



AGE 13–14

Being Aware of What You Share (UK)

How can you protect your privacy when you're online?



PRIVACY & SECURITY

We care about
everyone's privacy.

OVERVIEW

Children and young people share a lot of information whenever they go online -- sometimes on purpose, sometimes not. But do they understand that online privacy isn't just what they say and post? Help your learners understand their digital footprints and the steps they can take to shape what others find and see about them.

[See the US version of this resource](#)

Learning Objectives:

- Reflect on the concept of privacy, including what they feel comfortable sharing and with which people.
- Analyse different ways that advertisers collect information about users to send them targeted ads.
- Identify strategies for protecting their privacy, including opting out of specific features and analysing app or website privacy policies.

Key Vocabulary:

cookies

small text files stored on a computer that keep track of what a person does on a website

opt out

to choose to not participate in something

privacy

protection from being observed or tracked by others, including the government, the public, or selected individuals or groups

privacy policy

a legal document that an app or website must provide which describes what user information they collect and how they use it

privacy settings

choices a website or app might give you about what information is visible to other users and third parties

terms of service

a legal document that an app or website must provide that describes the rules the company and users must obey when they use the app or website

What You'll Need

Some resources below are available in Spanish

Classroom resources

- [Lesson Slides](#)
- [Ad Detective Handout Teacher Version](#)
- [Lesson Quiz](#)

Take-home resources

- [Family Tips](#)
 - [Family Activity](#)
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Lesson Plan

Warm-Up: Private Minds

10 mins.

1. **Project** [Slide 4](#) and ask: *What do you think of this meme? Do you think it's funny?*

Call on learners to share. Point out and confirm that the bottom image shows someone's reaction to learning that their mind was being read!

2. **Say:** *Even though mind reading might seem like a really cool power for someone to have, it actually would be pretty scary for everyone else.*

We all have thoughts that we don't intend or want others to know. These are our private thoughts, and we'd probably feel embarrassed or vulnerable if someone else knew them.

*Not sharing our private thoughts is an example of **privacy**, which is "protection from being observed or tracked by others". ([Slide 5](#))*

This includes protection from other people as well as groups of people, like companies, the government or the general public. Legally, we all have certain rights related to privacy.

3. **Ask:** *Can you think of examples of things that people might want to keep private -- either from everyone or from specific people?*

Call on learners to respond. If learners are reluctant to share, provide examples:

- *Not sharing your true thoughts because you don't want to hurt someone's feelings (maybe you secretly don't like your grandmother's famous rhubarb crumble!).*
- *Not sharing with your parents certain things you talk about with your best friend.*
- *Certain personal preferences you wouldn't want others to know.*

Explain that people have different boundaries when it comes to what they share with others. Some people feel comfortable sharing a lot with others, while others don't share a lot with anyone, even their close family.

4. **Say:** *When you are online, privacy becomes more complicated. You can choose the websites you go to and what information you decide to share with others, like on social media. But, depending on the device, app or website you're using, your words and actions are often being collected and tracked. Today, we're going to talk about how you can better understand what information is being collected and used about you online, particularly by companies.*

Explore: **Just for You**

10 mins.

1. **Say:** *We're going to begin by looking at a scenario.* Distribute the **Ad Detective handout** and have a learner read the scenario aloud.

Ask: What do you think about this scenario with John? How would you feel if this happened to you?

Call on learners to respond. Follow up by asking if their feelings would change if the ads were for something besides shoes.

Ask: What if your best friend moved to another country and all of a sudden you started seeing ads for plane tickets to that country? Learners may say they're less comfortable with that because the ads aren't based on their shopping history but on something more personal.

2. **Say:** *Companies place ads online based on everything they know about you. It might be based on information you provided when you signed up. Or it might be based on something you searched for, looked at, liked or posted while using the app.*

It's also based on information they get about how you use the app: how often you use it, what time of day, etc..

The websites and apps you use -- and the devices you use them on -- can collect a lot of information about you.

Companies then try to target you with ads or content that can appear in different places.

3. **Direct** learners to go back to their handouts and work in pairs to answer **Question 1**.
4. **Ask** learners to share their responses.

They may correctly identify that when John went to the online store, it was likely tracked by the search engine and his device. And when he posted the link on social media, it was likely tracked by his social media app.

Next, let's dive deeper into how this all works and how you can protect your own privacy.

Analyse: **Protecting Your Privacy**

20 mins.

1. **Project** Slide 6 and ask: *Has anyone seen a screen like this before? What is it?*

Call on learners to respond. Clarify that it is a sign-up screen for Snapchat, an app that many of them may know about. Follow up by asking: *When someone signs up for and uses Snapchat, what information do you think they are sharing? Who are they sharing it with?*

Call on learners to respond. Sample learner responses:

- Information required during sign-up (name, phone number, birthday)
- "Snaps" or content that the user creates, which might be shared with Snapchat or with friends of the user
- Things you browse when you're using the app
- Your location

Confirm that all of those things get shared with Snapchat and that the first way to protect your information is to understand what companies are collecting about you. If there's something that learners don't want companies or others to know about, they shouldn't provide or post it.

