. shrug off	д. нудьгувати, не знати, чим зайнятись
7. attention seeker	е. шкідливий, злий
8. seek satisfaction	є. шукати увагу
9. starved of attention	ж. позбавлений уваги
10. delete, block, report	з. видалити, заблокувати, поскаржитись

Complete the sentences with the correct forms of the phrases from .

**sensible approach, attention seeker, human nature, golden rule, anonymous individual, personal attack**

- 1) Police would like to thank the \_\_\_\_\_ who reported last night's robbery at the local bank.
- 2) I think the most \_\_\_\_\_ to cyberbullying is to just shrug it off, but not everybody is able to do that.
- 3) It is \_\_\_\_\_ to judge other people based on their appearance, but that doesn't make it right.
- 4) It's OK to disagree with somebody on social media, but you mustn't make \_\_\_\_\_ on other users.
- 5) My mum believes that people who appear on reality shows are mostly just \_\_\_\_\_ .
- 6) The \_\_\_\_\_ of safe Internet use is never to give away personal information such as your address.

**Read the article again and complete the sentences with no more than three words in each gap.**

- 1) The term 'troll' has changed from its original meaning and now refers to \_\_\_\_\_ who bully others.
- 2) Trolls are motivated by \_\_\_\_\_ and the need for attention.
- 3) As trolls usually feel \_\_\_\_\_, they try to make their life meaningful by hurting others.
- 4) You need to have \_\_\_\_\_ and the ability to think ahead in order to deal with trolls.
- 5) If you respond to online trolls, you will probably face \_\_\_\_\_.
- 6) Victims of online bullying should first talk to \_\_\_\_\_.
- 7) It is against the law to threaten someone with \_\_\_\_\_ online.
- 8) Those receiving violent threats online can inform either the police or \_\_\_\_\_.

**Read the article again and choose the correct answers.**

- 1) What is the writer emphasising in Paragraph 1?
  - The way technology leads to changes in language.
  - The typical victims of online trolls.
  - The geographical origins of the word 'troll'.
  - The similarities between old and new meanings of the word 'troll'.
- 2) In Paragraph 2, the writer says that online trolls
  - are treated as celebrities by some people.
  - seek attention of any kind.
  - are often lonely.
  - like to write about their experiences on the Internet.
- 3) Why is it illogical to respond to online trolls?
  - It is exactly what they want you to do.
  - It goes against human nature.
  - It shows a lack of self-control.
  - It is copying their negative behaviour.
- 4) Why does the writer recommend joining support communities to victims of online bullying?
  - They report illegal threats to the police.
  - They put victims in touch with each other.
  - They provide secure Internet services.
  - They also support friends and family of victims.

**Prepare for Speaking**

