



# Our K-12 Digital Literacy and Citizenship Curriculum

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Kids and teens today are using the immense power of digital media to explore, connect, create, and learn in ways never before imagined. With this power, young people have extraordinary opportunities, and yet they face potential pitfalls, too. Meanwhile, schools are dealing with the associated ramifications — like cyberbullying, digital cheating, and safety and security concerns. These issues underscore the need for students to learn — and for teachers to teach — digital literacy and citizenship skills.

Common Sense Education's **FREE Digital Literacy and Citizenship Curriculum** empowers students to think critically, behave safely, and participate responsibly in our digital world. These 21st-century skills are essential for students to harness the full potential of technology for learning. Taught by classroom teachers, librarians, technology specialists, health educators, and guidance counselors around the world, our K-12 curriculum:

- Introduces reliable, research-based information to students about digital media and their impact
- Offers a comprehensive yet balanced approach in addressing safety and security concerns, including ethics and behavior issues, as well as digital literacy skills
- Includes research-based lessons based on the work of Howard Gardner and the GoodPlay Project at the Harvard Graduate School of Education
- Provides student-centered, media-rich lesson materials that emphasize skill building, critical thinking, ethical discussion, media creation, and decision making to students of all ages
- Addresses the whole community by providing materials to educate parents and families about digital citizenship
- Satisfies criteria for CIPA E-rate compliance
- Aligns to the Common Core State Standards, the International Society for Technology in Education's National Education Technology Standards (ISTE's NET•S), and the American Association of School Librarians (AASL) Standards
- Includes rich professional development resources such as tutorials, videos, and webinars

There are 80 lessons in the full K-12 curriculum, with supporting materials such as student handouts, assessments, educational videos, family tip sheets, and professional development resources. We suggest starting with our Scope & Sequence to determine which approach is right for your students.

Our Scope & Sequence consists of three units for grade bands K-2, 3-5, and 6-8 and four units for Grades 9-12. Each unit is comprised of five lessons, which spiral to address a cross-curricular approach. The units build on each other by reinforcing developmentally appropriate topics. You can use the units either sequentially by grade or at any grade level within this band.

Our curriculum is made available to educators and schools FREE thanks to the generous support of our funders. Browse our educator site to find a plethora of curricular materials. Our education program brings students, families, and educators together to create world-class digital citizens for the 21st-century.

# Cross-Curricular Framework



## Privacy & Security

Students learn strategies for managing their online information and keeping it secure from online risks such as identity thieves and phishing. They learn how to create strong passwords, how to avoid scams and schemes, and how to analyze privacy policies.



## Digital Footprint & Reputation

Students learn to protect their own privacy and respect others' privacy. Our digital world is permanent, and with each post, students are building a digital footprint. By encouraging students to self-reflect before they self-reveal, they will consider how what they share online can impact themselves and others.



## Self-Image & Identity

These lessons are designed to help students explore their own digital lives, focusing on their online versus their offline identity. Students learn the benefits and risks of presenting themselves through different personas and the effects on their sense of self, their reputation, and their relationships.



## Creative Credit & Copyright

Living in a “copy/paste” culture, students need to reflect on their responsibilities and rights as creators in the online spaces where they consume, create, and share information. From addressing plagiarism to piracy, students learn about copyright and fair use.



## Relationships & Communication

Students reflect on how they can use intra-personal and interpersonal skills to build and strengthen positive online communication and communities. They delve into the concept of digital citizenship and digital ethics, and they reflect on their online interactions.



## Information Literacy

Information literacy includes the ability to identify, find, evaluate, and use information effectively. From effective search strategies to evaluation techniques, students learn how to evaluate the quality, credibility, and validity of websites, and give proper credit.



## Cyberbullying

Students learn what to do if they are involved in a cyberbullying situation. They explore the roles people play and how individual actions—both negative and positive—can impact their friends and broader communities. Students are encouraged to take the active role of upstander and build positive, supportive online communities.



## Internet Safety

Students explore how the Internet offers an amazing way to collaborate with others worldwide, while staying safe through employing strategies such as distinguishing between inappropriate contact and positive connections. These foundational skills are just the beginning!





















## Scope and Sequence: Grades K-2

Use our Scope & Sequence to find the lessons that are just right for your classroom and school. Our cross-curricular approach covers eight categories:



The Sequence consists of three units, each containing five cross-curricular lessons, which build upon each other by reinforcing developmentally appropriate topics. You can use the units either sequentially by grade or at any grade level within this band.

