Digital Citizenship

Lesson Plan | Primary and Elementary School

Lesson Time: 15-25 minutes

It's Right to Cite

Objectives & Outcomes

Lesson Objectives: Students will articulate an understanding of plagiarism and digital-citation procedures.

Lesson Outcomes: Students will be able to ...

- describe what plagiarism is and explain it is a form of cheating
- create a simple citation for a digital source

Subject Area Connection: Language Arts

Getting Ready

Teacher Preparation: To prepare for this lesson, review the basic definitions of plagiarism and citation. Gather online articles for students to use in the activity. Think of a story you can share with the students about how you felt when something you loved was stolen.

Materials Required:

- paper
- pencil
- book familiar to all students
- chalkboard or whiteboard

Key Vocabulary

plagiarism: using someone else's words or ideas as your own.

citation: proper way to credit someone else's words or ideas.

Background

Students today are part of what many people are calling the "copy and paste generation." Creating and sharing work online is easy; protecting your words and ideas is hard. This depends on students being ethical and fair about giving credit to other people's words and ideas. Because students conduct much of their research online, it is especially important for them to learn about plagiarism. Students need to understand the consequences of not giving credit to someone else's work.

Teaching students how to properly credit someone else for their work is a critical skill for younger students to learn so this act can become a habit over time.

"Creating and sharing work online is easy; **protecting** your words and ideas is hard."

Introduction and Modeling

Ask students if they have ever had anything stolen from them. Describe a situation in which a child said that a favorite toy belonged to them when it didn't. How would the owner feel when someone tried to take something that did not belong to him or her? Explain that our words and ideas are property. When people use words and ideas to create a story or write about a topic on a website, they own the words. Explain that they always need to give fair credit to those authors. Briefly touch on the potential consequences of plagiarism, and how they can avoid getting into trouble. Write the word plagiarism on the board and define it. Ask: What could happen if you plagiarized?

Tell students that creating a citation at the end of a report is a way to show the sources used. A special format is used for these citations.

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Procedure

1. Show students a book they have read together as a class or one that is familiar to everyone.

2. On a piece of paper, have students write one or two sentences that describe what the book is about.

3. To properly cite the book, ask students to write the name of the author and the title of the book. Write this example on the board: White, E. B. Charlotte's Web. 1952.

4. Explain that citing a source from an online article or book is similar to citing a paper book. They will still need to include the author's name, the title of the book/article, and the publication date, but they also need to list the edition of the publication/magazine (if applicable), the URL of the website where they found the information, and the date they accessed it. This helps someone who would like more information, to find the original source they found.

5. Write the following citation on the board:
   Corrigan, Maureen. "How E.B. White Spun 'Charlotte's Web.'" National Public Radio, 5 July 2011, www.npr.org/2011/07/05/137452030/how-e-b-white-spun-charlottes-web. Accessed 5 Oct. 2026.

6. Show students that a lot of the information in this citation is the same as the one for the book (i.e., author's name, title of article and website found, just like the book title as well as the date it was "published") but that it adds a little more information that will be helpful if someone wants to find the same article.

Discussion Questions

- Writing a citation shows where your information came from. How would the citation help someone else interested in your topic?
- What other sources do you think should be cited besides books?
- How is plagiarism like stealing?

Evaluation

Provide students with the online articles previously selected and have them write down a quote from each, and then create a citation using the proper format.

Tips for Tailoring This Lesson

For Higher Grade Levels

- Have students use at least one online source for a research paper and have them properly cite the source in their paper.
- Have students explore online citation resources, but remind them that online citation generators always need to be double-checked.

For Lower Grade Levels

- Ask students to write a short response to: Why is it right to cite?
- Ask students to create a reminder poster for how to cite.

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Alignment to Standards and Frameworks

Common Core State Standards: College & Career Readiness

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Anchor Standards for Language

CCRA.L.1. Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.

Anchor Standards for Reading

CCRA.R.7. Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse media and formats, including visually and uantitatively, as well as in words.*

Anchor Standards for Reading

CCRA.R.2. Determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas.

Anchor Standards for Writing

CCRA.W.8. Gather relevant information from multiple print and digital sources, assess the credibility and accuracy of each source, and integrate the information while avoiding plagiarism.

Partnership for 21st Century Framework

Partnership for 21st Century Framework: the framework comprises the skills, knowledge, and expertise students should master to succeed in work and life in the 21st Century. Partnership for 21st Century Skills www.p21.org

Information Literacy

Use and Manage Information

- Apply a fundamental understanding of the ethical/ legal issues surrounding the access and use of information

ICT (Information, Communications and Technology) Literacy

Apply Technology Effectively

- Use digital technologies (computers, PDAs, media players, GPS, etc.), communication/networking tools and social networks appropriately to access, manage, integrate, evaluate and create information to successfully function in a knowledge economy.

Social and Cross-Cultural Skills

Interact Effectively with Others

- Conduct themselves in a respectable, professional manner.

Leadership and Responsibility

Be Responsible to Others

- Act responsibly with the interests of the larger community in mind

International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE):

ISTE: Standards for learning, teaching and leading in the digital age

5. Digital Citizenship

Students understand human, cultural and societal issues related to technology and practice legal and ethical behavior.

a. Advocate and practice safe, legal and responsible use of information and technology

b. Exhibit a positive attitude toward using technology that supports collaboration, learning and productivity.

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