

# Internet Awareness

## Helping Middle School Students Make Wise Decisions Online

Our teens are online, mobile, and technological—technology is just part of life for them. They use computers to do homework, socialize, stream video, and create movies and songs. And they can connect and communicate anytime of the day.

We want our teens to make good decisions so they can take advantage of the powerful technology that fills their lives. They need to judge the trustworthiness of what they find online. They need to know how to protect their privacy and how to avoid getting into trouble for copying the work of others without giving them credit (known as plagiarism). Parents can help teach their teens the skills they need to use technology wisely and safely.



### Fact or Fiction

Ask your teen if she can tell if statements about the internet are true facts or myths (fiction). To begin, cut the FACT and FICTION words apart and put them on the table. Then, cut out the Fact and Fiction cards. Deal one card at a time to her and have her read the statement. If she thinks it is FACT, she should place the statement under the FACT card. If she thinks it is FICTION, she should place the statement under the FICTION card. Together you can see how many of her answers are correct by checking the Parent Answer Sheet (numbers on the cards match the numbers on the Parent Answer Sheet).



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### The Fact Detective

You've seen it many times. Your teen comes home from school with a report to write. Off to the Internet he goes. But as you probably know, not everything he finds on the Web can be trusted. The Internet is bursting with information. Some of it is correct, some is questionable, and some is just plain wrong. While some 6th and 7th graders may think about whether or not information on the Internet is accurate, many tend to believe that everything they read on the Web is true.

Do the Fact Detective activity with your teen to learn how to examine a website for clues to its accuracy with a little detective work. Cut apart the Fact Detective cards. Draw one card from the stack. Have him first guess if he thinks it is fact or fiction. Then search the Internet for information together. With each website you find, answer the questions on the Fact Detective Clue Sheet. The activity mentions the CRAAP Test, which can help people evaluate the information they find online.



### Being a Better Internet Researcher

Share these additional suggestions with your teen for becoming a better Internet researcher.

- Compare multiple sources. Kids and teens should look at several sites to see if they give the same information. Remember the “Rule of 3” - always compare three sources. If they are different, keep looking. This will help them determine whether a piece of information is accurate.
- Watch out for ads. Help your teens notice when advertisers are trying to target them and teach your teens to question what the ads are saying. If the ad looks too good to be true, it is probably not something they want to click on.
- Follow school assignment guidelines. Teachers often specify what sites students should search for information, how many sources of information they should use, and how to list each source—that is how to write up a citation for the source.
- Many teens use Wikipedia as their only source for finding information. But remind them that they shouldn't use it as their only resource, just a starting point. There is a lot of other good information they can find that isn't included in Wikipedia.

## General Common Sense tips:

Here are some common sense tips to talk with your teen about using the internet.



- Being connected can be positive or negative—it's what people make it. Our teens have a choice in all of their online relationships. They can say something positive or say something mean.
- Talk about online bullying. It's real. It's everywhere. Make sure your teens know how to deal with online bullying, and if the situation gets serious, urge them to tell a trusted adult about it—either you or another relative or a teacher.
- If you are concerned your teen is being bullied, talk to the school's administrator or counselor.
- Encourage positive posting. Have they said something encouraging about something they've seen or read online? From the earliest ages, kids need to know they can add positively to the online world.
- Remind teens the texts and instant messages may not persist, but they still have impact. Anything they say or do with their phones or through quick messages may seem to disappear when the devices shut down, but the impact on others remains—whether for good or bad.

**Credits.** Some of the information in this tip sheet is used with permission from Common Sense Media ([www.commonsense.org](http://www.commonsense.org)).

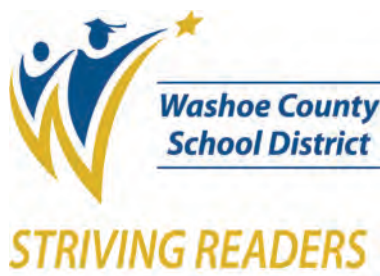
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### Watch Families Doing Activities

To see families doing these activities, please go to: [www.washoestrivingreaders.com](http://www.washoestrivingreaders.com). Next, click on the Family Literacy Videos tab at the top of the page. Then, scroll down the page and click on the video that goes with this tip sheet. Other tip sheets and videos are there as well.

### More Ideas

If you and your teen enjoy these activities, tell your teen's teacher or counselor. The teacher or counselor may have more ideas to share for learning fun at home. If your teen is having a hard time with these activities, you can also talk to your teen's teacher or counselor. There may be another tip sheet or other activities to help.



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