
Cyberspace: The Internet Highway

i-SAFE Lesson Plan

OVERVIEW: Suggested Grade Levels—Middle/High School

Lesson plan guide for classes with or without computers

Goal

Students will gain perspective on the issues related to Internet usage among youth compared with parents through an exploration of current statistics, and will relate that information to their own Internet behaviors.

Materials/Preparation

- a copy of the article, the survey, and the activity page for each student
- copies of a current newspaper for student resource material

LESSON PLAN

All students participating in the i-SAFE curriculum are considered mentors. If they haven't done so already, students can enroll online by clicking on "Create an Account" at www.isafe.org to take full advantage of the support and incentives offered. This may be done during the lessons, or students may complete this registration at home.

Discussion

Prior to reading the article:

- Ask students to raise hands in response to these questions:
 - How many have used a computer in the last week?
 - How many have been online in the last week?
- Ask students to describe how common (or uncommon) computer and Internet usage is among their peer groups.
- Explain that today you will look at some statistics on Internet usage and discuss what they mean to them as individuals.
- Have students complete Part 1 of the activity page, "Think About It—Internet Use Survey."

During Reading

Read and discuss the article "Cyberspace: the Internet Highway."

- Did you realize so many people were online?
- What are some common things your peer group does online?
Possible answers: instant message, chat, do research, e-mail
- Look over your answers to the survey questions. How do they compare to the statistics you read about in the article? Are they similar or different?
- What are some good things on the Internet?
Possible answers: research, ways to communicate, maps, things to buy
- What are some possible dangers on the Internet, and for each identified, who is most affected?
Possible answers: predators, fraud, theft, bullying, misinformation, hate sites

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- Have you discussed Internet use and/or safety with your parents? Do you have rules in your household concerning usage?

After Reading

Have students complete Part 2 of the activity page, “Who Wants You to Use the Internet?” Make newspapers available as a resource.

Discussion

- How important is the Internet to individuals and to businesses in today’s society?
- How does the newspaper promote Internet use and vice versa?
(For example: Newspapers often have Internet versions for newspaper sections).

Additional Activity Options

- class survey and math activity—percentages and graphing
- essay: “The Potentials for Internet Use”
- explore the Digital Divide

Activity Directions

1. Class Survey and Math Activity

- Pass out the survey to students, and allow them time to complete it.
- Collect surveys (without names), and discuss some of the questions and answers.
- Choose several questions to graph as a class.
- Place these questions on the board, and tally class answers.
- Direct students to use these tallies to answer the following:
 - percentages of class for each
 - bar or circle graphs representing percentages
- Discuss student answers, and demonstrate finding the percentages and graphing for one question.

Technology Integration Opportunity:

Have students design bar or circle graphs using a publishing program or Excel spreadsheet.

2. Essay

Direct students to write a paragraph or essay describing how dependence on Internet use has changed other forms of communication, such as newspapers.

Technology Integration Opportunity:

Use word processing to complete the activity. Post essays to the school Web site.

3. Explore the Digital Divide

- Introduce the concept of the Digital Divide. This is the large gap between students’ ability and knowledge and their parents’ ability and knowledge about the Internet. Review the survey results in the article, which describe Digital Divide, and have the students discuss how this concept relates to their own parents’ Internet abilities.
- Have students brainstorm ideas on how to help bridge the Digital Divide.

Technology Integration Opportunity:

- Have students create a Web page for parents showing statistics from the article and their ideas for increasing Internet knowledge among parents.

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- Have students e-mail the parent letter home or post the letter to a Web site from which students can print.

Empowerment Opportunities:

- Have students go to www.isafe.org and sign up for the i-SAFE Student Mentor program. Order (free) materials to put on a parent presentation about Internet safety.
- Have students submit essays to a school publication. Hold a contest.

Survey —What Do You Have To Say?

1. There should be rules in cyberspace just like there are rules in the community I live in.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

2. My actions and where I go in cyberspace cannot be traced, and I can stay anonymous.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

3. The Internet is safe and a good place to meet people.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

4. I feel comfortable when surfing the net.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

5. I feel safe when meeting new people in chat rooms.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

6. It's okay to share my age, sex, and location on the Internet as long as I don't give out other personal information like name, telephone number, or home address.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

7. How much time do you spend weekly on the Internet (select the closest answer)?

12 + hrs 6 + hrs 2-3 hrs less than 2 hrs

8. Surfing the Internet can be a dangerous activity.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

9. Internet safety is important to me, and I would encourage friends to get involved.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

Activity Page: Survey and Statistics

Name: _____

Understanding Internet Statistics and You

Today you will read some information about the number of people using the Internet, as well as facts and startling statistics on current Internet issues like cyber bullying. Sometimes it can be hard to relate statistics to what they mean for your own actions. Take a closer look at YOUR Internet use, and compare it with current trends in cyberspace.

PART 1

Think About It—Internet Use Survey

Do you go online at home? At school?	
What types of activities do you do online? Ex: instant messaging, e-mailing, research, chat	
Have you ever had any trouble online? Ex: seeing inappropriate material, spam, viruses, bullies, threats, etc.	
Are your parents' Internet skills as good as yours?	
Do your parents know what you do online? Have they set down rules for your Internet use?	

PART 2

Who Wants You to Use the Internet?

Use the newspaper to find examples that direct the reader to the Internet.

List Web addresses or Internet references that you find, and briefly describe what the possible advantages could be in promoting an Internet site through the newspaper reference.

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Cyberspace: The Internet Highway

Cyberspace, the global community made possible by the Internet, has dramatically changed the world we live in. Internet use has grown exponentially since the late 1990s and has opened new ways of sharing information and interacting with others throughout the world. Although the Internet has made a significant impact on business, it is today's young people who really inhabit cyberspace. More than 70 million youth under age 18 are reported to be online today. They are able to enjoy the benefits of technology unlike any other generation. With an abundance of positive resources available at every mouse click, they feel confident in their use of the new technology.

According to surveys of more than 55,000 students in 2003 through 2005 by i-SAFE America, nearly 85 percent spend time on the Internet each week. More than 11 percent spend more than eight hours per week, and 33 percent report that they use e-mail, instant messages, and chat rooms as their main contact with friends.

This includes even very young participants. According to i-SAFE surveys of third- and fourth-graders, 60 percent go on the Internet alone, 46 percent use e-mail, 26 percent use instant messaging, and 18 percent go into chat rooms.

Safety in cyberspace is an issue that not many take the time to discuss or consider.

Parents are at a disadvantage when it comes to knowledge of the Internet. Easy access to the cyber world combined with the technological anxiety that many adults face has created a gap between what parents say they know and what young people claim they share with their parents.

Over the past three years, i-SAFE America has surveyed parents and students around the country. According to the data collected, 94 percent of parents stated they had a pretty good idea about their child's online behavior. In contrast, only 45 percent of the students said they shared where they went and what they did on the Internet with their parents. Twenty-nine percent said their parent or guardian would disapprove if they knew what they were doing online. Of the parents surveyed, 93 percent felt they had set ground rules for their child's online activities. However, only 63 percent of students acknowledged that their parents had established rules for online use.

Internet technologies provide many advantages. But while they make life more convenient, they can also be dangerous, as indicated by the growing number of incidents of child abduction, cyber bullying, inappropriate Web site activity, online identity theft, and lawsuits related to intellectual property theft. According to i-SAFE, 73 percent of students surveyed say kids and teens need to learn about Internet safety, and those students hold the key to solving the problems associated with online activity.