

## LEVEL 1: DIGITAL CITIZENSHIP

This foundational level of Cyber Civics focuses entirely on “Digital Citizenship,” which is “the norms of appropriate and responsible technology use.” It is packed with hands-on learning activities that cultivate students’ social emotional + ethical and critical thinking skills. Lessons (about 50 minutes long) scaffold the important topics described below in a way that makes sense to young people. They engage in hands-on projects, discussion, problem solving, and role-play as they grapple with the complexities of online life. Students don’t need devices for these classes and teachers don’t need to be tech-savvy (students just need you to share your wisdom!).

### **Unit 1: Becoming a De-‘Tech’-Tive (3 lessons)**

This unit sets the stage for future lessons by situating today’s technological “tools” in a social and historical context. Students consider the impact that technology has had on society throughout history, before taking a closer look at the digital tools of today.

### **Unit 2: Citizenship (3 lessons)**

Becoming a “digital citizen” starts with an understanding of “citizenship.” In this unit students explore the basic principles of citizenship, and learn how to apply them to all the communities they belong to, online and off.

### **Unit 3: Your Digital Reputation (3 lessons)**

Students learn that everything they post online—and everything others post about them—contributes to their “digital reputations.” Through role-play and hands-on activities, they discover how and why to take a proactive role in managing this online presence.

### **Unit 4: Ethical Thinking (4 lessons)**

Nearly every online activity requires ethical thought—Should I upload an unflattering photo of a friend? Should I post information that might hurt the feelings of another? This unit helps students think through the ethical implications of their online actions in a safe and protected environment.

### **Unit 5: Cyberbullying and Digital Drama (5 lessons)**

This unit starts with some important lessons on empathy. Then, students learn how to detect and identify the differences between cyberbullying and digital drama and, most importantly, are empowered with strategies to deal with and/or report online cruelty of any kind.

### **Unit 6: Identity & Privacy (5 lessons, plus a final project)**

“Who am I?” is an important question during the preteen and teenage years, and today many young people turn to the digital world to find the answer. While the Internet can be a good place to explore different ideas or personal characteristics, there can also be danger in sharing too much personal information online, which is explored in the lessons in this unit.



## LEVEL 2: INFORMATION LITERACY

While Level 1 provides students with terrific foundational skills to help them use technology safely and wisely, it's not enough! They will be ready and eager to learn more practical skills. While today's kids seem incredibly tech-savvy, research shows that few know the core concepts of "informational literacy," or how to find, retrieve, analyze, and use online information. Although lessons that teach students these skills exist here and there, we had a hard time finding a comprehensive curriculum—which is why this one was created. Like Level 1, lessons help develop ethical and critical thinking skills through discussion, decision making, and hands-on projects. Some lessons will take two or more sessions to complete.

### **Unit 1: Learning Balance (2 lessons)**

Students carefully examine the time they spend with technology so that they can make smart choices about how to balance their online and offline lives in the future.

### **Unit 2: Online Safety 101 (2 lessons)**

Along with all the positives of technology come some risks. This unit helps students become aware of these risks and provides them with basic information and tools that will keep them safe online.

### **Unit 3: Searching the Web (5 lessons)**

Understanding how to effectively search the Internet is an essential "information literacy" skill. Through this series of lessons students will learn the basics of Internet search and understand how to read and evaluate a search engine results page (SERP) in order to get the information they need. They'll also learn how to avoid plagiarism.

### **Unit 4: Your Personal Information (7 lessons)**

It is especially important for young people just starting to use the Internet to learn how and why websites and social media networks collect personal information. Students will learn that while this exchange allows for a customized online experience, it is also how "filter bubbles" can happen. Learning the core concepts of online privacy, how algorithms work, the terminology of privacy policies and terms of use, help students make careful choices about the personal information they share online, now and in the future.

### **Unit 5: Copyright | Public Domain | Fair Use (5 lessons)**

This series of lessons helps students learn to respect creative works they find online and shows them where to go to find creative works they can use legally. It provides them with an understanding of copyright, plagiarism, remixing, Creative Commons, the public domain, fair use, and much more.

### **Unit 6: How To Use Wikipedia (3 lessons, plus a "Collaborative Final")**

Since Wikipedia often appears at the top of a search engine results page, this unit teaches students how to be discerning users of this online community where people pool information and check one another's claims in order to solve problems and build knowledge. They will understand how to read a Wikipedia page and the best way to use it for research.



## LEVEL 3: MEDIA LITERACY FOR POSITIVE PARTICIPATION

This final level of Cyber Civics finds students eager and prepared to participate with media in productive and positive ways. These lessons help them evolve from digital citizens into digital leaders who will wield technology with confidence, compassion, and wisdom. The level begins with lessons in “media literacy” that help students use critical thinking skills to evaluate media messages, many of them visual, that they encounter (and will continue to encounter) via all sorts of new technologies. They learn how to spot media misinformation, detect stereotypes, recognize visual manipulations, and more. This level includes lessons on “sexting,” a final unit about future technologies, and an extra unit on research skills.

### **Unit 1: A Participatory Culture (3 lessons)**

In this level students put critical thinking skills to work evaluating media messages, but first they evaluate their own media use. They discover the difference between “consuming” and “producing” media and understand what it means to live in a “participatory culture.”

### **Unit 2: Calling on Critical Thinking (2 lessons)**

The ability to detect online misinformation is perhaps one of the most important skills for a young digital citizen to master. This unit teaches students how to use their critical thinking skills to evaluate online information they find in social media, blog posts, websites, and more.

### **Unit 3: Misinformation (4 lessons)**

This unit teaches students how to be critical consumers of news media, and helps them understand how misinformation can spread via the Internet and social media. They learn the reasons why misinformation is spread and how to detect it, as well as clickbait and deepfakes.

### **Unit 4: Stereotypes and Media Representation (3 lessons)**

Students take a critical look at media stereotypes on gender, race, and more. They learn how advertisers can easily and inexpensively “microtarget” groups of people based on the rich personal information they willingly provide and how this might help perpetuate long-standing assumptions or generalizations about certain groups of people.

### **Unit 5: Visual Literacy (5 lessons)**

From Instagram to YouTube, TikTok, Snapchat and more, most of the media young people consume and create is visual. This unit helps students learn how to read and create visual media, and also helps them become less susceptible to visual manipulations.

### **Unit 6: Sexting (2 lessons)**

This unit on “sexting” intentionally follows the Visual Literacy unit when students have just explored how communication today, especially between young people, is increasingly visual. Sexting, which is the “sending OR receiving of sexually suggestive, nude, or seminude images,” is a serious digital age issue. These lessons make students aware of the potentially serious consequences of being involved in a sexting incident and teaches them what to do if they, or anyone they know, encounters it. Also covers revenge porn and sextortion.



### **Unit 7: Digital Leadership (5 lessons)**

This series of lessons look towards the future. By discovering how social media can be used to improve lives and even spur social change, students will understand how they can apply the lessons they've learned over three levels of Cyber Civics to wield digital technologies with wisdom, kindness, and compassion as they move into high school and beyond.

### **Extra Unit: Research Skills (4 lessons)**

This review of Level 2 helps students use digital media to research, cite, and write, and research projects. This unit is especially effective if and when students work on an "8th Grade Project" (a "passion" project on a topic of their choice), that way they can put new research skills to work.