

Navigating Online Spaces

40 minutes

Digital Media Literacy

WHAT THIS LESSON DOES

In this lesson, you'll explore what online spaces are and learn how to navigate them safely. Discover different types like social, educational, and gaming spaces, and understand safe versus risky behaviours to make responsible choices online.

WHAT STUDENTS SHOULD BE ABLE TO DO

- Understand the concept and purpose of various online spaces.
- Identify different types of online environments and their unique characteristics.
- Distinguish between safe and risky behaviours in digital interactions.
- Apply responsible decision-making skills in online scenarios.
- Develop strategies to navigate online spaces securely and confidently.

BEFORE THE LESSON

- A device per pupil or per pair with a web browser, plus a working internet connection.
- Check your school filter allows BBC Bitesize and National Geographic Kids, and open both yourself first so you know they load.
- Have paper or a notes app ready for pupils to jot scenario answers, and decide in advance how you will handle any real safety disclosures during the discussion.

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HOW THE LESSON RUNS

Introduction

What Are Online Spaces?

Types of Online Spaces

Safe vs Risky Behaviours

Scenario Activity

Activity: What would you do?

Safe Site Scavenger Hunt

Wrapping It Up

TEACHING MOVES

1. Introduction. Draw the playground comparison out loud: ask pupils to name online places they visit, then link staying safe there to staying safe outside. Keep it a quick warm-up, not a lecture.
2. What Are Online Spaces? Anchor the abstract idea with two examples pupils know, such as a chat app and the school website. Stress these are places you visit through a device, not places you can touch.
3. Types of Online Spaces. As you name each type, ask pupils to call out one they use that fits it. This turns a long list into a sorting task and keeps them attentive.
4. Safe vs Risky Behaviours. Build two columns on the board, safe and risky, and have pupils place each behaviour as you discuss it. Land hard on never sharing personal details and always telling a trusted adult.
5. Scenario Activity. Give thinking time before any answer. Ask why the request for a real name and address is risky even when it sounds friendly, so pupils reason rather than guess.
6. Activity: What would you do? Let pupils choose privately first, then take a show of hands per option and unpack why report and block beat ignore or accept.
7. Safe Site Scavenger Hunt. Model opening one site yourself before releasing pupils. Set a clear fact to find and ask them to say what makes the site trustworthy, not just what they found.
8. Wrapping It Up. Ask pupils to name one safe behaviour they will use next time they go online. Collect a few aloud to close the lesson on a concrete commitment.

WHAT TO WATCH FOR

- Pupils assume a person who is friendly in a game or chat is safe to share personal details with. Point out that friendliness is easy to fake online. A safe rule stays the same no matter how nice the request sounds: no real name, address or school to someone you have not met in person.
- Pupils think ignoring bullying or a strange message is the safe choice because they did nothing wrong. Reframe reporting and telling a trusted adult as the safe action, not tattling. Ignoring leaves the problem in place; reporting removes it.

DIFFERENTIATION

- Emerging: Pair the pupil with a confident partner for the scavenger hunt so device navigation does not stall the safety thinking. Offer the scenario choices as a simple pick from a, b or c rather than an open written answer.
- Developing: Ask them to give a reason for each scenario choice, not just the answer, so they explain their thinking back to you.
- Proficient: Have finishers write their own risky-message scenario and the safe response, then trade it with a partner to solve. Ask them to list two signs that made their scavenger-hunt site trustworthy and explain each.