

CTRL + ALT + ENGAGE

A Guide to Facilitating Digital Safety
with Confidence



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Introduction to the Guidebook



A Guide to Using the Handbook

The digital world is deeply woven into our daily lives, shaping how we connect, learn, express ourselves, and engage with society. For young people, the access to this digital world offers immense possibilities, access to knowledge, creative expression, and new ways to build communities. At the same time, navigating this space comes with challenges, from misinformation to privacy concerns and the pressures of online interactions. As technology continues to evolve, it's crucial that young people are equipped not just with the skills to use digital tools but also with the awareness to use them thoughtfully and responsibly.

Through these sessions, we aim to create a space where participants can explore and reflect on their digital experiences, the opportunities as well as the risks, and engage in a way that is informed, intentional, and meaningful. It is important to balance emotions, values and well-being with the tools for critical thinking so that young people can navigate the online world with confidence.

As a facilitator, your role is to guide these conversations with openness and empathy. Rather than providing rigid answers, the goal is to create a space for exploration, where young people feel encouraged to share, question, and learn from each other. By bringing in real-world examples, having robust discussions, and creating interactive experiences, you help them develop the skills and mindset needed to engage with the digital world in a way that is both critical and conscious.

This guidebook is designed to help you prepare and facilitate sessions effectively. Whether you're conducting a single session or multiple ones, this resource will help you choose the most relevant content based on your group's context and needs.

How to Prepare for the Sessions

- Familiarise yourself with the session flow and key discussion points.
- For sessions that involve sensitive topics (such as online exploitation, emotional well-being, or identity-related concerns), it is especially important that facilitators review all accompanying resources beforehand to feel confident, informed and prepared to guide the conversation with care.
- In case you are dealing with a topic you are unfamiliar with, it is highly recommended that you go through all the resources provided in the "Prep Required" section at the beginning of each activity.
- Gather all necessary materials or resources in advance.
- Adapt the activities and discussions to suit the experience level and context of your participants.
- If you are ever unsure how to respond to a participant's question or experience during the session, it is completely okay to say, "That's a really important question, I want to make sure I give you the right answer, so let me take some time to look into it and I'll get back to you in the next session." Creating a safe, respectful, and trustworthy environment takes precedence over having immediate answers.

How to Use This Guidebook

- If you can conduct only one session, choose the one that best aligns with your group's background and interests.
- If you're facilitating 2-3 sessions, consider selecting a mix of topics that build on each other for a more comprehensive experience.

A Guide to Using the Handbook

Themes Covered

This guidebook covers key themes related to the digital world. Each theme includes a brief introduction and clearly defined objectives. Additionally, we have mapped relevant activities that you can refer to when planning your sessions.

The themes covered are:

- **An Overview of the Digital World** – Building greater familiarity with the digital world, its possibilities and associated risks.
- **Social Media and Socialising** – Exploring how to safely and effectively connect, share, engage and advocate online.
- **Happy Shopping! Shopping Safely Online** – Recognising safe and legal practices for online purchases.
- **The World of Online Gaming** – Understanding gaming culture, risks, and safe participation.
- **Navigating Online Information and Media** – Learning to critically engage with digital content, recognising its possibilities as well as risks of media manipulation and fake news.

Session Classification

Each session is categorised based on the participants' familiarity with the topic:

- **Beginner** – Ideal for those new to the subject, with simple and easy-to-follow steps for new facilitators.
- **Intermediate** – Designed for participants with some prior knowledge, with more detailed guidance and additional discussion points
- **Advanced** – Best suited for those with deeper experience and understanding of the topic. Includes in-depth facilitation strategies for more complex discussions.

This handbook will help you explore the digital world safely while having fun online. Through the following activities, you'll learn about scams, privacy, misinformation, and responsible internet use.

Sr No.	Activity	Objective	Level	Page No.
1	A Day in My Digital Life	Mapping out our digital footprint by listing the platforms and websites we use daily, how we interact online, and what data we leave behind.	Beginner	23-26
2	The Algorithm Trap	Understanding how different people get different search results or recommendations based on past behavior. Discussion on our own experiences with algorithms.	Intermediate	27-30
3	Digital Time Capsule	Let's look back on our current digital activity 10 years from now and write a letter to our future selves.	Beginner	31-33
4	Research-a-thon	Let's work in teams to understand the research potential of the internet and learn how to find accurate, diverse sources on a given topic, comparing different types of online information.	Can be adapted to any level	34-37
5	Lock It Up	Learning critical cybersecurity tools (generating passwords and 2FA) to protect their social media accounts	Advanced	38-41
6	Fake or Fact?	Developing critical evaluation skills for online information and learning systematic fact-checking techniques.	Can be adapted to any level	42-45
7	The Misinformation Race	Demonstrating how fast fake news spreads and exploring ways to avoid engaging or participating in it.	Beginner	46-48
8	The Social Media Mirror	Reflecting on the emotional impact social media can have on us such as self-image, body image, and desire and navigating ways to gain control.	Intermediate	49-54
9	The Cyberbullying Spectrum	Recognising various forms of online threats that are common through social media (e.g., online harassment, doxing, online bullying, and grooming), and learning ways to deal with these.	Intermediate	55-60
10	Screentime Detox	Learning healthy social media habits and limiting unhealthy screen time usage.	Beginner	61-63

This handbook will help you explore the digital world safely while having fun online. Through the following activities, you'll learn about scams, privacy, misinformation, and responsible internet use.

Sr No.	Activity	Objective	Level	Page No.
11	The Power of a Post	Exploring how information on social media can act as propaganda and influence society (in both good and bad ways!)	Intermediate	64-67
12	The Consent Test	Let's reflect on and determine our digital boundaries.	Intermediate	68-71
13	Your Digital Advocacy Plan	Introducing the wide varieties of ways in which we can use social media for online activism - what are the impacts and how useful can it be?	Advanced	72-74
14	Super Shopper Challenge	Let's simulate an online shopping experience and identify safe vs unsafe practices.	Beginner	75-77
15	The Cyber Escape Room	Applying cyber-security concepts in real-world-like scenarios and to equip us with stronger digital safety habits.	Advanced	78-83
16	Hacker Mafia	Understanding how hackers operate, the importance of cybersecurity practices, and how we can identify red flags.	Intermediate	84-87
17	First Aid-er	Let's identify signs of emotional distress caused by digital threats and equip us with emotional first-aid tools to support ourselves and others.	Beginner	88-92
18	Deepfake Detective	Understanding AI manipulated media and how to recognise it.	Intermediate	93-96
19	Stranger Danger	Let's recognise red flags of grooming in online interactions and equip ourselves with safe, healthy online response strategies	Advanced	97--100
20	Cyber SOS Mission	Let's discover where and how to report different types of online incidents on various platforms and official channels.	Advanced	101-104

An Overview of the Digital World

Objectives:

- Understand how daily choices online, from searches to likes, contribute to a personal data trail and influence future digital experiences.
- Discover how recommendation systems and algorithms quietly shape what we see, encouraging more thoughtful and intentional scrolling.
- Develop a sharper eye for misleading content and sensationalism, building habits of verifying before believing or sharing.
- Learn how to engage meaningfully online while staying alert to risks like privacy invasion, manipulation, and data misuse.
- Begin viewing your online presence as an evolving story, one that you actively shape with care, curiosity, and awareness.

The internet is an expansive and dynamic space that offers unlimited possibilities to create, explore, and learn. It places knowledge at our fingertips, enables instant connections, and fosters self-expression and innovation. However, alongside these opportunities come complexities and risks that young users must navigate with awareness and responsibility.

For adolescents, who are growing up in a digital-first world, understanding how the internet functions is crucial to their online engagement. The internet has transformed communication, education, and entertainment, but it also presents challenges such as misinformation, privacy breaches, and cyber threats. Every online action, from posting a photo to searching for information, leaves a digital footprint, shaping one's online identity and influencing personal privacy. Moreover, the content they interact with is often curated by algorithms, platform policies, and artificial intelligence, subtly shaping their perceptions and experiences. By equipping young people with the knowledge of these digital dynamics, we can empower them to critically evaluate information, make informed choices, and develop responsible online habits. This will ensure that our young internet users harness the internet's potential to the maximum while minimizing risks.

Incorporating this theme into the guidebook

This theme will be explored through interactive activities and discussions designed to engage young people in critical reflection and hands-on learning. Listed below are the activities that the facilitators can undertake to initiate discussion on this theme with young internet users.

Activity 1 – A Day in My Digital Life

Beginner

Objective:

Help participants recognise their digital presence and reflect on how they engage online.

About the Activity:

Participants map out their digital footprint by listing the platforms and websites they use daily, how they interact, and what data they leave behind.

An Overview of the Digital World

Activity 2 – The Algorithm Trap

Intermediate

Objective:

Build awareness about how algorithms shape online content and encourage critical thinking about personalisation.

About the Activity:

Facilitator demonstrates how different people get different search results or recommendations based on past behavior. Participants then discuss their own experiences with algorithms.

Activity 3 – Digital Time Capsule

Beginner

Objective:

Encourage reflection on long-term digital footprints and mindful online behavior.

About the Activity:

Participants imagine looking back on their current digital activity 10 years from now and write a letter to their future selves.

Activity 4 – Research-a-thon

Can be adapted to any level

Objective:

Develop skills for online research, responsible digital research and evaluating online sources.

About the Activity:

Participants work in teams to understand the research potential of the internet and learn how to find accurate, diverse sources on a given topic, comparing different types of online information.

Social Media and Socialising

Objectives:

- Introduction to social media and its possibilities
- Understanding algorithms and (fake/mis/dis) information on social media
- Addressing online harassment, digital consent, privacy, and responding to threats.
- Social media wellbeing, personal expression and advocacy: Self-image and confidence, screen-time balance, responsible behaviour, and building positive online communities.

Social media plays a major role in the lives of young people; it is central to their ways of connecting, learning, navigating the world, and even advocating for change. In fact, we all use social media in our everyday lives - whether it is to see pictures of friends who live far away, read news from independent journalists, listen to music, find jobs or order food and groceries! For young people, who have grown up with social media from a young age, social media can be an important space for creativity and self-expression, because it offers an opportunity to choose how one depicts themselves to others.

However, using social media also comes with its set of challenges and risks, such as misinformation, privacy concerns, and online harassment. What we see online isn't always by chance. Most platforms use algorithms to show content based on past interactions and usage patterns. While this can make social media feel more personal, it can also create echo chambers that limit exposure to different perspectives and reinforce unchecked misinformation. Given this spread of false information, fact-checking, critical thinking and reflection are crucial skills to master for all young people who engage with social media. This is especially true when using social media as a powerful tool for raising awareness and making a difference – using social media, young people have spread important messages, connected with causes they care about, and even led entire movements! Responsible activism, therefore, means sharing genuine and fact-checking information to create positive change.

Additionally, given how intertwined social media has become within our lives, understanding online privacy is essential to using it safely. Young people should be encouraged to balance sharing their experiences and feelings with protecting their personal information. There already exist mechanisms such as privacy settings, creating strong passwords, and using two-factor authentication (2FA). Furthermore, to prevent threats like cyberbullying and online grooming, young people can be equipped with methods to recognise and respond to these situations, and to respect digital consent - their own and others!

It is important, now more than ever, for young people to access social media in a healthy and safe way, that doesn't compromise their privacy, wellbeing, or confidence, while allowing them to explore the possibilities of connecting online! This module will help young people think critically about their social media use and explore ways to stay safe while making the most of their online experiences.

Incorporating this theme into the guidebook

This theme will be explored through interactive activities and discussions designed to engage young people in critical reflection and hands-on learning. Listed below are the activities that the facilitators can undertake to initiate discussion on this theme with young internet users.

Activity 5 - Lock It Up

Advanced

Objective:

Help participants learn critical cybersecurity tools (generating passwords and 2FA) to protect their social media accounts..

Social Media and Socialising

About the Activity:

Participants learn to outsmart hackers by identifying weak passwords, crafting strong ones using profile clues, and debunking myths to build safer online habits.

Activity 6 – Fake or Fact?

Can be adapted to any level

Objective:

Introduce fact-checking through the SUCS method and recognising mis-information/fake information.

About the Activity:

Participants analyse various news headlines and apply the SUCS method to determine authenticity, building practical fact-checking skills.

Activity 7 – The Misinformation Race

Beginner

Objective:

Demonstrating how fast fake news spreads and exploring ways to avoid engaging or participating in it.

About the Activity:

Participants simulate how misinformation spreads and transforms through a whisper-down-the-lane activity, demonstrating how facts change during transmission.

Activity 8 – The Social Media Mirror

Intermediate

Objective:

Reflecting on the emotional impact social media can have on us such as self-image, body image, and desire. Navigating ways to gain control over this.

About the Activity:

Participants track their emotional reactions using emoji cards, and engage in guided group discussions to reflect on how different types of social media content influence them. They practice recognising emotional triggers and identifying healthier ways to respond online.

Social Media and Socialising

Activity 9 – The Cyberbullying Spectrum

Intermediate

Objective:

Recognising various forms of online threats that are common through social media (e.g., online harassment, doxxing, online bullying, and grooming), and learning ways to deal with these.

About the Activity:

Participants explore how different online actions can impact people in varied and often invisible ways. The session creates a safe, environment to recognise harmful behaviors, understand power dynamics, and learn how to respond.

Activity 10 – Screentime Detox

Beginner

Objective:

Learning healthy social media habits and limiting unhealthy screen time usage.

About the Activity:

Participants explore the triggers and effects of their screen use through self-audits and small group discussions. They then create a personalised screentime detox plan focused on self-awareness and practical behavior shifts.

Activity 11 – The Power of a Post

Intermediate

Objective:

Exploring how information on social media can act as propaganda and influence society (in both good and bad ways!)

About the Activity:

Participants work in small groups to critically analyse real online content, unpacking the perspectives, facts, or voices behind each post. They then dive deeper to examine those that are missing and how different people interpret content differently.

Activity 12 – The Consent Test

Intermediate

Objective:

Encouraging participants to reflect on and determine their digital boundaries.

About the Activity:

Participants evaluate various online scenarios to assess whether consent was respected. Through discussion and reflection, learners will explore the complexities of digital consent, understand how to navigate boundary-setting, and recognise the importance of maintaining respectful online relationships.

Social Media and Socialising

Activity 13 – Your Digital Advocacy Plan

Advanced

Objective:

Introducing participants to the wide varieties of ways in which they can use social media for online activism - what are the impacts and how useful can it be?

About the Activity:

Participants will work in groups to develop a digital advocacy plan for a cause, considering key elements like target audience, content strategy, and a clear call to action. They will also face real-world challenges that require them to adjust their strategies and discuss the ethical implications of their campaign's impact.

Activity 18 – Deepfake Detective

Intermediate

Objective:

Help learners identify deepfakes and understand the implications of AI-generated content in media.

About the Activity:

Participants examine genuine and AI-generated content to identify manipulation markers and verify authenticity of digital media

Activity 20 – Cyber SOS Mission

Advanced

Objective:

Helps participants actively discover where and how to report different types of online incidents on various platforms and official channels.

About the Activity:

Through presentations and a guided discussion, students work in groups to tackle realistic online incident scenarios by investigating where and how to report them, what immediate actions to take, and what official helplines or legal options are available.

Objectives:

- Learn to identify common online shopping risks like scams, phishing attempts, and data misuse, and how to avoid them.
- Develop skills to recognise trustworthy websites, secure payment options, and red flags in product listings or promotions.
- Understand how personal data is collected during online shopping and how to protect it, including using privacy settings and secure payment methods.
- Gain awareness of how targeted ads and promotions influence shopping habits, and how to make informed, responsible purchasing decisions.
- Know consumer rights and how to assert them when facing issues such as fraud, faulty products, or poor customer service.

Online shopping has become a part of our everyday life. From ordering groceries to buying gadgets, the internet has made purchasing convenient and instant. However, with this convenience comes risk. Scams, phishing attempts, and data misuse are common challenges in the world of e-commerce.

For young people, online shopping isn't just a convenience but often a first step into digital independence. Many adolescents and young adults today shop online for clothes, books, gadgets, and even food delivery. They're exposed to targeted ads, limited time offers, influencer promotions, and curated recommendations, all of which can shape their spending habits and perceptions of value. However, this also makes them more vulnerable to manipulation, scams, and impulsive purchases. They may not always understand what makes a website trustworthy, how their data is being collected, or what to do if something goes wrong. Without awareness and critical thinking, they risk falling into traps like fake deals, phishing links, or unreliable sellers.

This module aims to equip young digital consumers with the tools they need to navigate online marketplaces safely and responsibly, making informed decisions, protecting their personal information, and knowing when and how to assert their rights.

Incorporating this theme into the guidebook

This theme will be explored through interactive activities and discussions designed to engage young people in critical reflection and hands-on learning. Listed below are the activities that the facilitators can undertake to initiate discussion on this theme with young internet users.

Activity 2 – The Algorithm Trap

Intermediate

Objective:

Build awareness about how algorithms shape online content and encourage critical thinking about personalisation.

About the Activity:

Facilitator demonstrates how different people get different search results or recommendations based on past behavior. Participants then discuss their own experiences with algorithms.

Happy Shopping! Shopping Safely Online

Activity 5 – Lock It Up

Advanced

Objective:

Help participants learn critical cybersecurity tools (generating passwords and 2FA) to protect their social media accounts.

About the Activity:

Participants learn to outsmart hackers by identifying weak passwords, crafting strong ones using profile clues, and debunking myths to build safer online habits.

Activity 14 – Super Shopper

Beginner

Objective:

Help learners simulate an online shopping experience and identify safe vs unsafe practices.

About the Activity:

Participants simulate an online shopping journey: from browsing to checkout, while identifying safe practices and potential red flags.

Activity 15 – The Cyber Escape Room

Advanced

Objective:

Helping participants learn critical and more complex cybersecurity tools to protect themselves (e.g., anti-virus, anti-hacking tools, what to do in cases of grooming etc.)

About the Activity:

Teams solve a series of puzzles based on real-life digital threats to unlock clues and “escape” by correctly identifying safety strategies at each challenge station. Participants gain hands-on experience in protecting their digital lives.

Activity 16 – Hacker Mafia

Intermediate

Objective:

Teach students how hackers operate, the importance of cybersecurity practices, and how to identify red flags, through a thrilling social deduction game

About the Activity:

Participants take on the roles of hackers, ethical hackers, firewalls, and cyber citizens to experience real-world digital threat scenarios. Through this social deduction game, they uncover secret identities and discuss tactics used for hacking and defense and learn to stay safe online.

The World of Online Gaming

Objectives:

- Introduction to the world of online gaming and understanding its appeal, social potential, risks and impact on digital behaviour and well-being
- Recognising online harassment and threats while gaming, and ensuring privacy, safety and digital consent
- Ensuring wellbeing while online gaming: building positive online communities, screen-time balance, responsible behaviour, responding to threats and seeking help

Whether young people are playing casually with friends or engaging in competitive esports, online gaming can be an exciting social experience! From using consoles and equipment for gaming, to playing app-based games on smartphones, online gaming offers young people a way to connect, compete, and collaborate with others around the world. It can also be a space for creativity, problem-solving, and learning new information and skills such as pattern recognition, general knowledge, agility, and hand-eye coordination.

But just like social media, it comes with challenges, including online harassment, privacy risks, and screen-time balance. Online interactions in games can sometimes be unpredictable because the opposite player is not always a known individual. This can lead to players experiencing cyberbullying, harassment, or even grooming, with trash talk quickly crossing the line into harmful behavior. This holds even truer for female gamers, of which, over 70% have faced misogyny or gender-based discrimination, and over 30% have faced direct abuse. In multiplayer games, players often share voice chats, messages, and gameplay content, where digital consent and mindfulness is crucial. Young gamers would benefit from learning how to set boundaries, reporting issues, and seeking support if needed.

Additionally, cybersecurity is an important topic for those who engage in online games, since most games require accounts, logins, and personal data. Phishing scams, fake game downloads, and in-game purchases are all threats that can put accounts and players at risk; it is important to learn how to recognise these risks and to proactively use tools like anti-virus and 2-Factor Authentication to safeguard private information.

For many young people, gaming can be an escape into an imaginary world full of possibilities. However, when it becomes a habit or unhealthy coping mechanism, it can begin to affect sleep, focus, and mental health. Therefore, while learning how to game, gamers should also learn the importance of building positive online communities and ensuring their mental well-being. This session will help young people think critically about their gaming habits and explore how to create a safer, more positive gaming environment for themselves and others.

Incorporating this theme into the guidebook

This theme will be explored through interactive activities and discussions designed to engage young people in critical reflection and hands-on learning. Listed below are the activities that the facilitators can undertake to initiate discussion on this theme with young internet users.

Activity 5 – Lock It Up

Advanced

Objective:

Help participants learn critical cybersecurity tools (generating passwords and 2FA) to protect their social media accounts.

About the Activity:

Participants learn to outsmart hackers by identifying weak passwords, crafting strong ones using profile clues, and debunking myths to build safer online habits.

The World of Online Gaming

Activity 9 – The Cyberbullying Spectrum

Intermediate

Objective:

Recognising various forms of online threats that are common through social media (e.g., online harassment, doxxing, online bullying, and grooming), and learning ways to deal with these.