UNIT	CATEGORY	TITLE	DESCRIPTION
1		<b>Going Places Safely</b>	Students learn that they can go to exciting places online, but they need to follow certain rules to remain safe.
		<b>A-B-C Searching</b>	Students search for pictures online by clicking on letters of the alphabet. They learn that directory sites with alphabetical listings offer one way to find things on the Internet.
		<b>Keep It Private</b>	Students learn that many websites ask for information that is private and discuss how to responsibly handle such requests.
	 	<b>My Creative Work</b>	Students are introduced to the concept of having ownership over creative work. They practice putting their name and date on something they produce.
		<b>Sending Email</b>	Students explore how they can use email to communicate with real people within their schools, families, and communities.
2		<b>Staying Safe Online</b>	Students understand that they should stay safe online by choosing websites that are good for them to visit, and avoid sites that are not appropriate for them.
	 	<b>Follow the Digital Trail</b>	Students learn that the information they put online leaves a digital footprint or "trail." This trail can be big or small, helpful or hurtful, depending on how they manage it.
	 	<b>Screen Out the Mean</b>	Students learn that children sometimes can act like bullies when they are online. They explore what cyberbullying means and what they can do when they encounter it.
		<b>Using Keywords</b>	Students understand that keyword searching is an effective way to locate information on the Internet. They learn how to select keywords to produce the best search results.
		<b>Sites I Like</b>	Students discuss criteria for rating informational websites and apply them to an assigned site. Students learn that all websites are not equally good sources of information.
3		<b>Powerful Passwords</b>	Students explore reasons why people use passwords, learn the benefits of using passwords, and discover strategies for creating and keeping strong, secure passwords.
		<b>My Online Community</b>	Students explore the concept that people can connect with one another through the Internet. They understand how the ability for people to communicate online can unite a community.
		<b>Things for Sale</b>	Students examine product websites and understand that the purpose of the site is to encourage buying the product. Students learn methods used to promote products on these sites.
		<b>Show Respect Online</b>	Students explore the similarities and differences between in-person and online communications, and then learn how to write clear and respectful messages.
		<b>Writing Good Emails</b>	Students learn how to communicate effectively by email, taking into account the purpose and audience of their message, and the tone they want to convey.





























## Scope and Sequence: Grades 3–5

Use our Scope & Sequence to find the lessons that are just right for your classroom and school. Our cross-curricular approach covers eight categories:



The Sequence consists of three units, each containing five cross-curricular lessons, which build upon each other by reinforcing developmentally appropriate topics. You can use the units either sequentially by grade or at any grade level within this band.

UNIT	CATEGORY	TITLE	DESCRIPTION
1	 	<b>Rings of Responsibility</b>	Students explore what it means to be responsible to and respectful of their offline and online communities as a way to learn how to be good digital citizens.
	 	<b>Private and Personal Information</b>	How can you protect yourself from online identity theft? Students think critically about the information they share online.
	 	<b>The Power of Words</b>	Students consider that they may get online messages from other kids that can make them feel angry, hurt, sad, or fearful. Students identify actions that will make them Upstanders in the face of cyberbullying.
		<b>The Key to Keywords</b>	Students learn strategies to increase the accuracy of their keyword searches and make inferences about the effectiveness of the strategies.
	 	<b>Whose Is It, Anyway?</b>	Students learn that copying the work of others and presenting it as one's own is called plagiarism. They also learn about when and how it's ok to use the work of others.
2		<b>Strong Passwords</b>	Students learn how to create secure passwords in order to protect their private information and accounts online.
	 	<b>Digital Citizenship Pledge</b>	Students work together to outline common expectations in order to build a strong digital citizenship community. Each member of the class signs a We the Digital Citizens Pledge.
		<b>You've Won a Prize!</b>	Students learn what spam is, the forms it takes, and then identify strategies for dealing with it.
		<b>How to Cite a Site</b>	Students reflect on the importance of citing all sources when they do research. They then learn how to write bibliographical citations for online sources.
	  	<b>Picture Perfect</b>	Students learn how photos can be altered digitally. They will consider the creative upsides of photo alteration, as well as its power to distort our perceptions of beauty and health.
3	 	<b>Talking Safely Online</b>	Students learn that the Internet is a great place to develop rewarding relationships. But they also learn not to reveal private information to a person they know only online.
	 	<b>Super Digital Citizen</b>	Students explore Spider-Man's motto, "with great power comes great responsibility" through the lens of digital citizenship. They create comic strips show a digital superhero who witnesses an act of poor digital citizenship, and then helps resolve it.
		<b>Privacy Rules</b>	Students learn that children's websites must protect their private information. They learn to identify these secure sites by looking for their privacy policies and privacy seals of approval.
	 	<b>What's Cyberbullying?</b>	Students explore how it feels to be cyberbullied, how cyberbullying is similar to or different than in-person bullying, and learn strategies for handling cyberbullying when it arises.
	 	<b>Selling Stereotypes</b>	Students explore how the media can play a powerful role in shaping our ideas about girls and boys. They practice identifying messages about gender roles in two online activity zones for kids.


















