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## ***Internet Safety Top Five Handout***

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Being online is like being in a really large neighborhood. You know some people better than others on your block, but you all follow rules to keep your neighborhood safe and enjoyable for everyone.

Keep this list posted or handy for reminders about the top five rules to keep you safe online:

While there are other things to remember online, if you only follow these five rules of safety, your online travels will be safer, more dependable, and more reliable.

1. **Ask Questions:** Make sure you are near an adult so that you can ask questions and report anything suspicious.
2. **Keep private information to yourself:** Don't share your name, address, phone number, age, or school. Never send your picture to someone online.  
  
Keep your password private. And when you create a password, make sure it isn't obvious. Combine capital and lowercase letters and numbers.  
  
Keep other people's information private as well. That includes your parents' workplaces, credit card numbers, addresses, or emails.
3. **Don't be tempted:** Don't enter contests or clubs without adult permission.
4. **Listen to your instincts:** If someone asks to meet you somewhere, to talk on the phone, or asks for your picture, tell an adult immediately.
5. **Follow the laws:** Never send mail that could hurt someone or make them feel threatened. Never copy commercial files without permission. Never use other people's passwords.



## **Being An Internet Detective: The Six Accuracy Steps Handout**

The best part of the Internet is also the most suspicious part: the fact that anyone can write anything. The Internet is exciting because you have access to experts and information that your parents and grandparents never had access to. You can take a college level class, you can study any subject you want, and you can find the answers to almost anything. But it also means that anyone can put up a website that is false or misleading, and you don't want to fall for it.

Computers may be fast, but they aren't smart. That's where you come in. You need to check websites for accuracy you use their information as fact. Here are six steps to check for accuracy:

### **1. Use Your Common Sense**

Ask questions. Asking questions is a sure sign of how smart you are. As you read website content, make sure you always ask yourself the following questions:

- Who is the author of this site?
- Is there evidence to support what the author is saying?
- Is there evidence somewhere that supports or disagrees with this author?
- Is this author biased?

### **2. Verify the Evidence**

Be a detective with everything you read. The answers all lie in the evidence. Keep on the lookout for:

- proper nouns
- dates
- important keywords

Take this embedded information to a search engine (like Google) and find other believable references to backup your information.

### **3. Triangulate the Data**

Look at the word "triangulate." The prefix is "tri-," which means \_\_\_\_\_. What this means is that if you can't find three sources to back up your fact, then you can't really know for sure if your fact is credible or not. Read suspiciously!



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## ***Being An Internet Detective: The Six Accuracy Steps Handout*** (cont.)

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### **4. Follow the Links**

Where a page links to is as important as what information is on that actual page. Click on the external links to find the next layer of information about the author and his or her intent. Perhaps you'll be linked to an encyclopedia entry (reliable link), or perhaps you'll be directed to an Amazon or Café Press product (unreliable link). Don't fall for a website that's really an elaborate ad to sell someone's product or point of view!

### **5. Analyze The URL**

This is by no means foolproof, but it is a place to start in verifying the accuracy of the site.

### **6. Check the Publisher**

If possible, use websites like easywhois.com to check the background on the site to help you answer some of the questions in your head.

By checking off your accuracy checklist, you will have diminished the chances that you have fallen for a false website or a website that is more promotional than fact.

Congratulations! You are now an Internet Detective.





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## Rules of Netiquette

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“Netiquette” is the accepted word for online behavior. It refers to the expected manners that everyone should use when they are communicating on the Internet.

The following rules are important to remember when you are online:

1. **Treat others with courtesy and respect.** Don't be cruel. Just because you can't see a correspondent, doesn't mean he or she can't feel. Here's a good rule of thumb: if you won't say it to his or her face, then don't feel liberated to say it in writing. Also, bullying is bullying regardless of whether it is physically on the playground or written on a note, blog, or email. Also remember that everything that is written online can be seen forever. Don't let your online footprint be one that shows evidence of cruelty.
2. **Don't use bad language.** Using bad language just proves you don't know how to say something well.
3. **Don't spread rumors or lies.** This is a form of bullying and is against the law (and can be enforced by the law, too). Use the Internet to spread information, not instigation. Words and writing are powerful. With the Internet, anyone has access to giving information and reading information. Treat that power with respect and don't abuse another person or your audience.
4. **DON'T SHOUT.** ALL CAPS = shouting. Use all caps sparingly, as you would a highlighter.
5. **Don't break the law.** Stealing from others isn't just impolite; it's illegal.
6. **Share your expertise.** The Internet allows people from all over the world to share their knowledge. It's hard to imagine a time when we couldn't just Google any answer. You also have an audience for what you can do well. There are people out there who want to know how to do something that you already know how to do. Share your knowledge.



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## **Rules of Netiquette** (cont.)

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7. **Lurk before you participate.** “Lurking” is a term for reading and exploring a site before writing a comment. Read thoroughly before participating in an online discussion or activity. Know your audience before they know you.
  
