

## Why Use a Computer?



Hi, I'm Kate. I'm here to tell you a few stories about people who've just started to use computers, and how it's changing their lives. These are people who, maybe like you, haven't felt that using computers and the Internet made sense for them.

Use your mouse to click on the green Continue button.



Tanya  
"I didn't think I was smart enough"



Anita  
"I thought I was too old to learn something new"



Jack  
"I didn't think I could afford it"



Della  
"I didn't think it was safe"



After taking computer classes at the library, Anita can now send messages **and share photos with her family using the Internet.** She's also been able to rekindle relationships with friends who live far away.



Now that Tanya has taken computer classes, she can help Terrell with school work, and follow his progress on the school's website.

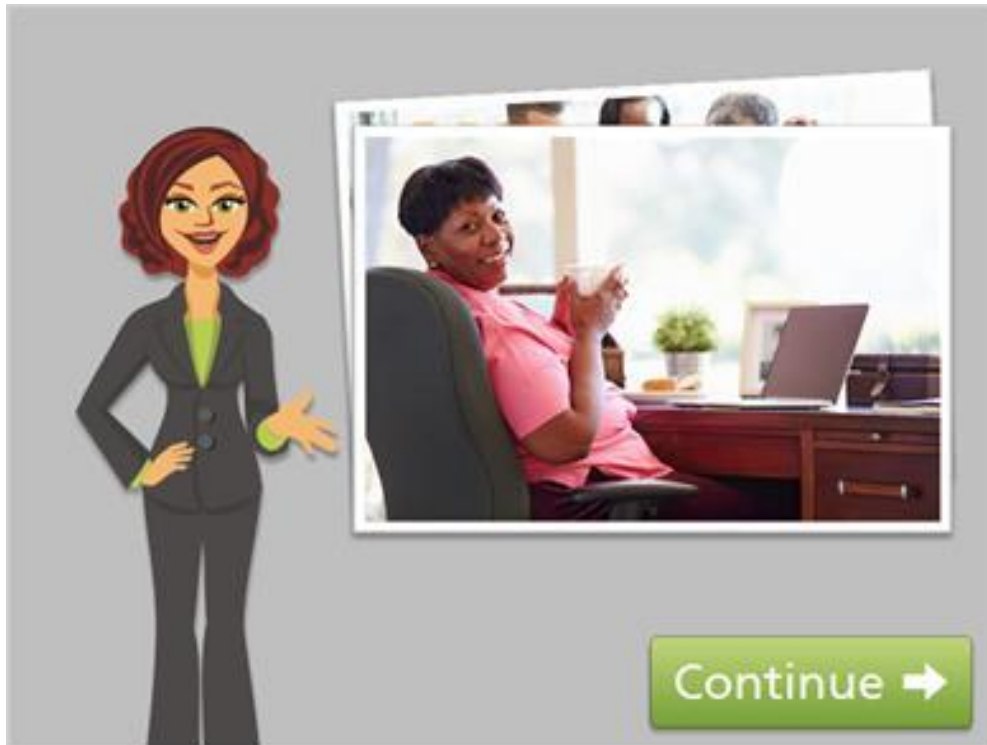


She's now a role model for her son and is more involved his learning. And Terrell's grades are going up!



Family is very important to Anita, but her daughter and grandchildren **moved out of the state. Anita still sees her family once a month, but it's** harder to stay in touch.

Anita had friends who use the computer for keeping in touch, but she felt **like it's hard for older people to learn new things. Technology seems so** complicated! But if her friends could learn, couldn't she?