About the Activity:

Participants explore how different online actions can impact people in varied and often invisible ways. The session creates a safe, environment to recognise harmful behaviors, understand power dynamics, and learn how to respond.

Activity 10 – Screentime Detox

Beginner

Objective:

Learning healthy online social media habits and limiting unhealthy screentime usage.

About the Activity:

Participants explore the triggers and effects of their screen use through self-audits and small group discussions. They then create a personalised screentime detox plan focused on self-awareness and practical behavior shifts.

Activity 12 – The Consent Test

Intermediate

Objective:

Encouraging participants to reflect on and determine their digital boundaries.

About the Activity:

Participants evaluate various online scenarios to assess whether consent was respected. Through discussion and reflection, learners will explore the complexities of digital consent, understand how to navigate boundary-setting, and recognise the importance of maintaining respectful online relationships.

The World of Online Gaming

Activity 15 – The Cyber Escape Room

Advanced

Objective:

Helping participants learn critical and more complex cybersecurity tools to protect themselves (e.g., anti-virus, anti-hacking tools, what to do in cases of grooming etc.)

About the Activity:

Teams solve a series of puzzles based on real-life digital threats to unlock clues and “escape” by correctly identifying safety strategies at each challenge station. Participants gain hands-on experience in protecting their digital lives.

Activity 17 – First Aider

Beginner

Objective:

In cases of mental distress or online threats, ensuring there is a toolkit with activities to help in de-stressing and supporting ourselves and others in distressing situations.

About the Activity:

Participants, as part of a “Support Squad”, are tasked with responding to realistic digital distress scenarios using empathy-driven strategies. They learn to offer meaningful support and foster safer, more caring digital spaces.

Activity 19 – Stranger Danger

Advanced

Objective:

Helps participants recognise red flags of grooming in online interactions and equip themselves with safe, healthy online response strategies.

About the Activity:

Participants analyse real-world-inspired online conversation snippets to identify manipulative tactics. Through group discussion and role-play, they practice healthy digital responses, turning awareness into confident, actionable safety skills.

Objectives:

- Analyse online content beyond face value by asking deeper questions about its origin, intent, accuracy, and potential biases.
- Understand digital manipulation and how these affect the perception of truth.
- Reflect on how all forms of media , not just fake news , shape opinions, reinforce stereotypes, and subtly influence emotions and decision-making.
- Explore strategies to verify claims, cross-check with trusted sources, and evaluate the credibility and intent behind the information shared online.

In today's digital landscape, information flows constantly from countless sources. From news articles and social media posts to videos and images, young people are bombarded with content that shapes their understanding of the world. However, not all information is created equal. The rise of misinformation, disinformation, and AI-generated content has made critical evaluation skills more important than ever.

For young people, navigating online information isn't just about consuming content but developing the ability to question it, reflect on how it makes them feel, and developing the ability to discern fact from fiction. Many adolescents and young adults today get their news primarily through social media platforms, where algorithms curate content based on engagement rather than accuracy. These algorithms personalise what they see online, creating filter bubbles that show them content similar to what they've liked or engaged with before. While this can make feeds feel familiar and entertaining, it also limits their exposure to new ideas and different viewpoints. They're exposed to clickbait headlines, emotionally charged content, and increasingly sophisticated fake media like deepfakes. Without proper evaluation skills, they risk forming worldviews based on manipulated or unverified information.

But beyond just spotting fake content, it's also important to recognise that all media influences us in some way. Every video, post, image or story is created by someone , and often, it carries that person's or organisation's opinions, interests, and perspective. Media can affect the way young adults think about people, places, or events, sometimes without them even realizing it. And so, they might share content simply because we agree with it, without checking if it's true. This can shape opinions, create stereotypes, and leave out voices that are equally important to hear.

This is why young digital citizens need to learn to view all media and not just obviously fake or sensational content with a critical lens. This means paying close attention to what's being said, how it's being presented and who is presenting or saying it. Being mindful of the way media affects them, will in turn help prevent them from being easily influenced or manipulated. It is necessary to encourage them to ask deeper questions about the content they encounter like: Who created this message? What might be their reason for sharing this? Is this showing the whole story, or just one side? What facts support this claim and are there other trusted sources supporting this too? Whose version of the truth is being shown here? Is there another version? Whose voice is missing? How is this information trying to make me feel and why?

The aim is not just to verify facts but to uncover bias, recognise media's influence and reflect whose perspective is being presented as the truth. By building these critical thinking and questioning skills, young adults will learn to unpack different viewpoints, understand when content is incomplete or one-sided, and develop more thoughtful, well-rounded views about them.

This module aims to equip young digital citizens with the tools they need to think critically about online information. Evaluating sources, identifying manipulation techniques, fact-checking effectively, recognising AI-generated content, and using digital platforms responsibly for advocacy and awareness.

Navigating Online Information and Media

Incorporating this theme into the guidebook

This theme will be explored through interactive activities and discussions designed to engage young people in critical reflection and hands-on learning. Listed below are the activities that the facilitators can undertake to initiate discussion on this theme with young internet users.

Activity 6 – Fake or Fact?

Can be adapted to any level

Objective:

Introduce fact-checking through the SUCS method and recognising mis-information/fake information.

About the Activity:

Participants analyse various news headlines and apply the SUCS method to determine authenticity, building practical fact-checking skills.

Activity 7 – The Misinformation Race

Beginner

Objective:

Demonstrating how fast fake news spreads and exploring ways to avoid engaging or participating in it.

About the Activity:

Participants simulate how misinformation spreads and transforms through a whisper-down-the-lane activity, demonstrating how facts change during transmission.

Activity 11 – The Power of a Post

Intermediate

Objective:

Exploring how information on social media can act as propaganda and influence society (in both good and bad ways!)

About the Activity:

Participants work in small groups to critically analyse real online content, unpacking the perspectives, facts, or voices behind each post. They then dive deeper to examine those that are missing and how different people interpret content differently.

Navigating Online Information and Media

Activity 18 – Deepfake Detective

Intermediate

Objective:

Help learners identify deepfakes and understand the implications of AI-generated content in media.

About the Activity:

Participants examine genuine and AI-generated content to identify manipulation markers and verify authenticity of digital media.

Activity 20 – Cyber SOS Mission

Advanced

Objective:

Helps participants actively discover where and how to report different types of online incidents on various platforms and official channels.

About the Activity:

Through presentations and a guided discussion, students work in groups to tackle realistic online incident scenarios by investigating where and how to report them, what immediate actions to take, and what official helplines or legal options are available.

Activities



Activity 1: A Day in My Digital Life

Objective

This activity helps participants visualize their digital footprint by mapping out their daily online activities. The goal is to create awareness of how they engage with the digital world, what data they leave behind, and how their online presence shapes their identity.

Prep Required:

- CTRL + ALT + PROTECT (Pages 10-13) – Student Handbook on Digital Safety.
- "[Why Privacy Matters Even If You Have Nothing to Hide](#)" – TED Talk by Glenn Greenwald
- [What happens to your personal data on social media & why should you care about privacy?](#) - The News Minute

Time Required 30-40 Minutes

Resources Needed

- Chart paper or large sheets (for group work)
- Markers, pens, and sticky notes
- A projector or whiteboard (if demonstrating examples)

Phase 1: Setting the Context (5–7 minutes)

[Start with a conversation about the group's usage pattern online, you can start with a simple activity where you ask the participants to raise their hand if they have seen something funny on the internet in the last week, wave their hands if they have a favourite musician or music video, and clap thrice if they have been told/have heard the phrase 'stop using the phone so much'. After this you can segue into general conversation.]

- How many hours do you think you spend online each day? (Let participants estimate before sharing research-backed data on screen time averages.)
- What are the different ways we use the internet daily? (e.g., chatting, studying, watching videos, gaming, shopping, social media, etc.)
- Do we think about what we're sharing online while using these platforms? What kind of information is being collected about us?

Your digital footprint is everything you leave behind when using the internet, whether you actively post, like, and comment or passively allow cookies to track your browsing. This includes public information (what you share) and hidden data (what is collected about you). Imagine you're walking through a snowy path. Every step you take leaves a footprint, whether you notice it or not. The internet works the same way.

There are two types of digital footprints:

1. Active – When you intentionally share (e.g., posting on social media, signing up for newsletters).
2. Passive – When websites track your behavior (e.g., browsing history, location tracking, targeted ads).

Activity 1: A Day in My Digital Life

Phase 2: Activity: Mapping Our Digital Footprint (25 minutes)

First 5 minutes:

Now, let's see what footprint we have already left behind. Take the piece of paper and divide it into three sections. List the following down in each section: Give each participant a worksheet or ask them to divide their page into three sections:

- Platforms/apps used daily (e.g., Instagram, Google, YouTube, WhatsApp, Snapchat, Amazon))
- What they do on these platforms (e.g., posting, searching, commenting, liking, watching, gaming)
- What data they leave behind (e.g., search history, location, personal details, interactions, preferences)

Facilitation Tip!

- Walk around and check in, encourage them to think beyond obvious apps , maps, e-wallets, shopping apps, online games, health trackers, apps for music, food delivery, banking,etc

Next 10 minutes:

We are going to create a collective “digital footprint map” by listing common online activities and the types of data left behind.

[Divide the students to form groups of 5-7 and give them 10 mins to create a common digital footprint map]

Alright, let's look at these maps you've all created. What you see here isn't just a list of apps or activities , it's a snapshot of your digital life.

Allow students to look at the maps created by each group and then bring them together to discuss the following questions

- Did anything surprise you about your digital footprint?
- If a stranger looked at your online activity, what would they learn about you? (Are participants able to make inferences like person A from location B spends time on C app and prefers X music/view/food over Y)

Our online actions shape our digital identity - What do you think happens to all this information about you , your likes, dislikes, locations, shopping habits, and even how fast you scroll through a post? Data gets collected, analysed, and often shared with or sold to advertisers or data companies. Even things you didn't mean to share , like your location, device type, and browsing patterns , get packaged and passed along. Let's look at a couple of videos and come back to discuss some questions

[“Who's buying and selling your personal information?”](#) - CBC KidsNews

[“Teen Voices: Oversharing and Your Digital Footprint”](#) - Common Sense Education

Questions for the group based on the videos

- Would you use a free app differently if you knew it was collecting and selling your data?
- How do companies collect and use data?

In case the video cannot be screened, the facilitator can watch the videos, take note of the discussion points and incorporate them into the discussion.

Activity 1: A Day in My Digital Life

Debrief!

- Apps and websites track how long you stay on a page, what you click, even how fast you scroll.
- Voice assistants and smart devices (e.g., Alexa, Siri) can collect audio data even when you're not actively using them.
- Websites use cookies and trackers to collect data, even if you don't have an account.
- Third-party advertisers track users across multiple sites to create behavioral profiles.
- Many free apps collect and sell data to ad companies, your activity is the product.

Phase 3: Discussion & Takeaways , Conclusion (10–15 minutes)

What are some simple ways to be more mindful? *[take responses from the group, and then add the following]*

- Check Privacy Settings: Regularly review app permissions and turn off unnecessary tracking.
- Be Intentional About Sharing: Avoid oversharing personal details.
- Use Private Browsing or VPNs: Reduce passive data collection.
- Fact-check Before Engaging: Be mindful of misinformation and online manipulation. We will learn more about this in [Activity 6](#) that will equip us with methods to distinguish fact from fiction.

Fun Fact!

A VPN stands for Virtual Private Network.

Think of it like a secret tunnel for your internet connection.

When you go online, your device sends information through public networks , like roads everyone can see. A VPN creates a private, encrypted tunnel that hides your activity from hackers, websites, and even your internet provider.

It also hides your real location and IP address by connecting you through a server in another city or country.

So what does this mean for you?

It helps keep your data safe on public Wi-Fi

Lets you access content safely from different regions

And makes it harder for people to track what you're doing online

But remember , a VPN isn't a magic shield. You still need to be careful with what you click and share.

Activity 1: A Day in My Digital Life

Conclusion

How we engage online and what choices we make online. You've just spent some time mapping out your digital world, and honestly, it's kind of wild how much of ourselves we leave behind without even noticing, isn't it? Before we wrap up, take a moment and think: What is it that my online activities and interactions sum up to?

It's not about deleting everything or going off the grid, but about being a little more conscious of how we show up online.

Optional Challenge to do After Class:

So here's a small challenge for you: Today, pick one app you use the most and check its privacy settings. See what it's tracking. Maybe switch off something you don't need. And if you discover anything surprising, weird, or interesting, share it with a friend. These little conversations matter more than we realize.

Alright, we'll pause here for now, but keep those digital detective glasses on because, trust me, we'll be digging deeper into these online worlds in the next activities.

Alternative Ways to Engage

- **Live Polling:** Use an online poll (like Mentimeter or Kahoot) to let participants guess which platforms collect what kind of data.
- **Role-Play:** One participant acts as "The Internet", another as "The User.". "The Internet" explains what they know about "The User" based on their activity.
- **Avatars:** Let participants design a "digital avatar" based on their online footprint, what does the internet "see" about them?

Activity 2: The Algorithm Trap

Objective

This activity will help students or participants to understand how algorithms work, what influences the content we see online, and how it can shape opinions, limit exposure to diverse perspectives, and create echo chambers.

Prep Required:

- CTRL + ALT + PROTECT (Pages 10-13) – Student Handbook on Digital Safety.
- [Algorithms and Propaganda: How social media algorithms amplify extremism](#) – ORF Article
- [What is an algorithm?](#) – TEDx Talk
- [How ads follow you around the internet](#) – VOX

Time Required 30-40 Minutes

Resources Needed

- Pre-prepared character personas (explained below) - one for every 3 participants
- [Pre-prepared 20 sample news/social media headlines](#)
- A3 chart-paper
- At least one phone device to show how content changes with location, language etc. (if available)

Phase 1: Setting the Context (5-7 minutes)

Okay , before we jump into today's activity, tell me ,

- What's something you've seen online lately that everyone's been talking about? It could be a meme, a news story, a viral video, a dance trend on Instagram or TikTok, or even a strange ad. *[Take 4-5 quick answers. Facilitator should have 1-2 recent examples from their end to start the discussion if required]*
- How do you think you ended up seeing these posts? *[Take some answers]*
- Have you ever noticed that just after you finish talking about buying a certain item, you suddenly see advertisements for it on your phone? What do you think is happening here? Is your phone listening to you? *[Take a few participant guesses. Accept all answers , affirm and note them]*

Some people say 'my phone is listening to me!' , and honestly, it can feel that way. But actually, it's less spooky and more strategic. What happens is , your phone, and even your friends' devices nearby, might have searched for the same thing recently, or you've clicked on something similar before. Platforms track not just what you search but what people around you are doing too. Therefore, if you and your friends were talking about purses, and someone near you overheard and searched for purses, you may also start getting ads for purses!

- Has anyone heard of algorithms before? What do you think an algorithm is? *[Take 2-3 answers , no wrong answers here]*

Facilitation Tip!

- You can play the following video from the extra resources section- [What is an algorithm?](#) - TEDx Talk

Activity 2: The Algorithm Trap

An algorithm is a set of rules or steps a platform (e.g., social media, advertisements, news sites) follows to decide what content to show you. These platforms observe your digital interactions and behaviours (what you click, like, share, watch) and then try to give you more of the same, to keep you on the platform longer, buy certain items, or cater news to you. While this can be helpful, it can also trap us in a 'filter bubble,' where we only see one side of the world.

Think of it like a digital DJ that watches what you like, click, watch, or comment on, and then plays more of the same songs or videos to keep you dancing on the platform.

Phase 2: Activity (20 minutes)

Step 1 (5 minutes):

[Split students into small groups of 3-5. Assign each group a user profile (a fictional character with a short description). Some examples include:

- *Shireen: 16, loves skateboarding and hip hop, likes watching funny cat videos.*
- *Meera: 15, shares climate activism posts, searches for best trekking spots nearby*
- *Rohan: 17, watches cooking videos and K-pop content.*
- *Sarah: 13, loves gaming and history news, shares poetry online*
- *Kiran: 14, recently searched for workout tips and motivation, follows feminist pages.]*

Step 2 (5 minutes):

Take a minute to read about your character within the group. Think about what kind of things they might like, what topics they'd search for, and what kind of posts might show up on their feed.

[Prompts you can use: What would they watch on YouTube? What memes would they share? What news would interest them? What would they skip?]

[After this, read out some titles of news items, memes, and videos, and ask the teams to decide if they want their character to see the post. They should write down each post that they choose on their chart-paper.]

The examples read out can include:

- Viral memes: *A new burger joint opens downtown.*
- Political opinions
- Sponsored ads (shoes, phone, gym plan, etc.)
- News stories (some real, some sensationalist): *NASA says they're closer to life on Mars; IPL: Shocking player transfer rumors.*
- Pet video
- Video game review: *Top 5 gaming laptops under ₹50k.*
- Health misinformation: *Is turmeric the cure to all illnesses?*
- Conspiracy theory
- Protest coverage
- Celebrity gossip : *10 celebrity looks that broke the internet.*
- Educational infographic: *Global temperatures hit a new record.*
- Music video
- Nature pictures or travel itinerary

Activity 2: The Algorithm Trap

Step 3 (5 minutes):

[After all the posts have been read out]

Alright, let's hear from a few groups. Which posts did you pick, and why?

[Let 2–3 groups share a couple of examples each.]

Prompt comparisons: Interesting, Group A picked this meme, but Group B skipped it. Why do you think that happened?

Step 4, Optional short activity if there is access to a device in the room (5 minutes):

Let's check this out live. This is what a YouTube or newsfeed looks like right now.

[Together with all the participants, make a note of the existing news feed on a device which has its system language settings in English. Next, change the system language on the device to the regional language or to Hindi. Notice the change in the newsfeed. Do the same activity, but this time, change the location of the device instead of the language.]

Notice any changes? Different kinds of news? Topics? How do you think location or language might be influencing what shows up?

Debrief

- Devices and sites track your activity and interests to cater content towards you
- Algorithms can also be influenced by preconceived notions like location, language and gender.
- You can get sucked into **echo chambers** without realising! Cross checking other sites, or breaking the rhythm of your algorithm from time to time can help you receive more balanced posts/information.

Fun Fact!

An echo chamber is an online space where people are mostly exposed to opinions, beliefs, and information that reflect and reinforce their own views, while alternative perspectives get filtered out or actively rejected. In an echo chamber, ideas “echo” back and forth within a closed loop, amplifying the same message over and over, whether it's about politics, trends, or even misinformation. It happens because:

- Social media algorithms show you content you already agree with or engage with.
- People tend to follow, friend, or interact with those who think like them.
- Communities or groups online can sometimes silence or exclude dissenting opinions.

Beware: They can stop you hearing other perspectives. Misinformation spreads faster. Harmful behavior can feel normal. And you might even start believing things just because everyone else around you does.

Activity 2: The Algorithm Trap

Phase 3: Discussion & Takeaways (10 minutes):

[Take some initial reflections and thoughts. Anything that was surprising?]

- Do you think your feed curation was an accurate representation of your character? What assumptions did you make about your character?
- Besides interests, what are some other factors that can influence algorithms? [e.g., language, gender, religion, location etc.] Did you notice any patterns?
- Group x included ___ post, but group y did not. Do you think this might shape the decisions your characters make? In what ways?
- Do you think this happens to you on real platforms, and how do you feel about it?
- Have you noticed whether your feed includes anything misleading or repetitive? What might we miss out on by only seeing things we already agree with?

Tips for navigating algorithms: Algorithms aren't evil - they're designed to maximise engagement. But because of that, they can often show us more of the same things and less of what challenges us! This can lead to echo chambers and polarisation. We can be smart about this by:

- Intentionally following people who think differently than you to seek different viewpoints! This can help change up our feed, expose us to new ideas, or help us become more informed about our opinions.
- Clicking on unfamiliar or diverse content intentionally and using "explore" or "discover" features in our social media.
- Questioning why we're seeing what we see and using other research methods to corroborate news or facts.
- Regularly reviewing and resetting our feed settings, if possible.

Conclusion

Pretty interesting how a few clicks, likes, and shares can start shaping what kind of world we see online, right? It's not just about what we choose to look at, but also what gets quietly filtered out without us even noticing.

Before we call it a day, here's something to think about: If your feed only showed you things you already agree with or enjoy, what might you be missing out on? Could that change the way you see certain people, issues, or even yourself? Algorithms aren't villains, but it's good to remember we're not just passive passengers online. You get to grab the steering wheel sometimes too.

Optional Challenges to do After Class:

- Tonight, open your social media or YouTube and click on something totally outside your usual interests, a different point of view, a new topic, or a creator you've never heard of. Notice how your recommendations start shifting.
- Explore video or social media "explore" pages using dummy accounts and reflect on how quickly recommendations get personalised.

Activity 3: Digital Time Capsule

Objective

This activity helps participants reflect on how their overall digital presence shapes how others perceive them, what might be misunderstood, and how to be more intentional about the image they project online.

