



Lesson Time: 25–30 minutes

Online Safety Smarts

Objectives & Outcomes

Lesson Objectives: Students will learn about Internet strangers and dangers, how to avoid them, and the importance of parental/adult supervision for online activity.

Lesson Outcomes: *Students will be able to...*

- understand that online safety is as important as safety in real life.
- recognize appropriate websites to visit and ask a trusted adult if they are unsure.

Subject Area Connection: Language Arts, Information Technology

Background

Most school-aged children have already been introduced to the concept of “stranger danger,” but they also need to be aware of the fact (or have it reinforced) that strangers and danger also exist online. Students also need to learn about cyberbullying, what to do if they feel threatened, and how to treat others and conduct themselves online as well.

Because of students’ young age and maturity levels, it is imperative that their online activity be supervised and regulated by parents or other trusted adults. However, children should know what to do if they inadvertently click on an inappropriate website or content, and ultimately how to determine which websites are appropriate and okay for them to visit. Learning to be safe online is just as important as learning to be safe in real life.

“Learning to be **safe online** is just as important as **learning to be safe in real life.**”

Getting Ready

Teacher Preparation: To prepare for this lesson, compile a list of appropriate websites or search engines for children. Brainstorm several “online safety situations” that students may encounter (see “Procedure” for an example) and write them on cards for role-playing scenarios.

Materials Required:

- blank index cards
- pencil with eraser
- paper

Introduction and Modeling

Briefly review the concept of how a stranger is someone we don’t know, the precautions we take when dealing with strangers, and the fact that we never give out personal information to people we don’t know. However, strangers and danger also exist online, and the same precautions must apply. Students will learn more about “Who Is a Stranger?” in the lesson.

What do students know about bullies? Have they ever encountered a bully at school? How did they react? How did they handle the situation? Do they know the definition of cyberbully? Write the definition on the board. How is a cyberbully similar to a bully at school? How is a cyberbully different than a bully (in person) at school? Discuss.

Key Vocabulary

cyberbullying: posting harmful or hateful things about another person online, often done anonymously.

inappropriate: unfit, not suitable.

stranger: a person whom one does not know.

Procedure

1. Anyone can pretend to be someone else online in order to gain trust and elicit information from children for the purpose of harming them. Ask students if they think the following people are strangers or not. Discuss their answers and reasoning. They must always remember that anyone they do not already know in person is a stranger and consult a parent or other trusted adult if they are unsure.

Who Is a Stranger?

- A. A classmate who lives nearby and wants to work on homework together.
 - B. A fifth grader named Scott who lives in Idaho and enjoys playing the same games on a great website the student discovered last summer. He is just a friend the student met online, but he seems pretty cool. He wants to exchange phone numbers and addresses.
 - C. The man who e-mails to tell a student she won a \$100 gift card from her favorite fashion site. She needs to e-mail him back immediately with her address so he can mail her the prize.
 - D. A neighbor's young cousin who visited for two weeks at Christmas and someone the family spent time with. The girl, who lives in another state, now wants to be e-mail pen pals.
2. Students need to be wary about seemingly harmless questions that are meant to gain information. Have them stop and ask themselves if anything in their responses gives away their name, age, address, phone number, e-mail address, school name, sports team, nearby cities, parents' workplace, etc.
 3. On cards, have students create screen names and evaluate these according to the safety guidelines above. Do the names pass the security test? Is protecting an online identity as important as protecting a "real life" identity? Why?
 4. Cyberbullies are usually a bigger problem for older kids, but ask for suggestions on how to handle the issue if it arises. Why is it important to respect other people and their feelings?
 5. Discuss how to handle online situations using role playing. Ideas:
 - A good friend asks to use your computer to create a profile on a social media site. Her parents won't let her use their computer at home or register, because she is not old enough.
 - You receive an e-mail from a man who says he is a coach in a nearby town scouting for more boys to play on his baseball team. He asks for your age, address, and phone number.

Discussion Questions

- If you visit a website that asks for personal information, what should you do? Most sites that are okay for children will have a section for parents or teachers, so this is a good clue if the site is safe.
- If someone is making fun of you online or causing you to feel scared or upset, what steps should you take?
- Can you help your parents or guardians create a checklist to keep near the computer to remind all users how to safely use the Internet at home? What rules should you include?
- Where is the best place for the home computer to be? Why?

Evaluation

Have students interview each other about how to handle Internet safety, online strangers, and cyberbullies. Together, brainstorm a list of questions on the board for them to use. Discuss appropriate solutions.

Tips for Tailoring this Lesson

For Higher Grade Levels

- Have the students ever felt uncomfortable or unsafe online? What did they do? Have them write down 3–4 immediate solutions to use if such a situation occurs or arises again. Divide the class into groups to discuss ideas. (Examples: use the BACK button, immediately close the window, take a screen shot of the offending message, get an adult, etc.)

For Lower Grade Levels

- Parents should always monitor and approve of all young students' Internet activity. However, as a class, brainstorm a list of appropriate websites/ search engines for kids. Have students copy the list for their parents to review as possibilities. Good suggestions are gws.ala.org, kidsclick.org, kidtopia.info, infotopia.info, kidrex.org, etc.

Alignment to Standards and Frameworks

Common Core State Standards: College & Career Readiness

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Anchor Standards for Reading

CCRA.R.7 Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse media and formats, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words.

Anchor Standards for Writing

CCRA.W.2 Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.

CCRA.W.5 Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach.

Partnership for 21st Century Framework

Partnership for 21st Century Framework: the framework comprises the skills, knowledge and expertise students should master to succeed in work and life in the 21st century. Partnership for 21st Century Skills www.p21.org

Flexibility and Adaptability

Adapt to Change

- Adapt to varied roles, jobs responsibilities, schedules and contexts
- Work effectively in a climate of ambiguity and changing priorities

Be Flexible

- Incorporate feedback effectively
- Deal positively with praise, setbacks and criticism
- Understand, negotiate and balance diverse views and beliefs to reach workable solutions, particularly in multi-cultural environments

Leadership and Responsibility

Guide and Lead Others

- Use interpersonal and problem-solving skills to influence and guide others toward a goal
- Leverage strengths of others to accomplish a common goal
- Inspire others to reach their very best via example and selflessness
- Demonstrate integrity and ethical behavior in using influence and power

Be Responsible to Others

- Act responsibly with the interests of the larger community in mind