

**Reading Level 3: Safer Internet Day**5<sup>th</sup> February 2013**Topics:** internet, cybercrime, cyberbullying**Learning points:**

- vocabulary
- --ing as connective
- passive

1 Today is Tuesday, 5<sup>th</sup> February, which is 'Safer Internet Day' in the UK. This day has been held for the past 10  
2 years to promote<sup>1</sup> the more responsible use of the internet, particularly for children. The internet has  
3 become more and more central to our lives – and children today have grown up never knowing a world  
4 without the internet - but children must learn how to stay safe when they are online. Children's charities are  
5 very anxious<sup>2</sup> about the risks posed<sup>3</sup> by the internet, saying that abuse through mobile phones is currently  
6 one of the biggest issues facing children in the world.

7  
8 An increasing number of incidents of child abusers contacting children via chat rooms, social networks and  
9 instant messaging are being seen, enabled by technology which allows potential abusers to contact hundreds  
10 of children at once from anywhere in the world. Once contact has been made, the abuser can intimidate the  
11 victims, obtaining their passwords, grooming<sup>4</sup> them for online sexual abuse and forcing them to send  
12 indecent images to them, often making use of webcams. Sometimes children are sent indecent<sup>5</sup> text  
13 messages or pornographic photographs by abusers and then can be blackmailed<sup>6</sup>.

14  
15 Furthermore, cyberbullying among children is a growing problem which plagues<sup>7</sup> children. It is estimated that  
16 about 14% of children in the UK are victims of cyberbullying – in 2002 one survey found that one in four  
17 youngsters had been bullied using a mobile phone or computer – while across the EU and the USA up to half  
18 of all children have experienced bullying online at some time. In middle school, girls perpetrate<sup>8</sup> more  
19 cyberbullying than boys. Malicious<sup>9</sup> lies and rumours are often spread about the victim via text messages or  
20 as posts on social networking sites, including the posting of embarrassing, hurtful, mean or mocking pictures,  
21 sometimes using false identities. More than 25% of children aged 7 to 11 have seen something unpleasant or  
22 upsetting on the internet in the last 6 months. Six out of ten children aged 12 to 15 own a smartphone now,  
23 complete with cameras, internet access and instant messaging apps, but two thirds of these phones have not  
24 been installed with content filters.

25  
26 One UK charity has been calling for schools to play a key role in teaching cybersafety to children, from as  
27 young as 5 years old, partly because parents are not keeping up with the rapidly-moving situation. However,  
28 it also wants parents and carers to talk far more to their children about internet safety and internet  
29 behaviour, because this alone can be very effective at protecting children, making them less vulnerable<sup>10</sup> to  
30 abusers. The website [www.saferinternet.org.uk](http://www.saferinternet.org.uk) gives advice for children, parents and teachers. For  
31 example, children have to learn to stop using some websites or messaging apps; filters can be set to block  
32 content; and usernames, email addresses and passwords can be changed.

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<sup>1</sup> to promote = fördern

<sup>2</sup> anxious = besorgt

<sup>3</sup> to pose = etw darstellen / aufwerfen / bringen

<sup>4</sup> to groom for = vorbereiten

<sup>5</sup> indecent = ungehörig / unangemessen

<sup>6</sup> to blackmail = erpressen

<sup>7</sup> to plague = bedrängen / ärgern

<sup>8</sup> perpetrate = begehen / verüben

<sup>9</sup> malicious = boshaft / böswillige

<sup>10</sup> vulnerable = verwundbar / verletzlich

### Level 3 questions

#### **--ing form as a connective**

1. This text has several examples of the use of the –ing form as a connective
  - a. Can you identify them?
  - b. Can you explain why it is used – or what it means?
  - c. Can you form some of your own sentences using the –ing form as a connective?

#### **Passive voice**

2. This text often refers to things that are done to a victim, without knowing exactly who did it. This is a perfect time to use the passive voice, where the agent of an action does not form the subject.

Can you identify passive forms of:

- a. the present simple
  - b. modal verbs
  - c. the present perfect
  - d. the past perfect
3. As an exercise, you can re-write the sentences in their active form, and then transform them back into their passive form. Compare your result with the original to check your answers.

### Level 3 answers

1. For example, in lines 5, 11 and 29.

The –ing form as a connective means that the two actions of the sentence happen at the same time, and are (usually) caused by the same agent. In effect, one action has 2 aspects to it.

2. For example:
  - a. are sent (line 12) / are spread (19)
  - b. can be blackmailed (line 13) / can be set (31)
  - c. has been held (line 1) / has been made (10) / have not been installed (23-4)
  - d. had been bullied (line 17)