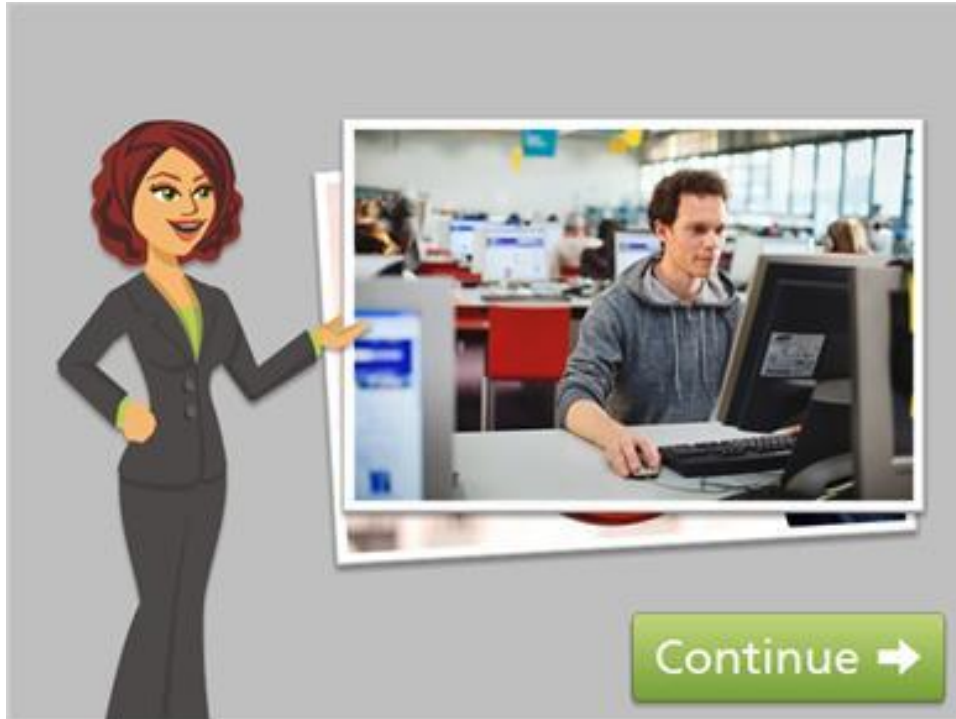


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Jack never had to use a computer in his line of work, and he always thought they were too expensive to bother using at home. But then Jack **needed to find a new job. He wasn't sure where to begin, especially** because these days you need to apply for most jobs online.





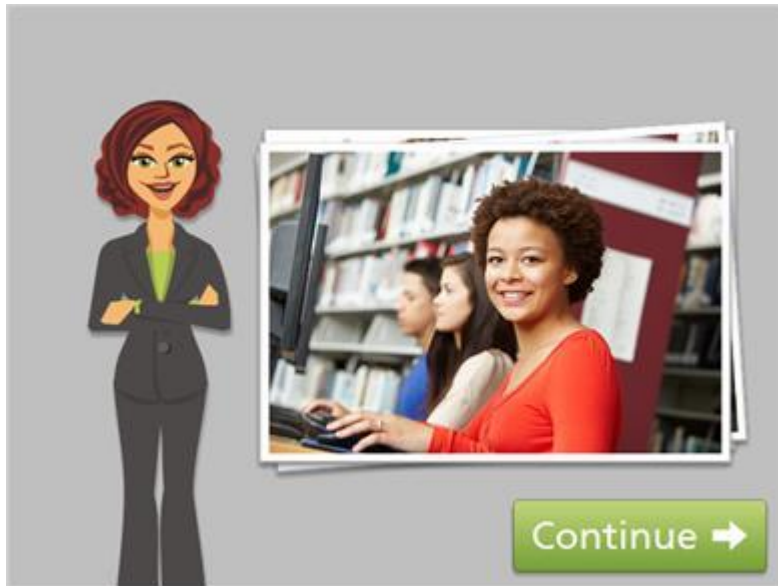
Jack heard from a friend that the library has computers and offers free classes. Using these free community resources, Jack was able to create a resume and apply for jobs online. No need for a computer or Internet at home! And now Jack has some more skills to bring to a new job position.



Della needed to renew her driver's license. But her job wouldn't allow her to take leave during the day. "Just do it online" her friends told her. But Della was afraid. Could she safely share her driver's license information, and payment information, when she wasn't there in person at the DMV?



Della's friend told her she could get help at the library after work. A library staff person showed Della the DMV website, and explained the process for renewing her license online. The staff person taught Della how to tell if a website is secure, **so she could rest assured there wouldn't be a problem** with the security of her personal information.