Prep Required:

- Write down prompts (mentioned below) on slips of paper if required
- CTRL + ALT + PROTECT (Pages 10-13) – Student Handbook on Digital Safety.
- [The power of digital footprint](#) – Common Sense Media’s Digital Footprint Toolkit

Time Required 35-40 minutes

Resources Needed

- A4 or A3 paper
- Pens/markers
- Optional: Envelopes or folders (to seal the letters)
- Optional: Printed prompt slips

Phase 1: Setting the Context (5-7 minutes)

I want to ask you something simple but important ,

- What do you think “digital presence” means? What can it include? *[Wait for 2-3 responses, then gently expand]*
- Your digital presence is much bigger than just social media - it could include your username, comments you leave on websites or videos, the way you write on learning platforms, your public work or projects, the way you show up in video calls, and more! Anytime you share something online, even if it is only with a few people, it becomes public.
- If someone scrolled through your account or your search history for the past month, what do you think they’d learn about you? What would they miss out on? *[Let a few volunteers share.]*
- Have you ever thought someone was a certain way online, and they turned out totally different in real life? Or maybe the opposite , have you ever judged someone too quickly by what they posted? *[Take a couple of responses. Be mindful to avoid shaming or personal teasing , steer it towards reflection.]*
- Have you ever deleted something you shared online? Why? What happened afterwards?

Every post, comment, and photo we put online becomes a part of our digital footprint. While we may forget what we’ve said or shared, the internet often doesn’t! Today, we’re going to reflect on what kind of story our digital footprints are telling and what we might want them to tell, years from now.

Activity 3: Digital Time Capsule

Phase 2: Activity (20 minutes)

Step 1: Group Discussion (10 minutes)

Now, I want you to pair up with someone sitting near you. In your pairs, you'll have 5 minutes to chat about these questions. No need to overthink, just be honest and relaxed. The aim is to listen to each other's stories, not to judge.

[Encourage mixed pairs if possible, experienced digital users with newer users, for a range of perspectives. After 5 minutes, prompt pairs to share one interesting thing they learned about their partner.]

Prompts for Frequent Internet Users:

- What kinds of things do you share online? What drives you to share it?
- What are some digital habits you think your future you might laugh at?
- Is there anything you wish you hadn't shared online?
- What's something online that makes you feel proud or inspired?
- Do you think the internet "remembers" things forever?

Prompts for New/Less Frequent Internet Users:

- If you had a phone or internet connection, what's something you'd like to share or learn about?
- What's something you've heard or seen (in books, radio, TV, or conversations) that made you feel proud, hopeful, or inspired?
- If someone were to post something about you online without asking, how would you feel?
- If you could show the world one thing about your life or your friends, what would it be?
- Do you think the internet "remembers" things forever?

Step 2: Writing the Time Capsule Letter (10 minutes)

Now it's time for you to have a quiet conversation with yourself. I want you to imagine it's the year 2035, 10 years from now. You've grown, learned new things, and you come across a letter from your younger self from today. What would you want that letter to say about your relationship with the digital world?

[Encourage participants to use honesty and thoughtfulness. If you have envelopes available, you can ask participants to seal their letters and address it to themselves 10 years later!]

Some prompts to help participants write include:

- Right now, the things I care most about online are...
- I hope you're still using the internet to...
- Please remember that time I...
- Things I hope you've learned since 2025...
- Stuff I hope no one ever screenshots...

Activity 3: Digital Time Capsule

Phase 3: Discussion & Takeaways , Conclusion (10–15 minutes)

Key Discussion Questions (10 minutes)

If anyone would like to, could you share one line or thought from your letter? No pressure , just anything you feel like voicing out.

[Let 2-3 volunteers share. After this, encourage participants to reflect and discuss together.]

Some questions to ask include:

- How did it feel to write a letter to your future self?
- Did you notice any patterns or themes in what others around you are sharing online?
- Were there things you felt unsure or uncomfortable about?
- What does this activity make you think about when it comes to your own digital footprint and about the information you share online?
- What are some things to keep in mind when using the internet?
 - e.g., thinking about what you want to keep private vs public. What is important to share online?
 - How would your 'future you' feel about the way you use the internet and the things you share?
 - Think about your digital legacy - what story do you want it to tell?

Facilitation Tip!

[If participants struggle to respond, gently paraphrase their letters back into a question. "Some of you mentioned you'd like to learn new things online, what are those? And what stops you right now?"]

Conclusion

Our digital lives are a huge part of who we are today, and we often use the internet as our mirror or a projection of our identity, emotions and beliefs. This has opened up many possibilities and opportunities, and it's important to learn how to navigate it responsibly and safely!

So here's something to think about:

If someone could only know you through your digital presence, what would you want them to know?

And maybe tonight, before you post, comment, or share something, pause for a second and ask, "Would future-me be proud of this?"

This is a reminder that being mindful about what we post and share isn't about fear - it's about self-awareness, intention, and control. Your future self will thank you for it. Your digital story is yours to shape and it's never too late to rewrite a chapter.

Activity 4: Research-a-thon

Objective

This session helps participants understand the research potential of the internet and learn how to find accurate, diverse sources on a given topic, comparing different types of online information. It enhances their understanding of how to filter content, choose strong keywords, and identify credible sources. The goal is to sharpen online research skills while making the process engaging and competitive.

Prep Required:

- [The Internet: How Search Works](#) – Code.org
- [Are Search Results Actually Biased?](#) – TEDx Thomas Rowson
- In case there is no access to the internet, the facilitator can prepare a presentation with screenshots explaining the tools for effective research and the activity can be conducted as homework
- CTRL + ALT + PROTECT (Pages 72-74) – Student Handbook on Digital Safety.

Time Required 35-40 minutes

Resources Needed

- Laptops/tablets with internet access (1 per team)
- Projector or whiteboard (for instructions and scoring)
- Pre-prepared research prompts/questions
- Scoring sheets

Phase 1: Setting the Context (10–15 minutes)

Before we dive into the activity, let's think about how we usually look for information online.

- How do you usually search for information online? *[Wait for answers: social media, news apps, tv, parents, friends, teachers, etc]*
- Have you ever found search results to be irrelevant or confusing? *[Pause for hands, comments]*
- How can you tell if a piece of information is a fact or just someone's opinion online? *[Wait for some thoughts and then expand]*
- A fact is something you can prove with evidence , like 'Water boils at 100°C'. An opinion is a personal belief , like 'I think pineapple on pizza is the best.' The internet often mixes these two together in ways that aren't obvious
- Have you ever been overwhelmed by too many results, or struggled to find the right ones? *[If you don't get a response. Using the projector, run a search for some topic and expand how for every search, the engine generates 1000s of results.]*

[Play the following video from the extra resource "The Internet: How Search Works" by code.org]

Today, you'll participate in a race- to see who's the best at finding credible information quickly and smartly. Let's get started with the Research-a-thon! Can any one guess the challenge?

Activity 4: Research-a-thon

Effective internet research is not just about typing the question, it's about knowing the right keywords, filters, and sources. Let me walk you through each of these essential tools.

[Using an example topic like AI in Education, run the students through each of the following tools to help evaluate the process]

- **Keywords:** Type in simple search terms with only important keywords (the lesser the words, the more accurate the result). Keep altering the keywords till you get the most relevant results.
Protip: If you add quotation marks around your keywords then it will look for sources with keywords in that exact order.
- **Filters:** You can use simple tricks like adding AND, OR, NOT to filter your search (e.g., and= both keywords to be found, or= either keywords to be found, not= keywords to be excluded). Additionally, there are advanced search tools in the search engine that allow you filter based on specific information (e.g., language, date of publishing, region, where the terms appear, etc.)
- **Sources:** Even after all this filtering you will still have many sources to shift through! It is important to evaluate the URL and the domain in particular to decide if the source is reliable or not. (Does the URL look like a well-known site? Is it a forum or opinion site? Is it an educational or government institution?) Look out for and avoid search results tagged as “sponsored” or “ad”.
Protip: The filter options allow you to run a site-specific search (e.g., .gov, .edu)
- **Tabs:** Depending on the kind of information you are looking for (e.g., scientific papers, podcasts, videos, infographics), the search engine provides various tabs (e.g., Books, Videos, Images, News) to filter the various multimedia search results.

Phase 2: Activity: Research Tournament (20–25 minutes)

Step 1: Prompt-Based Research (15-20 mins)

We will divide the class into teams of 5. For each round, I will display a prompt and the teams must find a source depending on the criteria of the round. You must copy the URL and write a justification for credibility and relevance.

[At the end of each round, the teams reveal their sources and will be awarded points for every reliable source cited. Encourage teams to critique and discuss the sources, they need to agree on the scoring for each team. Scores to be awarded out of 5 for each team. Prompts have been added for basic, intermediate and advanced levels]

First Round: Basic Search with Google - Prompts:

Basic: Find a reliable article explaining what deforestation is and why it's a problem.

Intermediate: Find a reliable source explaining the effects of deforestation on indigenous communities in the Amazon.

Advanced: Find a reliable source discussing both the ecological and social consequences of deforestation globally.

Activity 4: Research-a-thon

Phase 2: Activity: Research Tournament (20–25 minutes)

Second Round: Filter by Date and Domain - Prompt:

Find a recent (.gov or .edu) source on climate change adaptation strategies in India.

Third Round: Use an Academic Database - Prompt:

Basic: Find a research paper about how social media affects teenagers' sleeping habits.

Intermediate: Find a peer-reviewed article about the mental health effects of social media on teenagers.

Advanced: Find a peer-reviewed article¹ published in the last 5 years analyzing the correlation between online harassment and teenage self-esteem.

Fourth Round: Find Multimedia Sources (videos, podcasts, infographics)

Prompt: Find a high-quality multimedia resource (video, infographic, podcast) that explains how misinformation spreads online.

Debrief!

- The internet is full of information, and that can get overwhelming. Using the right tools can help us navigate the internet and separate fact from fiction!
- It is one of the most powerful tools for learning and discovery. We have access to expert opinions, scientific research, global news, interactive media from across the world at the tip of our fingers.
- With this great power comes an even greater responsibility, to be aware that not everything online is true, unbiased and well-researched. We must evaluate and verify these sources before sharing.
- Encourage participants to be mindful of source credibility in daily life and be responsible digital citizens.
- Share quick fact-checking strategies (e.g., Reverse Image Search, checking multiple sources) and fact-checking websites to confirm the credibility of viral news.

1 - A peer-reviewed article is a special kind of research paper written by experts, like scientists, doctors, or scholars, and then carefully checked by other experts in the same field before it gets published. Think of it like a super strict group project review, where a team of experienced people double-check your facts, methods, and conclusions to make sure it's accurate, fair, and useful.

Activity 4: Research-a-thon

Phase 3: Discussion & Takeaways , Conclusion (10–15 minutes)

Key Discussion Questions (10 minutes)

- Did multimedia sources feel more or less trustworthy than written ones?
- How do different formats (articles vs. podcasts vs. videos) affect how we understand a topic?
- Which round did you find most challenging? Why?
- What mistakes did people make when judging sources?
- Did anything surprise you about which sources were credible or not?

Conclusion

When you know how to use the internet well, you get to be in control of what you believe, what you share, and how you shape conversations around you. Here's something to reflect on as you head home: The next time you come across a shocking headline, viral video, or popular meme , will you take a minute to check where it's coming from?

Optional Challenge to do After Class:

Maybe tonight, challenge yourself to fact-check one thing you see online before you believe it. Or better yet, help a friend do the same. Being a smart digital citizen isn't about knowing everything; it's about knowing how to find out what's true. And if you're ever unsure where to start... Remember, you've got a whole toolkit now.

Alternative Ways to Engage

1. Keyword Ninja: Provide a complex question and the students must compete to find the most relevant sources. Teams receive points for every credible source stated. Bonus points for dunking the opposition's sources. Sample Prompts:

- **Basic:**
 - Find out why too much screen time can be bad for your health.
 - Who invented basketball and when?
 - Which animals are endangered in India today?
- **Intermediate:**
 - What are the effects of fast fashion on the environment and garment workers?
 - How did the invention of the internet change communication in the 1990s?
 - Find out the causes and effects of air pollution in Delhi in the last five years.
- **Advanced:**
 - How do AI-generated deepfakes threaten democratic elections and media trust globally?
 - Compare government climate policies in India and the European Union over the past decade.
 - What are the social, cultural and economic impacts of deforestation on indigenous communities in the Amazon?

2. Fact-Check: Show a viral social media post with a block claim that students must research. Using credible internet sources, they must either debunk or validate the claims.

Activity 5: Lock It Up

Objective

This activity helps participants understand the importance of strong passwords, how personal data can be compromised, and learn strategies to safeguard their digital identities.

Prep Required:

1. CTRL + ALT + PROTECT (Pages 16-23) – Student Handbook on Digital Safety.
2. Password Security – American English
3. Using a Password Manager – Aging Matters: PBS
4. How to be a Good digital Citizen – 2 Minute Teachables
5. By Cybersecurity Safe: Lock Your Digital Door – TED Talk, Leon Geter (3:33 to 7:30)

Time Required 35-40 minutes

Resources Needed

- Chart paper or whiteboard
- Markers
- Optional: Sample (fake) password chart/graphic for display
- Optional: One shared digital device

Phase 1: Setting the Context (5-7 minutes)

We live in a world where our personal data holds value. Just like money, it can be bought, sold, or traded, and companies, advertisers, and sometimes scammers want it. From the apps we download to the websites we visit, we're constantly leaving behind digital footprints. Companies and others can collect and use this data to make money, show us ads, or even misuse it, which is why it's important to keep it safe.

Pose these questions *[take 1-2 volunteers for each]*

- Have you ever thought about how much of your personal information is already online? How do you feel about that?
- Whose responsibility do you think it is to protect your personal data? Yours, the app or website, or someone else's? Why?
- Can you think of a time when you (or someone you know) shared something online and later regretted it? What could have helped protect that data better?

One of the simplest and most powerful ways to protect yourself online is by creating strong, secure passwords. But how strong are the ones we use every day?

In this activity, you'll explore what makes a password weak or strong, how online profiles can give away more than we think, and what habits can help keep our accounts secure.

Activity 5: Lock It Up

Phase 2: Activity: Lock It Up! (25 minutes)

Step 1: Warm-up Discussion (5 minutes)

Ask the following questions:

- When was the last time you made a new password? What did you base it on? *[Let participants respond freely.]*

Many people use easy-to-guess passwords, like birthdays, pet names, or "12345", and these can be cracked in seconds by hackers. *[Write some common weak password types on a board (e.g. "password", "birthday123", "name@123") and ask participants to vote on whether they've seen someone use them.]*

- What kind of passwords do you usually use? No need to share real ones.
- What makes a password strong or weak?

[Write key terms on the board: birthdays, pet names, short passwords, reused passwords, etc.]

These are things someone could easily guess if they spent a few minutes looking through your social media or online posts. And hackers often do that, it's called social engineering. They gather small details to crack your accounts. Let's see what hackers could guess if they had a little information about you.

Step 2: Password Challenge – Cracking the Code (10 minutes)

[Split participants into small groups of 2–4. Hand out chits with fake online profiles. Facilitator can customise the profiles as per the context of the group- based on their interests and aspirations.]

For example:

- Ananya - 14, BTS fan, loves IPL
- Ravi - 12, loves Shah Rukh Khan, makes gaming videos
- Zoya - 17, interested in zoology, feeds stray animals

Task - For each profile, teams must create:

- One weak password (e.g. "ananya123")
- One strong password (e.g. "BTSixers!08@")

As you make your passwords, think like a hacker. What clues would you use? Then, make it harder for a hacker to guess.

Step 3: Discussion (5 minutes)

Ask groups to explain:

- What made their weak password vulnerable?
- Why is the strong password more secure?

[Write standout examples on the board]

- What clues did you spot in the profile that a hacker might use?
- How did you make your password harder to guess?

Activity 5: Lock It Up

Phase 2: Activity: Lock It Up! (25 minutes)

Step 4: Password Myths Busted (5 minutes)

Ask participants the following questions:

[Share these with the group one by one and ask the students to first raise their hand if they think it is true, and then if they think it is false]

- If I have nothing to hide, I don't need to worry.
- Short passwords are okay if I change them often.
- Adding 123 at the end makes it safe.
- I should make my passwords personal but not obvious

Let's break these down:

- 'If I have nothing to hide...' , False. It's not just about hiding stuff. It's about protecting your identity, your photos, your messages, and your safety.
- 'Short passwords are fine if I change them often' , False. Length makes passwords stronger. Even if you change it every week, if it's short and simple, it's still easy to crack.
- 'Adding 123 makes it safe' , False. Hackers test combinations like name123 first.
- 'Personal but not obvious' , True. If it's unique to you but not guessable from your online presence, you're on the right track

Step 5: Create Your Digital Lock (5 minutes)

Now, without telling anyone, quietly write down a new, strong password you could use for one of your accounts. Here's a formula you can use:

- 8-12 characters
- A mix of numbers, symbols and words
- Easy to remember, but not obvious to guess

Don't have to share, this is a habit building exercise.

Step 6: Introduce Password Managers (5 minutes)

Have you ever struggled to remember all your passwords? *[take a few answers]*

Most of us use the same few passwords everywhere, which makes it easier for hackers to guess them. That's where a password manager comes in.

A password manager is like a super-safe digital locker that stores all your passwords in one place. You only have to remember one strong master password to open it, and it takes care of the rest. It can even help you create long, strong, and unique passwords for each of your accounts, so you're not using the same one over and over.

Many password managers work on your phone and computer, and they can automatically fill in your passwords when you need them. It's one of the easiest ways to stay safe online, and you'll never forget a password again!

Activity 5: Lock It Up

Debrief!

- Weak passwords make it easy for hackers to access your data.
- Strong passwords should be long, unique, and not based on personal info.
- Many common beliefs about password safety are actually myths.
- Protecting your digital identity starts with small, consistent habits.

Phase 3: Discussion & Takeaways , Conclusion (10–15 minutes)

Key Discussion Questions (10 minutes)

- What surprised you about how easy it is to guess weak passwords?
- Why do you think we often choose simple passwords even when we know they're unsafe?
- What's one habit you'll change to keep your digital accounts more secure?

Conclusion

Today, you've seen how passwords made from things like our pet's name or birthday are basically invitations for trouble. But by choosing stronger, longer, unique passwords and avoiding obvious clues, you protect not just your account, but your personal safety too.

Before you go, here's something to think about: Which of your own habits might be putting your digital identity at risk? And what's one small change you'll commit to starting today?

Optional challenge to do after class: If you're up for a challenge, pick one of your accounts tonight and lock it up better than before. Make it something strong, unique, and personal only to you. No pet names, no "12345," and definitely no birthdays. Bonus points if you try using a password manager to save it!

It may seem like a small thing, but protecting your digital presence matters; not just for you, but for everyone in your online world. Small steps, but that's how we build a safer digital world for ourselves and those around us. Stay sharp, stay safe, and lock it up tight.

Want to know more? You can watch the following videos! *[Share videos 4 & 5 listed in prep]*

Alternative Ways to Engage

- Use an online password checker to test the strength of sample passwords (avoid using real passwords!).
- Create visual posters or memes around password safety as a fun takeaway.

Activity 6: Fake or Fact?

Objective

This activity introduces learners to the SUCS method of fact-checking and helps them critically assess information, distinguish between reliable and false content, and become more mindful of what they consume and share online.

Prep Required:

- CTRL + ALT + PROTECT (Pages 61-69) – Student Handbook on Digital Safety.
- The Information Ecosystem – Young Leaders for Active Citizenship

Time Required 35-40 minutes

Resources Needed

- Chart paper or whiteboard
- Markers
- Optional: Printed examples of fake vs. real news headlines or screenshots

Phase 1: Setting the Context (5-7 minutes)

Okay, quick poll, have you ever seen a video online that made you go, 'No way, that can't be real!'... but then you weren't sure?

[Wait for a few hands or reactions.]

What about a WhatsApp forward from a family group like 'eating mangoes with Coke is dangerous' or 'this actor just got married in secret'? Ever believed one of those? *(Keep it light and get them laughing, even share one you fell for!)*

The internet is kind of like a giant public notice board - anyone can put anything up there. And the wild part? Some of it spreads faster than truth ever could. So today, we're going to become Internet Detectives. We'll learn how to spot what's real and what's fake. And don't worry, we've got a cool tool for it: the SUCS method. It's like your secret weapon for checking facts before falling for the drama or pressing 'forward' too fast!

Activity 6: Fake or Fact?

Phase 2: Activity: Fake or Fact (25 minutes)

Step 1: The SUCS Method (5–7 mins)

[Introduce the SUCS method using a visual aid. Write it out on the board. You can show the video “Information Ecosystem” mentioned in the prep resources section if possible]

S – Source: Who shared this? Is the source reliable?

U – Ubiquity: Is the news being reported by other credible sources?

C – Context: Is the information presented in full context, or just a piece to mislead?

S – Second Opinion: Have I checked a fact-checking website or searched to confirm?

This method works like a mini toolkit you can use in your head every time you come across something that feels off.

Step 2: Real or Fake? Group Challenge (15 mins)

Now, let’s test your skills. I’ll divide you into small groups. Each group gets a list of 10 ‘headlines’, some real, some fake, some that need checking. Your job is to:

1. Use the SUCS method to assess each headline
2. Mark each headline as “Fake”, “Real”, or “Needs Checking”. Give a 1-line reason for your decision
3. *[Optional: If devices are allowed, let them do quick fact-checking using the internet]*

Headlines *[read them out-loud]:*

- Drinking cold water causes heart attacks.
- The government bans all WhatsApp usage.
- Sunita Williams back from space.
- Eating carrots improves your night vision.
- India launches the world's largest solar park in Gujarat.
- A man turns invisible after drinking a secret potion.
- Instagram will delete all inactive accounts by tomorrow.
- Mumbai gets its first underground metro line.
- Scientists successfully grow plants on the Moon.
- A tiger spotted roaming freely in New Delhi streets.