## Scope and Sequence: Grades 6–8

Use our Scope & Sequence to find the lessons that are just right for your classroom and school. Our cross-curricular approach covers eight categories:



The Sequence consists of three units, each containing five cross-curricular lessons, which build upon each other by reinforcing developmentally appropriate topics. You can use the units either sequentially by grade or at any grade level within this band.

UNIT	CATEGORY	TITLE	DESCRIPTION
1		<b>Digital Life 101</b>	Students are introduced to the 24/7, social nature of digital media and technologies, and gain basic vocabulary and knowledge for discussing the media landscape.
		<b>Strategic Searching</b>	Students learn that to conduct effective and efficient online searches, they must use a variety of searching strategies.
		<b>Scams &amp; Schemes</b>	Students learn strategies for guarding against identity theft and scams that try to access their private information online.
		<b>Cyberbullying: Be Upstanding</b>	Students learn about the difference between being a passive bystander versus a brave upstander in cyberbullying situations.
		<b>A Creator's Rights</b>	Students are introduced to copyright, fair use, and the rights they have as creators.
2		<b>My Media</b>	Students review their media habits and the array of media they use on a weekly basis, and reflect on the role of digital media in their lives.
		<b>A Creator's Responsibilities</b>	Students reflect on their responsibilities as creators and users of creative work.
		<b>Safe Online Talk</b>	While acknowledging the benefits of online talk and messaging, students learn how to handle situations or online behavior which may make them feel uncomfortable.
		<b>Which Me Should I Be?</b>	Students learn that presenting themselves in different ways online carries both benefits and risks.
		<b>Gender Stereotypes Online</b>	Students analyze a "Dress Up Your Avatar" feature of a virtual world for kids for evidence of stereotypes about boys and girls.
3		<b>Trillion Dollar Footprint</b>	Students learn that they have a digital footprint and that this information can be searched, copied and passed on, but that they can take some control based on what they post online.
		<b>Identifying High-Quality Sites</b>	Students learn that anyone can publish on the Web, so not all sites are equally trustworthy.
		<b>Reality of Digital Drama</b>	Students draw connections between young teens' perceptions of digital drama and stereotypes of men and women on reality TV.
		<b>Cyberbullying: Crossing the Line</b>	Students learn to distinguish good-natured teasing from cyberbullying.
		<b>Rework, Reuse, Remix</b>	Students expand their understanding of fair use, apply it to case studies, and create an original work of fair use.



## Scope and Sequence: Grades 9–12

Use our Scope & Sequence to find the lessons that are just right for your classroom and school. Our cross-curricular approach covers eight categories:



The Sequence consists of four units, each containing five cross-curricular lessons, which build upon each other by reinforcing developmentally appropriate topics. You can use the units either sequentially by grade or at any grade level within this band.

