Not only was Della able to renew her driver's license, but she also learned enough about safety online that she's confident taking care of other personal business using the computer. What a relief to be able to complete essential tasks, without creating a problem at work!



What did you think of these stories? They were all different, but in each, someone felt that computers were not for them. Then they were challenged **with a need for computers they didn't expect. In all four stories, when they** faced that challenge, their lives were improved as a result.



The fact is, more and more of what we need to do to engage in the world is taking place **online**. **If you aren't online, it's more difficult to access** resources and services, and to stay in touch with the things that matter.

How about you? Have you noticed how much is online, and that you need to use a computer to access it?

# I'm Overwhelmed!

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Did you know that many people, maybe just like you, are hesitant to learn **to use a computer and the Internet?** In this lesson, we'll look at a few reasons why some people feel this way, and help you to think through your own reasons for learning.

In this lesson, it will be helpful to write down your thoughts. Click on the document icon to download the lesson handout. Or, use any blank piece of paper.

Ready to get started? Click the green Continue button.



**If you're taking this course, you're probably at least THINKING about learning to use a computer more. As we get started, please take a minute to use your imagination. Imagine it's a year into the future, and you have learned to use a computer.**

You are using it regularly to accomplish tasks, to stay connected to things that are important to you, and to have fun! With that picture in mind, how do you feel about yourself?

**Take your time, and write down your thoughts. When you're ready, click the continue button.**





It can be helpful to think about the reasons you haven't wanted to use a computer.

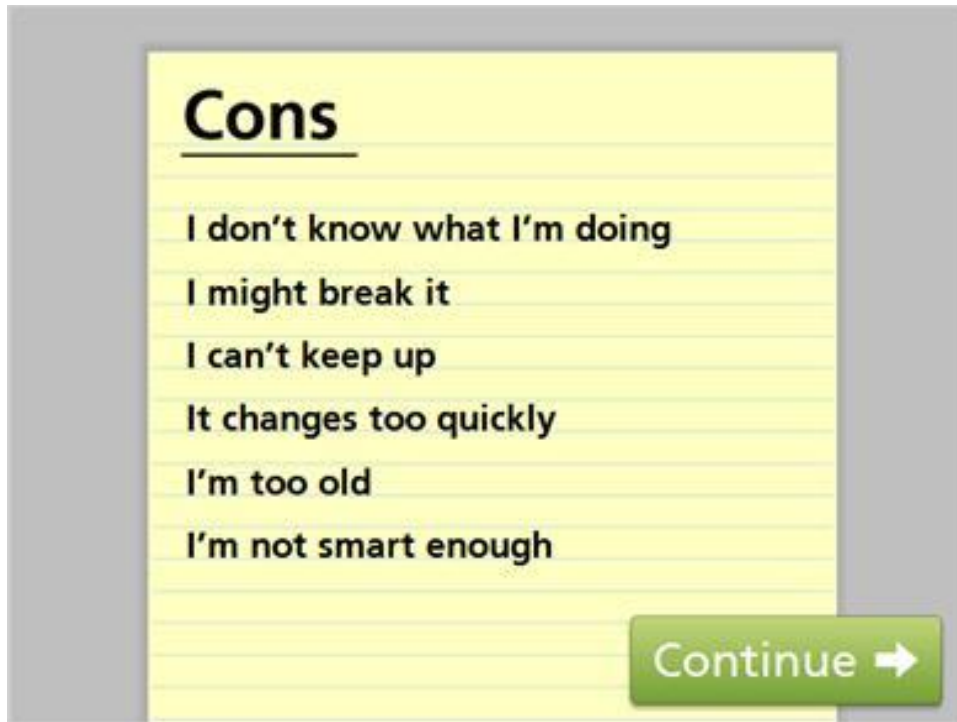
At the same time, we know that more and more things require you to go online.

Is it worth it to try?



Listing the pros and cons of using a computer can help us to think things through

Let's do this together. Write out your own list as we go.



