

[Page 1: cover page of section]**1.2: Cyber Citizenship: What's My Role?****Included in this Section**

- Overview of Cyber Citizenship
- Personal Reflection
- Challenge: What Would You Do?
- Extension Activities

Topics Explored

- Cyber Citizenship
- Personal Responsibility
- Cyber World Versus Real World

Purpose of this Section

In this section, you'll learn about what it means to be a cyber citizen. You'll examine your role in the cyber universe and determine the responsibilities it takes to maintain cyber citizenship.

[Page 2]**Overview****What is Cyber Citizenship?**

Have you ever played on a sports team or participated in a group activity such as volunteering at an organization or attending a birthday party? As humans, we are all citizens of different groups, whether at school, home, or in our personal lives. Being a citizen of different groups means that we follow safe, ethical, and responsible decision-making because our actions can impact other members of the group or community.

When you participate in the cyber world, you become a **cyber citizen**, or a member of the global community. Recall from Section 1.1. that having cyber citizenship means taking responsibility for your role on the web and engaging in positive and ethical decision-making to stay safe online.

For many people today, upholding positive cyber citizenship is a natural part of living in the digital era. This is because many people are what are called **digital natives**, or people that have grown up with technology and understand it on a deeply personal and familiar level.

[Call Out]**Did You Know?**

Approximately 80% of students have access to computers and the Internet at school. That's a lot of cyber citizens exploring the web! (Source: [Tech and Learning](#))

[Page 3]**Your Role**

What is your role as a cyber citizen? In the same way you follow certain roles as a citizen of your personal communities, you must also understand the roles you play as a cyber citizen.

Review the similarities and differences of responsibilities in real-world citizens and cyber citizens below, and think about your own actions in the cyber world.

Real-World Citizen Responsibilities

- Listen and respond thoughtfully to others
- Be cooperative and kind
- Maintain an open mind and willingness to help others
- Follow rules set by the communities in which you participate, such as school, home, or sports teams
- Communicate effectively
- Respect others
- Treat others the way you want to be treated

Cyber Citizen Responsibilities

- Use respectful and kind language, not hateful or bullying words
- Treat others the way you want to be treated
- Don't share overly personal information, such as your passwords or home address
- Don't **plagiarize**, or steal, information from the web and use it as your own
- Protect yourself and your computer by following security measures

[Page 4]**Respect and Responsibility**

Being a good cyber citizen means following two key concepts:

1. **Respect:** always be courteous and respectful to others online in the same way you would be in real life. The age-old saying of "treat others as you

would like to be treated” is an important rule to maintaining positive cyber citizenship. For example, if you wouldn’t want someone to speak meanly to you or be hurtful, then you should also refrain from using mean language online.

2. **Responsibility:** taking responsibilities for one’s actions is an important part of being a cyber citizen. If a classmate cheats on an exam in class, he or she should take personal responsibility for their actions. The same applies to the cyber world, where information can be easily copied and pasted. A good rule of thumb is to behave in the virtual world in the same way you would in the real world.

Online Ethics

While respect and responsibility are the core of what makes up a good cyber citizen, another important part is **ethics**, or the moral principals we follow as citizens. We use ethics to make choices everyday, both on and offline. **Online ethics** is specific to the principals that drive our actions while using the Internet, and they resemble many of the ethical guidelines we follow in the real world.

What constitutes unethical behavior? Is it ethical to:

- Cheat on a test
- Steal personal information
- Say something cruel about someone else

In both the real world and the online world, these actions are all **unethical behaviors** because they result in other people being hurt. You will learn more about online ethics, also called **cyber ethics**, in Section 4.1.

[Call Out]

Did You Know?

Copying software without permission is stealing and is the equivalent to shoplifting from a computer store. (Source: [Tech and Learning](#))

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Personal Reflection

Write a two-paragraph reflection on what it means to be a cyber citizen. Your paragraphs should include at least seven to ten complete sentences, examples learned from the chapter, and answer the following questions:

1. What are similarities and differences of citizenship online versus the real world?
2. In what ways do you believe you are a good cyber citizen?

Challenge: What Would You Do?

Read the situations below and determine what you would do. Use what you have learned in the chapter to justify your answers and write one paragraph of five complete sentences explaining your decision.

Situation: What would you do if you see a friend copying information from the web and using it as his own?

Situation: What would you do if you witness a friend saying cruel things to another friend online?

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Extension Activities

Activity 1: Short Answer

Answer the questions below in one to two complete sentences each.

1. Define the term cyber citizen.
2. Describe what it means to be a digital native.
3. Identify three elements of citizenship in the real world.
4. Identify three elements of citizenship in the cyber world.
5. Define the terms ethics and online ethics.

Activity 2: Key Terms

Using your own words, define the following terms by writing one complete sentence for each.

Cyber Citizen: _____

Plagiarize: _____

Digital Native: _____

Ethics: _____

Cyber Ethics: _____

Activity 3: Cyber Citizen Laws

The world is formed by different sets of rules. For example, stealing is not socially acceptable behavior and, therefore, it is punishable by law. But what laws or rules should be followed in order to be a good cyber citizen? Should cyber citizens be expected to communicate respectfully? If so, what does it mean to be respectful?

Write a list of at least ten rules that you believe cyber citizens should follow while participating in the online world. Include a brief explanation of at least two complete sentences for each rule explaining why you believe it is important to cyber citizenship.

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Activity 4: Successful Cyber Citizenship

Imagine that you are helping a friend learn about the cyber world for the very first time. To help him understand the vast universe of cyberspace, write a one-page letter of advice to him using complete sentences. In your letter, describe:

- What attributes, or features, make up a successful cyber citizen
- What pitfalls, or negative actions, to avoid when participating in the cyber world
- How decision-making in cyberspace impacts cyber citizenship