



CYBER CIVICS

Level 2: Information Literacy

This second level of Cyber Civics (recommended for 7th grade) follows [Level 1: Digital Citizenship](#). While the first level of Cyber Civics equips students with essential foundational skills to use digital media safely and wisely, it's not enough! Upon completion, they will be ready and eager to learn more practical skills.

While youth today seem incredibly tech-savvy, research shows that few know the core concepts of “informational literacy,” or how to find, retrieve, analyze, and use online information. This comprehensive information literacy curriculum teaches them these skills. Like Level 1, lessons and activities emphasize ethical and critical thinking skills through collaboration, discussion, decision making, and hands-on projects. Lessons are :50 min. long (some will take two classes to complete).



OPTIONAL: PREP LESSON

Although students don't need devices for most lessons in this level, some do offer the option for them to use technology. This lesson helps ensure they use their devices safely and responsibly in the classroom.

UNIT 1: LEARNING BALANCE

Before diving into lessons on research, students carefully examine how they spend their time, online and off.

- **Lesson 1: Your Time**
Students put math skills to work assessing how they spend their time. They discover how much of their time is spent using digital media and consider what it may be displacing in their offline lives.
- **Lesson 2: Your Time, Part 2**
Part 2 continues students' investigation into how they spend their time and includes a challenge to take a 24-hour digital media “vacation.” This challenge, and students' reflection upon it, is a first step towards healthy media balance.

UNIT 2: ONLINE SAFETY

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.

- **Lesson 3: Online Safety 101**

With this activity, students begin to understand that although most online interactions are positive and safe, their online safety, and the safety of their friends and family, can be put at risk when they don't follow these basic safety rules.

- **Lesson 4: Your Time, Part 2**

Students are introduced to common online threats and scams, including: phishing attempts, malicious popups, shopping and influencer scams, catfishing, and more. They play a game to expand their knowledge and practice responses to these online threats.

UNIT 3: SEARCHING THE WEB

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

- **Lesson 5: Elements of a Web Search**

Students learn the fundamental components of a web search and participate in a hands-on project that helps them remember, and explain, the terms they learn.

- **Lesson 6: How Does Search Work?**

In addition to helping students understand how the complicated business of online search works, they discover the importance of choosing the right keywords.

- **Lesson 7: Constructing a Search Query**

An efficient researcher knows how to write search queries that yield more relevant results. In this lesson, students learn the steps to writing an effective query.

- **Lesson 8: Anatomy of a Results Page**

It can sometimes be challenging to locate the actual information you need on a search engine results page. This lesson teaches students how to critically evaluate and identify all the elements (including ads and AI results) that appear on these pages.

UNIT 3: SEARCHING THE WEB, cont.

- **Lesson 9: What About Wikipedia?**

The first “organic” results that appear on a search engine results page still come from Wikipedia. In this lesson, students learn how Wikipedia works, and how to effectively use a Wikipedia article for research.

- **Lesson 10: Why Can’t I Cut and Paste?**

Once students find the search results they were looking for, they might be tempted to simply cut and paste what they find. This lesson teaches them what plagiarism is, how to avoid it, and the important skill of paraphrasing.

UNIT 4: AI & RESEARCH

Today’s students are growing up in a world where artificial intelligence (AI) will be embedded in nearly everything they do—including searching the Internet. In this unit, they begin to become AI-literate by understanding how algorithms, chatbots, and generative AI are already impacting Internet search, and much more.

- **Lesson 11: Algorithms Are Everywhere**

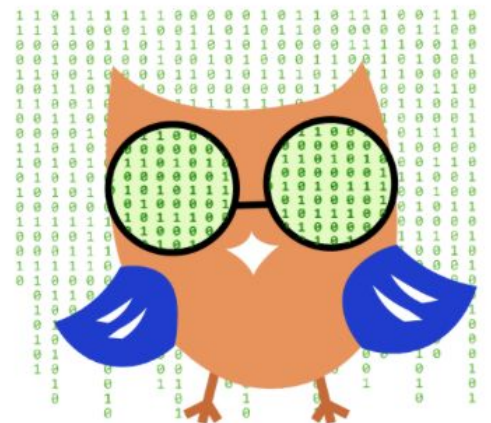
By engaging in a very fun hands-on activity, students learn that algorithms—instructions to solve a problem or complete a task—are literally everywhere!

