

## Middle primary unit

### Finding and identifying appropriate online content



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# Finding and identifying appropriate online content

## Before you start

This unit is designed for students aged 8–9 years.

Before you start this unit it is important that you are aware of what your students, and others in this age group, are doing online and how they use online technologies. For some general information visit the 'What are students doing online?' section at [www.cybersmart.gov.au/schools.aspx](http://www.cybersmart.gov.au/schools.aspx).

This section provides information on children and technology, including cybercitizen profiles, videos of students discussing their online activities and links to ACMA research regarding online behaviour.

## Teacher background information

The Internet is an essential part of education today. It provides quick and easy access to a wealth of information. However, finding relevant and appropriate information online can be a daunting or frustrating task, especially for children.

It is the role of parents and teachers to ensure that children remain safe and protected while using the Internet. This involves teaching them the knowledge and skills they need in order to navigate the World Wide Web in a safe manner. They need to be able to determine and identify content that is reliable, appropriate and safe, and be given strategies to deal with inappropriate content or contact.

## Unit overview and objectives

This unit aims to help students to:

- develop the knowledge and skills to enable them to conduct effective online searches
- identify reliable and appropriate online content
- develop strategies to deal with unwanted or inappropriate content.

By the end of this unit, students will be able to:

- employ effective searching strategies to locate information quickly and easily online
- identify reliable and appropriate online content
- list strategies to deal with unwanted or inappropriate content or contact.

## Unit duration

The time allocated to this unit will depend upon the prior knowledge and skill levels of your students. It comprises eight activities, each designed to take approximately one or two 45 minute lessons.

## Required resources

- Butcher's paper
- Prepared clues for treasure hunt (see activity 2)
- Various items/objects for treasure hunt (see activity 2)
- Several computers with Internet access
- Ball of wool/string
- Interactive whiteboard with Internet access
- Poster paper
- Worksheets 1–4
- [www.abc.net.au/abc3](http://www.abc.net.au/abc3)

## Further information

For more information, contact:

Australian Communications and Media Authority  
Cybersafety Contact Centre

Tel: 1800 880 176

Email: [cybersafety@acma.gov.au](mailto:cybersafety@acma.gov.au)

[www.cybersmart.gov.au](http://www.cybersmart.gov.au)

# Finding and identifying appropriate online content

## Activity 1: What is the Internet and how is it used?

### What you will need:

- Butcher's paper

Ask students 'What is the Internet?' and discuss and record their responses on butcher's paper.

Give students five minutes to write down how they use the Internet.

Collate the answers into a class graph.

Use the class graph to make a list of the most popular ways of using the Internet. Students, in pairs or small groups, survey other classes about their use of the Internet. Compile the new data into a larger graph to gain a bigger picture of how students use the Internet.

Discuss the larger graph.

## Activity 2: Clues for searching

### What you will need:

- Prepared clues for treasure hunt
- Various items/objects for treasure hunt

Explain to students that they will be going on a treasure hunt. Hide a number of items around the school (or classroom). Students form small groups and search for the items.

Provide each team with a list of clues designed to help them find the items. Ensure that only one team has clear, accurate and specific clues (e.g. the item is next to the drinking fountain outside the front office) and the other teams have clues which are less specific or even inaccurate (e.g. the item is near water). Allow the hunt to proceed until all the items have been found (ideally by one team), or the teams with inaccurate clues become too frustrated to continue.

Discuss the treasure hunt and allow the groups to share the clues they had.

As a class, discuss and record the reasons why the teams could, or could not, locate the items with the clues they had. Ask them to explain the causes of the problem. Emphasise the ease of locating items when the search clues were relevant, accurate and specific and highlight the frustration of searching for an item/location with confusing or incorrect clues.

Each group is to choose a location in the school (or classroom) and write a series of six to ten specific clues to help another group to find it.

Explain that searching on the Internet is a bit like a treasure hunt and it is useful to have relevant, accurate and specific clues to help you find what you are looking for.



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## Activity 3: Search engines

### What you will need:

- Several computers with Internet access

Write the words 'relevant', 'accurate' and 'specific' on the board. Recap what they mean in terms of clues for searching.

Explain that the World Wide Web is made up of millions of websites found on computers all around the world. We can connect to these sites using the Internet. (We can also send emails using the Internet.) So, if we want to find useful, accurate and relevant information by doing web searches, we need to learn specific searching skills.

One such strategy is to use a 'search engine'. Ask students what they think this is, or to provide examples of ones they have used.

