

Digital Footprint: Think Before You Post

40 minutes

Cyber Safety

WHAT THIS LESSON DOES

Discover what a digital footprint is and how your online actions create active and passive traces that can last. Learn why it affects your safety, future, and relationships. Through interactive activities, practise pausing to think before posting, ensuring your online presence stays positive and secure.

WHAT STUDENTS SHOULD BE ABLE TO DO

- Understand the concept of a digital footprint and its lasting impact online.
- Differentiate between active and passive digital footprints.
- Recognise how online activities contribute to one's digital footprint.
- Appreciate the importance of managing a digital footprint for privacy, safety, and reputation.
- Develop the habit of pausing to reflect before posting content online.

BEFORE THE LESSON

- Open and test the lesson site on your own device first, and check the interactive activity in step 6 loads and submits a score on your school network.
- Have a device per pupil or per pair ready and logged in.
- Decide your seating for step 6 so pupils who need a partner to talk the scenarios through are placed together.

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HOW THE LESSON RUNS

Introduction

Types of Digital Footprint

Your Digital Footprint is Permanent

Why Your Digital Footprint Matters

Think Before You Post

Interactive Activity

Review and Reflect

TEACHING MOVES

- 1. Introduction. Anchor it with the footprints-in-sand image before scrolling on. Ask pupils to call out one thing they did online today, and point out each is a footprint they left.
- 2. Types of Digital Footprint. Stress the control distinction: active is what they choose, passive happens without them noticing. Ask for one example of each from their own use so it lands personally.
- 3. Your Digital Footprint is Permanent. Land the copy-machine idea hard. Point out that delete removes your copy, not everyone else's, and that a screenshot lives on long after the original is gone.
- 4. Why Your Digital Footprint Matters. Read the teacher-coach-family test aloud and leave a pause. Draw out that safety means sharing less personal detail, not just being careful who you talk to.
- 5. Think Before You Post. Walk through the three questions slowly, one at a time. The marker-pen line is the takeaway: say it and have pupils repeat it back.
- 6. Interactive Activity. Have pupils read each scenario and decide before tapping. Circulate on question 1 and 3, where the private detail is the trap, and ask why before they submit.
- 7. Review and Reflect. Close on the simple rule aloud: if you would not want a teacher or future you to see it, do not post it. Take reflections as spoken answers only.

WHAT TO WATCH FOR

- Pupils believe deleting a post erases it completely and permanently. Return to step 3's copy-machine idea. Show that a screenshot or download made by someone else stays even after the original is deleted, so delete does not equal gone.
- Pupils think a footprint only counts when they actively post something, missing passive tracking entirely. Revisit the active-passive split from step 2. Point out that just opening an app can share location or device data, so a footprint forms even when they post nothing.
- Pupils judge a post only on whether it is funny or nice, not on whether it leaks private information. Use question 1 from the activity: the photo is harmless but the school bag shows a full name. Teach them to scan for private detail separately from tone.

DIFFERENTIATION

- Emerging: Give this pupil the single rule to hold onto: if you would not want a teacher or future you to see it, do not post it. Judge each activity scenario against that one line.
- Developing: Pair them for the step 6 activity and ask them to say why aloud before tapping, so the reasoning is spoken not just guessed.
- Proficient: Ask them to write their own POST or DON'T POST scenario for a partner, and to explain what makes it a hard call rather than an obvious one.