



3. Online Safety 101

Mobile phones, laptops, tablets, smartwatches and more! Today's students are connected to a wealth of information and to people from all over the world. Along with all the exciting and positive ways to use technology, **come some risks**. So before students start learning how to use the Internet as a research tool, it is important for them to be aware of some of these risks and to know how to protect themselves from them. This lesson introduces students to **some basic practices that will help keep their online interactions safe and secure**.

Key Standards—CCSS.ELA-LITERACY: RI.7, RI.7.1, RI.7.2, RI.7.3, RI.7.4, W.7, W.7.4, SL.7, SL.7.1, SL.7.1.a, SL.7.1.b, SL.7.1.c, SL.7.1.d, L.7, L.7.4, L.7.4.a, L.7.4.d, L.7.6. ISTE: 2b, 2d. CASEL: 4a, 4b, 4c, 5a, 5b, 5c, 5d, 5e, 5f.

Learning Objectives

Students will...

- ✓ Be introduced to the most important online safety rules.
- ✓ Gain a strategy to help them assess online risk.
- ✓ Understand how important it is to protect themselves, their friends and their family members, whenever they go online.



Introducing The Lesson

Before beginning this lesson, give students ample time to share their reflections from their homework assignment (their "Screen-Free Vacation"). Ask: *How difficult was it? What did you miss most? Least? How did your parents do?* Get students to reflect on all the things people rely on digital media for, such as: *searching for information, shopping, playing online games, texting friends, checking email, etc.* Next ask: *When you go online, who do you think is responsible for making sure the Internet is a safe and secure place?* The answer you want to guide your students to is this: *Because there are no "police" patrolling the digital world, we are **all** responsible for keeping ourselves, and others, safe and secure online.*

The Lesson

1. Tell students that it's important to be able to identify online interactions that may be **unsafe or even dangerous**. Just as they should be careful traveling offline, it is important that they stay safe when roaming online too. Explain that this lesson will equip them with some essential rules of the road.

The Lesson, continued

2. Screen [Video 1]. Afterwards, remind students how easy it is for people to hide their true identities online. Any stranger, or even a company, can pretend to be someone or something they're not in order to gain our trust.
3. Review the most important safety rules (have students record):
 - **Never share personal information online.** This includes your name, address, telephone number, birthdate, social security number, name of school, parent information, passwords, embarrassing or intimate photos, etc.
 - **Keep an eye out for emails that look unfamiliar and strange, or text messages from mysterious numbers.**
 - **Don't respond to text messages or emails unless you know who they are from.**
 - **Never click on the links or open attachments from unknown emails or phone numbers.**
 - **Be suspicious of incredible online bargains or prizes.**
 - **Think twice about accepting every single person who wants to add or follow you.**
 - **Never arrange a face-to-face meeting with someone you meet online.** If a stranger asks to meet you, tell a trusted adult immediately.
 - **Practice skepticism** (this means always thinking twice about people and their intentions).
 - **Pay attention to your feelings.** If something online makes you feel uncomfortable or unsafe, listen to your gut and tell a trusted adult.
4. Explain that even with simple rules like these under our belts, it can still be challenging to make good decisions online. Screen [Video 2]. It introduces a strategy to help assess possible online risks.
5. Tell students: **When something online makes you feel uncomfortable, ask yourself these three questions** (have them record):

W – Who is contacting you?

W – Why are they contacting you?

W – What do they want?

The Lesson, continued

If they can't come up with a reasonable answer for each question, they should beware!

6. Review the story in the video:

While at home doing his homework, Joshua was distracted by a text. Even though he didn't recognize the number or the name of the sender, he read the text message anyway. It read: *"You have been selected to receive a FREE \$1,000 Giftcard! Click on this link to claim your prize now. Only 43 left!"* Not sure what to do, Joshua asked himself the three questions:

- **Who is sending me this information?** He had no idea who it was from. The sender was not in his contact list and he didn't recognize the number that the text was coming from.
- **What do they want?** Obviously, they wanted him to click on the link. But clicking on the link could lead to a malicious app being installed on his phone. Once installed, it might be used to steal his identity, log his keystrokes, or download information from his device (like his contact list). His friends wouldn't be very happy about that.
- **Why are they sending me this?** They wanted to send him a \$1,000 Giftcard. But Joshua knew if something seems too good to be true, it usually is. And in this case, he was right.

Activity

7. Explain that you are going to read some additional stories aloud to help students practice using the three questions. Read the following stories, and use each one as an opportunity to have a discussion surrounding students' responses. Chances are many will have personal experiences related to each story, so be sure to discuss them. (Alternatively, you could use the Student Packet and have students do this work independently.)

Goal

The goal of this lesson is to give students guidelines for safe online interactions. By asking themselves three questions if and when uncomfortable or risky online situations occur, they will be able to make better decisions online.