Discussion Prompts:

- What made you doubt a piece of information?
- Which step in SUCS did you find hardest or most helpful?
- Have you ever seen something like this shared before? Have you believed it?

Activity 6: Fake or Fact?

Step 3: Fact vs Opinion (5-7 mins)

Every day, we read or hear things online: some are facts, and some are opinions. But the tricky part is that opinions can *sound* like facts, and if we don't notice that, we might believe or share something that's misleading. I'll read you three short statements. Two are facts, and one is an opinion pretending to be a fact. Your job is to spot the opinion!

Example 1

- Fast food contains high levels of sugar, fat, and salt *[fact]*
- People should avoid fast food, it's very unhealthy and dangerous *[opinion]*
- Many people around the world eat fast food at least once a week *[fact]*

Example 2

- India has more internet users than the entire population of the United States *[fact]*
- Social media platforms track what you watch, click, and search *[fact]*
- Social media is consuming the younger generation, impacting thinking ability *[opinion]*

Example 3

- Climate change is leading to more extreme weather events globally *[fact]*
- If you care about the planet, you should stop using cars and planes *[opinion]*
- Carbon dioxide is one of the main gases responsible for global warming *[fact]*

So why does this matter? When opinions sound like facts, they can be used to influence what we think, feel, or do, even if the person saying them doesn't have proof. That's how people online convince others to believe fake news, support unfair ideas, or trust unreliable sources. If we learn to spot the difference, we're less likely to be tricked, misled, or manipulated. We can ask: Where's the proof? before we believe or share something. Next time you read a bold or emotional statement online, pause and ask - is this a fact I can check, or just someone's opinion? This habit can really protect your thinking.

Debrief!

- Not everything you see online is true, misinformation spreads easily.
- Fact-checking helps protect you and others from false beliefs.
- The SUCS method is a simple tool to assess credibility and avoid falling to misinformation.
- Slowing down before sharing something can make a big difference.
- It is important to distinguish between facts and opinions to make informed decisions!

Activity 6: Fake or Fact?

Phase 3: Discussion & Takeaways , Conclusion (10–15 minutes)

Key Discussion Questions (7-10 minutes)

- How does our own bias or emotion affect what we believe or share online?
- What can we do to avoid spreading misinformation apart from fact checking? What are some small habits we can build to become more mindful readers or viewers online?
- How can we help others do the same (e.g., our friends and family)?
- Why do you think some videos, memes or written pieces go viral over others? Can you think of any examples?

Conclusion

Today, you got a first-hand look at how tricky it can be to tell facts from fakes online and how easily misinformation can slip into our screens, our groups, and our conversations. Whether it's a forwarded message, a viral video, or an unbelievable headline, it's on us to pause and think before we believe or share.

Before you head out, take a moment to reflect: When was the last time you shared something without checking it? What's one small habit you'll commit to starting today to be a sharper, safer digital citizen?

Optional Challenge to do After Class:

The next time a weird claim or shocking post comes your way, don't just scroll past or hit forward. Run it through SUCS. Check the source, see who else is talking about it, and maybe even share a fact-check with your friends.

Bonus points if you help someone else learn the SUCS method too, because the more fact-checkers we have, the better our online spaces become. It may feel like a small step, but every pause, every question, and every fact-check makes a difference. Stay sharp. Stay curious. And remember, if it sounds too wild to be true, it probably is.

Alternative Ways to Engage

- **Role-play, The Misinformation Messenger:** In pairs, one student tries to convince the other of a wild claim (real or fake). The other uses SUCS to question and verify.
- **Fact or Fake Dice Game:** Create a die with prompts like "Check source," "Ask a trusted adult," "Search online," etc. Students roll and follow the steps to investigate a mystery headline.

Activity 7: The Misinformation Race

Objective

This activity helps participants understand how quickly misinformation can spread, how it evolves during transmission, and why it's important to pause and verify before sharing.

Prep Required:

- CTRL + ALT + PROTECT (Pages 56-61) – Student Handbook on Digital Safety.
- [How false news can spread](#) – TedEd: Noah Tavlin

Time Required 40-50 minutes

Resources Needed

- Rumor cards (provided below)
- Timer or stopwatch
- Whiteboard/Chart paper
- Markers

Phase 1: Setting the Context (5–7 minutes)

Alright everyone, quick question: Have you ever shared a post or video without checking if it was true? Why do you think people share information so quickly online? *[No judgement, be honest!]*

Not everything we see online is true. The faster false information spreads, the harder it becomes to control its impact. Today, we're going to explore how fast misinformation travels, and what that means for us as digital citizens.

[Let them know they'll be part of a race for this activity but not the kind they're used to.]

Phase 2: Activity – The Misinformation Race (20–25 minutes)

Step 1: Setup (2 minutes)

[Seat participants in a circle or a few lines for a large group). Choose 1 rumor from the Rumor Card List below and hand it to the first participant in each line. They should not show it to anybody.]

Rumor Card Example (You can write these on chits):

- The government is giving away free smartphones to students who forward this message to 10 people.
- Eating raw onions prevents COVID-19, scientists confirm.
- Drinking water every 15 minutes kills all viruses in your throat.
- Instagram will shut down all accounts that don't post a pink heart today.

Activity 7: The Misinformation Race

Step 2: The Race Begins + Discussion (10 minutes)

This rumor is your message. You'll pass it on, but only by whispering. No writing or showing anyone the card. The last person will announce the message aloud - just like a game of Chinese whisper! *[Observe how the message changes from person to person.]*

Discussion (5 mins):

- Was the final version of the rumor the same as the original? What changed?
- Can you trace how and why the message changed as it moved from person to person?
- How did it feel passing on something without knowing if it was true?

This is what can often happen online. As we share messages, especially ones that are shocking, emotional, or dramatic, they can get exaggerated, misunderstood, or even completely twisted. And unlike in this game, the real-world consequences can be serious.

[You can play the following video from extra resources: How false news can spread - TedEd]

Step 3: How Misinformation Impacts (5 minutes)

If you were in a real-world version of this race, what would've helped you pause before passing it on? What are the risks of sharing content before checking it?

[Take a few answers, and then present 3-4 examples of viral misinformation. For each example provide context and then ask students "Would you have shared this ahead? Why/why not? What do you think could have happened because this misinformation spread?". Let participants guess or discuss possible consequences. Then, reveal the actual impact.]

Example 1: Vitamin C cures COVID-19

Context: During the COVID-19 pandemic, claims circulated that taking vitamin C could prevent or cure the virus.

Impact: Many people believed it and delayed seeking medical care. Public health officials had to urgently issue clarifications, and misinformation slowed down the adoption of proven safety measures. In rare cases, the delay in seeking medical care led to avoidable medical complications.

Example 2: If you charge your phone overnight, it will explode

Context: Viral WhatsApp forwards and Facebook posts warned people that leaving their phone plugged in overnight would cause it to overheat and explode.

Impact: Some people avoided overnight charging, leading to low battery anxiety during the day, and viral memes about 'exploding phones'. Tech experts had to issue clarifications across the media. Till-date there are people who do not sleep next to charging phones in fear of explosion

Example 3: North Indians are dangerous and will abduct children

Context: In Vellore, Tiruvannamalai and Tiruvallur districts of northern Tamil Nadu, WhatsApp posts were circulated about 200 criminals from "north India" entering the State to lure children away. In the widely-circulated video message, the youth was reportedly seen narrating how a number of children were abducted from a few villages in Cheyyar, Vandavasi, Anakkavoor, and Kancheepuram.

Impact: The circulated video was riddled with fake news. No incidents of abductions were reported in these villages. This fake news claimed three lives and incited numerous mob attacks. There were instances when the villagers attacked innocent by-standers they were suspicious of.

Activity 7: The Misinformation Race

Step 4: Slowing It Down: What Could We Do Differently? (10 minutes)

Now that we know how dangerous misinformation can be, what are some steps we can take to prevent this? *[Present these strategies to avoid spreading misinformation:]*

- **Pause before sharing:** Just because something is viral doesn't mean it's true.
- **Check the source:** Is it a credible website or just a forwarded message?
- **Look for emotional triggers:** If something makes you feel angry or scared, it's often a red flag.
- Search for the same news on **fact-checking sites**.

I want each of you to think of one rule you'll follow before forwarding a message from now on. When you're ready, share your rule aloud. *[ask students to share freely]*

Debrief!

- Misinformation spreads easily and can change drastically along the way.
- We often pass on information without verifying it. This is a habit we should avoid.
- Slowing down and checking sources can stop the chain. Being a responsible digital citizen means thinking before clicking forward.

Phase 3: Conclusion (5 minutes)

Conclusion

You're not just an audience online. You're part of the chain. Whether misinformation spreads or stops often depends on what you choose to do with it.

So before you log off, ask yourself: What kind of content encourages you to share instantly and how might you slow that impulse down next time?

Optional Challenge to do After Class:

Pick one piece of viral content you've come across recently: a forwarded message, a viral video, a trending post. Take five minutes to fact-check it. Is it real? Who posted it first? Can you find it on a credible news site or a fact-checking page?

If it turns out false or misleading, share the correct info with one friend or family member. Not to shame, but to inform, because slowing down misinformation isn't about being perfect, it's about being thoughtful. And every fact-check counts!

Activity 8: The Social Media Mirror

Objective

Reflecting on the emotional impact social media can have on us such as self-image, body image, and desire. Navigating ways to gain control over this.

Prep Required:

- CTRL + ALT + PROTECT (Pages 101-108) – Student Handbook on Digital Safety.
- [5 Crazy Ways Social Media Is Changing Your Brain Right Now](#) – Asap Science
- [Social Media And Self-Image](#) – AMAZE Org

Time Required 30-40 minutes

Resources Needed

- A projector or whiteboard (for demonstrating examples)
- Student's devices
- Sheets of Paper
- Crayons/Markers

Phase 1: Setting the Context (5-7 minutes)

Hi everyone , thank you for being here today. We're going to talk about something we use every day but don't often pause to reflect on: how social media makes us feel.

And before we start, it's important you know this is not a lecture , it's a space where all of us can be honest about our experiences. And in that spirit, I'll start first.

(space for facilitators to share their experience) E.g., A while ago, I found myself spending way too much time on Instagram. And it wasn't even fun anymore. Every time I opened the app, I saw people traveling to these beautiful places, achieving huge things, or looking amazing in every photo , and I started feeling like my own life wasn't good enough. I'd start comparing myself, wondering why I wasn't doing as much, or didn't look like that, or didn't have as many likes. And honestly, it made me feel really anxious and kind of low about myself.

Has this ever happened to you too? How does social media make you feel?

[Pause. Let students answer aloud. If silence, gently prompt]

Activity 8: The Social Media Mirror

Phase 1: Setting the Context (5–7 minutes)

For example, do you feel curious, happy, upset, stressed, overwhelmed or anxious? Fear of missing out? What else?

Okay, now it's time to hold up the mirror, literally. We are going to sketch a self-portrait, not how you look, but how you feel when you are on social media.

[Give each participant a sheet of paper and crayons/markers]

You're not drawing your face, you're drawing your emotions. Are you smiling? Frowning? Are you heavy like a rock? Light like a balloon? What's the color of your scrolling mood? If a word pops into your head, write it next to your drawing.

[Encourage abstract expression too: colors, symbols, shapes. After 5-7mins of quiet drawing]

Do you like how you see yourself? Is there something about this that you would want to change?

[You can also show your self-portrait and illustrate by example]

It took me a while to even notice how social-media was affecting me. But when I did, I realized I needed to do something about it. That's when I came across this interesting video.

[Play the video: [5 Crazy Ways Social Media Is Changing Your Brain Right Now](#) – ASAP Science]

Red-flag feelings are when something on social media makes you feel uncomfortable, sad, anxious or worried, even if you don't know exactly why. Like a red traffic light, they're signals that we need to pause and notice what's happening inside us. Today, we're going to learn how to notice them, talk about them, and do something about them.

Phase 2: Activity: Deep Dive into Social Media (20 minutes)

First 10 mins:

Now let's look at some examples of things you might see on social media. For each one, I want you to notice how it makes you feel. Not what you think you should feel, but what you actually feel inside when you hear it.

Option A (Digital Method):

I'm going to show you a few situations people often face on social media. For each one, I'd like you to type one or two words about how it makes you feel into the Mentimeter link you'll see on the screen.

[Display QR code or link, confirm everyone can access it]

Ready? Let's go.

Activity 8: The Social Media Mirror

Phase 2: Activity: Deep Dive into Social Media (20 minutes)

[Read each scenario aloud while displaying it on screen. Wait for Mentimeter responses to populate and form word clouds.]

Sample Scenarios:

- **Feeling Left Out** – A group chat is making plans for an event you weren't invited to, and you don't know if you're being excluded or just missed the details.
- **Comparison Trap** – You see a post from a fashion influencer or a classmate whose life seems perfect, exciting trips, great marks, perfect photos.
- **Social Media Anxiety** – You tried checking social media but had no data. By the time your phone was charged, you saw only two messages and one notification.
- **The Follower Count Game** – Your friend's post hits 300 likes while yours barely crosses 30.
- **Toxic Positivity** – A post says "If you're not successful by 25, you've wasted your life", with thousands of likes and positive comments.
- **Negative Comment Spiral** – You share a photo you're proud of and receive one negative or teasing comment.
- **Chain Message Pressure** – You receive a DM saying "If you don't forward this message to 10 people in 5 minutes, something bad will happen."

Take a look at the word cloud on the screen. What do you notice? Which emotions appeared most often?

[Note some of the trends aloud.]

Option B (Analog Method):

We're going to work in groups now. Each group will get a chart paper that you will divide into 6 sections- one for each situation. I'll read out some social media situations. When I do, write one emotion you'd feel in that situation on a sticky note, and stick it in the section corresponding to that situation on the chart paper.

In the end, we will pin these chart papers and do a gallery walk. So ensure you do not mention your names so the process remains anonymous.

[Distribute materials. Read scenarios aloud one at a time. Give 1-2 minutes per scenario. After all scenarios, invite students for a gallery walk to see what emotions other groups listed.]

What do you notice? Which emotions appeared most often? Any surprises?

[Note some of the trends aloud.]

Which situations brought up the strongest emotions in the group? Why do you think those situations affected us more than others?

[Encourage students to reflect and recognise which situations have the most impact]

Great, now, when you feel this way, what do you usually do? Do you scroll faster? Log out? Compare yourself more? Text a friend? Or just ignore the feeling?

[Take a couple of responses]

Activity 8: The Social Media Mirror

Phase 2: Activity: Deep Dive into Social Media (20 minutes)

Next 10 mins:

We've seen how these situations make us feel and that we are not alone in this. It's important to remember: having an emotional response doesn't mean you're weak or wrong. It means you're human. What matters at the end of the day, for our own emotional wellbeing, is that we don't have to stay stuck in those feelings. We can notice what's happening, pause, and choose a response that helps us feel a little better and stay in control.

Now, let's talk about what we can do about them. For each situation, I want you to think of a healthier way to respond, something that would make you feel a little better or take back control.

[Read scenario aloud and invite students to suggest healthy responses. If they struggle, provide a few yourself. Repeat for each scenario.]

Sample Healthy Responses:

Feeling Left Out – A group chat is making plans for an event you weren't invited to, and you don't know if you're being excluded or just missed the details.

- Remind yourself social media shows highlight reels, not real life.
- Mute or unfollow accounts that consistently trigger comparison.
- Limit time on apps where you feel this the most.
- Reflect on something in your own life you're grateful for right now.

Comparison Trap – You see a post from a fashion influencer or a classmate whose life seems perfect with exciting trips, great marks, perfect photos.

- Remind yourself social media shows highlight reels, not real life.
- Mute or unfollow accounts that consistently trigger comparison.
- Limit time on apps where you feel this the most.
- Reflect on something in your own life you're grateful for right now.

Social Media Anxiety – You tried checking social media but had no data. By the time your phone was charged, you saw only two messages and one notification.

- Reassure yourself that it's okay to be offline, nothing major happened while you were away.
- Say out loud or mentally: *"It's normal not to be available all the time."*
- Engage in an offline activity you enjoy, reading, drawing, music, talking to family

The Follower Count Game – Your friend's post hits 300 likes while yours barely crosses 30.

- Remind yourself that likes don't measure real-world worth, talent, or friendships.
- Avoid checking numbers repeatedly, post, then step away from the app.
- If you find yourself obsessing over it still, turn off the "Like and share counts" on these apps.

Activity 8: The Social Media Mirror

Toxic Positivity – A post says “If you’re not successful by 25, you’ve wasted your life” , with thousands of likes and positive comments.

- Talk to someone you trust about your own goals and timelines , ground yourself in your reality.
- Remind yourself that real happiness isn’t defined by social media trends.
- Say out loud: “Success looks different for different people.”

Negative Comment Spiral – You share a photo you’re proud of and receive one negative or teasing comment.

- Focus on the positive comments and the fact that you posted something meaningful to you.
- Remind yourself that one person’s opinion isn’t a verdict on your worth.
- If it’s bullying, report or block the person , protect your peace.

Chain Message Pressure – You receive a DM saying “If you don’t forward this message to 10 people in 5 minutes, something bad will happen.

- Acknowledge it’s a silly chain message with no real consequence.
- Remind yourself that bad luck can’t be controlled by texts.
- Delete the message without forwarding it.
- Share with a trusted friend and laugh it off together.
- Use it as a chance to discuss digital literacy , you’re likely not the only one getting these.

Phase 3: Discussion & Takeaways , Conclusion (10–15 minutes)

Before we close, let’s reflect a little.

[Ask each question and encourage students to share openly.]

Key Discussion Questions:

- How do we let our sense of self not get overly affected by what we perceive of ourselves and others on Social Media?
- What are some strategies to take control of our social media experience rather than letting it control us?
- How can we reframe our thoughts when social media makes us feel inadequate?

Debrief!

- It’s important to remember: what we see online is usually a highlight reel, not a complete reality. People share their best moments , not their failures, bad days, or insecurities. Even influencers or celebrities feel anxious sometimes, even if their posts look perfect.
- Social media can be great , for fun, for learning, for staying connected. But it can also be a space that affects how we feel about ourselves. And the power to control your experience, even in small ways, is in your hands.
- Many people, including influencers, struggle with these feelings.
- Recognising red-flag feelings and having tools to manage them is key to using social media in a healthier way.

Activity 8: The Social Media Mirror

Conclusion:

Before we leave, take a minute to think quietly: What's one small thing you'll do differently the next time social media makes you feel upset or left out? You don't have to share it out loud, but if you want to, you can.

[Invite volunteers to share.]

Optional Challenge to do After Class:

For the next 3 days, note down one post that made you feel good and one that made you feel bad. Write down what you did next, and how you felt after. We'll share our learnings next week!

Alright, everyone, thank you so much for being honest and open today. I know conversations like this can feel a little personal, a little uncomfortable even. But what matters is that you showed up, thought about your feelings, and reflected on how social media affects you, and that takes courage.

I hope you'll carry forward some of what we talked about today, whether it's muting that one account, taking a break when you need it, or just being a little kinder to yourself the next time social media messes with your head.

Always remember, you are more than your posts, likes, and follower count.

Alternative Ways to Engage

Feeling Cup Game: Ask participants to draw a cup and fill it with the various emotions each of the projected scenarios makes them feel. Then ask them to start listing down ways to combat those feelings outside the cup.

More than a Post (Role-playing): Divide the class into two groups where half the students are content creators tasked with designing a social media post on specific themes (e.g., promoting a cause you care about, celebrating something you're proud of, highlighting a hidden talent or act of kindness) while the others are feed explorers who are scroll these posts and record how these posts make them feel. Later, ask the creators to share their behind-the-scenes decisions while the explorers share their emotional responses. The aim is to help students understand that social media isn't just about likes, followers, and going viral, it's a tool that can shape emotions, tell stories, and influence real-world behavior.

Social Media Diary: Ask participants to track their social media use for one week. Ask them to note what they saw and how it made them feel. (You can also ask them to note how they responded as well) After a week, conduct a discussion to identify the trends in specific posts and their negative impacts as well as guide them with positive actions they can take to change their experience.

Activity 9: The Cyberbullying Spectrum

Objective

This activity delves into various forms of online harm that participants may encounter/may have encountered in the past, from unkind comments and exclusion, to harassment, impersonation, or threats. Additionally, the activity guides participants on how to best protect themselves and report threats. Because this activity deals with various forms of violence and harm, it is important for the facilitator to spend time beforehand to go through the additional resources and familiarise themselves with ways to respond kindly and empathetically in case participants feel emotionally distressed/triggered.

