

Can You Spot a Scam?

How students can protect themselves from online scams

About the Story

Lexile® Measure 960L

For qualitative complexity factors, go to Scope Online.

Learning Objective: to read a short informational text, then craft a constructed response that includes a claim, text evidence, and commentary

Featured Skill: constructed response

Additional skills in this lesson plan: identifying central ideas and details

Standards:

The article and its suite of support materials support these Common Core anchor standards: R.1, R.2, R.3, R.4, R.5, R.6, W.2, SL.1, SL.2

For more standards information—including TEKS—go to Scope Online.

Can You Spot a Scam?

Millions of Americans were tricked out of money or personal information online last year. Here's what you need to know to protect yourself.

DO Tell a friend or family member if a company contacts you online.

DO Ignore offers to collect free things.

DON'T Tell a friend or family member if a company contacts you online.

DON'T Share your password or other personal information.

DON'T Ignore offers to collect free things.

Special Feature: Social Media Stardom

On social media, scammers often prey on people's desire to be famous. One common scam goes like this: A cool clothing company messages you on Twitter, asking you to represent the brand. This is your chance to be the next big social media influence! You can already see your future filled with millions of fans and followers.

But first...the company wants you to participate in a quick training session. Just send \$10, and you can begin. Don't do it!

This is a trick. Scammers create fake accounts to make you believe they work for a particular company. They might offer you a job or brand partnership. Then they request money for training or a background check. After you send the money, guess what happens? The scammer disappears. Real jobs don't make you pay to get a job or brand partnership. They might ask you to pay for training or a background check. After you send the money, guess what happens? The scammer disappears. Real jobs don't make you pay to get a job or brand partnership. They might ask you to pay for training or a background check. After you send the money, guess what happens? The scammer disappears.

Special Feature: Online Shopping Risks

Online shopping sites aren't the only places where scammers lurk. Gaming platforms like Roblox and games like Fortnite also attract criminals. The games are fun, but you can make purchases, such as clothing for your avatar, while playing.

That's one reason how very common trick players. A scammer sends a message offering special rewards in the game...like free coins. Because you can purchase things in the game, the offer might not seem that strange. But clicking the link will take you to a website asking for your username or other personal information or requesting you to download something to get the reward. It's through this step that a scammer can steal a lot of money quickly, for example by getting access to a parent's bank account or credit card.

The good news is that you can avoid being tricked. Always log into games through official sites or apps, and never click on ads or links online you know for certain that they are legitimate. Ignore offers to "collect" anything being given out for free.

Most important of all, never share your password.

Imagine you get a message online stating that you've won a free phone. What should you do next, according to the article? Answer in a short paragraph. Use text evidence.

10 Scholastic Scope • February 2024

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Your Teaching Package

Find your full suite of support materials at scope.scholastic.com.

Audio:

- Article read-aloud
- Text-to-speech
- Vocabulary

Activities to print, project, or share digitally:

- Vocabulary: Definitions and Practice
- Short Write Kit
- Core Skills Workout: Central Ideas and Details*
- Quiz*

*Available on two levels

Step-by-Step Lesson Plan

1. Prepare to Read (10 minutes)

Preview Vocabulary (10 minutes)

Project the Google Slides version of **Vocabulary: Definitions and Practice** on your whiteboard. Review the definitions and complete the activity as a class. Highlighted words: *con*, *legitimate*, *lurk*, *nefarious*. Audio pronunciations of the words and a read-aloud of the definitions are embedded on the slides. Optionally, print the PDF version or share the slideshow link directly to your LMS and have students preview the words and complete the activity independently before class.

2. Read and Discuss (20 minutes)

- For students' first read, have them follow along as they listen to the **audio read-aloud**, located in the Resources tab in Teacher View and at the top of the story page in Student View.
- Have students read the story again.
- Optionally, divide students into groups to complete the **Core Skills Workout: Central Ideas and Details** activity. This graphic organizer asks students to identify the central idea and supporting details of each section of the article and the central idea of the article as a whole. (This activity comes on two levels, with more or less scaffolding.)
- Reconvene as a class. Together, choose three of the ads in the illustration at the beginning of the article and explain how you can tell that they are likely scams. Encourage students to support their ideas with text evidence from the article.

3. Write About It

(20 minutes)

Have students complete the **Short Write Kit**. This activity guides students to write a claim, support it with text evidence, and provide commentary in response to the prompt on page 11 in the printed magazine and at the bottom of the digital story page:

Imagine you get a message online stating that you've won a free phone. What should you do and why, according to the article? Answer in a short paragraph. Use text evidence.