A search engine helps you to use the Internet to locate information stored on the World Wide Web. While there are now thousands of search engines, not all of them are helpful or easy to use.

Search engines work in different ways. For example:

- 'Ask Kids' allows you to type in questions  
<http://sp.askkids.com/docs/askkids>
- 'Google Safe Search' lets you type in words or phrases, and then ranks results by the importance and relevance of the site. For this to work effectively you have to choose your search words carefully  
[www.squirrelnet.com/search/Google\\_SafeSearch.asp](http://www.squirrelnet.com/search/Google_SafeSearch.asp)
- 'Family Friendly Search' searches Yahoo!igans, AOL Kids, Kids Click and Saluki Search with one click  
[www.familyfriendlysearch.com](http://www.familyfriendlysearch.com)

Selecting an appropriate search engine helps to locate content quickly and easily, but it does not guarantee that it will be relevant.

Allow students time to try each of the search engines mentioned above (and any others that are deemed appropriate).

Students to decide, with their group, which search engine they liked the best. Survey the class to find out if there was a clear favourite.

## Activity 4: The World Wide Web

### What you will need:

- Ball of wool/string
- Interactive whiteboard with Internet access
- Poster paper

In this lesson students will be exploring what a web search 'looks like' using a ball of wool/string.

Ask students what types of things, or pieces of information, they have searched for on the Internet recently. Could they locate appropriate content quickly?

Choose a topic that you would like to research and compose a specific question about it. For example, you want to research cats and your question is 'what is the most popular breed of cat in the world?'

Explain that you will be using a ball of wool/string to represent a web search. One student (or the teacher) will be the researcher and the rest of the students will use the wool/string to represent the search.

To begin, students spread out around the room (with one student holding the ball of wool/string). The researcher sits at a computer and selects a favourite search engine (select one that students are familiar with from activity 3). The researcher types some information into the search engine and clicks 'Search'. When the page changes to a list of sites, the student holding the ball of wool/string passes it to another student (while keeping hold of the end). Each time the researcher clicks on a new site or page, the ball of wool/string is passed to another student. Ultimately a network of connections will be represented.

When the required information is found, students can untangle themselves and discuss the experience. Encourage students to make suggestions about how searching for information on the World Wide Web could be made less random and more focused (think back to the treasure hunt in activity 2 and the exploration of search engines in activity 3).

For example:

- List questions you wish to have answered, but don't make them too specific.
- List important words relating to the topic of your search.
- Do not randomly click on sites that come up in a search. Read the information provided and only click on sites that seem relevant.

Work as a class to design a 'Top tips for searching' poster.

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## Activity 5: Find the facts

### What you will need:

- 'Top tips for searching' poster from activity 4
- Several computers with Internet access
- Worksheet 1: Find the facts

Students work in pairs or small groups and employ the 'Top tips for searching' to find and record (on worksheet 1) five accurate facts about a chosen topic from five different sources on the World Wide Web. Set a 20 minute time limit. Suggest that students spend a few minutes discussing and planning how they will search before they start.

After 20 minutes find out how many facts students have gathered. Consider how many websites they looked at that were not useful. Explain the need to carefully choose words to guide the search engine, as poor choice of search words wastes time by leading you to sites that are irrelevant, unreliable, outdated or inappropriate.

Share collected facts recorded by students. Discuss discrepancies and consider these in relation to the reliability of the sources of information. Ask students to think about what makes a source reliable. Consider:

- Who wrote the information or created the website?
- The date on the website (if applicable).
- Could they find other sources (sites) that had the same information?
- Did the site provide links to other sites, or give sources for its information?

Have pairs of students review worksheet 1 to rate the reliability of their sources using smiley faces. A smiley face indicates that the students think the site is very reliable, a neutral face indicates that they think it might be reliable and a sad face indicates that they do not think it is reliable. Share again and encourage students to justify their ratings.

## Activity 6: Selecting appropriate content

### What you will need:

- Interactive whiteboard with Internet access
- Worksheet 2: Internet information
- [www.abc.net.au/abc3](http://www.abc.net.au/abc3)

Explain to students that there are a number of terms and words that can assist you to locate, select, navigate and evaluate appropriate websites and online content.

Provide each student with a copy of worksheet 2 that lists a number of commonly used terms and pieces of information that can be found on websites. Read through each of them with the students.

Use the ABC3 website, found at [www.abc.net.au/abc3](http://www.abc.net.au/abc3) to explicitly teach students where to find important pieces of information on a website (e.g. point out where they can find the date of the site, its URL and what each part of it means, or how to find out who is responsible for the site).

