



Empower your students to thrive online with this turnkey, teacher-led curriculum. Three progressive levels, delivered over three years, help students build essential skills in digital citizenship, information literacy, and media literacy, with AI literacy integrated throughout. Every 50-minute lesson includes a lesson plan, slides with entertaining videos, an engaging activity, student handouts, plus send-home family activities. Cyber Civics is fun and easy to teach, and designed to build students' social-emotional, ethical, and critical thinking skills.



LEVEL 1: DIGITAL CITIZENSHIP

This foundational level (ideal for 6th grade) centers on Digital Citizenship—the safe and responsible use of technology. Through hands-on projects, discussions, role-plays, and problem-solving, students learn to navigate the challenges of online life. No devices are needed for this level, and no tech expertise is required from teachers—just your guidance, insight, and willingness to engage in meaningful conversations.

Unit 1: Becoming a De-‘Tech’-Tive (3 Lessons)

This unit lays the groundwork for future lessons by exploring today's technology through a social and historical lens. Students reflect on how technology has shaped human life over time, then use their “de-tech-tive” skills to investigate different tools that humans have developed over time.

Unit 2: Citizenship (3 Lessons)

Becoming a “digital citizen” begins with an understanding of “citizenship.” In this unit students learn what it means to be a citizen today, both online and off. This understanding puts them on the road towards becoming wise and safe online community members.

Unit 3: Your Digital Reputation (3 Lessons)

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

Unit 4: Ethical Thinking (5 Lessons)

Almost everything we do online involves ethical decision-making. Should I post an unflattering photo of a friend? Share something that might hurt someone's feelings? This unit helps students explore the consequences of their online choices and develop a strong sense of digital ethics. They'll also learn how to communicate thoughtfully and respectfully through email, visual tools, and text messaging.

LEVEL 1, cont.

Unit 5: Cyberbullying and Digital Drama (5 Lessons)

This unit begins by helping students understand that there's a real person with real feelings behind every screen. They explore topics like cyberbullying, digital drama, offline bullying, and other hurtful behaviors. Most importantly, they learn practical strategies to protect themselves and their friends, and how to speak up and report cruelty when they see it.

Unit 6: Identity and Privacy (6 Lessons)

"Who am I?" is a timeless question for preteens and teens—and today, many turn to the digital world to help answer it. While the internet can offer a space to explore identity and self-expression, it also comes with risks, especially when too much personal information is shared. In this unit, students examine the balance between self-discovery and privacy online. They also learn to recognize and understand hate speech, which is communication that attacks an individual or group based on identity characteristics they cannot change.

LEVEL 2: INFORMATION LITERACY

While youth today seem incredibly tech-savvy, research shows that few know the core concepts of "information literacy," or how to find, retrieve, analyze, and use online information. This level (recommended for 7th grade) teaches these skills. Like Level 1, lessons and activities emphasize ethical and critical thinking skills through collaboration, discussion, decision making, and hands-on projects. Some lessons work best if students can practice skills on devices.



1:1 Device Care and Maintenance (2 Lessons)

Although students won't need devices for many lessons in this level, some do offer this option. Additionally, as many students are issued 1:1 devices in school, these two lessons teach them how to use devices safely and responsibly.

Unit 1: Learning Balance (2 Lessons)

Before diving into lessons on research, students carefully examine how they spend their time, both online and off. The purpose of these lessons is to help them become more mindful of how they allocate their precious time and be inspired to seek balance between online and offline pursuits.

LEVEL 2, cont.

Unit 2: Online Safety (2 Lessons)

Today's youth have unparalleled access to online information, digital tools that help them express their creativity, and the ability to connect with people from all over the world. But along with these positive opportunities come some risks. So before students begin learning how to conduct effective web searches, they are introduced to potential online risks and common scams, and learn how to keep themselves safe from them.