Prep Required:

- CTRL + ALT + PROTECT (Pages 45-46) – Student Handbook on Digital Safety.
- [Childline India: Online Bullying Help](#) – Childline Helpline
- [Stop. Speak. Support Campaign](#) – UK Safer Internet Centre
- [Digital Compass](#) – Common Sense Interactive tool
- [Bachpan Bachao Andolan](#)
- [What is Cyberbullying](#) – UNICEF

Time Required 1-1.5 hours

Resources Needed

- Pre-prepared chits or cards with various scenarios (see examples below)
- A3 chart paper or large post-it notes
- Markers
- Notebooks and pens/pencils
- Projector and computer
- Optional - personal participant devices

Phase 1: Setting the Context (7–10 minutes)

- *[Before starting the session, explain the emotional safety ground rules to the student to ensure no one is uncomfortable during the session.]* Before we begin, I'd like us to agree on a few ground rules so this space feels safe and respectful for everyone. Today's conversation will touch on topics that might feel personal or difficult for some. It's okay if you don't feel like sharing, you can always pass or step out if you need a break. We listen without judgment. We don't interrupt. And importantly, we don't share anyone else's stories outside this room.
- We're here to learn from each other, not to debate anyone's feelings or experiences. This is a no-vulnerability-extraction space. That means no one is expected to share something painful to 'prove a point' or educate others.
- **At any point, if the topics are making you feel uncomfortable and if you'd like to step out, take a break, or talk to me, you're welcome to do so. No judgments, no questions asked. Cool?**
- Let's check in on how we're doing today. Show me with your hands, how are you feeling? 5 is amazing, 1 is a bit low-energy. *[Wait for responses]*
- *[Consider playing a small icebreaker in case the participants do not know each other.]* Tell us your name and one unusual fact about yourself, or show us a silly movement associated with your name!
- Alternatively, talk to your partner about your favorite meme or online video, then introduce them and their pick!

Activity 9: The Cyberbullying Spectrum

Phase 1: Setting the Context (7–10 minutes)

- We often hear the term cyberbullying, but online harm can take many different forms. Some may be subtle, others more obvious. It might be a joke that stings, a post left out, or something bigger like harassment. What might seem small to one person can feel deeply hurtful to someone else. Remember, this is not just about what happened; it's also about how the impacted person feels, who it's coming from, and what power dynamics are at play.

Ask the participants:

1. Has anyone here ever seen or experienced unkindness or harm online? Would anyone like to share their experience with the group? You can share the incident without names. *[Allow volunteers to share; no pressure]*
2. Have you heard of "cyberbullying before?" What do you think of when you hear the word "cyberbullying?"
3. How common do you think cyberbullying/online threats are? Why do you think we are doing this activity today?
4. Why might some people find certain actions more hurtful than others? *[If no one responds, continue gently: "It's okay if you haven't thought about this before, that's exactly what we're here to explore together. Prompt them to consider: identity, lived experience, past trauma, how public something is, etc.]*

[If possible Play the Video: [What is Cyberbullying](#) - UNICEF]

Key Concepts

- **Doxxing:** When someone publishes your personal information online without your consent, like your address or phone number.
- **Trolling:** When someone posts hurtful or annoying comments just to upset others.
- **Exclusion:** When someone is left out of online groups or chats on purpose to make them feel bad.

Today, we will try to begin understanding the spectrum of online harm. We will not be judging or ranking the kinds of threats that exist, but instead, will be learning how to recognise them, reflect on their effects, and think about how we can respond more responsibly online.

Phase 2: Activity – Identifying Online Threats (20–25 minutes)

Step 1: Group Discussion (15 minutes)

I'll give each group 7-10 cards describing different online situations. Some might seem harmless, others clearly upsetting. Your task is to read them and discuss these questions:

[Each group will read their scenarios and then discuss the following prompts. Ask each group to document their thoughts on chart papers. When reading the questions aloud, explain each prompt and supplement with simple examples to help communicate the intent of the question.]

Activity 9: The Cyberbullying Spectrum

Phase 2: Activity – Identifying Online Threats (20–25 minutes)

1. What's happening in this situation? *[Prompt: Describe it in your own words.]*
2. How does it make us feel? How might the person experiencing it feel? *[Prompt: There's no wrong answer, our reactions can be different.]*
3. What might be misunderstood or dismissed about this situation? *[Prompt: Some people might say 'it's no big deal', let's think about why.]*
4. Is there a power imbalance here (e.g., popularity, age, group vs. individual)? *[Prompt: "Like an older person messaging a younger one, or a group leaving one person out.]*
5. How might others respond, both positively and negatively? *[Prompt: The aim isn't to shame but to understand how these can make one feel and respond.]*
6. What can be done to prevent such a situation? *[Prompt: If you can't think of what you could do for someone else, think about what would help you in this situation.]*

Example Scenarios (alter based on context and participant demographics such as age):

- A private photo was screenshotted and shared in a group chat without consent.
- A classmate is repeatedly left out of shared reels or "collab" posts.
- Someone's joke in a gaming chat includes a sexist stereotype.
- A friend changes someone's profile picture as a prank.
- Someone receives multiple DMs with curse words and threats after a disagreement on a public post.
- An older person online keeps messaging a teen with "friendly" compliments, requesting pictures and favors
- An anonymous online profile repeatedly stalks a friend, asking for their address and phone number
- A person is impersonated with a fake account that shares misinformation.

Step 2: Grouping the scenarios (5-7 minutes)

Now, let's see how different kinds of harm show up. Place your scenario cards under whichever category you feel it fits best. *[The idea is not to create concrete categories, but to highlight how different kinds of harm exist and are subjective and often treated differently, even when they're painful.]*

The categories could include:

- Common and harmful
- Often misunderstood by others
- Invisible to outsiders
- Clearly dangerous or illegal
- Depends on relationship/context

[Emphasize there's no perfect answer, what feels harmful can vary. Give the participants some time to look at how others have categorised the scenarios and ask them to write down questions and reflections.]

Activity 9: The Cyberbullying Spectrum

Phase 3: Discussion & Takeaways (15 minutes)

[Ask participants to share their reflections from the activity. Begin with asking each group to briefly talk about their charts and their categorisation, highlighting anything they found surprising and challenging, or something they disagreed on within the group.]

After this, you can prompt specific responses such as:

- Was there a situation that seemed insignificant at first, but you now see it differently?
- How do our own experiences shape what we notice or dismiss?
- What do you think makes something harmful online? Is it the intent, the impact, or both?
- Have you ever heard someone say “it was just a joke” or “they’re being too sensitive”? How do you think these phrases affect the person harmed?
- Do you think it is important to recognise “less visible” forms of harm (e.g. exclusion, impersonation, grooming)? Why or why not?
- What does responsible online behavior look like?

[If participants seem hesitant, you can prompt them: "It's okay if you haven't experienced this yourself, imagining how it would feel can help us act with care when it happens to others."]

Phase 4: Activity – Responding to Online Threats (10 minutes)

In this short activity, participants will learn how to report and block unwanted profiles and chats, and will understand how to report cybercrimes online/via phone. If participants have access to one device between 3-4 people, then split them into groups for this activity. Alternatively, conduct this activity on your device that is connected to the projector and ask participants to engage directly with you.

1. Ask participants to open up a messaging platform of their choice and try to figure out how to block and report a chat or profile. Guide the participants in case they are unable to find the option. *[Explain how blocking and reporting can be used as a first-level precaution in cases where someone feels uncomfortable or unsafe due to an online message or profile, or in the case of identity theft.]* You can also emphasise the importance of taking screenshots, noting down timestamps, and gathering evidence of the incident. *[Based on context, you can quickly teach participants, or ask participants to teach each other how to take screenshots].*
2. Ask participants to navigate to the national cyber crime cell website (cybercrime.gov.in) and encourage them to explore the website and portal to submit concerns. Participants may have some questions on how the portal works, so it will be helpful for the facilitator to be broadly familiar with the portal beforehand.

Activity 9: The Cyberbullying Spectrum

Phase 4: Activity – Responding to Online Threats (10 minutes)

3. Distribute a pamphlet/paper to each participant with the following helpline numbers. You can take participants through each contact and explain when and how to use it:

- **Cyber Crime Cell (National Cyber Crime Reporting Portal)**

Website: cybercrime.gov.in

Helpline: 1930

Reports cyberstalking, online threats, identity theft, hacking, and more.

- **National Commission for Women (NCW)**

Website: ncw.nic.in

Helpline: 7827-170-170

Focuses on crimes targeting women, including online harassment and abuse.

- **Local Police Station**

Phone Number: 100

Cybercrime cases can also be reported at your nearest police station.

You can also file a First Information Report (FIR).

- **Childline India (For Cyber Safety of Children)**

Website: childlineindia.org

Helpline: 1098

Handles online threats, cyberbullying, and other digital crimes against children.

Conclusion (2–3 minutes)

Today, we saw that online harm exists on a spectrum, not a ranking of what's worst to least harmful. We learned that different people experience and react to online situations in different ways based on their identities, experiences, and the context they're in.

What might seem like a harmless joke or a causal exclusion to one person might deeply hurt someone else. It might not always look serious at first glance, but it can leave deep emotional wounds. No one should have to deal with this alone.

You now know how to recognise these situations, what you can do to respond, and how to seek help. Always remember, it's not your fault if someone hurts you online. And it's okay to ask for help.

I want to check, is anyone feeling unsettled or heavy after today's session? If you'd like to speak privately, I'm here for you now or later.

[Activity 20 must be done with this activity to explain the reporting mechanisms. Take a short break for students to decompress before starting Activity 20, during which you can go around and check up on students in case they need to talk.]

When something uncomfortable happens online, you don't have to just accept it. We will now learn how to block, report, and ask for help. Even if you're not directly harmed, reporting protects others too. If you're unsure, save screenshots and talk to a trusted adult or friend.

Activity 9: The Cyberbullying Spectrum

Debrief!

- Online harm exists on a spectrum, not a scale of worst to least bad. It can impact people differently based on their experiences and therefore, it is important to be sensitive and empathetic.
- Some forms of online harm that we covered include:
 1. Bullying and exclusion
 2. Impersonation/identity theft
 3. Sexual harassment
 4. Stalking
 5. Sharing private information or images without consent
 6. Threats of violence or direct harm
 7. Blackmailing
 8. Grooming (a technique used by sexual predators to manipulate and abuse their victims, often children)
- It's our job to be aware, listen, and act when we see harm. We should take proactive steps to keep ourselves, our families and our friends safe online!

Alternative ways to engage:

- **Personal Reflection Prompt:** Have you ever said, posted, or shared something online that you later realized might have hurt someone? (Journaling activity can be conducted anonymously if needed)
- **Sharing Box:** Create an anonymous box (physical or digital) where participants can write real examples of online harm they've experienced or witnessed. Share this with the participants and hear reflections.

Activity 10: Screentime Detox

Objective

This activity helps participants become more aware of their screen-time habits, understand how excessive screen use can affect well-being, and explore practical ways to create a more intentional relationship with devices. The focus is on reflection, balance, and regaining control, rather than guilt or shame.

Prep Required:

- CTRL + ALT + PROTECT (Pages 101-106) – Student Handbook on Digital Safety.
- [Digital wellbeing lessons for students](#) – Common Sense Education
- [Social Media Youth Toolkit](#) – Centre for Humane Technology
- [Screen Time: How Much Is Too Much?](#) - Above the Noise
- [“6 Ways Social Media Hacks Your Brain”](#) - Center for Humane Education

Time Required 40-45 minutes

Resources Needed

- Whiteboard
- Markers
- A4 sheets or notebooks
- Pens/pencils
- Optional: Card paper

Phase 1: Setting the Context (5-7 minutes)

Let's start with a small reflection. Think about your day yesterday, from waking up to going to bed.

- How many hours do you think you spend looking at screens each day, including phones, laptops, TV, etc.? *[Let participants respond freely. Write approximate numbers on the board.]*
- When do you usually reach for your phone or device? What causes you to reach out? Is it automatic? *[Prompts: First thing you check after waking up? Or while eating? Maybe when you're feeling bored, stressed or waiting for something?]*
- How have you felt after spending time scrolling on your phone? *[You can ask if they have felt drained, anxious, or like time just disappeared]*
- Did you ever open it for '5 minutes' and suddenly realize an hour passed?

[Play this video: [Screen Time: How Much Is Too Much?](#) - Above the Noise]

We all have seen, first-hand, how our devices and social media can help us connect, create, learn, and access limitless opportunities! However, too much screen-time, especially without breaks, can affect our mood, sleep, relationships, and even self-esteem. In today's activity, we will be mapping out our screentime usage patterns and will explore small ways to gain control of the amount of time we spend on our devices.

Activity 10: Screentime Detox

Phase 2: Activity (30 minutes)

Step 1: Screen Audit (10 minutes)

Take the next 10 minutes for yourself. No one else will read this. Think about a typical day in your life, when do you start using screens, what apps you spend time on, when it feels good, and when it feels like a waste. Be honest with yourself. You can even draw if you prefer!

[Hand out a worksheet to participants with the following questions, or ask them to write these questions in their notebooks. Give them 10 minutes to silently and individually reflect on their average day, and encourage them to write at least 2-3 sentences for each question. You can also encourage participants to use illustrations to reflect on the prompts.]

- What time do you wake up and sleep?
- When are you usually on your phone or device?
- What apps or websites do you spend most time on?
- What prompts you to use social media/open social media apps?
- When does screen-time feel helpful or energising?
- When does it feel stressful or mindless?

Step 2: Group Sharing (10 minutes)

Now, let's talk about what we discovered. No one needs to share things they're uncomfortable about. But if you're okay, discuss these questions in your group:

[Form small groups of 2-4 participants and discuss:]

- How did you feel while filling out the worksheets? Is there anything that surprised you or made you feel hesitant?
- What's one habit you're okay with? What is one habit you would like to change?
- When does screen-time feel good vs. draining?
- Share one idea with your group on managing screentime, which you have yourself implemented or would like to try!

[If the participants seem hesitant then prompt: "It's okay if some of these feel hard to talk about. Many people don't think about this much, so even noticing one thing about your own habit is a good first step."]

Step 3: Screentime Detox Plan (10 minutes)

Now, let's make our own small Detox Plan. Not a big 'quit social media forever' thing, just one small change we're ready to try. What I want you to do is answer the following prompts in one line and together we will develop our detox plan.

Activity 10: Screentime Detox

[Write the prompts on the blackboard and ask the participants to write their answers in their notebooks, or it can be on small pieces of card paper that they can keep with them in their phones.]

- One screen-time habit they would like to reduce or change (e.g., no scrolling before bed, 1-hour no-device zone in the morning, less doomscrolling etc.)
- One replacement activity they would like to try (e.g., going for a walk, journaling, music, stretching)
- One way to ensure that they will be able to meet their goal (e.g., asking a friend to check in, keeping the phone far away before bed etc.)
- A personal motivation: "I want to do this because..."

[Encourage them to decorate it, make it a card they can keep in their wallet or phone case.]

Phase 3: Discussion & Conclusion (8–10 minutes)

Would anyone like to share one idea they wrote down, or one thing they learned about themselves today?

You can also encourage participants to talk about the following points:

- Why do you think we get drawn towards higher screentime usage?
- What's one small change you feel excited to try?
- Can you share one method with the group on reducing screentime usage?

[Play Video: "[6 Ways Social Media Hacks Your Brain](#)" - Center for Humane Education]

As we wrap up and get back to our regular days, it might be helpful to remember that while technology is a big part of how we live, it doesn't have to take over our time, energy, or focus. There are so many great ways to use it, you could learn new things, connect with people, explore ideas. But it's just as important to know when to take a step back to rest, hang out with friends, work on something offline, or just do nothing for a bit. A digital detox doesn't have to mean quitting tech completely, it's more about using it with a bit more intention and making space for the stuff that really matters to us.

Alternative Ways to Engage

- **App Check-In:** If participants have phones, you can briefly show them how to check their screen time statistics in settings (Android/iOS).
- **Accountability Buddy:** If the session is being conducted in a school setting, you can pair participants to check in with each other after a few days.

Activity 11: The Power of a Post

Objective

This activity helps participants recognise how online content like advertisements, memes, influencer posts, viral challenges, and more, can shape public opinion, influence behavior, or manipulate emotions. The activity builds critical thinking around what makes content persuasive and how to spot subtle or manipulative messaging.

Prep Required:

- CTRL + ALT + PROTECT (Pages 110-119) – Student Handbook on Digital Safety.
- [What is propaganda and where can it be found?](#) – Media Education Lab
- [What is propaganda and its role in democracy](#) – Big Think: Jason Stanley
- [An introduction to propaganda](#) – Organisation for Propaganda Studies

Time Required 40-50 minutes

Resources Needed

- Printed examples of online posts (memes, ads, influencer quotes, sensational headlines, news screenshots, political or social messages)
- Chart paper or notebooks
- Markers or pens
- Projector and computer (optional, in case the activity will be done as a group)

Phase 1: Setting the Context (7-10 minutes)

Quick Guess the App Game (5mins)

To show how social media isn't just for memes and selfies, let's do a fun little guessing game. I'm going to tell you short stories about different people using social media for different reasons, you guess which app or platform they're using.

[Read scenarios one at a time. After each, invite 3-4 guesses. Accept any logical platform, explain that different apps can be used for similar purposes.]

1. **Business:** "Amrita loves baking. During the lockdown, she started making cupcakes, took photos, and posted them online. Within a few months, she had 3,000 followers and custom orders for her festive cupcake boxes."
2. **Community Support:** "During a medical emergency, Neha needed a rare blood type for a friend. She posted about it online, and within hours, strangers began replying to a long post offering help and donor leads."
3. **Activism:** "Zoya cares deeply about animal welfare. She saw a viral post about stray dogs being harmed in her city. She signed an online petition, shared it with her friends, and within a week, 10,000 people had signed it too."
4. **Disaster Response (Government Use):** "When a cyclone was approaching a coastal city, the state government's official page began posting regular alerts about evacuation zones, helpline numbers, and weather updates. They even used short videos and maps to explain where people could find nearby shelters. These posts were widely shared by citizens to help their neighborhoods stay safe."

Activity 11: The Power of a Post

Phase 1: Setting the Context (7-10 minutes)

We usually think of social media as a place to chill: scroll, laugh, maybe share a few memes. But it's also where people learn new things, speak up about issues, start creative projects, run businesses, and even find help during emergencies. You've probably come across some powerful posts like that in your own feed. At the same time, though, the same platforms that share inspiring stuff can also spread false info or mess with our emotions. That's what we're diving into today: how the content we see online can influence the way we think and feel, and how to recognise when something's trying to persuade us, whether we realize it or not

Now, let's dive into some questions to get our conversation started:

- Can you think of a post, ad, meme, or video you've seen recently that made you laugh, feel angry, or want to share it? Why do you think it made you feel that way? Was it a word, an image, a personal experience it reminded you of? *[If participants struggle, give examples: "Maybe a meme making fun of exams? Or a video of someone helping a street dog? Or an ad with an emotional family reunion scene?]*
- Why do you think it made you feel that way? Were there specific words or images that moved you? Was it the topic?
- What influence do you think online content has on real life events and actions?

While the internet has a vast array of information, it's important to recognise that not everything we see online is an objective truth and that not everything is meant to inform us! Sometimes it's meant to influence us or push us towards certain opinions, or even misinform us! This could be a meme with a hidden message, a funny reel that reinforces a stereotype, or an ad that uses emotions to make us buy something. Through today's activity, we will reflect on the power that online messaging has, learn how to recognise various propaganda techniques, and think about responsible ways of engaging online.

Phase 2: Activity (25-30 minutes)

Step 1: Group Analysis (15 mins)

[Split the participants into groups of 3-4, and give each group 2-3 examples of real online content]. These can include

- An emotional charity ad
- A trending meme with political undertones
- A viral influencer post promoting a brand
- A news headline with dramatic wording
- A social media post with exaggerated or false statistics

Each group has a few real examples of social media content. Some of it may look entertaining or harmless. Your job is to look closely and decode what's *really* going on. Try to step back from your first reaction, and become a 'content detective.' What feelings are being triggered? Why? What messages are being pushed, and how?

Activity 11: The Power of a Post

Phase 2: Activity (25–30 minutes)

[Ask each group to discuss and reflect on the following questions. They can use chart paper to note down their thoughts and make a mind-map for each piece of content:]

- What emotions does this post make you feel?
- What message is being communicated?
- Who created this and why do you think they made it?
- What techniques are being used? (e.g. humor, fear, repetition, music, urgency, peer pressure)
- Is this information reliable? How would you check?

[Once the teams are done, ask each group to pick one example and share their discussion about that post in 1-2 minutes!]

Step 2: What's Missing? (10 mins)

When we see content online, we're usually seeing only *one side* of the story, often the side the creator wants us to see. Imagine if this ad/meme/quote were shown in another country, or to someone older/younger. Would they react the same way? Would they trust it? Sometimes, the most important questions are the ones we don't see being asked. Let's train ourselves to ask them.

[Start by giving each group a different kind of post (e.g., a product ad, a political meme, or a motivational quote from an influencer) and ask them to discuss the following questions:]

- What part of the story is not being shown?
- What would you ask the creator if you could?
- Could someone interpret this differently based on their background?

Phase 3: Discussion & Conclusion (10–15 minutes)

[Once all groups have finished discussing amongst themselves, encourage participants to share their thoughts on each of the three questions.]

- What kind of posts are the easiest to believe or share without thinking? Think of something you've shared without thinking twice, maybe a reel, a funny meme, or a motivational quote. Why do we share so quickly sometimes? Is it because it feels true? Or because it's relatable?
- Do you think things that confirm our existing opinions are easier to believe? Why might that be dangerous?
- Can propaganda also look "fun" or "cool"? Why is that powerful? [If needed, refer to a real example: a viral meme during elections, or influencer promoting dubious health claims.]
- Why might it be harder to notice propaganda when it confirms our own beliefs?
- What's the harm in sharing posts that aren't fully true, even if they seem harmless?
- What could be the ripple effect if 100 people shared the same half-true post? What if it affected how someone was treated, or how people voted?