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## Activity 7: Website review

### What you will need:

- Several computers with Internet access
- Worksheet 3: Analysing a website

Students to revisit one or more of the sites they used to find information for activity 5. They are to record as much information about each site as they can (on worksheet 3).

Students to reassess their happy, neutral or sad face ratings for the sites they revisit.

## Activity 8: Inappropriate content

### What you will need:

- Worksheet 4: Safety scenario

Read the scenario written on worksheet 4 to the whole class.

Ask students to share with a partner what they would do in this situation to keep themselves safe.

Share and record the ideas.

Explain to students that there may be times when they do not feel safe while using the Internet. They could find content that makes them feel uncomfortable, or someone may try to contact them via pop-ups or messages. Reassure students that this is not their fault, but there are strategies for dealing with this situation and they are similar to dealing with real-life examples of feeling unsafe.

Revisit the ideas from the scenario and explain how the same strategies can be used when online (e.g. asking a trusted adult for help, or calling the police).

Strategies for dealing with inappropriate content include:

- asking a trusted adult for help
- calling the police, your Internet Service Provider (ISP) or the Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA)
- closing the window
- clicking on the Back button
- clicking on the home page (if it was safe)
- shutting down the computer.



### Worksheet 1: Find the facts

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Use a search engine to locate five accurate facts about a topic. You must use at least five different sources (websites). Record the name of the sites that provided the information, and put a tally mark in the box at the bottom each time you visit a site that is not useful.

	Fact	Source
1	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
2	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
3	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
4	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
5	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/>

Put a tally mark in this box every time you visit a site that is not useful.

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### Worksheet 2: Internet information

Below are some commonly used terms and pieces of information that may help you to assess the reliability of a website when searching for information online.

URL	This stands for uniform (or universal) resource locator. It is the address of a web page. You can find it in the 'location bar' at the top of the screen. A URL can tell you if the site is secure, the country it comes from and what type of site it is (e.g. government, organisation, company or educational).
.gov	refers to a government website.
.edu	refers to an educational institution.
.com	tells you the website is a commercial business.
.org	usually refers to an organisation, such as a charity.
Where was the site created?	The URL provides information about the country of origin of the site. For example, sites that end in .au are Australian.
How can I find out who created the website?	This can be tricky, but it should be easy to find out on a reliable site. Look for sections called 'About us' or 'Contact us' as these may provide some answers.
When was the site created or last updated?	This is not always easy to find out. A 'What's new?' section might help or the copyright information, which might be at the bottom of the home page, could provide some clues.
How can I tell what sections are in the website?	There will be a menu on the site. It will be located across the top, or down the side (usually the left-hand side), of the home page.

### Worksheet 3: Analysing a website

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Select a website and answer the following questions:

- What is the URL? \_\_\_\_\_
  
- Who created the website? \_\_\_\_\_
  
- Record any contact details \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
  
- When was the website content written or last updated? \_\_\_\_\_
  
- In which country was the website created? \_\_\_\_\_
  
- Why do you think the website was created?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
  
- Who do you think the content is aimed at?  
\_\_\_\_\_
  
- Why?  
\_\_\_\_\_
  
- Is the website easy to use and navigate?  
 Yes    No
  
- Do you think the website is reliable?  
 Yes    No
  
- Why or why not?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

#### Worksheet 4: Safety scenario

Read the following scenario and discuss what children could do to keep themselves safe in this situation.

It is Saturday afternoon. Your dad is playing cricket at the local oval, your mum has just gone down to the shops and your older brother is next door playing an online game with his mate.

You LOVE being home alone. You can eat whatever you like (even break into your brother's hidden chocolate stash and eat crumbly food on the couch), turn your favourite music up really loud and channel surf as much as you like.

Suddenly, you hear a noise. You can't really identify it at first, but it is probably your dog scratching at the back door. You get up to check. No, he is asleep in the laundry. Oh well, perhaps you are hearing things again. Back to the TV.

Creeeaaaak! There it is again. This time it sounds as though it is coming from the front of the house. Slowly you get up and walk to the front door. You open it slightly, but you can't see a thing.

Creeeaaaak.... Thud! It's the front gate. You remember that it needs to be oiled and that the hinge is slightly broken, so it hits the ground at the last minute. You open the door just a little bit further and can see a man (whom you don't recognise) trying to get through your front gate.

What do you do?