Unit 3: Searching the Web (6 Lessons)

Even with the advent of AI and new ways to find information online, knowing how to effectively search the Internet is an essential information literacy skill. In this series of lessons students are introduced to the basics of using the internet to search for information.

Unit 4: AI & Research (4 Lessons)

Today's students are growing up in a world where artificial intelligence (AI) is becoming embedded in nearly everything they do—including searching for information. In this unit, they begin to become AI-literate by learning about algorithms, artificial intelligence, and generative AI tools... and how to use them responsibly.

Unit 5: Your Personal Information (7 Lessons)

Understanding how and why personal information is gathered and shared online is essential knowledge for anyone who uses the Internet. It is especially important for young people just starting to use websites and social networks to make careful choices about sharing personal information. They should understand the terms in "Terms of Use," know what filter bubbles are, and learn that the choices they make now will impact the information they'll receive in the future.

Unit 6: Copyright | Public Domain | Fair Use (6 Lessons)

Because digital tools make it so easy (and fun!) for anyone to share their creativity online today, it is important for young people to understand the important law of copyright. This series of engaging lessons and activities provides students with an understanding of this law, in addition to its limitations and more. By the end of this unit students will know how they can legally and ethically use and share the creative works of others, and hopefully feel inspired to make and share creative works of their own. Don't miss teaching this unit, it's always a student favorite!

LEVEL 3: MEDIA LITERACY FOR POSITIVE PARTICIPATION

This final level of Cyber Civics (recommended for late middle school and early high school) finds students eager and equipped to engage with media in positive and productive ways. The focus is on media literacy—the ability to access, analyze, evaluate, create and act using all forms of communication. Lessons teach students how to critically evaluate increasingly sophisticated media messages, thanks in part to new AI technologies.



This level also includes an all-new “Digital Health and Wellbeing” unit that addresses some of today’s most pressing digital challenges. Upon completion of this level, students are ready to navigate our media-rich world with confidence and discernment.

Unit 1: A Participatory Culture (3 Lessons)

Students discover there are lots of ways to use media and that sometimes media even uses them! They also begin to consider their place in today’s “participatory culture.”

Unit 2: Calling on Critical Thinking (3 Lessons)

The ability to use critical thinking to assess online information is perhaps one of the most important skills for a young digital citizen to master, especially today! This unit, based on current research from the Stanford History Education Group (SHEG), teaches students how to evaluate the reliability of online information, including articles, websites, and AI-generated content.

Unit 3: Misinformation (5 Lessons)

One of the wonderful things about living in a “participatory culture” is that anyone and everyone can be a purveyor of information and news. This is one of the great downsides too. This unit teaches students how to be critical consumers of news media, how misinformation easily spreads online, and the concerning role that new technologies—like artificial intelligence (AI)—play in its spread.

Unit 4: Stereotypes and Media Representation (3 Lessons)

Television, videos, movies, commercials, online games, and more often depict people in overly simplified ways and digital technologies make it easier than ever to share and perpetuate these notions. In this unit, students explore media representations and how they influence the way we view ourselves and others.

Unit 5: Visual Literacy (5 Lessons)

Using everything from YouTube to TikTok, young people consume and create all sorts of visual media, including photos, videos, images, memes, and more. This unit helps students learn how to “read” visual media so that they become less susceptible to visual manipulations, including AI ones!

LEVEL 3, cont.

Unit 6: Digital Health and Wellbeing (6 Lessons)

With students increasingly navigating social relationships through technology, this unit provides crucial guidance on maintaining safe digital boundaries, recognizing when interactions become inappropriate or harmful, and building confidence to seek support when needed.

Unit 7: The Power is in Your Hands (4 Lessons)

The overall objective of Cyber Civics has been to help students discover how to use technology positively and productively—to learn, to inspire, be inspired, and to make and share useful, truthful, and uplifting content in ethical ways—and to show others by example how to do the same. This final unit challenges students to consider their place in the digital world, now and in the future.