Activity 11: The Power of a Post

Conclusion

Online information can be powerful because it's fast, emotional, and everywhere! Whether it's a meme, ad, reel, or news post, it can shape how we think about people, products, and politics, and by extension, it can influence our actions and words. This is not always harmful - in fact, online education is also a form of propaganda. However, it is our responsibility to ensure that we double check what we engage with and share. We can do this by learning to pause, asking questions, and thinking about what we're seeing and sharing!

Before we close for the day, take a moment to reflect and ask yourselves : What's one kind of post you'll look at differently now , and what will you ask yourself before reacting or sharing it?

If time permits, take responses from a few volunteers.]

Being a thoughtful digital citizen doesn't mean not sharing , it means sharing **mindfully**. It means learning to ask, 'What's the message? What's missing? Who benefits from this being believed? With a little curiosity and a few questions, we can become smarter, more responsible sharers , and protect ourselves and others from being misled.

Debrief!

- It is important to remember that not everything we see online is true!
- It is important to ask "Who benefits from this post going viral? What's the message behind it? What's missing?"
- We have the power and resources to double-check what we read online. Before sharing information, it is helpful to research the issue on our own to prevent spreading misinformation!
- With the increase in the use of AI, it has become harder to distinguish real videos and images from altered ones! It is helpful to check dates, times and contexts before engaging with or sharing images that could be fake or sensitive.

Alternative Ways to Engage

- **AI and Propaganda:** Using examples, show participants how images and videos can easily be generated or altered through AI. Take them through ways to recognise AI content, as well as the importance of fact-checking.

Activity 12: The Consent Test

Objective

To help learners understand digital consent and boundaries through a creative, interactive exercise that encourages empathy, critical thinking, and respectful online behavior.

Prep Required:

- [Tea and Consent](#) - Blue Seat Studios
- [Consent Explained](#) - Amaze.org
- CTRL + ALT + PROTECT (Pages 37-44) – Student Handbook on Digital Safety

Time Required 35-40 minutes

Resources Needed

- Scenario slips (prepared in advance)
- Whiteboard/Chart paper
- Markers

Phase 1: Setting the Context (10 minutes)

Let's think about how quickly we interact online, liking a post, sharing a meme, tagging someone. But... have we ever paused to ask, *'Did this person want me to do that?'* Today, we'll explore what digital consent and boundaries mean. These are essential to building respectful, safe relationships online, just like in real life.

Understanding Consent vs. Boundaries: Consent is an active agreement to participate in an activity or interaction. It's specific, informed, and can be withdrawn at any time. Boundaries are personal limits we set to protect our well-being. They define what we're comfortable with and how we expect others to treat us.

- Let's take a second to unpack some things we may have assumed about consent:
- If someone doesn't say "no," it's consent : Silence or lack of resistance doesn't equal consent. Consent must be clearly and freely given.
- Once given, consent can't be withdrawn : Consent can be revoked at any time, and ongoing communication is key.
- *[Play Optional Video on Consent: [Tea Consent](#): Blue Seat Studios]*
- It's not always easy to assert boundaries, especially with peers or in group settings. However, setting and communicating boundaries is crucial for self-preservation and mental well-being.

Activity 12: The Consent Test

Phase 2: Activity – The Consent Test (25 minutes)

Step 1: Introducing the Consent Score (5 minutes)

[Participants will use a finger-based scoring system to evaluate scenarios. Below is what each number of fingers represents. Facilitators can write this on a chalkboard or a chart paper for everyone's convenience.]

We'll look at some online situations and decide whether consent was present. You'll vote using your fingers. Here's how it works:

- 1 Finger: Clear violation of consent.
- 2 Fingers: Unclear or ambiguous consent.
- 3 Fingers: Consent given but boundaries not fully respected.
- 4 Fingers: Full consent with clear communication and respect.

Step 2: Scenario Evaluation (15 minutes)

[Read out each scenario aloud. Participants raise fingers to indicate their Consent Score. Facilitator leads a discussion on the importance of consent in each context. Facilitator leads a discussion on the importance of consent in each context.]

1. A friend shares your personal message in a group chat without asking. *[Prompt: Why might this feel like a clear violation to some, but blurry to others? Private messages are personal. Even if it's not embarrassing, it's not okay to share without asking. Online trust begins with respecting digital privacy.]*
2. Someone tags you in a photo you're uncomfortable with. *[Prompt: What if the photo wasn't bad, does that change whether consent is needed? Even 'harmless' posts need permission. It's not just about how you look, it's how you feel. Consent includes emotional comfort, not just public image.]*
3. A classmate asks before posting a group project video online. *[Prompt: How does asking first change the way we feel about being included? This is what respectful digital behavior looks like. It creates a safe, cooperative space where everyone feels seen and heard.]*
4. You receive a friend request from someone you don't know. *[Prompt: Does accepting or declining a request mean anything about your 'niceness'? You don't owe anyone access to your online space. You're allowed to ignore, block, or say no, even if you feel bad. Consent also means having a choice without guilt.]*
5. A peer shares a meme about you without your knowledge. *[Prompt: If others found it funny, but you felt hurt, who decides whether it was okay? No joke is okay if the person in it feels unsafe or humiliated. Consent means prioritizing the person, not the popularity.]*
6. You change your profile picture, and a friend compliments it publicly. *[Prompt: Can a positive comment still cross a line? What decides that? Even compliments can feel uncomfortable depending on tone, platform, or context. Respecting consent means noticing how someone responds, not just your intentions.]*
7. A friend asks for your permission before sharing your artwork online. *[Prompt: Why does asking make a difference, even when someone's giving credit? Asking means you're giving someone a say in how their work shows up online. That's a sign of creative and personal respect.]*
8. Someone adds you to a group chat without informing you beforehand. *[Prompt: Some people love group chats, others feel overwhelmed. How do we balance that? Digital spaces should be opt-in, not forced. People deserve the chance to choose what spaces they're in, just like in real life.]*

Activity 12: The Consent Test

Phase 2: Activity – The Consent Test (25 minutes)

Discussion Prompts (5-7 mins):

- How did you feel when you raised your fingers for each scenario? Was there a moment where you felt stuck between two scores? What made it tricky? [*Encourage participants to reflect on their feelings in each situation.*]
- That's completely okay. Consent can be confusing, especially when no one talks about it openly. If you felt unsure, it probably means the situation wasn't very respectful or clear, and that's exactly why we're having this conversation.
- Could the same situation feel different to different people? Why?
- We all have different comfort levels, life experiences, and boundaries. That's why *asking* is important instead of assuming, what feels fine for you might feel like a big violation to someone else.
- Were there any situations where you felt the line between consent and violation was unclear? Why? [*Nudge them to think of situations where consent can be misinterpreted.*]
- What can we learn from the differences between the scenarios where consent was respected versus violated? [Help participants understand the nuances of consent and boundary-setting.]
- What should you do if you find yourself in a similar situation in real life? or how would you want someone else to act?
- Even small changes, like messaging a friend before tagging them, or asking before reposting, can help someone feel respected and safe. It's not about being perfect. It's about caring enough to check.

Step 3: What to Do if Boundaries are Violated? (5 minutes)

Sometimes, we realize *afterward* that something made us uncomfortable, and that's okay. What matters is what we do next. There are several ways in which you can assert your boundaries like:

- **Saying “No” Is Okay:** You don't have to explain or apologize for setting a boundary. If you're uncomfortable, that's *enough*. It's not your job to protect someone else's feelings before protecting your own safety.
- It's important to remember that you Are Not “Overreacting”, even if you are made to feel otherwise: Whether it was a small post or a big issue, if something hurts you, it matters. Your feelings are valid.
- If you ever feel your digital boundaries or consent have been violated, talk to a trusted adult like a parent, teacher, or counselor.
- Speak up with assertive phrases like: “I wasn't okay with that, can you take it down? OR Next time, please check with me first. OR Please take it down.
- You can also reach out to the Childline helpline at 1098 for support in cases of online harassment or boundary violations.

Activity 12: The Consent Test

Phase 3: Discussion & Takeaways, Conclusion (10–15 minutes)

Key Discussion Questions

- What makes digital advocacy effective? *[If not covered, convey that: The most important is credibility. Even one misleading post can damage trust. Consistency, facts, and emotional truth matter more than viral trends.]*
- How can we measure real impact beyond likes and shares? *[Likes are easy. But real change? That's when someone changes a habit, signs a petition, shows up to an event, or even just thinks differently.]*
- What ethical considerations should digital advocates keep in mind?
- How can we sustain momentum in digital campaigns?
- What's the role of offline action in digital advocacy?

Conclusion

Your voice matters. But to be heard clearly and ethically, you need a plan. Today you created one. You thought deeply, responded to challenges, and understood that digital advocacy is about truth + strategy + action.

The next time you see a post, ask: What's the real impact here? And when you care about something, plan, pause, and then post with purpose.

Debrief

- Effective digital advocacy requires clear goals, strategic planning, and authentic engagement
- Online activism should be connected to real-world action and outcomes
- Digital advocacy has unique strengths (reach, speed, accessibility) and challenges (algorithm limitations, echo chambers)
- Being a responsible digital advocate means considering the accuracy and impact of your message
- Adaptability is key to advocacy. Ethical choices often require more creativity, not compromise.

Alternative Ways to Engage

- **Individual Focus:** Instead of group work, have each student develop a personal advocacy plan for an issue they're passionate about.
- **Case Study Analysis:** Provide examples of successful digital advocacy campaigns for analysis rather than creating new ones.

Activity 13: Your Digital Advocacy Plan

Objective

This activity helps participants understand how quickly misinformation can spread, how it evolves during transmission, and why it's important to pause and verify before sharing.

Prep Required:

- CTRL + ALT + PROTECT (Pages 110-119) – Student Handbook on Digital Safety.

Time Required 35-40 minutes

Resources Needed

- Large chart paper (one per group)
- Markers/colored pens
- Sticky notes (multiple colors)
- Digital Advocacy Strategy Cards (provided below)
- Sample advocacy campaigns (printed or digital)
- Timer or stopwatch

Phase 1: Setting the Context (10–12 minutes)

- Have you ever wanted to make a difference on an issue you care about, climate change, gender equality, a stray dog on your street, or a local issue in your school? Have you seen or participated in online campaigns or movements?
- Can you name an online campaign that made you stop and think? What made it stick with you?

Digital platforms give us unprecedented power to raise awareness and mobilize action. But there's a difference between effective advocacy and simply jumping on trends. **Digital advocacy** means using digital tools, like social media, websites, videos, and hashtags, to raise awareness, influence public opinion, and create real-world change around a cause.

It's more than just posting about something you care about. It's about having a clear goal, understanding your audience, and using digital spaces strategically to get people to think, care, and act.

Today, you're going to be the campaigners. You'll build your own digital advocacy plan from scratch, one that's thoughtful, strategic, and aimed at real impact.

Activity 13: Your Digital Advocacy Plan

Phase 2: Activity – Your Digital Advocacy Plan (20 minutes)

Step 1: Identify Your Cause (5 minutes)

*[Divide participants into small groups (3-4 students). Ask each group to brainstorm and select one issue they genuinely care about (local, national, or global). Have them write this issue at the top of their chart paper. Encourage groups to pick something **they feel connected to personally**. The more it matters to them, the more meaningful their campaign will be.]*

Step 2: Digital Advocacy Strategy Planning (15 minutes)

Don't rush into flashy slogans, think deeply about who you want to reach and what action you want them to take. A good campaign makes it easy for people to understand and do something about the issue.

[Instruct each group to develop their advocacy plan by addressing these components on their chart paper:

1. **Goal Statement:** What specific change do you want to see? (Make it SMART: Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-bound)
2. **Target Audience:** Who needs to hear your message? Who can help create the change?
3. **Platform Selection:** Which digital platforms would be most effective for reaching your audience? Why?
4. **Message Crafting:** Create a clear, compelling message. What's your hashtag or slogan?
5. **Content Strategy:** What types of content will you create? (Videos, infographics, stories, etc.)
6. **Call to Action:** What specific actions do you want people to take?
7. **Measurement:** How will you know if your campaign is successful?

Facilitation Tip!

If time permits, you can give each group one "Advocacy Challenge Card" that presents a realistic obstacle to their campaign. Challenge them to adapt their strategy to address this obstacle.

Sample Challenge Cards (You can write these on chits):

- Your campaign is being ignored by mainstream media
- A competing narrative from powerful interests is drowning out your message
- Your campaign is being misinterpreted or misrepresented
- People express support but aren't taking real action
- Your platform's algorithm is limiting your content's reach

Step 3: Presentation and Discussion (10-15 minutes)

- Each group briefly presents their advocacy plan and how they addressed their challenge.
- Follow this by a round of questions from all participants.
- What surprised you while solving the challenge?
- What did you learn about your audience or your platform choice?
- How did you make sure your message stayed true and ethical?

Activity 13: Your Digital Advocacy Plan

Debrief!

- Effective digital advocacy requires clear goals, strategic planning, and authentic engagement
- Online activism should be connected to real-world action and outcomes
- Digital advocacy has unique strengths (reach, speed, accessibility) and challenges (algorithm limitations, echo chambers)
- Being a responsible digital advocate means considering the accuracy and impact of your message
- Adaptability is key to advocacy. Ethical choices often require more creativity, not compromise.

Phase 3: Discussion & Takeaways , Conclusion (10–15 minutes)

Key Discussion Questions:

- What makes digital advocacy effective? *[If not covered, convey that: The most important is credibility. Even one misleading post can damage trust. Consistency, facts, and emotional truth matter more than viral trends.]*
- How can we measure real impact beyond likes and shares? *[Likes are easy. But real change? That's when someone changes a habit, signs a petition, shows up to an event, or even just thinks differently.]*
- What ethical considerations should digital advocates keep in mind?
- How can we sustain momentum in digital campaigns?
- What's the role of offline action in digital advocacy?

Conclusion

Your voice matters. But to be heard clearly and ethically, you need a plan. Today you created one. You thought deeply, responded to challenges, and understood that digital advocacy is about truth + strategy + action.

The next time you see a post, ask: What's the real impact here? And when you care about something, plan, pause, and then post with purpose.

Alternative Ways to Engage

- **Individual Focus:** Instead of group work, have each student develop a personal advocacy plan for an issue they're passionate about.
- **Case Study Analysis:** Provide examples of successful digital advocacy campaigns for analysis rather than creating new ones.

Activity 14: Super Shopper Challenge

Objective

To help participants understand the online shopping process, recognise secure practices, and identify warning signs of scams or unsafe platforms.

Prep Required:

- CTRL + ALT + PROTECT (Pages 31-33) – Student Handbook on Digital Safety.

Time Required 30-35 Minutes

Resources Needed

- Whiteboard/Chart paper
- Markers
- Product Description Chits (5–8 pre-made slips)
- Safe Shopping Checklist (on board or printed)

Phase 1: Setting the Context (5–7 minutes)

- Think about the last thing you bought online. Where did you buy it from? What made you trust that website or app? *[Invite 2–3 participants to share briefly.]*
- Have you ever abandoned a cart because something felt off? Have you (or someone you know) ever been scammed while shopping online?

Online shopping can be super convenient, but it also comes with risks. Just like we check quality in a physical store, we need to do the same online. The trick is learning how to spot a *good deal* from a *scammy trap*. And that's exactly what we're going to practice today.

Phase 2: Activity – Super Shopper Challenge (20 minutes)

Step 1: Introducing the Safe Shopping Checklist (3–5 minutes)

This checklist is your digital shopping compass. These six points help you decide if something is *safe to buy online*. Not all sketchy products look sketchy at first glance, so we need to get good at spotting what's *missing* just as much as what's *present*.

[Write or display the following Safe Shopping Checklist on the board or provide printed copies:]

- The product has clear details and photos.
- The seller has multiple verified reviews.
- There is a return/refund policy.
- The language used is correct and professional.
- No pressure tactics like countdowns or “only 1 left”.
- Secure payment options (not just UPI or bank transfer)

Activity 14: Super Shopper Challenge

Sample Product Description Chits (You can write these on chits):

Product: Wireless Earbuds

- Price: ₹899
- Details: No return policy. 4.9-star rating with 3 reviews. Payment only via direct bank transfer. Spelling errors in title.

Product: Notebooks Combo Pack

- Price: ₹299
- Details: Verified seller. 250+ reviews. Refund/return policy clearly listed. Secure payment available.

Product: Portable Bluetooth Speaker

- Price: ₹499
- Details: No reviews. The description has grammar mistakes. Only UPI payment allowed. No contact info.

Product: Portable Bluetooth Speaker

- Price: ₹499
- Details: No reviews. The description has grammar mistakes. Only UPI payment allowed. No contact info.

Step 2: The Race Begins (5 minutes)

[Divide participants into small groups (2–4 per group). Give each group 2–3 Product Description Chits and ask them to assess each chit using the checklist. For each chit, the group must]

- Decide whether the product seems safe to buy or not
- Highlight which red flags they spotted (if any)
- Share which checklist points were met or missed
- After reviewing, each group selects one product they would confidently buy and one product they would not buy
- Finally they must present these products and their logic behind the categorizations.

Debrief!

- Just because it's online, doesn't mean it's safe , Always pause and investigate before you click 'Buy'.
- A trusted platform and clear return policy are signs of a safe buy.
- Reviews and seller transparency is essential. But check how many, and how real , Three 5-star reviews don't mean much.
- Payment modes matter , Avoid products that only accept UPI or direct transfers. Use secure gateways or Cash on Delivery when unsure.
- Read product descriptions properly, images can be misleading. Spelling mistakes and shady language are often signs of poor credibility or rushed scams.
- Urgency tactics are red flags , If it says "Only 1 left!" or "Buy in 3 minutes!", think before you rush.
- Today you didn't just shop,you investigated. That skill will keep you and your family safer online.

Activity 14: Super Shopper Challenge

Phase 3: Discussion & Takeaways , Conclusion (10–15 minutes)

Key Discussion Questions:

- What made you trust or avoid certain products?
- Did anything appear safe at first but turned out suspicious?
- How can you use this checklist in your real-life online shopping?
- What will you now look for before making a payment online?

Conclusion

Super Shopper isn't just about deals, it's about digital thinking. Online shops can be tricky because they often look professional even when they're not.

The next time you shop online, stop and ask:

Does this pass the safe shopping test? If something feels too good to be true... it probably is.

Whether you're buying school supplies, gadgets, or even gifts, smart shopping is about slowing down and spotting signs. Scams rely on your hurry. Your new skill? Spotting red flags and making smart choices. And hey, if you ever see someone about to buy something fishy? Be their Super Shopper and help them out. That's digital responsibility in action.

Alternative Ways to Engage

- **Poster-Making:** Design posters titled "Top 5 Tips to Spot a Fake Deal"
- **Shopping Journey Roleplay:** Assign roles (buyer, seller, scammer) and let students act out a buying experience

Activity 15: The Cyber Escape Room

Objective

This activity focuses on advanced cybersecurity concepts, like spotting phishing attempts, using strong passwords, dealing with online grooming, installing protective software, and responding to breaches, through an immersive escape room experience. The goal is to help participants apply these concepts in real-world-like scenarios and leave equipped with stronger digital safety habits.

Prep Required:

- CTRL + ALT + PROTECT (Pages 24-35) – Student Handbook on Digital Safety.
- [Interlude: Be Internet Awesome](#) – Google Game
- [Safe Web Surfing: Top Tips for Kids and Teens](#) – Watchwellcast

Time Required 45-50 Minutes

Resources Needed

- A projector or whiteboard
- Flashcards (for context setting)
- Printouts or digital versions of clues (QR codes, fake emails, riddles, mini puzzles)
- Props or envelopes for different stations
- Laptops/tablets (optional if running a digital version)
- A timer and buzzer

Phase 1: Setting the Context (5–7 minutes)

Before we jump into today's game, let's talk about something most of us use every day: the internet. It's where we message our friends, play games, watch videos, and even study. But like any public space, there are risks too.

Let me ask you some questions:

- Have you ever received a weird message or email that didn't seem right?
- Do you know what kind of personal information apps or websites collect from you?
- Have you ever overshared something online that you later regretted?
- What would you do if someone tried to talk to you online and made you uncomfortable?

The internet is powerful, it lets us connect, learn, and explore. But just like in the real world, we need to know how to stay safe. Today's activity will help you understand the 5 major online threats and how to stop them before they happen, or know what to do if they do.

Activity 15: The Cyber Escape Room

Phase 2: Activity (25–30 minutes)

Step 1: Understanding the Threat (10mins)

[Split the class into 5 groups and assign each group one online threat. Ask the students to take 10mins to go through the student handbook and prepare a 1-2 minute presentation answering what the threat could look like, how one can stay safe and what tools or actions one must use if it happens to you.]

