Investigating the truth
Developing critical thinking skills

About this resource

**Target year level: Year 1 to 2**

Adaptations are provided at the end of the document to help you differentiate the activity based on the students in your class.

Aim: To help students to recognise that not everything they see or hear online is true; to develop questioning skills to identify when something is fake or trying to trick them.

Related resources

You can use this activity with the following resources to further explore the key messages and encourage students to continue the conversation with their families at home:

- **Mighty Heroes video series**, including Billie the bilby's video about being an investigator and questioning what you see, hear and do online.

- **Online safety classroom posters**, featuring the Mighty Heroes.

- **How our class stays safe online** – a classroom tech agreement poster to help start a conversation about online behaviour.

- **Family tech agreement** – a take-home activity for families to create their own tech agreement.
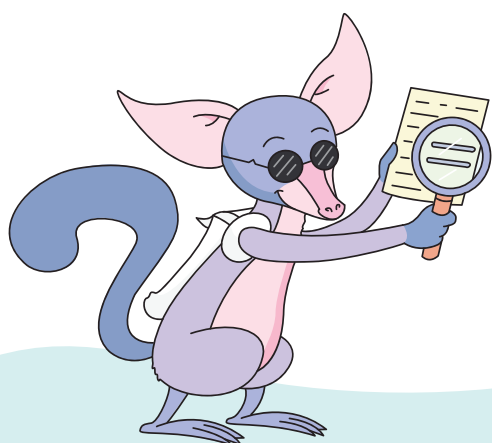
Remember to ask questions and follow the clues. And if you're not sure, ask a trusted adult for help.

Opening questions

Use these questions to introduce the concept of why it is important and useful to ask questions when online.

Remember, talking about online safety can cause emotional distress for some children. So it's important to let parents and carers know about this activity in advance. Ask students how they are feeling during a classroom discussion and remind them they can ask questions or ask for help if it brings up issues or worries.

- **When do we ask questions?**
  We may ask questions when we are curious about something and want to know more. Or when we are unsure about something and want to understand it better or check that it is true.

- **What makes a good question?**
  A good question helps us find out more about the topic being discussed. Questions that start with 'what', 'where', 'when', 'why' and 'how' will help us investigate topics further.

- **Why might we need to ask questions about what we are watching or doing online?**
  We might need to ask questions when:
  - we're not sure about something
  - there's a message we don't understand
  - we think the message may be trying to trick us
  - a message asks us to share personal information (like our name, home address, email address, password or passphrase).

You can ask a trusted adult for help if you see something online that makes you feel unsure, uncomfortable or worried.

Activity

This activity is a role-playing game about online shopping and scams. You may like to run the activity with a colleague in a team-teaching situation, although it's not necessary. Some ideas may be a bit complex, so you can choose the adaptations you think would work best based on your students' everyday experiences.

> Students may need to be reminded of what it means to take part in a role-play and given support to explore how they feel, how others feel, and how this impacts their responses and emotional reactions.

You will need:
- paper shop items (see **Supporting resources**)
- paper money (see **Supporting resources**)
- a wall or whiteboard.

Instructions

1. Print and cut out the shop items and money. Display the shop items on the wall or whiteboard.

2. Explain to students that they are going to play a game where they will role-play as customers for an online store. The online store has items from many different sellers. Some of the items in the pictures are real and some are fake. The fake items have clues or 'red flags' to show they are being sold by a scammer. Explain that a scammer is someone who is trying to trick others so they can steal their money.

3. Hand out the paper money to students and ask them to choose an item to buy from the shop. Remind them that this is only a game. They should never purchase anything online without the permission of their parent or carer. If they are not sure, they should always ask for help from a trusted adult.

4. When a student chooses a genuine or real item and pays their money, you can role-play as the seller of the item. Let them know their payment was successful, the item is being packed and is on its way. When a student chooses a fake or scam item and pays their money, you can tell them that unfortunately they have been scammed or tricked. The item will never arrive and they lose their money. Luckily it's only a game!

Use this scenario to explore why it's important to ask questions and think about what we see, hear and do online. Talk about the clues that someone might be trying to trick or scam us, and when we might need to ask an adult we trust for advice and help with what to do next.

Real or fake? Clues to look for

Clues that an item is genuine or real might include a realistic price, and photos and details so you can see and understand what you are buying. For older students, you may want to point out more complex concepts and clues, such as the shop is one you trust or that friends and family have used with no issues, the seller rating is high, and the seller has good reviews.

Clues that an item is fake or a scam might include a price that is too good to be true because it's unbelievably low, and there might not be a clear photo or little information about the item so you don't really know what you are buying. There might also be an urgency to buy the item. For example, 'You must buy today!' For older students, you may want to point out more complex concepts and clues, such as the shop does not seem trustworthy (for example, you, your family and friends may have never heard of it), the shop's rating is low or there is no rating, or there are bad reviews or no reviews.