Many people would list Cons, or reasons not to do more on the computer, like we see in this list

Can you relate to any of these reasons?



Now let's look at a list of common pros, or reasons to do more on the computer.

How about this list? Do any of these reasons match with your own?



Take a look at your own pros and cons list. Are cons outweighing pros? Are pros outweighing cons?



Now that we've looked at pros and cons, let's look at the truth about three of the most common reasons people are hesitant to use a computer more. Click on each of the buttons for information.



**“It’s too hard! It’s too complicated!”**

Get the facts: Learning something new like using a computer can seem overwhelming at first. But if we go step by step, and learn one skill at a time, we can build skills quickly. Research shows that as we learn a new skill, the skill gets easier and easier to do. Basic tasks become automatic, and it becomes easier to build on our knowledge.



“I’m too old to start now.”

Some older adults lack interest in learning new things. They want to focus on things that matter more, and the things they enjoy doing. But using a computer can help them stay in touch with family and friends, and can also help with exercising the brain. Nearly 60% of seniors use the Internet, and that percentage is increasing every year.






“Getting online just isn’t safe!”

**Concern about safety is a common reason people don’t want to use** a computer and the Internet. We hear stories about people being scammed and harmed online. There are risks involved, but you can stay safe by learning. By taking classes at the library or online, and by asking questions of library staff and others who know more, you can learn to stay safe. Millions of people do it every day!

On a scale of 1 to 10, **how important** is it to learn to use a computer or the Internet?

Not at all important Extremely important

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10



Now that we've talked about common concerns, I'd like to ask you: How important is it to you to learn to use a computer?

On a scale of 1 to 10, where 1 means not important at all, and 10 means extremely important, where do you fall?

Click one of the buttons to select the number, then click on Submit.

Why was my level of importance  
%importance%, and not  
%importance\_total%? Write down your  
thoughts

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Continue →

The screen now shows your score.


Think about this: why did you choose that number, and not one number lower?

What is it, for you, that's making it at least a little bit important?

On a scale of 1 to 10, how confident are you that you can learn to use a computer and the Internet?

Not at all confident Extremely confident

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

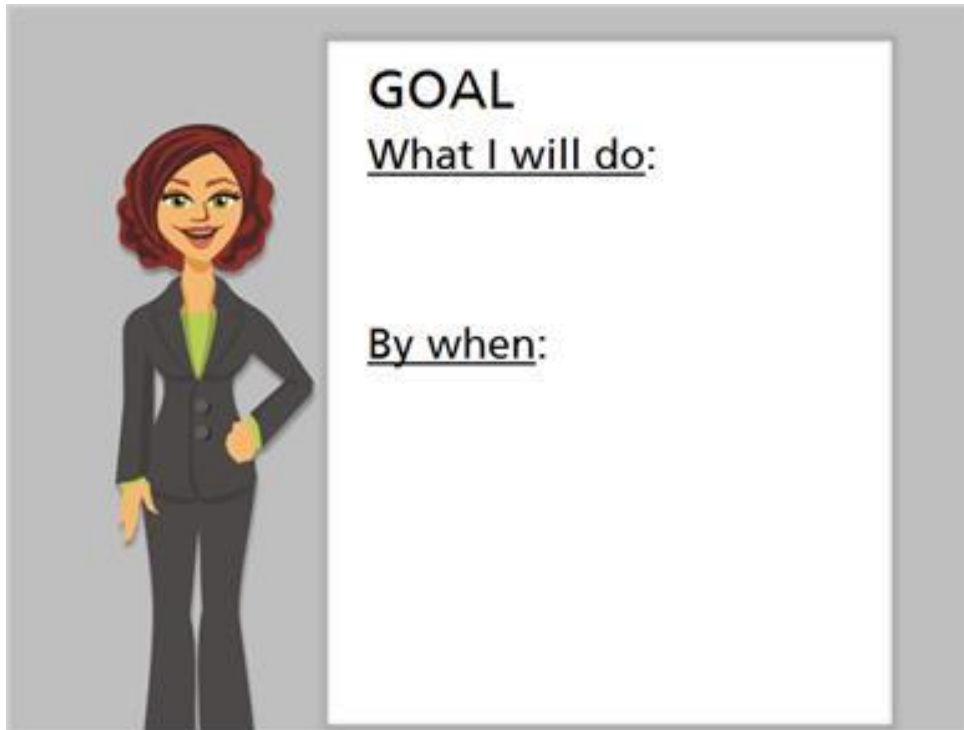


**Let's try one more scale.**


On a scale of one to 10, how confident are you that you can learn to use a computer and the Internet?