Threat	What It Looks Like	How to Stay Safe	Tools/ Actions If It Happens
<i>Phishing</i>	You get a message or email pretending to be from a trusted source (bank, teacher, friend), asking for personal details or to click a suspicious link.	Don't click unknown links, verify the sender, look for spelling errors or fake domains.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Change your password immediately - Report the phishing email (e.g., to Gmail/Outlook) - Use an antivirus scan (e.g., Windows Defender, Avast)
<i>Data Theft</i>	A random app or website asks for unnecessary access to camera, contacts, or location. Your data is silently collected and used.	Check app permissions, only install trusted apps, update privacy settings.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Revoke permissions on your phone (Settings > App Permissions) - Delete suspicious apps - Use Privacy Checkup tools (e.g., Google Privacy Checkup)
<i>Identity Theft</i>	Someone uses your personal info to impersonate you online or access your accounts. This could happen via leaked passwords or oversharing	Use strong passwords, avoid oversharing online, use 2-factor authentication.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Report fake profiles to the platform (e.g., Instagram, Facebook) - Use HaveIBeenPwned.com to check breaches - Enable 2FA and update passwords
<i>Hacking</i>	Someone breaks into your device, account, or network, possibly due to weak passwords or outdated software.	Use strong passwords, install antivirus, update your devices, avoid public Wi-Fi.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Run a full antivirus and malware scan - Use "Account Recovery" or "Reset Password" options - Use tools like Malwarebytes, Bitdefender
<i>Grooming</i>	An adult builds emotional connection with a minor online, intending to exploit or manipulate	Don't engage in private chats with strangers, block/report, tell a trusted adult.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Block and report the user (platform safety tools) - Talk to a parent, teacher, or counselor immediately - Use helplines (e.g., CHILDLINE 1098 in India)

Activity 15: The Cyber Escape Room

Step 2: Identifying the Threat (15mins)

Alright! Now that we've learned about different online threats and how to stay safe, let's see how well we can spot these dangers in action, and figure out what to do if we ever face them.

Here's how this next game works. We're going to play a short quiz on Kahoot. You can play it on your phone or on a shared device. Just scan this QR code to get started.

Each question will show you a real-life online scenario, like a suspicious message or an app asking for too much access. Your job is to figure out two things:

1. What kind of online threat is this?
2. What's the right action or tool to stay safe in this situation?

If you get both right, you earn full points.

You can even get bonus points if you also choose the right step to take if the threat has already happened, like reporting a fake message or deleting a risky app

Play smart, some answers might seem okay at first, but think like a digital detective. Let's begin!

Sample Prompt Cards:

Data Theft- App Permissions

Kahoot Prompt:

You download a flashlight app. It asks for access to:

Camera

Location

Contacts

Q: Is there anything suspicious here? What should you do?

Correct Cybersecurity Threat: *Data Theft*

Correct tool/response to choose: "Review permissions before installing apps"

Bonus Card (What to do if you could not stop the threat?): "Delete the app and change privacy settings"

Phishing Detective- Spot the Fake

Kahoot Prompt:

You receive this message:

"Dear user, your bank account has been suspended. Click the link below to restore access:

[\[http://secure-yourbank-login123.biz\]](http://secure-yourbank-login123.biz)"

Q: List all the suspicious elements of the message.

Correct Cybersecurity Threat: *Phishing*

Correct tool/response to choose: "Don't click suspicious links + Report the message"

Bonus Card (What to do if you could not stop the threat?): "Immediately change password, inform service provider, and run antivirus scan."

Activity 15: The Cyber Escape Room

Sample Prompt Cards:

Identity Theft- Oversharing Post

Kahoot Prompt:

A friend is excited about getting her license on her 18th birthday and decides to share a selfie with her new license.

Q: How can someone misuse this information?

Correct Cybersecurity Threat: *Identity Theft*

Correct tool/response to choose: "Limit personal info shared online + Enable 2FA"

Bonus Card (What to do if you could not stop the threat?): "Report the profile to the platform, inform friends/family, and secure your account."

Hacking- Weak Password

Kahoot Prompt:

You struggle with remembering your passwords so you have ensured that all your accounts have the same password that is easy to remember. It is mumbai123.

Q: What went wrong? What could have prevented this?

Correct Cybersecurity Threat: *Hacking*

Correct tool/response to choose: "Use strong, unique passwords + update your software"

Bonus Card (What to do if you could not stop the threat?): "Try account recovery options, report it to the platform, and alert people who may be affected."

Grooming- Suspicious Chat

Kahoot Prompt:

You have got the following message from an unknown number.

"Hey, I have been observing you after school from the parking lot everyday. You seem really cool. Don't tell your parents about this chat, okay? Want to meet in real life?"

Q: What red flags do you see? What should you do?

Correct Cybersecurity Threat: *Grooming*

Correct tool/response to choose: "Block + report + tell a trusted adult"

Bonus Card (What to do if you could not stop the threat?): "Speak to a trusted adult, and report the user immediately."

Facilitation Tip!

If the digital version is not possible then you can use the following analog version: Split the class into groups and conduct an offline quiz.

I'm going to read out a scenario, it'll describe something that could happen to anyone online. Once I'm done, raise your hand if you think you know:

1. What kind of threat it is
2. What's the best response to stay safe

If you get both right, your team scores 2 points.

If you only get one right, you still get 1 point.

And if you give the bonus answer, what to do if the threat already happened, that's an extra 1 point!

If your team doesn't get it right, I'll pass the question to another team, so stay alert!

Activity 15: The Cyber Escape Room

Discussion Prompts 5 mins:

- Which threat surprised you the most?
- Did any of the tools or responses feel unfamiliar?
- What's one new habit you will try from now on to protect yourself online?

Debrief!

- The online world is fun , it helps us learn, connect, and explore. But just like we stay alert in the real world, we must be smart and careful online too. But like the real world, it has dark alleys and risks. Think of cybersecurity like your seatbelt. You hope nothing bad happens, but if it does, you're protected.
- Cybersecurity isn't just for experts,it's for everyone who goes online.
- Each of us has the power to protect ourselves and our friends by being alert, thinking critically, and speaking up when something doesn't feel right.
- Remember: Just like you lock your door at night, you must lock your digital world too,and remember the Cyber Safety Power Moves you learnt today like:
 1. Use strong, unique passwords for every app and website.
 2. Turn on two-factor authentication (2FA) , it adds an extra lock to your account
 3. Pause before you click.
 4. Avoid using public Wi-Fi for sensitive things like online banking or email logins. Never overshare personal information online.
 5. Keep your apps and software updated. Review your app permissions regularly.
 6. Report and block suspicious accounts or messages.
 7. Talk to a trusted adult or friend when you feel uncomfortable or unsafe online.

Phase 3: Discussion & Takeaways , Conclusion (10–15 minutes)

Key Discussion Questions:

- Why do you think people fall for phishing, data theft, or grooming,even when they know the risks?
- What's one new habit you will try from now on to protect yourself online?
- How can we help our friends and families become more cyber-aware too?

Activity 15: The Cyber Escape Room

Conclusion

Today, you stepped into the shoes of a cyber detective. You solved real problems people face every day. These threats aren't imaginary. They happen around us, to adults, kids, even celebrities. But we're not helpless.

You now have the tools to: Recognise red flags, Respond calmly and smartly and Protect yourself and help others too

Remember: Being cyber-smart doesn't mean never making mistakes. It means learning from them and knowing what to do next.

Before we close, I want you to reflect on: What's one situation from today's game that felt real to you? How would you handle it in real life?

Option Home Activity:

Try this tonight: Sit down with a parent or sibling and teach them one thing you learned today. You can also help them do one of these:

- Check and improve app permissions
- Set up 2FA on a device
- Identify a phishing message in their email

Remember: Being cyber-smart doesn't mean never making mistakes. It means learning from them and knowing what to do next. You don't have to be a tech genius to be cyber safe. You just have to stay alert.

Alternative Ways to Engage

- **Cybersecurity Skit Challenge:** Split students into 5 groups and assign each group one cybersecurity threat. They must create and perform a 2-minute skit that shows the threat happening and how to respond to it properly. Also include ways to navigate a situation where someone has fallen prey to the threat as well.
- **Cyber Truth or Myth Quiz Show:** Run a quiz game where teams compete to identify true vs. false statements like:
 - "It's okay to use the same password for school and social media."
 - "Strangers can't see my Instagram if my account is private."
 - Include rapid-fire rounds and "What would you do if...?" scenarios to keep things exciting.

Activity 16: Hacker Mafia

Objective

The aim is to teach students how hackers operate, the importance of cybersecurity practices, and how to identify red flags, through a thrilling social deduction game.

Prep Required:

- CTRL + ALT + PROTECT (Pages 24-35) – Student Handbook on Digital Safety.
- [Protect Yourself from Hackers](#) – Peekaboo Kidz
- [How to be safe online, from a young person](#) – TED: Aurelia Torkington

Time Required 35-50 minutes

Resources Needed

- Scenario Cards (5–6 short digital threat situations)
- Hacker's Toolkit Cards (with common tricks used by attackers)
- Firewall's Toolkit Cards (with defense strategies and tools)
- Whiteboard

Phase 1: Setting the Context (5–7 minutes)

Let me tell you a quick story. A few months ago, I got a message from what looked like a friend. They said they needed help urgently and sent me a link. Without thinking too much, I clicked it. The next thing I knew, my account was acting weird, and people were getting strange messages from me! I felt embarrassed, but also really confused. That's when I realized: even people who think they're tech-savvy can fall for online tricks. *[Substitute with your own anecdote if you have one about hacking. The idea to make the participants comfortable and feel less ashamed and more open to share their own experiences]*

- Has anything like that ever happened to you or someone you know? *[Pause for response and ask followups]*
- Have you heard of hacking before? What comes to mind?
- Have you ever seen someone lose access to their account?
- What kinds of tricks do online attackers use to steal information?
- What would you do if someone sent you a suspicious link or asked for your OTP?
- Do you know of ways you can protect ourselves from hacking? What do you do if you have been hacked?

Hacking might sound like something out of a movie, but in reality, it happens every day. Sometimes it's through fake emails, shady links, or password guessing. These tactics can harm not just individuals but entire systems.

But not all hacking is bad. Some people use their skills to protect, not attack. These are called **Ethical Hackers**, people trained to think like hackers so they can stop real ones. Today, you'll be stepping into both roles: learning how attacks work and how to defend against them.

Activity 16: Hacker Mafia

Phase 2: Activity (25–30 minutes)

Students become residents of **Digital Town**, where hackers hide in plain sight. Each round, hackers secretly choose someone to "hack" using fake tactics like phishing, password guessing, or public Wi-Fi traps. The rest must use discussion, deduction, and gut instinct to vote out the hackers. Special roles like the Firewall and Ethical Hacker try to protect and investigate. The winner is announced at the end of each round when either the hackers are caught, or the hackers outsmart the digital citizens.

Role	Function
Hacker (2)	Secretly hacks one person each night
Cyber Citizen	Has no powers, must deduce and vote
Firewall (1)	Protects one person each night

[The 1st round will be a demo round where you play in the larger group to ensure s. The facilitator assigns secret roles via chits or printed cards. Everyone sits in a circle. All eyes stay closed unless it's their turn. At the beginning of each round, the Game Master (facilitator) announces the scenario for the round and guides the game through two phases of night and day. After the demo round, the class is divided into smaller groups of 6-7 and elect a new game master for each round. The facilitator gives each group one set of the Scenario Cards and the Hacker and Firewall Toolkit with the solutions.]

Night Phase (1–2 mins):

1. **Hackers** open their eyes and point to one person to hack. They also pick a "hacking method" (e.g., Phishing Email, Guessing Password, etc.)
2. **Firewall** opens their eyes and picks a "defending method" (e.g., strong password, link scanner, privacy settings update, etc.)

Day Phase (3–5 mins):

1. Game Master announces who was "hacked" and announces the method of hacking chosen.
2. If the Firewall has successfully identified the defending method then they have successfully saved the attacked person. The Game Master announces the same.
3. Eliminated players become silent observers.
4. Players discuss their suspicions based on behavior, logic, or guesswork.
5. Everyone votes on one person to eliminate.
 - If a Hacker is voted out, the town wins.
 - If the town can not find the hacker, the hackers win.
6. At the end of each round, the group initiates a discussion about the means of hacking attack, defending method and behavioral tactics used by the hackers to mask their identity.

Activity 16: Hacker Mafia

Scenario Cards	Hacker Toolkit	Firewall Toolkit
You receive a message saying you won a contest you don't remember entering.	Fake prize link	Verify source or delete
A classmate shares their password to use an account.	Reuse or share password	Use private, strong password
You post your pet's name and birthday online.	Guess password	Avoid personal info in passwords
Friend messages you from a new account asking for help.	Impersonation	Confirm identity via call

Discussion Prompts 5 mins:

- What made some hackers harder to catch than others?
- Which hacks were the most surprising or realistic?
- How do hackers actually use social behavior to trick us?
- What would you do differently online after this game?

Debrief!

- Hackers use manipulation, curiosity, and fear to trick people, more than just technical skills.
- Cybersecurity starts with awareness. Weak passwords, phishing links, and careless browsing are common entry points.
- You can be part of the solution, by staying alert and helping others. (Discuss some of the ways students can do this, like be skeptical of links, messages, and downloads, especially when urgent or emotional, never share OTPs or passwords, even with people who seem trustworthy, etc)
- Privacy matters: oversharing online makes you vulnerable.
- Digital safety is a team effort. Protecting oneself and others requires communication, observation, and action.
- Critical thinking and empathy are key skills in the digital world, whether it's spotting a scam or helping a peer in distress.
- Ethical hackers play a critical role in defending systems by thinking like attackers, safely.

Activity 16: Hacker Mafia

Phase 3: Discussion & Takeaways , Conclusion (10–15 minutes)

Key Discussion Questions:

- Why is it important to think like a hacker when protecting your data?
- Do you think your digital habits are strong enough to protect you from a hacker? Why or why not?
- Should governments or schools hire ethical hackers to test their systems?
- What role does peer pressure or embarrassment play in people not reporting digital threats?

Conclusion

Today you all got a taste of what it's like to think like a hacker, and how to defend yourself and others.

Hacking is not always about code, it's about knowing how people behave online. Remember:

- Be skeptical of urgent messages, unknown links, and too-good-to-be-true offers.
- Never share OTPs, passwords, or personal details, even with people you trust.
- Always double-check the source, and help your friends do the same.

Before we close, let's reflect: Can you think of a time when you or someone you know was tricked online, or almost was? Looking back, what could you have done differently? What would you do now?

[Encourage students to journal this or discuss it in pairs/small groups if time allows.]

Optional home activity: Ask students to do a 10-minute “cyber hygiene check” at home. Bonus points for getting your family to do the same.

You're not just users, you're defenders. And with awareness, you can help keep the internet a little safer.

Alternative Ways to Engage

- **Storyboard Challenge:** Ask students to draw their own “digital attack” comic based on a real-life threat.
- **Hacker for a Day:** Divide the class into two teams—hackers and defenders. Each round, hackers try to “breach” a scenario (e.g., weak password, open browser), and defenders counter it. At the end, students switch roles so they understand both sides.

Activity 17: “First Aid-er”

Objective

This activity focuses on helping students identify signs of emotional distress caused by digital threats and co-create a real-time support system for themselves and their peers. It equips them with emotional first-aid tools to support themselves and others in times of digital stress.

Prep Required:

- CTRL + ALT + PROTECT (Pages 96-98) – Student Handbook on Digital Safety.
- [How to practice emotional first aid](#)– TED Guy Winch
- [Manage Digital Stress & Improve Mental Health](#) – Nic Ferguson

Time Required 45-50 minutes

Resources Needed

- Pre-written scenario cards (with online distress situations)
- “Support Squad Card” templates (1 per group)
- Sticky notes or index cards
- Posters of calming tools and resources
- Printable “First Aid Kit” templates or small paper boxes

Phase 1: Setting the Context (5–7 minutes)

Hey everyone, before we jump in, I want to ask something.

- Have you ever felt helpless after seeing something online?
- How do you know when you or a friend is feeling low or overwhelmed online?
- Has someone ever opened up to you about a problem, and you didn't know what to say? Did you feel pressure to fix the problem, or just to listen?
- What do you do in situations where you do not know what to say or how to respond to the situation?

Just like physical first-aid teaches you what to do if someone faints or falls, this session is about emotional and digital first-aid. You'll learn how to respond when you or someone else is upset, scared, or confused online.

Facilitation Tip!

- You can play the following video from the extra resources section- [“How to practice emotional first aid”](#)– TED Guy Winch

Just like we carry band-aids for cuts, we need emotional first-aid tools for moments like these. That's what today's session is all about.

Activity 17: “First Aid-er”

A **“First Aid-er”** is someone who listens, supports, and connects others to help when they’re struggling emotionally. You don’t need to be an expert, just follow the following tools:

- **Notice Signs of Distress:** Looking out for emotional cues (e.g., unusually quiet, angry, withdrawn, or distracted) as well as online cues (e.g., sudden status updates, disappearing from chats, or cryptic posts). Pay attention with care, not judgment.
- **Listening without Fixing:** Let them talk, without interrupting or trying to immediately solve their problem. Use open body language, eye contact, and patience. Listen to understand, not to respond.
- **Validating Feelings:** Let them know it’s okay to feel what they’re feeling. Avoid trivializing their emotions by saying: “It’s not that bad” / “Don’t cry” / “Just move on”
- **Asking Open & Gentle Questions:** Be curious, not pushy. Let them lead the pace.
- **Knowing When to Get Help:** If someone talks about self-harm, hopelessness, or wanting to disappear, it’s time to act. Tell a trusted adult, teacher, counselor, or helpline, even if your friend asks you not to. Know your limits. Getting help is helping.
- **Stay Connected:** Support doesn’t stop after one talk. Stay present. Send a kind message to check in later or include them in something simple.

Phase 2: Activity (20–30 minutes)

The Squad Challenge (15mins):

You’re now a ‘Support Squad.’ Think of this as your mission to help someone facing a rough online situation. You’re not fixing the person. You’re just building a small bridge of support. Look at the scenario and try to understand what your peer might be feeling, not just what they did.

[Break the class into teams of 5 students, each becomes a “Support Squad.” Each squad receives:]

- A scenario card (see examples below)
- A blank Support Squad Card to write their solutions

Each team reads their scenario and must answer:

1. What do you think someone in this situation would feel like?
2. What are the possible digital red flags in this situation?
3. What kind of help does the person need?
4. What are 2 things someone in the group can do to help?
5. What are 2 things the person can do for themselves?

They must then present:

- A name for their Squad
- Their “First Aid Plan” (written on a large sheet or read aloud)

Facilitation Tip!

- If the students belong to a younger age-group and not familiar with the terms used to define the feelings they have identified, the facilitator can introduce these terms after each presentation.

Activity 17: “First Aid-er”

Scenario	How does one feel in this Situation?	Possible Red Flags	Possible Ideas for Support
A student was publicly shamed in a class group chat for a photo. Now they've stopped replying to anyone.	Feels like your face is burning and you don't want anyone to see you / Feels like hiding under a blanket / tummy hurts / not wanting to talk / want to be all by oneself	Withdrawal, shame	Reassure, talk privately, help report the post
Someone lost money after clicking a scam link in a game. They're too embarrassed to tell their parents.	Tummy feels tight or twisty / fast heart / scared to get in trouble	Guilt, anxiety	Share a helpline, role-play how to talk to adults
A friend is chatting with someone older online who is asking personal questions. They say it's "a secret."	Hearts beating fast and you can not concentrate on anything else / Feels like something is not right	Isolation, fear	Explain grooming, encourage blocking, talk to a counselor

Build Your Own First Aid-er Toolkit (5-7 minutes):

Distribute a blank piece of paper and ask each participant to create their Emotional First Aid kit by adding:

- 1 thing that calms them down (e.g. breathing, music, doodling)
- 1 trusted adult or helpline number
- 1 positive affirmation (“I am safe. I am not alone.”)
- 1 step they can take to support a friend in distress
- A friend they would like to talk to in such situations of distress

This is your personal Emotional First-Aid Kit. Keep it close. Maybe stick it on your wall or inside your notebook. You never know when you or a friend might need it.

Discussion Prompts 5 mins:

- What was difficult about playing the First Aid-er?
- What's something new you learned about being supportive in the digital world?
- What kind of support would *you* want if you were in distress?
- Going forward, will there be any changes in your approach towards your friends while supporting them?

Activity 17: “First Aid-er”

Debrief!

- Ethical hackers play a critical role in defending systems by thinking like attackers, safely.
- The internet is powerful but sometimes things can go wrong. and it’s okay to feel overwhelmed. Just like we need plasters or band-aids for cuts, we need emotional first-aid tools to handle distress.
- Being a First Aid-er doesn’t mean fixing everything, it means knowing how to listen, support, and connect people to help. You have the power to protect not just yourself, but also those around you.
- Remember, support doesn’t always look dramatic. Sometimes it’s a ‘Hey, are you okay?’ or a ‘Want to go for a walk?’ And sometimes it’s knowing when to bring in help.
- When someone is in distress, especially online, they may not always ask for help. But if we recognise the signals, we can show up with small actions that make a big difference. Whether it’s offering kind words, guiding someone to a trusted adult, or just reminding them they’re not alone, you are part of the digital support squad.

Phase 3: Discussion & Takeaways , Conclusion (10–15 minutes)

Key Discussion Questions:

- What makes it hard for someone to talk about their feelings online?
- What does it mean to “show up” for someone digitally?
- What’s something in your first-aid kit you’ll try using next time you feel stressed or unsafe?
- Apart from what we have talked about today, are there other ways in which you think you would want to be supported by those around you, if you were in a distressing situation?