2. **Say:** Companies get information about you by tracking what you do.

One way they do this is by using "cookies".

Explain that **cookies** are "small text files stored on a computer that keep track of what a person does on a website". (Slide 7)

It allows companies to collect information about you and what you do while you are on their site.

Companies use this information to learn your preferences so they can make recommendations of things you'll like and make it easier for you to use their site. They may also sell this information to advertisers and other companies.

Ask: In John's scenario, how might a cookie have helped advertisers figure out what he was interested in?

Call on learners to respond.

If necessary, clarify that when John went to the online store Zaps, they used cookies to track what he shopped for. That information was then sold to advertisers, who used it to place ads in the apps and websites that he uses.

3. **Project Slide 8** and say: If you're not comfortable with this kind of tracking, you can turn cookies off in your browser settings.

You can usually find the setting in the privacy settings. You should know that this might affect your browsing experience, as cookies also help the website automatically know helpful things about you, like your location or preferences.

4. **Project Slide 9** and ask: Let's talk about another tip for protecting your privacy. What do these screens show? What could you use them for?

Call on learners to respond. They may correctly identify these screens as settings screens.

Say: Most apps have settings you can adjust and these are screenshots of the settings screens in Snapchat.

Within an app's settings, there are usually **privacy settings**, which are choices a website or app gives you about what information is visible to other users and third parties.

You can usually use these settings to opt out of some of the ways that the app shows and shares your data.

To **opt out** means choosing not to participate in something. (Slide 10)

5. **Go back to Slide 9** and ask: What might you click on in these screenshots to see or adjust your privacy settings?

Call on learners to respond and support them to correctly identify the "WHO CAN ..." section and review the items in it. Project **Slide 11** to confirm tips for protecting privacy.

6. **Project Slide 6** again and say: *Another way you can protect your privacy is by looking at what you're agreeing to when you sign up.*

Direct learners' attention to the fine print above the "Sign Up & Accept" button. Point out the two words in bold: "**Privacy Policy**" and "**Terms of Service**".

Say: *These two terms are important! They actually tell you everything you're agreeing to, legally, when you agree to use the app. A **privacy policy** describes what user information the app or website collects and how they use it. The **terms of service** describe the rules that the company and users must obey when they use the app. (Slide 12) These documents are usually pretty long and sometimes difficult to understand. They are legal agreements users opt in to.*

7. **Say:** *Remember the word "ASK" when you're looking at a privacy policy.*

Review the acronym ASK on **Slide 13** and explain that by finding out these pieces of information, learners can make an informed decision about using the app or opt out of certain kinds of tracking.

Wrap-Up: Take Action

10 mins.

1. **Project Slide 14** and review the final tip for protecting privacy.

*Ask: Based on these tips, what do you think John could have done if he wanted to protect his privacy more? Go back to your handout and answer **Question 2**.*

Call on learners to share out their answers. Refer to the **Teacher Version**.

2. **Ask:** *What information are you OK with your devices, apps and websites collecting? Does it depend? Take turns sharing with your partner.*

Call on learners to respond. Prompt learners to identify specific pieces of information they're OK with sharing as well as information they're not OK with sharing. And ask them whether the benefits and importance of the device, website or app factors into their thinking. (For instance, do they need their location tracked if the app doesn't depend on it to function?)

3. **Direct** learners to complete **Question 3** on their handouts. Collect handouts to assess learning.
4. **Ask** learners to complete the **Lesson Quiz**, and send them home with the **Family Activity** and **Family Tips**.

Additional Resources:

1. **Before the lesson:** As an optional activity before the lesson, have learners complete the **Sticky Situation** storyline in Digital Compass™ by Common Sense Education. This will help introduce key concepts of this lesson. To see more, check out the **Digital Compass Educator Guide**.
2. **Extend the lesson:** Have learners apply what they have learnt by completing the **Social Media Privacy** activity on TestDrive, a social media simulation game developed by Cornell Social Media Lab and collaborated upon with Common Sense Education. Learners go through a self-guided activity to reinforce key concepts and practise managing privacy settings online. For more information, download the **Social Media TestDrive Educator Guide**.
3. **Extend the lesson:** Provide learners with a link to a privacy policy, such as those for **Snapchat** or **Fortnite**, and have them complete a "Scavenger Hunt" to find specific information such as:

- - What data the app or website collects
 - - What data is collected from third parties
 - - What data is shared with third parties
 - - How long user data is stored
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