

# How can teachers and parents promote students' digital literacies skills?

Students who are digitally literate know how to use computers and the Internet to find, read, organize, and critically analyze information, to compose digital texts such as infographics, blogs, or videos for a range of purposes using a range of applications, and to participate ethically on social media platforms and in other networked spaces using multiple modes such as text, image, sound, or hashtags. Teachers and parents play a crucial role in helping young people to develop the foundational digital skills and social practices that enable them to become critical readers, writers, and participants in a complex world where digital technologies shape how we think, understand and interact.

## HERE ARE THREE STRATEGIES THAT TEACHERS AND PARENTS CAN USE TO SUPPORT DIGITAL LITERACIES LEARNING

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| <p><b>Teach emergent print-based and digital literacies at the same time</b></p>            | <p>As children learn to recognize, decode and print the letters of the alphabet, they can also learn to recognize and type letters on keyboards, use digital applications to listen to and interact with e-books, use audio recording applications to record and share their ideas, and use block-coding platforms (e.g. SCRATCH) to design commands that computers can read. Young children require developmentally appropriate opportunities to make meanings with and through <i>all</i> of the technologies that will shape their literacies practices in life.</p>   |
| <p><b>Encourage meaningful digital co-creation</b></p>                                      | <p>Creative collaboration sets the stage for students to think beyond the consumption of digital information as they negotiate and solve complex problems using a range of digital tools. For example, co-creating a digital video on a topic of social importance might require students to use cloud-based writing platforms for storyboarding, digital video cameras for recording, data management practices for organizing files, digital editing software, and online video sharing platforms with permissions set according to privacy needs. Through collaboration and peer review, students learn what it means to create, curate, and disseminate their work as active participants in networked cultures.</p>  |
| <p><b>Offer multiple opportunities to learn critical evaluation skills and mindsets</b></p> | <p>When searching the Internet for information, students who adopt an evaluative stance, and who read across information sources in order to compare facts, arguments, and perspectives (also called lateral reading) tend to construct more accurate understandings of topics. To develop an evaluative stance, students need opportunities to judge the relative trustworthiness of information sources using indicators such as context, author identity and credentials, point of view, evidence of funding, text genre, modality, use of emotional triggers, how the information circulates via social media and whether information can be verified. Students also benefit when they have to justify their trustworthiness rankings, through debate, with peers and when their parents and teachers model critical evaluation practices by thinking aloud as they make judgments about information.</p> |

Just as learning to read and write printed texts requires explicit instruction over many years with many types of text, and for many communicative purposes, learning to become digitally literate requires similar support. Even though people sometimes think children are born “just knowing” how to use digital tools, research has dispelled this myth. Even highly educated young adults who grew up using the Internet are susceptible to fake news, and may not know how to solve complex problems using computers. Given the importance of global digital networks to nearly every aspect of life today, prioritizing digital literacies teaching and learning in every grade and in every subject area at school is important so that students learn foundational digital reading, composition and participation practices from an early age.

For online resources and references please visit:  
[www.edcan.ca/facts-on-education](http://www.edcan.ca/facts-on-education)

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