You may also want to refer to **Scamwatch** for other examples and warning signs of scams.

Discussion

Follow up the activity by exploring these questions.

- Why would somebody try to trick or scam us online?
- What are some clues or 'red flags' that some of these items might be fake and sold by someone trying to trick or scam us?
- What are some other times people may try to trick or scam us? Can you think of a time when someone has tried to trick you or your family? For example, you may have received an email or advertisement that tells you that you have won a prize but you haven't entered any competitions. Could someone try to trick you to find out your personal information?
- What can we do if we feel unsure, don't understand something online or feel a bit worried about what we have seen, heard or done online? When you are unsure or worried, don't click on any button or link – talk to an adult you trust about what to do next.

Adaptations

For students with lower literacy

This activity is play-based however students with lower literacy may need additional guidance about the written clues on the items and support to scaffold 'good' questions.

For all students

1. Create a scenario where an advertisement is played before a favourite show that your students watch on YouTube Kids. The advertisement is trying to sell them some merchandise (items related to the show).

   ### Discussion

   Follow up the activity by exploring these questions.
   - What are some clues that this might be an advertisement and not the show itself?
   - Why do you think an advertisement related to the YouTube kids show plays right before it?

   Some students may not be familiar with YouTube Kids, so you may need to play them the start of a show for them to understand this scenario. If this scenario doesn't match your students' everyday experiences, you may like to choose a different scenario.

2. Brainstorm with students about times they have clicked a link online to find that they are asked to buy or pay for something when they were not expecting it. This will help you work out what experiences (if any) your students have with in-app purchases and in what situations.

   If you find your students have seen in-app purchase options in a game they all like to play online, you may like to try the following scenario.

   Ask students to imagine they have nearly reached the next level of the game for the first time ever. Unfortunately, they think they might lose if they can't get more coins and they are running out quick.

   A pop-up message appears (see Supporting resources for an **example game pop-up that you can display for students**). It says they have won a bonus of exactly the coins they need. It is only available for the next 2 hours and they have to 'collect' it now. Ask students to think about what they would do next.

Some students may not be familiar with playing online games, so you may need to explain that sometimes games ask players to pay for things with pretend coins they have earned during the game. Or sometimes the coins have to be bought with real money.

If the game has stored credit card information (for example, from the adult who signed the player into the game), the player may not even know they are being charged real money when they click 'collect'. If this scenario doesn't match your students' everyday experiences, you may like to choose a different scenario.

Discussion
Follow up the activity by exploring these questions.

- What would you do if you saw a pop-up like this in a game? Why? What questions do you have when you see this pop-up? For example, does this pop-up mean that the game needs real money to play? What will happen if you click 'collect'? Why is the pop-up saying that the points are only available for 2 hours?

- What would be the best thing to do in this situation? For example, don't click on any button that you are not sure about, and talk to an adult you trust about what to do next.

- What do you think would happen if you did click on the 'collect' button?

Ideas for sharing learning at home

Share the **eSafety family tech agreement** with students to take home to continue the conversation with their families. The agreement includes conversation starters that reinforce the importance of asking before clicking on pop-ups or making in-app purchases, identifying fact and fiction online and thinking critically about what we see, hear and do online.

Best Practice Framework for Online Safety Education

The **Best Practice Framework for Online Safety Education** establishes a consistent national approach that supports educators across Australia to deliver high quality programs with five clearly defined elements and effective practices. This resource aligns with the following elements of the framework:

Element 1 Students' rights and responsibilities

Element 2 Resilience and risk

Element 4 Integrated and specific curriculum

Australian curriculum links

This resource aligns with the following **Australian curriculum** learning areas and general capabilities:

English: Skills: Interpreting, analysing and evaluating; Literacy: Texts in context.
Students learn to:

- describe some similarities and differences between imaginative, informative and persuasive texts (**AC9E1LY03**)
- identify the purpose and audience of imaginative, informative and persuasive texts (**AC9E2LY03**)
- discuss different texts and identify some features that indicate their purposes (**AC9E1LY01**)
- identify how similar topics and information are presented in different types of texts (**AC9E2LY01**)

General capabilities: Critical and creative thinking; Digital literacy: **Practising digital safety and wellbeing**; **Ethical understanding**.

