

FAMILY DIGITAL LITERACY

Quick Reference



TERMS, PRACTICAL EXAMPLES, AND
CONVERSATION STARTERS FOR (GRADES 6-12)

Start With What Fits Your Family

Every family has different devices, internet access, schedules, experiences, values, and comfort with technology. You do not need to be a technology expert. Staying curious, asking questions, setting age-appropriate expectations, and keeping communication open are strong ways to support digital literacy.

Being aware of a technology does not mean a family or school needs to encourage or permit its use. Age requirements, purpose, privacy, maturity, school expectations, and family decisions all matter.

A FEW USEFUL TERMS.

- **Digital literacy:** Using, understanding, questioning, creating, and communicating with digital tools in safe, thoughtful, ethical, and responsible ways.
- **Generative AI:** AI that creates new content - such as text, images, audio, video, or code - in response to instructions or prompts.
- **Digital footprint:** Information about a person that is created, shared, collected, or left behind through online activity.
- **Recommendation system:** Technology that predicts and suggests content based on factors such as what a person watches, clicks, searches, likes, or shares.
- **Privacy:** Having appropriate control over personal information, who can access it, and how it is collected, used, stored, or shared.
- **Responsible and ethical use:** Using technology in ways that support learning and well-being, respect other people and their work, protect privacy, follow expectations, and consider possible consequences.

A SIMPLE WAY TO THINK ABOUT DIGITAL USE.

Instead of labelling particular apps as "good" or "bad," look at the purpose, features, context, and effect on the person using them.

- **GREEN - generally supportive use:** Age-appropriate and purposeful; supports learning, creating, accessibility, communication, problem-solving, or healthy connection; privacy and family/school expectations are considered.
- **YELLOW - pause and think:** The tool asks for unnecessary personal information, includes contact with unknown people, creates pressure to stay connected, affects sleep or mood, encourages endless scrolling, or begins doing thinking the learner needs to practise.
- **RED - stop and get help:** There are threats, coercion, blackmail, impersonation, requests for sexual images, pressure to keep an online relationship secret, or any interaction that feels unsafe.



WHAT SUPPORTIVE TECHNOLOGY CAN LOOK LIKE.

- **Accessibility:** text-to-speech, speech-to-text, captions, translation, visual supports, or other features that remove barriers and support participation.
- **Creating:** writing, making videos or podcasts, coding, designing, composing, documenting learning, or solving a real problem.
- **Learning and practice:** researching with verification, practising a skill, collaborating, receiving feedback, or using an approved learning platform.
- **Connection:** communicating with people a student knows, participating in a supportive community, or maintaining relationships with healthy boundaries.
- **Balance:** consuming and creating can both have value. Ask what the activity adds, how the person feels afterward, and what it may be replacing.

TRY THIS TOGETHER.

- Ask your child or teen to show you one app, game, creator, or digital tool they enjoy. Start with curiosity: "What do you like about it?"
- Review one privacy, security, advertising, or location setting.
- Compare two posts or sources about the same topic and discuss what makes one more trustworthy.
- Ask: "How did this tool help you, and what thinking did you still need to do yourself?"
- Ask which online activities leave them feeling connected, confident, pressured, left out, calm, or drained.

QUESTIONS FAMILIES CAN ASK SCHOOLS.

- Which digital and AI tools are approved or commonly used at this grade level?
- What does each tool add to the learning?
- What privacy, data, and account protections are in place?
- What are the expectations for AI use, citation, academic honesty, and student-created work?
- What accessibility features or alternatives are available for learners who need them?
- When are non-digital approaches used, and how does the school think about balance?

WHEN SOMETHING GOES WRONG.

Keeping communication open makes it more likely that a child or teen will ask for help. If an online situation involves threats, coercion, sexual content or requests, blackmail, impersonation, or another safety concern, focus first on safety and support. Help them leave the situation, preserve evidence when appropriate, block or report, and involve a trusted adult or appropriate service.

HELPFUL RESOURCES FOR FAMILIES.

- [MediaSmarts Digital Literacy Fundamentals](#)
- [Common Sense Education Digital Citizenship Resources](#)
- [Canadian Centre for Cyber Security – Get Cyber Safe](#)
- [Digital Moment AI Literacy Resources](#)

