Our K-12 Digital Literacy and Citizenship Curriculum

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 world-wide, while staying safe through employing strategies such as distinguishing between inappropriate contact and positive connections. These foundational skills are just the beginning!