PRACTICE USING THE 3 “W” QUESTIONS (in-class discussion)

Directions: Ask student volunteers to tell you:

W – Who is contacting the main person in the story?

W – Why are they contacting them?

W – What do they want?

...and then let your class determine if it is safe to proceed, or not.

STORY 1

Eric is 12 and loves playing online games. Recently when he was playing one of his favorite games another player who Eric had played with in the past but didn't know personally asks: *Where do you go to school? Where do you live?*

Ask your students the three questions above. *Explain that Eric really has no idea who this person asking really is. He should never share his location with strangers online. Suggest to your students that if they play games or use social media networks that track and share their physical locations—a feature in Snapchat, for example—they should turn off or disable that feature.*

STORY 2

Sam is in 7th grade, he is rather shy and wishes he could make more friends at school outside of his small circle of friends. So when a few of the kids from one of his classes send friend requests to his social media account, he jumps at the chance to friend them.

Ask your students the three questions above. *Explain that social media can be a great way to get to know real life acquaintances better, such as other kids in our class, on our teams, or in our neighborhoods. It's okay to become online friends with kids you know in real life.*

STORY 3

8th grade students Emily and Robin used to live in the same neighborhood and have been good friends since third grade. Last year Robin's family moved hundreds of miles away. Now the girls keep in touch through texting and a social media site that both sets of parents approved of them using. While on the social media site one afternoon, Emily receives a friend request from someone she doesn't know. But seeing that the unknown contact is an online friend of Robin's, she accepts the request. Soon this person begins asking Emily for personal information including her phone number.

Ask your students the three questions above. Explain that unless you personally know who this person is in real life, you shouldn't share your personal information with them, nor should you post personal information in a public venue. Also encourage students to choose their online friends wisely.

STORY 4

On one of her social media sites, 8th grade student Jemma gets a new follower —“Robert.” Robert likes and comments on Jemma’s posts, always saying something nice and flattering that makes Jemma feel good about herself. Although she does not know Robert in real life, she gets to know him slowly online over the course of many months and feels comfortable communicating with him. Over time they establish an online relationship. When Jemma discovers that he lives nearby and offers to meet her, she jumps at the chance.

Ask your students the three questions. Explain that there is no way to be absolutely certain about the identity of an online stranger unless you know who that person is in real life. Anyone could be any age, or even gender, online (ask your students to recall the “Who Am I Online?” lesson from Level 1). Unless you are absolutely sure you know who this person is in real life, and have your parent’s permission, you should never meet a virtual stranger in the real world. If you feel the need to drive this story home with your students, share [this true story](#) about a Texas mom who catches a child predator.

PRACTICE USING THE 3 “W” QUESTIONS (worksheet)

STORY 1

Eric is 12 and loves playing online games. Recently when he was playing one of his favorite games another player who Eric had played with in the past but didn't know personally asks: *Where do you go to school? Where do you live?*

WHO is contacting the main person in the story? _____

WHY are they contacting them? _____

WHAT do they want? _____

IS IT SAFE TO PROCEED, WHY OR WHY NOT? _____

STORY 2

Sam is in 7th grade, he is rather shy and wishes he could make more friends at school outside of his small circle of friends. So when a few of the kids from one of his classes send friend requests to his social media account, he jumps at the chance to friend them.

WHO is contacting the main person in the story? _____

WHY are they contacting them? _____

WHAT do they want? _____

IS IT SAFE TO PROCEED, WHY OR WHY NOT? _____

STORY 3

7th grade students Emily and Robin lived in the same neighborhood and had been good friends since third grade. But last year Robin's family moved hundreds of miles away. Now the girls keep in touch through texting and a social media site that both sets of parents have approved of them using. While on the social media site one afternoon, Emily receives a friend request from someone she doesn't know. But seeing that the unknown contact is an online friend of Robin's, she accepts the request. Soon this person begins asking Emily for personal information including her phone number.

WHO is contacting the main person in the story? _____

WHY are they contacting them? _____

WHAT do they want? _____

IS IT SAFE TO PROCEED, WHY OR WHY NOT? _____

STORY 4

On one of her social media sites, 8th grade student Jemma gets a new follower — "Robert." Robert likes and comments on Jemma's posts, always saying something nice and flattering that makes Jemma feel good about herself. Although she does not know Robert in real life, she gets to know him slowly online over the course of many months and feels comfortable communicating with him. Over time they establish an online relationship. When Jemma discovers that he lives nearby and offers to meet her, she jumps at the chance.

WHO is contacting the main person in the story? _____

WHY are they contacting them? _____

WHAT do they want? _____

IS IT SAFE TO PROCEED, WHY OR WHY NOT? _____

ONLINE SAFETY 101

When something online makes you feel uncomfortable, ask yourself:

W – WHO is contacting you?

W – WHY are they contacting you?

W – WHAT do they want?

W – Why do they need this personal information

If you can't come up with a reasonable answer for each question, beware!