8. **Control flame wars.** “Flaming” happens when the fires of gossip get out of control and rapidly spread. Sometimes flame wars start because someone started a discussion without any thought of holding back his or her emotions, and had the intention to flame others. Sometimes a comment begins a flame war. Don’t get caught up in it. Don’t be the dry grass that helps the fire to burn out of control.
  
9. **Be forgiving.** Everyone’s a newbie at sometime in his or her life. Everyone misspells occasionally or offends someone by accident because he or she hasn’t perfected an email voice yet. Just remember that most people online are well intentioned and looking to communicate and learn. Let the small things pass, and pick your battles.



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## Rules of Netiquette (cont.)

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Look at the two scenarios below. Identify which rules of netiquette are being broken and list their numbers in the lines following each example.

### Scenario #1

**DBG#23:** That guy in Mrs. J's class is awful! You should've heard what he said to me during class. It was like I was stupid or something. The teacher wanted a metaphor, right? Well, I've got one. That guy's as dumb as dirt! At least I have you to talk to.

COMMENT: Oh, he's not so bad.

DBG#23: Oh yeah? How would you know?

COMMENT: I AM that guy in Mrs. J's class.

**Rules Broken:** \_\_\_\_\_

### Scenario #2

**SGFD:** HEY EVERYONE! I HOPE THAT YOU UNDERSTOOD MY ESSAY ON THE CELL. I HAD A GREAT TIME MAKING THE MODEL AND I EVEN HELPED MY SISTER UNDERSTAND IT BETTER TOO. SHE'S TWO YEARS YOUNGER, BUT NOW SHE'LL BE PREPARED.

PETERPIPER87: I thought your essay was really great. It included the cell membrane that I totally forgot to put into my model. Just so you know, you're yelling. No biggie. But all caps is hard to read. Thanks for the update!

**Rules Broken:** \_\_\_\_\_



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## Netiquette: How to Comment on a Blog

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Online reading is meant to be very interactive. While there are those students who click around reading this and that, there are many who also comment on what they read. In fact, commenting is not only accepted, it's encouraged. Remember that just as there are classroom rules for responding to someone's writing and ideas, there are rules online when you are responding to a blog post or article. Here are some of the rules:

1. **Don't say anything you wouldn't say in person.** Just because you can't see the author doesn't mean he or she doesn't have feelings.
2. **Don't hijack the discussion.** Stay on topic.
3. **Bring something new to the conversation.**
4. **Don't be a know-it-all smarty-pants.** If you have to correct somebody, be polite. And you don't always need to be the one to correct somebody. Think of it like class: if all the students corrected each other every time someone misspoke or mispronounced, nobody would feel comfortable speaking out loud. It's the same online. It's more important to focus on the deeper content when reading.
5. **Make your tone clear.** Try not to use humor or sarcasm; they don't always go over well, even if you are the best writer ever. Use emoticons or write what the audience might see at that moment (shrug) to communicate your message clearer.
6. **Don't write anonymously.**
7. **Cite your sources with links.** If you mention a resource, link the words to the resource or provide the website for others to refer to.
8. **Paste quotes into your comment field.** If you are commenting on a quote within the post, copy and paste the quote into your comment field and then comment on it below so that the readers don't have to scroll back up to the original article.
9. **Don't comment when you are emotional.** If you are angry with someone for posting something, calm down before writing something that could forever be accessed. A good rule is to give it a day and then return to the post. Maybe even write a draft of your comment and let it lie for 24 hours. You can always cut and paste it into the comment field if you still believe it represents you well.
10. **Don't fan a flash fire.** A flash fire is when someone says something inflammatory and then people jump on the bandwagon, fanning the flames even more. If you ever see it happening, don't jump in. If there is a moderator, let him or her know what's happening. That will defuse it even faster.



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## **Netiquette:** **How to Comment on a Blog** *(cont.)*

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### **Activity**

Below is an example of a blog entry about Persuasive Essay Writing. The author is a middle school student who has posted the article as an assignment for English class.

At the bottom of the post is a comment field. Fill it in with a paragraph that comments on the article. If you can refer to a website as a resource, that's even better.

Then, pass your paper to a peer, have him or her flip it over, and have him or her comment after you. He or she may either add a comment about the original article, or he or she may comment on something you said. Your peer must use formal paragraph form for his or her comment.

Then, the second student must pass the paper on to one more student to fill in his or her own comment, referring to either the original article or to one of the comments.

Persuasive Essay Writing

Posted by Annie Bain-Epling, 5/27/10, 8:06PM

I have always struggled with writing persuasive essays. I mean, I like to argue, but the format of a persuasive essay has always been a struggle. For instance, I don't understand the purpose of a counterargument. My word choice is also always weaker than I am feeling in my heart when I'm writing something I feel passionately about. Last year, I wrote an essay on the effects of global warming on polar bears, but it just came out, well, blah. I wish I had a toolbox of strategies to help me specifically with persuasive writing. I wouldn't mind a little advice if anyone's out there reading.

Post a Comment: