

secureIT · Course materials for the teacher

Media literacy for students

15 lessons · approx. 90 minutes of teaching · 22 interactive tasks · As of: 09/10/2026

News, AI images, algorithms and advertising: how to make sense of what you are shown, and what you are allowed to post yourself.

How the course works

You lead the course on the board and decide yourself when to cover which lesson; the course does not expire. In the first lesson the class signs up via QR code; a first name is enough to take part. You release interactive tasks one at a time, the class answers on their phones, and with “Reveal” the correct answer appears on the board and on all phones at the same time. You can see the answer key for all quiz questions in your Cockpit; this public PDF deliberately does not contain it so that it does not reach the class in advance. At the end you complete the course; everyone with an email address receives their certificate of participation as a link. This course has no phishing training; that is only part of the “Digital self-defence” course.

What you need: a projector or display with internet access, and the class with smartphones. Anyone without a phone joins in with their neighbour.

Link to the Baden-Württemberg curriculum

Grades 7 to 9 (about 12 to 15 years old) · Scope: two double lessons or four single lessons; the AI block also works as a double lesson on its own · As of 03.10.2026

In grade 7 it covers the reading guide focus “manipulation through media” almost completely, and in grades 8 and 9 it supports the Media Education guiding perspective in German, social studies, ethics and art. Fields of action of the guiding perspective “Living and learning in a digital world”: Analysing media and the media society, Gathering, understanding and evaluating information, Acting responsibly and protecting, Using digital tools and algorithmic thinking.



Area	Competence (reading guide for computer science and media education 2026/27 or 2016 curriculum)
Digitality and participation (grade 7: gaming and manipulation through media)	Actors in the digital space and their interests; influence through algorithms, ratings, advertising; assessing trustworthiness; fake news and deepfakes; psychological and social aspects of gaming, monetisation Lessons: How a News Story Is Made, Fake News, AI Images and Deepfakes, Algorithms, Advertising and Influencers, Gaming: Why You Can't Stop
Information and data	Check information against criteria; criteria for trustworthiness; AI-generated research results can lead to misjudgements Lessons: AI block: What AI Tools Are, AI Always Sounds Sure, The Learning Trap, Using AI Cleverly and Safely
Communication and security	Describe features of hurtful behaviour (cyberbullying, hate speech); name strategies, sources of help and ways to report Lessons: Cyberbullying
Digital working	Describe forms of technical alteration and manipulation of media; apply copyright rules and the right to your own image Lessons: AI Images and Deepfakes, Image Rights
Media Education guiding perspective	Media analysis, media society, information and knowledge, protection of minors in the media, production and presentation
Advanced course in computer science, 3.1.4 Information society and data security	(5) The right to your own image and copyright, (6) personal data arising from the use of services

This mapping is the provider's professional assessment, not an official approval. For grades 8 to 10, the 2016 curriculum applies until the computer science and media education curriculum takes effect (2027/28).

Overview of the lessons

Lesson	Interactive tasks
1. Getting started: how much media is actually in your day? Grade 5/6 · Digitality and participation What we spend our time on every day and who decides what we see while doing it.	Word cloud, Quiz





2.	Why do you see exactly this? Algorithms and filter bubbles Grade 7 · Digitality and participation How recommendation systems decide what ends up in your feed and what that does to you.	Word cloud, Quiz
3.	Advertising, influencers and the money behind them Grade 5/6 · Digitality and participation Who earns money from what, how advertising has to be labelled and how in-app purchases work.	Quiz
4.	Gaming: Why You Can't Stop Grade 7 · Digitality and participation What makes games so gripping (motivation, immersion, story), what they mean socially (team, belonging, pressure, isolation), how they make money, and how to assess your own use honestly.	Word cloud, Quiz, Quiz
5.	How a news story is made and how you recognise quality Grade 5/6 · Information and data Newsroom, sources, opinion and news: the difference between journalism and a post.	Quiz
6.	Fake news and disinformation: the fact-check game Grade 5/6 · Information and data How made-up stories are built, why they spread so fast and how you check them.	Game: faktencheck, Quiz
7.	AI images, deepfakes and chatbots Grade 7 · Information and data What artificial intelligence can create, how you recognise it and why a chatbot is not a source.	Word cloud, Quiz
8.	What AI tools are - and how they "think" Grade 5/6 · Information and data ChatGPT and co. are language models: they guess word by word what fits best. What that means and what the tools can do today.	Quiz
9.	Which AI tools exist - and from what age you may use them Grade 5/6 · Digitality and participation The best-known tools and their age limits. Why the limits exist and what to do if you are unsure.	Quiz
10.	AI always sounds sure - even when it is wrong Grade 5/6 · Information and data Why you should never blindly believe AI answers: invented facts, invented sources, hidden prejudices.	Quiz





11.	The learning trap: if you let AI do the thinking, you learn nothing Supplement · Learning with AI in practice The biggest risk for learning – and how to turn AI from an answer machine into a learning coach.	Quiz
12.	Using AI cleverly and safely Grade 5/6 · Communication and security Which data you should never enter, why fake images are dangerous – and the skills that make you strong in the age of AI.	Quiz
13.	Cyberbullying: recognise it, respond, get help Grade 5/6 · Communication and security What cyberbullying is, how you can defend yourself and where to find help.	Quiz
14.	Are you allowed to post that? Rights to your own image, memes and music Grade 5/6 · Communication and security / Digital working What you may show of other people, what belongs to you and what copyright has to do with your meme.	Quiz
15.	Your media toolbox Supplement · Summary Everything important at a glance and what comes next.	Word cloud, Quiz

The following pages contain each lesson in full, with all quiz questions and answer options. You will find the marked solutions only in your Cockpit.



1. Getting started: how much media is actually in your day?

What we spend our time on every day and who decides what we see while doing it.

Do the maths

Phone in bed in the morning, music on the way to school, videos at break, streaming in the evening. Young people in Germany spend on average **more than three hours a day** on online media, not counting school or homework. That is more time than most of them spend talking to their family.

Word cloud

Which app do you open first thing in the morning?

What this course is about

Media literacy does not mean "being good with your phone". It means: **being able to make sense of what you see**. Who made this? Why am I seeing it? Is it even true? And am I allowed to pass it on?

Over the next few lessons we will look at:

- how a real news story is made and how a made-up one is
- how you can spot AI images and deepfakes
- why exactly this video was suggested to you
- who earns money from your attention
- what you may post and what you may not

Important



Everything you are shown was selected by someone. Either a person or an algorithm. It is never chance.

Three questions that always help

1. **Who is saying this?** Is there a name, a legal notice, an editorial team?
2. **Why am I seeing this?** Is it advertising, opinion, news or entertainment?
3. **How do they know?** Is a source given that you can check?

These three questions take ten seconds and save you from most mistakes.

Quiz question

You see a video that makes you angry. What do you do first?

Answer options

- Share it straight away so everyone sees it
- Check who uploaded it
- Check whether a serious source reports the same thing
- Write in the comments that it is outrageous
- Do nothing for a moment and think

Tip

The strongest response to an outrageous post is the thumb that does **not** hit "Share".

2. Why do you see exactly this? Algorithms and filter bubbles

How recommendation systems decide what ends up in your feed and what that does to you.

Your feed is not a window, it is a selection

No platform shows you everything. It shows you whatever is likely to keep you there the longest. This is measured by your behaviour: how long you watch, what you like, where you scroll on, when you open the app again.

Important

The algorithm's goal is not for you to be well informed. The goal is for you to stay.

What pushes content to the top

- **Watch time:** videos you watch to the end
- **Reactions:** comments count more than likes, and arguments create comments
- **Similarity:** people with similar behaviour watched it too
- **Newness:** freshly uploaded content is shown as a test

That is why outrageous and extreme posts end up higher than calm ones. Not because anyone wants it that way, but because they hold attention longer.

Filter bubble and echo chamber

When for weeks you are only shown similar things, you get the impression: "Everyone sees it this way." This is called a **filter bubble**. If on top of that everyone in your groups says the same thing and disagreement disappears, it is an **echo chamber**.



Addition

You cannot notice the bubble from the inside. The only test: ask someone who uses their apps differently what is in their feed. It is usually a different world.

What you can control yourself

- Actively use "**Not interested**", it works better than scrolling past
- **Unfollow** accounts that regularly make you angry
- Deliberately follow **two sources** that do not share your opinion
- Choose a **chronological feed** where the app offers one
- Look at your **screen time**, not as a punishment but as a measurement

Word cloud

How do you feel after 30 minutes of scrolling, in one word?

Quiz question

What pushes you to the top of the algorithm?

Answer options

- People watching for a long time
- Lots of comments and arguments
- The content being true
- Similar users having watched it too
- The source being reputable



3. Advertising, influencers and the money behind them

Who earns money from what, how advertising has to be labelled and how in-app purchases work.

If you are not paying, you are not the customer

Most apps cost nothing. They still make money, with advertising that is tailored to you. For that, they measure what you like, where you are and how long you stay. This is allowed and disclosed, it is just rare for anyone to stand next to you and explain it.

What advertising looks like today

- **Ad in the feed:** looks like a normal post, marked "Sponsored"
- **Product placement:** the product is simply in the picture
- **Affiliate link:** there is money per click or purchase
- **Discount code:** the personal code is how the payment is tracked
- **Giveaway:** you pay with your address details and reach

Important

In Germany, paid advertising must be clearly labelled, with "Werbung" (advertising) or "Anzeige" (ad). "#ad" at the very bottom among thirty hashtags is not enough legally.

Why this matters to you

An influencer who is paid by a company will not say the product is bad. That is not malice, that is the contract. So a recommendation is only a real recommendation if nobody paid for it.

**Tip**

Before you buy something a person in a video recommended: search for the product name plus "review" or "experiences". Two minutes that regularly save money.

In-app purchases and loot boxes

Games make money from small amounts. The mechanism is the same everywhere: first it is free, then it gets tedious, then there is a shortcut for €2.99. Loot boxes add to this: you pay for a random chance, not for an item.

- **From age 7, purchases need parental consent** (in Germany: § 107 BGB, the Civil Code; the "pocket money rule" has tight limits)
- **Subscriptions** renew automatically. Check the notice period
- Do not store **payment details** permanently on your device

Quiz question

What counts as advertising that must be labelled?

Answer options

A video the company paid for

A post with the manufacturer's personal discount code

A product that was sent for free and is shown

A favourite product someone bought themselves and shows without getting anything in return

An affiliate link in the description





4. Gaming: Why You Can't Stop

What makes games so gripping (motivation, immersion, story), what they mean socially (team, belonging, pressure, isolation), how they make money, and how to assess your own use honestly.

Games aren't evil. But they are built.

A good game is a good game: story, skill, friends, fun. At the same time, game companies employ psychologists whose job is to make sure you **keep playing**. Both are true. If you know the mechanics, you still play, but **more consciously**.

Why it grips you so much

- **Rewards in small doses.** Level-up, chest, new skin, progress bar. Your brain gets small wins all the time; in real life they come less often.
- **Immersion.** You're not at the screen, you're *in it*. The world, the sound, the character: after an hour, stopping feels like being torn out of a film.
- **Storytelling.** "Just this one mission." Games deliberately end with loose threads.
- **Artificial scarcity.** "Today only", daily quests, login bonuses. Skip a day and you lose something.

Word cloud

What keeps you hooked most in your favourite game? One word.

What it means socially

For many people, gaming is where friendships happen: team, voice chat, winning together. That's real and valuable. But it also has downsides:

- **Belonging** can turn into **peer pressure**: "Come online, or we'll lose."





- **Teampplay** is great until the tone in voice chat turns: insults, exclusion, hate.
- **Isolation** is possible even though you're talking to people all the time, when your online friends become your only friends.

Important

The question isn't "How many hours?" but: **What are you dropping for it?** Sleep, school, sport, friends in real life, family. If one of these regularly loses out, it's too much.

How games make money

Most games are free. The money comes from **monetisation**:

- **Loot boxes**: you pay without knowing what you'll get. At its core that's gambling, which is why it's banned in some countries.
- **Battle pass**: pay, then you *have to* play so it's "worth it".
- **Skins and currencies**: with a fantasy currency you don't notice that 2,800 V-Bucks are real money.
- **Pay-to-win**: whoever pays wins. Whoever doesn't pay is cannon fodder.

Quiz question

Which mechanics are meant to make you keep playing or pay?

Answer options

Daily login bonuses that are lost if you skip a day

Loot boxes with unknown contents

A fantasy currency instead of amounts in euros

A good story with a proper ending



An honest check

Answer for yourself (not out loud):

1. Do I get **irritable** when I have to stop?
2. Do I play to **avoid something** (homework, arguments, boredom, sadness)?
3. Have I **cancelled** something in the last few weeks so I could play?
4. Do I sometimes **lie** about how long I play?

Two or more yeses: no reason to panic, but a reason to talk to someone and make rules for yourself.

Quiz question

How can you tell that gaming is taking up too much space?

Answer options

- I cancel plans with people so I can play
- I play so I don't have to feel arguments or sadness
- I play for three hours with friends at the weekend
- I'm looking forward to the new update

Tip

Make your playing time visible (your console or phone shows it), set **an end before you start** ("until 7 pm", not "one more round"), and have at least one thing a week that has nothing to do with screens and belongs only to you.

5. How a news story is made and how you recognise quality

Newsroom, sources, opinion and news: the difference between journalism and a post.

The path of a news report

At a serious newsroom, this happens before anything is published:

1. **Tip-off:** someone reports something, a news agency, an authority, a person on the spot
2. **Verification:** at least two independent sources confirm the core facts
3. **Counter-check:** the other side is asked
4. **Editing:** someone else reads it through
5. **Publication:** with a name, a date and a responsible person in the legal notice
6. **Correction:** if something turns out to be wrong, it is visibly corrected

With a post, this happens: write it, send it. That is the whole difference and the reason why a post is faster and a news report is more reliable.

Addition

News agencies such as dpa, Reuters or AFP supply almost every newsroom. If a story does not show up anywhere else even though it would be huge, that is a warning sign.

News, commentary, advertising

Form	Goal	How to recognise it
News	to inform	factual, sources given, author named



Form	Goal	How to recognise it
Commentary / opinion	to convince	labelled as "commentary", first person, value judgements
Feature / reportage	to bring something to life	scenes, quotes, one person at the centre
Advertising / ad	to sell	"Ad", "Sponsored", "Advertisement", product link
Satire	to entertain, to exaggerate	obvious exaggeration, note in the legal notice

If you mistake one of these forms for another, you have misunderstood the message, even if every word in it is true.

Important

An opinion cannot be "wrong", but a claim of fact can. That is why it pays to separate them while reading: what can be checked here, and what is a judgement?

How to recognise a usable source

- **Legal notice** with an address and a responsible person
- **Date** and **author's name** are given
- **Sources** are named and linked
- **Corrections** are marked, not secretly deleted
- The headline **does not promise more** than the text delivers

Quiz question

Which sentences are claims of fact that can be checked?

Answer options

"From Monday the city has cancelled bus number 12."

"Bus number 12 was the worst bus in the city anyway."





"Last year there were 240 accidents at this junction."

"This junction is a disgrace."

"The manufacturer confirmed the recall on Tuesday."

Tip

With a shared screenshot, always click through to the original source. A screenshot can be faked in thirty seconds, a website cannot.

6. Fake news and disinformation: the fact-check game

How made-up stories are built, why they spread so fast and how you check them.

Why made-up stories are faster

A study by MIT analysed millions of tweets: false news spreads on social media **faster and further** than true news. Not because bots are so powerful, but because people share it. Made-up stories are more exciting, and excitement gets shared.

Important

Disinformation is spread on purpose, misinformation is a mistake. For you, at the moment you share it, it makes no difference: you spread both just as far.

The usual building blocks

- **Real picture, wrong context:** the photo is real, but six years old and from another country
- **Numbers without context:** "500 cases!" without saying of what, where, over what period
- **Quote without a source:** supposedly said, never proven
- **Real source, twisted message:** the study exists but says something different
- **Urgency:** "Share this before it gets deleted!"
- **Missing sender:** no name, no legal notice, no date

Your four-step checking tool

1. **Check the sender:** who is this, does the site really exist?
2. **Check the date:** is the story from today or from 2019?



3. **Cross-check:** do other independent sources report the same thing?
4. **Reverse image search:** upload it to Google Lens or TinEye and see where it appeared before

Tip

Reverse image search is the sharpest tool of all and takes ten seconds. Upload a screenshot and you will see when the picture first appeared.

Learning game

Five headlines, real or made up. Unlock the game, let the students tap their answers individually, and then go through the reasoning on the board, especially the cases where the class got it wrong.

Who helps with checking

- **Correctiv, dpa fact check, AFP fact check:** German-language fact checks
- **Mimikama:** mainly checks viral content from social media
- **Google Lens / TinEye:** reverse image search

Quiz question

How do you recognise a story that is probably made up?

Answer options

No author, no date, no legal notice

"Share this before it gets deleted!"

The text contains numbers

The headline promises far more than the text delivers

No other outlet reports on it





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Daten und User schützen. Mit Sicherheit.

The post has lots of likes



secureIT

Daten und User schützen. Mit Sicherheit.

7. AI images, deepfakes and chatbots

What artificial intelligence can create, how you recognise it and why a chatbot is not a source.

Today anyone can create anything

A picture of the Pope in a puffer jacket, a voice that sounds like your mother, a video in which a politician says something she never said: today none of this needs a studio or skill, just an app and two minutes.

Word cloud

Where have you come across AI in the last few days?

How you can often recognise generated images

- **Hands and teeth:** too many fingers, strange transitions
- **Text in the image:** jumbled letters on signs and packaging
- **Light and shadow:** shadows falling in different directions
- **Background:** faces blur, patterns repeat, lines bend
- **Skin:** too smooth, too even, not a single blemish

With videos, also: the mouth does not quite match the sound, the blinking looks wrong, the neck does not move along.

Important

These signs disappear with every new generation of models. Do not rely on being able to "see" fakes, rely on the source.

The grandparent scam with your voice

A voice can be cloned from three seconds of a voice message. That is exactly what scammers use: a call, the voice of someone's own child, panic, money right now.

Tip

Agree on a **code word** in your family that only you know. Anyone on the phone who wants money or data and does not know the word is not who they claim to be. It costs nothing and works immediately.

Chatbots are not sources

A language model does not say what is true, but what sounds plausible. It invents sources, legal paragraphs and quotes that never existed, with complete self-confidence.

For homework this means: good for ideas and explanations, useless as evidence. Check every number, every quote, every link yourself.

Quiz question

What is true about dealing with AI content?

Answer options

- A chatbot can invent sources that do not exist
- A voice can be cloned from a few seconds of a voice message
- You can always recognise AI images by the hands
- Anyone who spreads AI images of real people can violate their rights
- What an AI writes is automatically neutral

8. What AI tools are - and how they "think"

ChatGPT and co. are language models: they guess word by word what fits best. What that means and what the tools can do today.

Maybe you have already chatted with **ChatGPT**, **Gemini** or another chatbot. Programs like these are called **AI tools** or **language models**. But how do they actually "know" what to answer?

Guessed word by word

A language model **does not look anything up** like an encyclopaedia. For every word, it calculates which word is **most likely** to come next - and adds it. That is how it builds sentence after sentence.

It learned this from huge amounts of text: from the internet, from books and articles. So it has a very good feel for how language sounds.

Important

Because the AI always picks the *most likely* word, every answer sounds **fluent and convincing** - but that does **not automatically make it right**.

What AI tools can do today

- **Write texts:** essays, emails, summaries - in seconds and in any style.
- **Explain:** patiently, as often as you like, like a study partner if you want.
- **Understand photos:** you take a picture of an exercise, the AI gives you the solution including the working.
- **Speak and translate:** in real time, even between languages.
- **Create images, videos and voices:** deceptively real, just from a description.
- **Carry out tasks themselves:** research and work through things step by step.



That is powerful – but it is a tool, not a know-it-all. In the next lessons you will see what you need to watch out for.

Quiz question

How does a language model like ChatGPT arrive at its answer?

Answer options

It calculates word by word which word is most likely to come next

It looks up checked facts in an encyclopaedia

It secretly asks a human

It always tells the truth because it is a computer

9. Which AI tools exist - and from what age you may use them

The best-known tools and their age limits. Why the limits exist and what to do if you are unsure.

There are lots of AI tools, and almost all of them have a **minimum age**. That is not just to annoy you: it is about **data protection** and **protecting young people** – about which of your data may be stored and which content is suitable for your age.

The best-known tools (as of 2026)

- **ChatGPT (OpenAI):** from 13, under 18 only with parental consent. Has a teen mode.
- **Gemini (Google):** from 16 in Germany.
- **Copilot (Microsoft):** 13–18 depending on the country, under 18 with parental consent.
- **Claude (Anthropic):** from 18, no accounts for younger users.
- **My AI (Snapchat):** from 13, directly in the app.

Important

The providers' rules **change often**. If you are unsure whether you may use a tool: **ask your parents** – trying it out together is better than doing it secretly.

Why this matters

As soon as you write to a tool, you reveal something about yourself. The younger you are, the more careful you should be about **what data** you enter. More on this in the lesson "Using AI cleverly and safely".

Quiz question



What is true about the age limits for AI tools?

Answer options

Most tools only let younger users use them with parental consent

The rules change often – if in doubt, ask your parents

Age limits do not matter, as long as the tool works

There is never an age limit for chatbots

10. AI always sounds sure - even when it is wrong

Why you should never blindly believe AI answers: invented facts, invented sources, hidden prejudices.

The tricky thing about AI: it **always answers confidently** - even when it is way off. Because it phrases things so fluently, even wrong answers sound convincing.

What you need to keep in mind

- **It invents facts.** Wrong numbers, dates and names, phrased convincingly. Experts call this "hallucinating".
- **It invents sources.** Sometimes the AI names books, quotes or links that do not exist at all. **Always check for yourself.**
- **It is not neutral.** It picks up prejudices and gaps from the texts it was trained on.
- **"AI detectors" are not proof.** Programs that supposedly recognise whether a text was written by an AI are often wrong.

Important

Check it. With every AI answer, ask yourself: is that really true? Open real sources, compare with what you already know. Only if you know something yourself will you notice when the AI is talking nonsense.

A good test: ask the AI about your school or a person from your town. You will often get confident answers that are completely made up.

Quiz question

An AI gives you a year and a source for it. What do you do?

Answer options



I check the year and open the source before I use it

I believe it, the AI sounds very sure

Sources from an AI are always right

An AI detector proves to me that everything is genuine

11. The learning trap: if you let AI do the thinking, you learn nothing

The biggest risk for learning – and how to turn AI from an answer machine into a learning coach.

AI can solve your homework in ten seconds. Handy? In the short term, yes. But here is the **learning trap**:

Important

Learning takes effort. If you hand over a task completely, you get a result – but **no progress in learning**. In the next test, you will be sitting there without the AI.

Turn the AI into a learning coach

The trick is **not to let the AI produce the solution**, but to have it support your thinking. Try prompts like these:

- **"Don't give me the answer. Ask me questions until I figure it out myself."**
- "Explain the first step to me, I'll try the rest on my own."
- "I worked it out like this – where is my mistake?"

That way the thinking stays with you, and the AI only helps when you are stuck.

Stay honest

If you have used AI, **say so** – a short note: *Which tool, for what, and what did I change myself?* That is fair, and it is part of school and later of working life. And the best test of whether you have really learned something: **can you explain it to someone else?**

Quiz question



How do you use AI without falling into the learning trap?

Answer options

I let it give me questions and hints and solve the task myself

I say when I have used AI

I let the AI do all my homework and hand it in as my own

I copy the AI's solution without understanding it

12. Using AI cleverly and safely

Which data you should never enter, why fake images are dangerous – and the skills that make you strong in the age of AI.

AI is a powerful tool. To make sure it helps you rather than harms you, stick to a few rules.

Staying safe

- **Do not enter private data.** No full names, addresses, school reports – and **no photos of yourself or others**. Whatever you enter ends up with a company.
- **No fake images of other people.** Creating fake images of classmates is **bullying** and can be a **criminal offence** – even "as a joke".
- **AI is not a real friend.** A chatbot is always there and usually agrees with you. But it does not replace real people, and it belongs to a company with its own interests.
- **Be careful with calls from a familiar voice.** AI can imitate voices deceptively well ("shock call"). A **family code word** helps: only someone who knows it really is who they say they are.

What makes you strong

These skills are worth their weight in gold when dealing with AI – and you are already practising them at school:

- **Asking good questions:** describe the task, goal and context clearly. Precise language steers the AI.
- **Checking critically:** cross-check statements, open sources, judge whether something is plausible.
- **Taking responsibility:** anyone who passes on an AI result has to stand by it.
- **Data awareness:** knowing which data you may share – your own and other people's.



Important

Teamwork, creativity, empathy and your own judgement remain **irreplaceable**.
The AI takes work off your hands, not the thinking.

Quiz question

What is part of using AI safely and wisely?

Answer options

Not entering private photos, names or school reports

Checking AI answers critically and opening sources

Creating and sharing funny fake images of classmates

Telling the AI all my secrets, it is my friend after all



13. Cyberbullying: recognise it, respond, get help

What cyberbullying is, how you can defend yourself and where to find help.

Cyberbullying is no joke

Cyberbullying means someone is repeatedly and deliberately insulted, threatened, humiliated or excluded through digital channels. It is not "just on the internet", it is real, it hurts, and it can be a criminal offence.

Forms of cyberbullying

- **Insults** in group chats or under posts
- **Exclusion** from groups (deliberately kicking someone out or ignoring them)
- **Spreading** private pictures, screenshots of chats
- **Identity theft**: creating a fake profile in your name
- **Threats** by message
- **Outing**: making personal secrets public

Important

Cyberbullying does not stop when you put your phone down. The messages are always there, and others are reading along. That makes it especially hard to bear.

What you can do if it happens to you

1. **Do not stay alone with it.** Talk to someone. Parents, a teacher, a person you trust, a counselling service
2. **Take screenshots.** Secure evidence before something gets deleted
3. **Do not reply.** Every reaction gives the bully confirmation
4. **Block and report.** To the platform, to the school, to the police if necessary
5. **Use helplines (in Germany):**



- **Nummer gegen Kummer:** 116 111 (free, anonymous)
- **Jugend-Notmail:** jugend.notmail.de
- **Klicksafe:** klicksafe.de

What you can do if you see it happening to others

- **Do not join in:** even "just" watching or liking is taking part
- **Let the person affected know:** "Hey, I saw what is being written in the group. That's not okay."
- **Report it:** to the platform, to a teacher

Tip

Imagine the message were written about you. If it would hurt you, the line has been crossed.

Legal consequences

Cyberbullying can have serious criminal consequences (German Criminal Code, StGB):

Act	Punishable from
Insult (§185 StGB)	age 14
Coercion and threats (§240, §241 StGB)	age 14
Violation of privacy through photos or video (§201a StGB)	age 14
Stalking (§238 StGB)	age 14

In Germany you are criminally responsible from the age of 14. That means: police, youth court, a case file.

Discussion question for the class:





A classmate posts an embarrassing photo of someone from your class in a WhatsApp group. 15 people have already seen it and laughed. What is the right reaction?

Quiz question

Someone from your class is being torn apart online. What helps?

Answer options

Saving screenshots as evidence

Insulting them back

Reporting and blocking

Telling an adult

Writing to the person affected that you have noticed



14. Are you allowed to post that? Rights to your own image, memes and music

What you may show of other people, what belongs to you and what copyright has to do with your meme.

The most important rule in one sentence

Every person decides for themselves where their picture appears. In Germany this is called the right to your own image and is set out in the Art Copyright Act (Kunsturhebergesetz). Without consent you may not publish a recognisable photo of a person, not even in the class group, not even "just for fun".

Important

Taking a photo and publishing it are two different things. You may take the group photo. Whether it goes online is decided by everyone in it.

What is especially sensitive

- **Screenshots of chats:** the text belongs to the person who wrote it
- **Photos in changing rooms, toilets, classrooms:** § 201a StGB (German Criminal Code), this is a criminal offence
- **Embarrassing pictures:** even if the person agreed to be photographed
- **Forwarding:** anyone who passes it on is publishing it too

Copyright: music, pictures, videos

Everything someone has created belongs to that person: songs, photos, drawings, texts. For your own video this means:





What you want	What applies
Put a song under your video	only with a licence or from the platform's own library
Post someone else's photo	only with permission or a free licence (e.g. Creative Commons)
Meme with a film scene	legally a grey area, tolerated but not permitted
Your own work	belongs to you, even if others share it

Addition

Platforms have music contracts. The same song TikTok offers you can get your upload blocked on YouTube. The licence only applies where it was agreed.

If someone shows you without permission

1. **Speak to the person directly** and ask them to delete it
2. **Report the post to the platform**, all the big services have a form for this
3. Save a **screenshot as evidence**
4. In case of threats or sexual content: **involve adults**, and if necessary report it to the police

Tip

Before posting, quickly ask: "Is it okay if I upload this?" It takes five seconds and saves a lot of trouble, friendships too.

Quiz question

What may you publish without further ado?

Answer options

A photo of yourself in which nobody else is recognisable





A screenshot from the class chat with names

A group photo where two people were not asked

Your own video with music from the platform's library

A funny photo of a classmate that she finds embarrassing



15. Your media toolbox

Everything important at a glance and what comes next.

What should stick

When reading and watching

- Who is saying this? Why am I seeing this? How do they know?
- Tell news, opinion and advertising apart
- When you feel strong emotions: check first, then share
- Do a reverse image search before passing pictures on
- Chatbots explain things, they are not evidence

When posting

- Ask people before you show them
- Music and pictures only with a licence
- Screenshots of chats stay private
- Do not post anything you would have to explain in five years

When dealing with each other

- Do not laugh along when someone is being torn apart
- Secure evidence, report it, get help
- Nummer gegen Kummer (free helpline for children and young people in Germany):

116 111

Important

Media literacy is not knowledge you have once and for all. It is a habit: pause briefly before you click, share or post.



What happens next

When your teacher completes the course, you'll get your certificate of participation as a link by email. The practical part with simulated phishing emails is in the course "Digital self-defence": there you learn to recognise attacks and show it in your inbox.

Addition

If you have not entered an email address yet: scan the course code on the board and add it. Without an address, your teacher can't send you the certificate.

Word cloud

What are you taking away from this course, in one word?

Quiz question

Finally: what is true?

Answer options

Everything I am shown was selected by someone or by an algorithm

Paid advertising must be labelled

I only publish a photo of others with their consent

Lots of likes are a sign of a reputable source

With strong emotions, a reverse image search is worth it

I can cite what a chatbot writes as a source