- **Lesson 12: What is Artificial Intelligence?**

AI—a group of algorithms that can modify themselves, or even create new algorithms—is becoming embedded into nearly every aspect of our lives. In this lesson students learn what it is, and more importantly, where it falls short.

- **Lesson 13: Using Generative AI Responsibly**

In this lesson, students are introduced to responsible and ethical ways they might use generative AI—systems that generate new content, such as text, images, music, etc., in response to prompts—for schoolwork and research.



UNIT 5: YOUR PERSONAL INFORMATION

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.

- **Lesson 14: Who’s Watching You?**

Nothing online is truly free, we pay for it with our personal data. This is a difficult concept for young people, or for any of us, to grasp. This lesson drives this concept home through a surprising activity.

- **Lesson 15: Privacy Policies: Who Reads Them?**

Young people often readily sign up for websites and apps without understanding or care for the personal information these platforms gather. That’s because the “privacy policies” are long and full of hard-to-understand legalese. This lesson equips students with the skills and vocabulary to understand policies they will encounter online.

- **Lesson 16: Understanding Terms of Use**

This lesson empowers students with a general understanding of just a few of the most commonly used terms found in online “terms of use.” This knowledge helps them know what to look for, and understand how their information will be used, whenever they visit or sign up for anything online.

- **Lesson 17: Algorithms Are Awesome. Or Are They?**

Since personal information feeds many of the algorithms we find online, students learn about some choices they have about the personal information they share.

- **Lesson 18: Help! I’m Trapped in a Filter Bubble**

In this lesson, students consider the benefits and drawbacks of online customization as they learn about “filter bubbles.”

- **Lesson 19: What Makes a Password Great?**

Since passwords are still our first line of defense when it comes to protecting personal information online, an engaging activity teaches students the characteristics of a great password. It also provides them with a method for remembering the passwords they create.

- **Lesson 20: What Makes a Password Great?**

This lesson challenges students to think about all they’ve learned about personal information from an entirely new perspective.

UNIT 6: COPYRIGHT | PUBLIC DOMAIN | FAIR USE

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 is always a student favorite!

- **Lesson 21: What is Copyright?**

Students learn the important role copyright plays in protecting creative works online. Through an engaging activity, they become “creative artists” themselves, which provides a framework for the lessons that follow.

- **Lesson 22: Why Copyright Matters**

As students just experienced what it means to own a work protected by copyright, they learn why it is important make careful choices about using and sharing content online.

- **Lesson 23: Sharing Your Creativity**

Students discover why copyright law might be too restrictive for some creative artists, as they learn about legal and ethical ways to share creative works online.

- **Lesson 24: Public Domain and Fair Use**

It's important for students to understand the limitations of copyright law too. Through two fun activities, they discover what it means when online content is in the “public domain” and how “fair use” works.

- **Lesson 25: Living in a Remix World**

Advances in technology make it easy (and fun!) to combine media like music, text, photos, video, and more to make new and different (“transformative”) creative works. Through a fun activity, students experience what it means to be a “remix” or “mashup” artist and, more importantly, understand how such works are protected by copyright.

- **Lesson 26: The Future of Creativity: AI & Art**

Generative AI tools—particularly image generators like OpenArt, Midjourney, and DALL-E—have raised important questions in regard to copyright and art. Students will grapple with some ethical questions regarding this intersection.

THE COLLABORATIVE FINAL

A final challenge tasks students to put their collaborative skills to work while allowing you to assess what they've learned about information literacy through this course.