More ideas and educator support

Classroom resources
Explore eSafety's education resources based on topics relevant to children and young people and designed for different education levels. These include more Mighty Heroes classroom activities for Foundation to Year 3.
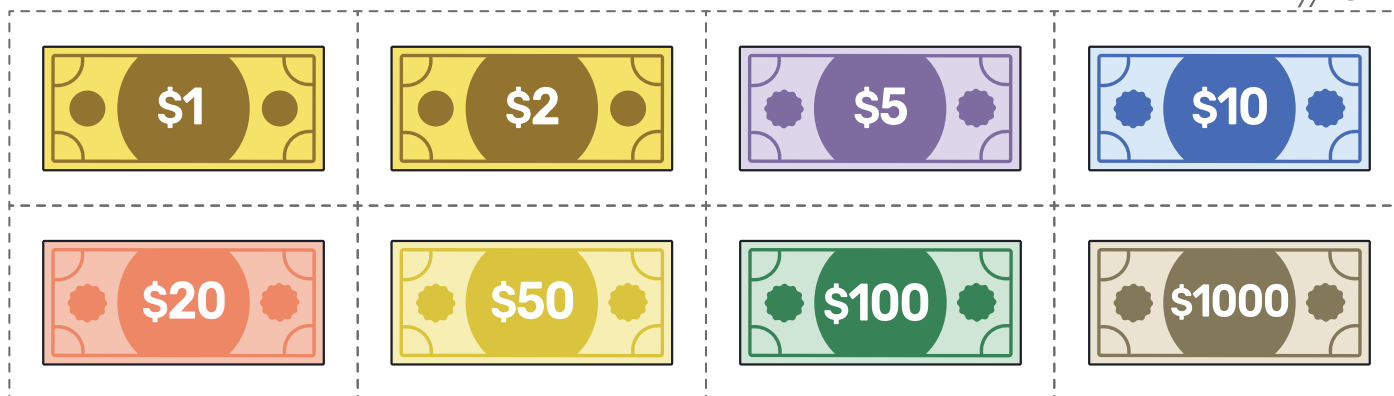
Professional learning program for teachers
eSafety offers a range of online safety professional learning programs designed for educators and others working with children and young people. This includes short self-paced online modules for lower primary teachers.

Toolkit for Schools
These resources are developed to support schools to create safer online environments and are categorised into four sections: Prepare, Engage, Educate and Respond.

Supporting resources

Money

$1	$2	$5	$10
$20	$50	$100	$1000

Fake or scam items

Brand new laptop

ONLY $1

Only $1!!!

Seller: laptopsforeveryone
Seller rating: 👎👎👎👎

Reviews

Sunny: Don't buy it NEVER came!
Jeni: Too good to be true????

BUY NOW

Book

FREE BAG OF MONEY!

$2
PLUS **FREE** bag of money!

Seller: Free Money
Seller rating: 👎👎👎

Reviews

Lucky: This is a scam!

BUY NOW

Best game ever!

NO IMAGE AVAILABLE

$10 if you buy today

Seller: Buy from us
Seller rating:

Reviews

No reviews

BUY NOW

Supporting resources

Genuine or real items

T-shirt

$20

Sizes available: S, M, L

Seller: Best T-Shirts
Seller rating: 👍👍👍

Reviews

Ted: The t-shirt was just like in the picture and arrived on time.

BUY NOW

Sneakers

$50

Available in kids size: 2, 3, 4

Seller: The Sneaker Shop
Seller rating: 👍👍👍👍

Reviews

Min: This shop is great!
PopCat: These sneakers are awesome

BUY NOW

Latest iPhone

$1000

Only two available

Seller: Smart Tech World
Seller rating: 👍👍👍👍👍

Reviews

TechNerd: The iPhone arrived safely
PurpleSam: I love my new phone

BUY NOW

Add your own shop items

BUY NOW

BUY NOW
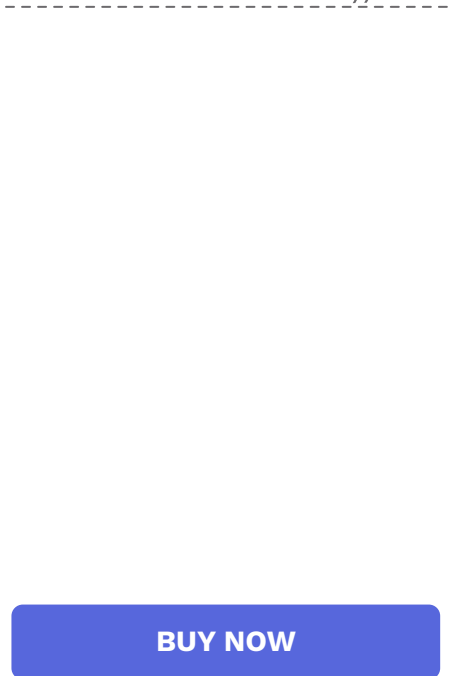
BUY NOW

Supporting resources

Game pop-up

BONUS GIFT

AVAILABLE FOR 2 HOURS ONLY!

Congratulations!

You've unlocked a new bonus in the game

One click to pay!
x 500 coins

COLLECT

eSafety education

esafety.gov.au