



Lesson Time: 25–30 minutes

## Getting Set for Safety

### Objectives & Outcomes

**Lesson Objectives:** Students will learn how to configure settings to better ensure online safety and minimize the risks of compromising private information or identity.

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

- configure safer settings on social media platforms and other relevant sites.
- create strong passwords to better protect their computer, data, and accounts.

**Subject Area Connection:** Language Arts, Information Technology

### Background

Privacy settings are important for anyone who uses the Internet, but even more so for teens and children. One of the main reasons to configure safer settings is to avoid encounters with stalkers and predators who prowl online just waiting for the chance to interact with naïve and uninformed individuals (especially those who are younger). But there are also others who want the chance to garner some private information for their own gain.

Therefore, it is imperative for students to learn how to adjust the privacy settings on all their social media accounts, e-mail programs, and even search engines and computer systems. Additionally, most schools do have systems in place to protect students, but parents need to be encouraged to use filters and parental controls on home computers as well.

**“Privacy settings are important for anyone who uses the Internet, but even more so for children.”**

### Getting Ready

**Teacher Preparation:** To prepare for this lesson, browse the information pages on various social media platforms to learn more about adjusting safety settings. There are also many YouTube videos that give good instructions on configuring safety settings on social media sites.

#### Materials Required:

- paper
- pencil with eraser
- blank index cards

### Introduction and Modeling

By the time students are in their teen years, the Internet has become a social outlet, in addition to being a place to find content and data. Students enjoy interacting with others, expressing themselves, and having fun. There are definitely positives and benefits. Ask students to brainstorm some of the reasons they like to go online or participate on social media sites.

Make a mind map on the board by drawing a large circle labeled with a title such as “Benefits of Cyberspace and Social Media” and extend lines from the middle circle. Using the students’ suggestions, label the lines with reasons/benefits of going online. If needed, draw extra circles/lines to give more information. Discuss.

### Key Vocabulary

**configure:** to adapt or set for a specific purpose.

**privacy:** freedom from unauthorized intrusion or invasion.

## Procedure

1. Begin a discussion about ways we protect our privacy at home. Are our windows or doors left wide open during the evening to allow strangers walking or driving by our houses to see everything we are doing inside? No. Additionally, we usually close our curtains or blinds for privacy and safety reasons. We really don't mind family and friends coming in to join us or knowing about our activities, but to have strangers viewing us from the outside is unsettling.
2. Are there similarities between "real life" and online privacy? Discuss. However, if all Internet account settings aren't configured correctly, our activities (and fun) may be more public than we think—and our "curtains" may be wide open for strangers to peer inside to see who we are and what we are doing. This alone can make us more vulnerable and our online identities at risk to predators and scammers.
3. Although most students do enjoy social media and interacting online, many of them don't realize that danger is possible, especially if precautions to ensure privacy are not taken. No one ever thinks it will happen to them. Discuss some of the problems and risks of not configuring safety settings properly on all internet accounts. These can include hackers, scammers, predators, stalkers, cyberbullies, etc.
4. If you have access to a classroom computer(s), log on to the Internet and demonstrate how to adjust the privacy settings on at least one social media profile, browser, or e-mail account. Then have students pair up to research what needs to be done to adjust the safety settings on two or three different platforms or programs. You can assign these or have students choose their own, but try to cover the most common platforms, browsers, or programs used by the students. Ask them to write down each step of the process on a blank index card to share with the class and compare with other groups' results if applicable. They can also use these steps later on to configure their own privacy settings.

## Discussion Questions

- Do you believe that configuring the highest safety settings on all your online accounts will make a difference? Why or why not?
- Have you or any of your friends ever been approached by a stranger online? What happened?
- Do you know how to configure your settings on each account? How? Discuss.
- What makes a password strong? Are your passwords strong enough? Discuss.
- Are you in the habit of sharing your passwords with others? If so, who?
- Do you think parental controls, locks, or filters are necessary on home computers? If so, why?

## Evaluation

Have students check all their social media accounts and e-mail programs to see if they have the safest settings. If not, ask them how they can reconfigure the settings for more privacy. How strong are their passwords? Do they need to be re-evaluated? Also, have them ask their parents about the security and settings of their home computer.

## Tips for Tailoring this Lesson

### For Higher Grade Levels

- Discuss the locating sharing devices on GPS-enabled cell phones and how this is can be an important safety concern as well. When students share posts that pinpoint their location, the information can go out to strangers as well as friends. There are also settings for photo sharing on the phone as well, and the location option should be turned off.

### For Lower Grade Levels

- Discuss the importance of strong passwords and how to create one. It should be one that a hacker can't figure out with an educated guess or automated attack. Experts recommend using a combination of numbers, letters, symbols, capitals, etc. Also, keep the password in a safe place and never share it with anyone except a parent.

## Alignment to Standards and Frameworks

### Common Core State Standards: College & Career Readiness

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#### Anchor Standards for Speaking and Listening

**CCRA.SL.4** Present information, findings, and supporting evidence such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning and the organization, development, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

**CCRA.SL.5** Make strategic use of digital media and visual displays of data to express information and enhance understanding of presentations.

#### Anchor Standards for Language

**CCRA.L.1** Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.

**CCRA.L.4** Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases by using context clues, analyzing meaningful word parts, and consulting general and specialized reference materials, as appropriate.

### 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](http://www.p21.org)

#### Productivity and Accountability

##### Manage Projects

- Set and meet goals, even in the face of obstacles and competing pressures
- Prioritize, plan and manage work to achieve the intended result

##### Produce Results

- Demonstrate additional attributes associated with producing high quality products including the abilities to:
  - Work positively and ethically
  - Manage time and projects effectively
  - Multi-task
  - Participate actively, as well as be reliable and punctual
  - Present oneself professionally and with proper etiquette
  - Collaborate and cooperate effectively with teams
  - Respect and appreciate team diversity
  - Be accountable for results

#### 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