

 **Internet Traffic Light**
Student Handout

Name(s)

Class

Date

When people drive, they should know the rules of the road. Warning signs tell them when danger is ahead. Traffic lights tell them when it's safe to move forward, and when they need to stop.

When you are on the Internet, you need to pay attention to some basic safety rules.

Internet Safety Rules

- Only do private messaging with family and friends.
- Be careful when flirting, and never flirt or talk about sex with people you don't know in person.
- Don't answer questions online that make you feel uncomfortable.
- Don't give out your private information (names, home address, school name, phone number, etc.) on the Internet.
- If something inappropriate happens, tell a grownup immediately.
- Never plan a face-to-face meeting with someone you met online without taking a trusted adult along.

There are no traffic lights on the Internet, so you need to pay attention to your internal traffic light. It will help you make decisions about how to stay safe online.

The following chart shows the different colors that can light up on your internal traffic light.

Internet Traffic Light

<p>Green</p> 	<p>Coast is clear (but look both ways!)</p>	<p>You feel safe and enjoy interacting with this stranger online. You also remember that all conversations with strangers can take unexpected turns, so you're prepared to put on the brakes if you need to. You have not provided any personal/private information.</p>
<p>Yellow</p> 	<p>Slow down, be cautious— and be prepared to stop.</p>	<p>Something about this conversation makes you feel uncomfortable. You're alert for any signs of inappropriate or suspicious behavior.</p>
<p>Red</p> 	<p>Stop! Too dangerous to proceed.</p>	<p>The person you are talking to is clearly acting inappropriately, and the conversation needs to end. You may want to discuss your experience with a trusted adult. If sex has been mentioned, tell an adult immediately.</p>

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Directions

Use the Internet Safety Rules and your internal traffic light to complete the following activity.

1. Take three sheets of paper, and draw a circle on each one. Color your circle “lights” green, yellow, and red.
2. With your group, read through each of the stories. Next, take one of your lights and place it face down in front of you when you decide what you think of the situation. If you wish, you can look at the Internet Safety Rules to help you make your choice.
3. Wait until all group members have made their choices, then flip your lights over. Discuss the choices you made, and decide as a group which one is best.
4. Choose one person in your group to be the scribe. After you discuss each story, the scribe should write down what choice your group made, and why.

Abby’s Story

Abby is 14. Yesterday was her friend Ivan’s bar mitzvah, and Abby chatted with some of his relatives at the party. Today, Abby logs on to the social networking site MyFace and sees a friend request from Ivan’s uncle. She doesn’t know him very well, but they did chat a little bit at the dessert buffet about school.

What light do you think Abby should choose in this situation? Explain your choice.

Vince’s Story

Vince is 12 and loves playing EscapeGo – a fantasy combat MMORPG (massive multiplayer online role-playing game). When he first started playing, another avatar was nice to him and helped him learn the ways of the game. Since then they’ve been good friends online, completing quests together and protecting each other during combat. Once, one of their teammates asked them how old they were during a quest. “Enough small talk, dude. Nobody cares, just play the game,” Vince’s friend said in response.

What light do you think Vince should choose in this situation? Explain your choice.

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Keyanna’s Story

Keyanna is 13 and she often plays Whatville, a virtual world for middle school kids like herself. One day, a male avatar throws a heart her way. Keyanna knows that throwing hearts is a common way to flirt on Whatville. She also knows he’s not a newbie, because it takes someone with a lot of experience to design the kind of appearance that his avatar has.

What light do you think Keyanna should choose in this situation? Explain your choice.

Catherine’s Story, Part 1

Catherine, who is 15, logs onto a chat room for teenagers. Her screen name is CathyKisses15. A guy called MikeyMike99 said hi to her a few days ago, and they’ve talked every day since. He’s really easy to chat with, and she likes venting to him about things that annoy her at school and at home. She hasn’t told him anything too personal yet. “I luv that we can talk openly 2gether,” MikeyMike99 says.

What light do you think Catherine should choose in this situation? Explain your choice.

Catherine’s Story, Part 2

Catherine is back online with MikeyMike99, and they’ve been talking for about a week now. He’s starting to flirt with her, and she’s flattered because he seems pretty mature. After all, Catherine’s not really into any of the guys at her school, so she likes flirting with Mike online. She’s pretty good at it too. And yeah, he said something that might have been kind of sexual once or twice. Today he writes, “Can I show u a pic?” Before she types a response, he says again: “Keep this private ok? I like u, Cat. I hope u like me 2.”

Now what light do you think Catherine should choose? Explain your choice.