UNIT	CATEGORY	TITLE	DESCRIPTION
1		<b>Digital Life 102</b>	Students test their knowledge of digital media and talk about the role media plays in their lives.
		<b>Oops! I Broadcast it on the Internet</b>	Students are introduced to the benefits of sharing information online and the potential risks of sharing inappropriate information.
		<b>Copyrights and Wrongs</b>	Students explore the legal and ethical dimensions of respecting creative work.
		<b>Feeling On Display</b>	Students reflect on the different pressures teens face when it comes to editing, posting, and commenting on photos online.
		<b>Turn Down the Dial on Cyberbullying and Online Cruelty</b>	Students learn that cruelty can escalate quickly online because people are often anonymous and posts spread quickly.
2		<b>My Online Code</b>	Students discuss their understanding of ethical behavior and are introduced to the concept of online ethics.
		<b>Who Are You Online?</b>	Students explore how they and others represent themselves online, and the relationship between online and offline selves.
		<b>Building Community Online</b>	Students examine websites that foster positive community.
		<b>Overexposed: Sexting and Relationships</b>	Students explore the risks and responsibilities of carrying out romantic relationships in the digital world.
		<b>Risky Online Relationships</b>	Students think critically about developing relationships with people online.
3		<b>Rights, Remixes, and Respect</b>	Students reflect on the differences between taking inspiration from the creative work of others and appropriating that work without permission.
		<b>Taking Perspectives on Cyberbullying</b>	Students learn about the dynamics of online cruelty and how it affects all of the people involved.
		<b>What's the Big Deal about Internet Privacy?</b>	Students explore the concept of privacy in their everyday lives, and as it relates to using the Internet.
		<b>Becoming a Web Celeb</b>	Students explore the upsides and downsides of becoming famous online, and reflect on whether the experience can differ for boys and girls.
		<b>College Bound</b>	Students learn that everything they or anyone else posts about them online becomes part of a public online presence known as a digital footprint.
4		<b>Private Today, Public Tomorrow</b>	Students reflect on their responsibility to protect the privacy of others when posting information about them online.
		<b>Does it Matter Who Has Your Data?</b>	Students consider the ways websites and companies collect data online and utilize it to personalize content for their users, as well as consider companies' motives in doing so.
		<b>Breaking Down Hate Speech</b>	Students learn the definition of hate speech and understand how it affects individuals, groups, and communities.
		<b>Retouching Reality</b>	Students think critically about the different purposes and contexts of digital image editing.
		<b>Collective Intelligence</b>	Students consider both the benefits and drawbacks of using collective intelligence in different contexts.



## Scope and Sequence: Library

Use our Scope & Sequence to find the lessons that are just right for your classroom and school. Our cross-curricular approach covers eight categories:



GRADE	CATEGORY	TITLE	DESCRIPTION
3-5	 	<b>Group Think</b>	Students identify actions that will make them upstanders in the face of cyberbullying.
3-5		<b>Rating Websites</b>	Students discuss criteria for rating informational websites and apply them to an assigned site. Students learn that all websites are not equally good sources of information.
3-5		<b>Right Sites</b>	Using the Which Sites Are Right for You? Student Handout, students visit two different websites about extreme animals and rate the sites according to their quality and appeal.
3-5		<b>Advertising Detectives</b>	Students learn to recognize five different kinds of online ads prevalent on children's sites. They learn how to distinguish advertising content from other content on a website.
3-5		<b>Choosing a Search Site</b>	Through online observations, students record and compare the features of different search sites. They learn to choose the best site or sites to suit their purposes.
6-8	 	<b>Secret Sharer</b>	Students look beyond protecting their own privacy to respecting the privacy of others online.
6-8	  	<b>Top Secret</b>	Students review what they have learned about protecting their privacy online and respecting the privacy of others.
6-8		<b>Forms and Norms</b>	Students will learn the forms and norms of effective communication in an online context.
6-8	 	<b>Chart It</b>	Students will learn to assess people's intentions and the impact of their words and actions, both positive and negative, in online environments.
6-8	 	<b>Cracking the Gender Code</b>	Students explore "boy codes" and "girl codes," and discuss the extent to which they shape people's online identities and relationships.
6-8		<b>Sticky Sites</b>	Students learn about some of the features that attract and retain visitors to websites. They also learn to recognize the commercial motives that sometimes lie behind these "sticky" sites.
6-8	 	<b>With Power Comes Responsibility</b>	Students explore what it means to be responsible and respectful to their offline and online communities as a step towards learning about the characteristics of good digital citizens.
6-8	 	<b>Build Your Ideal Community</b>	Students will consider the characteristics of positive online communities that promote responsibility and respect.
6-8	 	<b>The Ups and Downs of Digital Life</b>	Students reflect on the possibilities and pitfalls of digital media for themselves, for their relationships with people close to them, and for society at large.
6-8		<b>Crawling the Web</b>	Students learn to make informed choices about which search sites to use for different purposes. They also learn to use multiple search tools to get the best results.