Conclusion

We live in a world where we’re connected all the time, but it’s still easy to feel isolated, especially when something goes wrong online.

Today was about learning to notice without judgment, listen without pressure, and act without needing to fix. We all need emotional band-aids sometimes.

Take a moment and think : If you could send one anonymous message to a friend who’s been quiet or distant lately, what would you say?

So, before you scroll tonight, take 30 seconds to check in with that friend. That’s the beginning of being a First Aid-er.

Activity 17: “First Aid-er”

Alternative Ways to Engage

- **Emotional Emoji Relay:** Prepare emoji cards representing different feelings. Teams draw a card and must act out a mini skit showing:
 - A digital distress situation (e.g., rejection online)
 - How to notice emotional cues
 - A supportive response
- **Support Notes Wall:** Have students write anonymous messages of encouragement to someone feeling low (e.g., “It’s okay to ask for help”, “You are not alone”). Stick them on a wall or create a rotating “Message of the Day” board.
- **Digital Red Flag Bingo:** Create bingo cards with common online red flags (e.g. ghosting, online bullying, scam messages, sudden mood changes, isolation). As you describe scenarios or tell stories, students mark the red flags they spot. First to get a line shouts “Support Squad!”

Activity 18: Deepfake Detective

Objective

This activity focuses on understanding AI-manipulated media (like deepfakes), learning to spot signs of fake content, and thinking critically before sharing information online.

Prep Required:

- CTRL + ALT + PROTECT (Pages 79-81) – Student Handbook on Digital Safety.
- [“Can you tell when a video is fake?”](#)– Above the Noise
- [“How deepfakes undermine truth and threaten democracy”](#) – TED-Danielle Citron

Time Required 30-40 minutes

Resources Needed

- Projector or screen
- [8-10 Short videos](#) (mix of real & AI-generated/deepfake content) / Printouts of real and AI generated [images](#)
- “Real or AI?” response paddles or hand-raise cues
- Whiteboard/Markers

Phase 1: Setting the Context (5-7 minutes)

- Have you ever seen a video that looked real, but felt “off”? [Prompt: Maybe a celebrity doing something weird? A politician saying something shocking? Or a news anchor sounding off?]
- Do you trust everything you see online? Why or why not?

You’re not alone. These days, AI can create fake videos so real-looking that they trick even adults, journalists, even tech experts! These are called deepfakes. Deepfakes are videos, images, or voices that have been altered using artificial intelligence to make someone appear to say or do something they never did. They can be funny or artistic, but they can also be used to spread lies, ruin reputations, or influence opinions. This is why it is essential to understand how these work.

- Do you know about AI? Have you ever seen a video generated by AI?

Artificial Intelligence (AI) refers to the ability of computers or machines to perform tasks that typically require human intelligence, like recognising faces, understanding speech, generating art, or mimicking human behavior. AI is already all around us. You’ve probably seen AI at work in things like YouTube recommendations, Google Translate, or chatbots.

In recent years, AI has made huge leaps, especially in India. From AI-powered [translation tools](#) in governance to AI chatbots answering citizen queries and [AI-generated anchors](#) delivering news, India is embracing this tech in new ways.

Activity 18: Deepfake Detective

- Can you tell the difference between AI-generated voices or faces and real ones?
- What could happen if people start believing fake videos as truth

Facilitation Tip!

- You can play the following video from the extra resources section- [“Can you tell when a video is fake”](#)– Above the Noise

Key Concepts:

- Deepfakes: AI-generated media that can manipulate videos, images, and voices.
- Risks of Deepfakes: Misleading information, identity theft, and manipulation.

Phase 2: Activity (15–20 minutes)

First 10 mins:

Divide the class into teams of 5. The facilitator will show 3–4 short videos: a mix of real and deepfake (e.g., celebrities saying strange things, politicians making false claims, everyday people altered via AI). After each clip, students will have short discussions internally.

The teams will raise “Real” or “AI” paddles (or thumbs up/down) to guess. After the facilitator reveals the truth, the teams will discuss and highlight the red flags with the content.

Possible cues:

- Lighting inconsistencies
- Skin texture issues
- Unnatural expressions
- Background mismatches
- Misaligned eyes or mouth

Next 5 mins:

Within the teams of 5, students review screenshots or short clips and identify as many red flags as they can.

Discussion Prompts 5 mins:

It’s completely normal to be unsure or believe the deepfakes we see, deepfakes are made to trick our brains. The goal isn’t just to be able to always spot them accurately, but to ask questions and help others stay safe.

- Which deepfakes were easiest or hardest to spot? Why?
- How can you help others avoid falling for deepfakes?
- What would you do if you received a suspicious or emotional video?

Facilitation Tip!

- You can play the following video from the extra resources section-[“How deepfakes undermine truth and threaten democracy”](#) – TED-Danielle Citron

Activity 18: Deepfake Detective

Debrief!

- Deepfakes are getting harder to detect. Look for visual, audio, and behavioral inconsistencies like unnatural blinking, strange lighting, mismatched audio and mouth movements, or odd gestures.
- However sometimes just this is not enough. It is imperative to go beyond visual cues. Run reverse image/video search, check trusted fact-checking platforms and compare the content across multiple news or official sources.
- As deepfakes become more advanced, it may get harder to tell real from fake just by looking. That's why it's crucial to keep asking questions and checking the source before believing or sharing anything.
- Deepfakes can be used to spread propaganda, polarize opinions, or mislead people, especially during elections, protests, or emergencies. It is thus important to pause and ask: "Who made this? Why? Can I trust it? What's the context?" before sharing.
- It is crucial to recognise bias, question sources, resist manipulation, and make informed choices, whether it's news, memes, ads, or even celebrity videos.
- As deepfakes become more common, your role as a responsible digital citizen becomes more important. By staying alert, asking questions, and helping others recognise fakes, you're building a safer internet for everyone.
- Digital safety isn't just about passwords and privacy, it's also about protecting the truth. By staying curious, skeptical, and informed, you're becoming a responsible digital detective and helping build a more trustworthy online world.

Phase 3: Discussion & Takeaways , Conclusion (10–15 minutes)

Key Discussion Questions:

- How could someone use a deepfake to cause harm or confusion?
- Why is it important to question what we see online?
- How do deepfakes affect trust online, and what can we do about it?

Conclusion

We live in a world where seeing is no longer believing. When something looks real but isn't, it can change how we see the world, who we believe, and even how we treat others. That's why being a deep fake detective isn't just about spotting fakes, it's about protecting truth, empathy, and each other. But you've just trained your brain to pause and investigate. That's powerful.

Your role doesn't stop at spotting a fake, you must also report it to protect others from being tricked. What makes you a strong digital citizen isn't knowing all the answers, it's staying curious, asking good questions, and protecting others from harm.

You now have the power to be someone who doesn't just scroll, but thinks, checks, and cares. That makes you more than just a digital detective: you're a guide for others too.

[If time permits, conduct Activity 20 with this if it is not already covered.]

Activity 18: Deepfake Detective

Alternative Ways to Engage

- **Deepfake Newsroom:** Students create fake vs. real headlines or stories based on deepfake content for others to guess.
- **AI vs Real Showdown:** Students play a game where they're shown pairs of photos, texts, or videos and must guess which is AI-generated.
- **Would you believe it? Thought Experiment:** Present a series of surprising claims (some real, some AI-generated). Students must guess which they believe, then discuss how appearance or believability can trick even critical thinkers, and what steps they could take to verify.

Activity 19: Stranger Danger

Objective

This activity helps participants recognise red flags of grooming in online interactions and equip themselves with safe, healthy online response strategies.

Prep Required:

Facilitators should review the full set of resources provided before the session to ensure they are comfortable and informed about discussing online grooming and related red flags. This topic can bring up sensitive questions, so it's important to be prepared to guide the conversation with care. If you're unsure how to respond to a particular query or situation during the discussion, it's completely okay to say, "That's a great question, I want to give you the right information, so let me take some time to review and I'll get back to you in the next session." Prioritizing accuracy and safety builds trust with participants.

- ["What is Grooming? Understanding How Predators Target Kids"](#) – Bark
- CTRL + ALT + PROTECT (Pages 47-78) – Student Handbook on Digital Safety.

Time Required 35-40 minutes

Resources Needed

- Internet access (phones/tablets/laptops) OR printed platform safety guides
- Snippets to online conversations (some friendly and some manipulative)
- Chart paper and markers to make hold up cards of Safe, Uncertain and Unsafe

Phase 1: Setting the Context (5-7 minutes)

Let's start with something simple. Raise your hand if:

- Have you ever received a message or friend request from a stranger online?

Facilitation Tip!

- *If few or no hands go up, facilitator can say:*

That's okay if you haven't, or if you're not sure. Sometimes people delete those messages quickly or forget they ever got them. You could also have seen a random message in a game, social app, or even on YouTube comments.

Whether or not it's happened to you, it's still important to know how to stay safe if it ever does, and to help someone else if they're in that situation. Which brings me to my next question:

- What would you do if someone you didn't know kept messaging you or asked you to keep secrets?
- Why do you think people don't always report this or tell an adult? [Possible follow ups: Do they feel like they'll get into trouble? Do you think people feel embarrassed or unsure? What would help make it easier to talk about?]
- Do you know what red flags to watch for in online conversations?

Facilitation Tip!

- Play video: ["What is Grooming? Understanding How Predators Target Kids"](#) – Bark

Activity 19: Stranger Danger

Online grooming is when someone, usually an adult, builds a relationship with an underage person online by tricking or manipulating them. They might start by being friendly and understanding, but their real goal is to take advantage of the underage person and sexually exploit them. Groomers may:

- Pretend to be your age or overly friendly
- Shower you with compliments, gifts, or attention
- Ask you to keep conversations secret
- Guilt you if you don't respond or share personal info
- Slowly push boundaries about what's okay to say, show, or do

Phase 2: Activity (25–30 minutes)

Part 1: Spot the Red Flags: Identifying Grooming Activity (10 minutes):

Let's look at some online messages people have received. For each one, hold up cards or hand signs (or write on paper) categorizing each as "Safe," "Uncertain," or "Unsafe."

[Project snippets of online conversations (some friendly, some manipulative). Ask students to, after each snippet, discuss why each was placed where, and highlight common grooming tactics like over-sharing, secrecy, guilt-tripping.]

Sample Conversation Snippets:

1. "Hey, you look so cool in your profile pic! Want to be friends?" *[Prompt: Friendly on the surface, but unsolicited compliments from strangers can be an early tactic to build false closeness.]*
2. "Let's keep this just between us, okay? Grown-ups wouldn't understand." *[Prompt: Secrecy is a major grooming red flag. Healthy relationships don't need secrets from trusted adults.]*
3. "I'm older than you, but I feel like I can tell you anything." *[Prompt: Groomers often blur age boundaries and create false emotional intimacy to manipulate younger people.]*
4. "What's your number? I'll video call you when your parents aren't home." *[Prompt: Clear isolation tactic, choosing a time when adults are absent. High-risk request.]*
5. "Can you send me a picture of you in your new outfit?" *[Prompt: Groomers often request photos, even if they start off as "harmless" or disguised as compliments.]*

Part 2: Tools against Grooming Activity (10 minutes):

Now let's go back to the Uncertain and Unsafe examples. I'll show each one again, and you tell me how you might respond in that situation.

[Re-project snippets of only the "Uncertain" and "Unsafe" online conversations and initiate a discussion on the ways in which they'd respond to uncomfortable conversations, guide them with healthy ways of responding.]

Activity 19: Stranger Danger

Snippets safe action responses:

- Snippet 1: Do not respond right away. Check their profile and privacy settings. Telling a trusted adult immediately and block if anything feels off.
- Snippet 2: Take a screenshot and immediately block and report. Talk to a trusted adult.
- Snippet 3: End the conversation. Avoid emotional sharing with someone older online. Report and talk to a trusted adult.
- Snippet 4: Never give out your number. Let someone in your household know. Block and report immediately.
- Snippet 5: Say no and don't send anything. Use platform tools to block/report. Tell a trusted adult.

General Safe Action Tools:

- Tell a trusted adult immediately
- Blocking and reporting the person
- Never sharing personal info, photos, or passwords
- Using privacy settings to limit who can message or add them
- Trusting gut feelings about conversations that feel uncomfortable

Discussion Prompts 5 mins:

Every single one of you now knows how to read between the lines in online messages. You've practiced what it looks like to say no, to reach out, to block and report, and most importantly, you've seen how grooming doesn't always start with something scary, but it can turn unsafe really fast.

- What were some common red flags you noticed?
- Why do you think people sometimes ignore those signs?
- How can we make it easier to talk about this if it happens to a friend?
- Would you feel confident reporting or blocking someone after today's session?

Debrief!

- Grooming conversations aren't always obvious at first, but you can protect yourself by recognising patterns and acting early.
- Grooming happens gradually, most groomers don't start by being openly inappropriate. They gain trust first. That's why it's so important to notice small warning signs early.
- Your gut feeling is important. If a conversation feels uncomfortable, pressured, or confusing, it matters. You don't owe anyone attention, replies, or secrecy.
- You have the right to say no. Whether it's a stranger or someone you know, you should never feel forced to share personal details, photos, or keep secrets online.
- It's never your fault if someone crosses boundaries. The responsibility is always on the person behaving inappropriately.
- Always tell a trusted adult, block/report the person, and support your friends in doing the same. You have a right to feel safe and respected online.

Activity 19: Stranger Danger

Phase 3: Discussion & Takeaways , Conclusion (10–15 minutes)

Key Discussion Questions:

- Why is it important to act, not just ignore, when something wrong happens online?
- How can we make reporting more accessible or less scary for everyone?
- Would you feel confident reporting an incident after today? Why or why not?

Conclusion

Today wasn't just about spotting red flags. It was about building your confidence to respond to them - not just for yourself, but for others too.

Think of someone your age who may not feel confident speaking up. What's one thing you could do or say to help them stay safe online?

Sometimes unsafe conversations online don't start off dangerous. But when someone pressures you to keep secrets, share things, or talk when no one's around, it's a red flag. You always have the right to say no. You don't owe anyone photos, replies, or your trust just because they're nice.

Alternative Ways to Engage

- **Red Flag Rapid Fire:** Facilitator reads out statements from fictional online chats, students raise their hands, hold up colored cards (Green = Safe, Yellow = Uncertain, Red = Unsafe), or shout the color aloud. Quickly debrief each with why it's a red flag or not.
- **Spot the Trap:** Show a fake Instagram or WhatsApp chat screenshot (on screen or printouts). Students work in pairs to underline/circle 3 warning signs in the conversation.

Activity 20: Cyber SOS Mission

Objective

This activity helps participants actively discover where and how to report different types of online incidents on various platforms and official channels, through teamwork, roleplay, and presentations.

Prep Required:

- CTRL + ALT + PROTECT (Pages 84-95) – Student Handbook on Digital Safety.
- “[Cybercrimes and You | Crash Course](#)” – PragerU
- “[How to file a cybercrime report](#)” – Young Leaders for Active Citizenship (YLAC)

Time Required 55-60 minutes

Resources Needed

- Internet access (phones/tablets/laptops) or printed copies of the Student Handbook Pages for each student/group
- Incident situation cards (5–6 different types of cyber incidents)
- Chart paper and markers or a digital presentation tool (optional)

Phase 1: Setting the Context (5–7 minutes)

Let's start with a quick question, you don't have to share anything personal, just a show of hands or a nod will do:

Have you or someone you know ever seen something unsafe or uncomfortable online?

- Like someone sent repeated messages asking personal questions, even after being told to stop?
- Or you saw a comment thread filled with hate speech or bullying?
- Perhaps, a stranger tried to video call you or someone you know out of nowhere?

Many of us freeze, ignore it, or just block and move on. And honestly, sometimes we don't even know where to report, or whether it even works. Let's discuss these together so we can help in building a more responsive ecosystem.

- How many of you know how to report harmful or inappropriate content on social media or other platforms? Can I see a show of hands [Take some responses on which platforms, what actions etc and share that we'll also look into them in more detail]
- Do you think platforms take reports seriously? Why or why not?

Reporting such content or messages helps platforms take action against offenders, protects yourself and others from online abuse, and prevents harmful content from spreading. Reporting doesn't always result in immediate action, but repeated reports from multiple users can increase the chances of a platform addressing the issue.

Most major platforms have built-in systems to remove harmful content or block dangerous accounts, and governments have legal systems to take further action. But many people don't know how to use them or don't trust them, and that's what today's activity is all about! Today, we're going on a Cyber SOS Mission, you'll become online detectives and explore how to act fast and smart when digital safety is at risk.

Activity 20: Cyber SOS Mission

Phase 2: Activity: Cyber SOS Challenge (35–40 minutes)

First 5-10mins:

Before we start our activity, I want each one of you to take some time to go through the student handbook and acquaint yourselves with the various reporting methods across different platforms. If any of you have any questions or confusion, raise your hand and I'll come to you.

Next 15 mins:

Let's form groups of 4–5. Each group will get a different realistic online situation, things that could happen to anyone.

Your task is to figure out where and how you would report it. Use your phone, help centre articles, app settings, or the printouts of the student handbook you just went through. Find where to report the incident (on the platform or to authorities), how to report (steps/screenshots/help links), identify any helplines or legal action options if needed and actions to be immediately taken (block/screenshot/tell someone)

[Distribute cards, read aloud one or two examples if needed for clarity. Assign the sample situation and read out the instructions below. After the allocated time is over each group will share their case and their reporting strategy. Try to keep it short and clear: about 2 minutes max per group. After each, the facilitator quickly corrects any missing info and shares official helpline numbers mentioned in the students handbook]

Your job is to answer these 4 questions, and be ready to explain them like cyber-first responders. You can divide the work inside the group, one person explores app settings, another searches government portals, another looks for tips online. But ensure you cover the following points:

- What happened? (Summarise the incident)
- Where would they report it? (Which platform/tool?)
- How would they report it? (Find the steps, screenshots if possible)
- Extra tips or safety advice? (Block, Screenshot, Tell someone, Legal action?)

[If teams are stuck, prompt them with:

- *Try searching 'how to report blackmail on Instagram.'*
- *Look at the 'three dots' next to posts, a lot of tools are hidden there.*
- *Check if the platform has a safety page or Help Centre, they usually guide step-by-step.*
- *Can this be reported to the police or cyber cell too?*

What should someone do immediately after, block? Screenshot? Tell a friend?

Activity 20: Cyber SOS Mission

Sample Situation Cards:

Sample Situation	Examples
You get a creepy DM from a stranger on Instagram.	A message pops up: <i>"Hey cutie, you look really good in your pics... wanna chat privately?"</i> 😏
Your friend's picture is posted on a fake profile.	You come across a profile with your friend's photo and name, but the username is different and it's sharing odd or flirty posts that your friend never made.
A group chat is spreading hateful messages about a classmate.	In your class WhatsApp group, someone writes: <i>"She's such a loser, always trying to act smart. Let's all block her."</i>
Someone posts fake health advice that could harm others	A viral post claims: <i>"Drinking bleach mixed with warm water kills COVID instantly. Share to save lives!"</i>
You receive blackmail threats over DMs	Someone messages you: <i>"I have screenshots from your private account. If you don't send me what I want, I'll share them with everyone."</i>
You accidentally shared your OTP with a scammer.	A caller says: <i>"I'm from your bank. Please share the OTP sent to your phone to fix your account."</i>

Discussion Prompts 5 mins:

- Which platform's reporting system surprised you?
- Was it easy or hard to find this info?
- Was any platform's reporting harder to understand than others?
- What would you do differently next time something like this happens?

Debrief!

- One of the most effective ways to tackle harmful, unsafe, or illegal online behavior is by knowing how to report it quickly and correctly.
- Today we learnt that each platform has its own reporting tools, often hidden in menus or help centers, and that official helplines and portals like Cybercrime.gov.in and the 1930 helpline exist to handle more serious issues like threats, blackmail, or financial scams
- Reporting is a right and a responsibility. Whether it's for your own safety or someone else's, using reporting tools correctly can stop harm from spreading, support victims, and hold wrongdoers accountable. Learning to act in real time builds safer online communities.

Activity 20: Cyber SOS Mission

Phase 3: Discussion & Takeaways , Conclusion (10–15 minutes)

Key Discussion Questions:

- Why is it important to act, not just ignore, when something wrong happens online?
- How can we make reporting more accessible or less scary for everyone?
- Would you feel confident reporting an incident after today? Why or why not?

Conclusion

Today you learned more than just what buttons to press. You learned how to think clearly in a moment of stress, how to help others, and how to respond, not freeze when something's wrong. Every time we report harmful behaviour online, we're stopping it from growing. We're making platforms safer, not just for ourselves, but for everyone.

So here's the real test: What will you do next time you see something that's not okay?

Will you scroll past, or will you be the one who takes action? You now know what to do. And that makes you not just a safe internet user, but a digital leader.

Alternative Ways to Engage

- **Reporting Toolkit Poster:** Invite groups to make posters or digital slides summarizing reporting steps for one platform.
- **Reporting Cheat Sheet:** Each group collaboratively creates a one-page reporting guide with platform links and helpline numbers to display in classrooms or share digitally. This creates a shared tool-kit for the class as a resource.