On this scale, 1 means not at all confident, and 10 means extremely confident.

Click one of the buttons to record the number, then click on Submit.




I've asked you to consider and write down your own thoughts and feelings throughout this lesson. You've made it this far, which shows your commitment to learning more. As we wrap up, I'd like you to do one final thing, which is to set a goal.



**GOAL**  
What I will do:  
I will talk to my friend who uses a computer about how they learned

By when:  
Within two weeks

 Write down two small goals

[Continue →](#)

Here's an example. It's helpful to choose something you can do in the next couple of weeks that will move you toward increasing confidence and learning more about using a computer. It's important to pick something small, and to include when you'll do it. Think about your own goals, and write down two small things you can work on in the next few weeks.

| Which of these statements is true for you?                                  |
|---|
| I would feel good about myself if I learned to use a computer.              |
| Even someone like me can learn to use a computer.                           |
| Learning to use a computer is at least a little bit important to me.        |
| I can take a small step to increase my confidence in using a computer.      |
| There are some reasons why I might want to learn use a computer.            |
| I was able to set at least one small goal about learning to use a computer. |
| None of these are true for me.  |

As you complete this lesson, think about the exercises you went through in this lesson.

Check any of the statements that are true for you. Then click on submit to continue to the next lesson.

# How to Stay Safe

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A common concern people have when they first start to use a computer is **safety**. This could be a reason you haven't wanted to learn.

Click on the green Continue button.





Being concerned about safety is **a good thing!** It's true that there are privacy, security, and safety risks involved with using a computer. We **simply need to learn how to be careful when we're online, to reduce those risks.**

Click on the green Continue button.



Let's start by gathering a little bit of information. We're using the terms "privacy", "security", and "safety" in this lesson. What do these terms really mean? Click on each term for information.



Privacy refers to our right to keep personal information out of the hands of **anyone we don't want to have it**. **Taking precautions with privacy means** that YOU decide what information about yourself to reveal, when, why, and to whom.

On the Internet, you may search for information, send emails, shop, and more. To maintain privacy **online, you'll need to learn how to keep your** information private as you perform those tasks.



Security refers to the protection of your information, so unauthorized people **can't access it or copy it**. You can keep information private and out of the wrong hands by using good security precautions.

This can involve putting extra software on your computer, using strong passwords, and learning how to identify situations where people are trying to gather information without your knowledge.



When we **talk about online safety**, we're using a broad term that includes both privacy and security. Safety refers to keeping our information private and secure, and also to keeping ourselves safe from others who may want to harm us.

Personal safety is especially important for kids, who may share too much information about themselves, and could become targets for bullies or predators.



**Now that you've started to learn about safety, what's the next step? You can continue learning by asking questions of people who might know more.**

Most public libraries have friendly staff who you can talk to about using a computer safely. Some libraries have computer classes you can take to learn about the risks. There is also a lot of information online that a librarian can show you, so you can keep learning.



**As you get started, you can take precautions even if you aren't an internet safety expert. How can you do this?**

Just apply the same kinds of precautions you would in other areas of your life. For example, if you drive to your local park to spend the afternoon, **you'd be sure to lock your car, keep valuables with you, and be cautious of strangers. It's the same thing online. Think about the things that are valuable to you, like your personal information, and be careful about sharing it with strangers.**

|   |   |
|---|---|
|   | How can I stay safe when learning to use the computer and Internet? |
|   | Ask library staff for help.   |
|   | Take classes at the library or online.                              |
|   | Pay attention to personal information I'm providing to others.      |
|   | Keep learning as I go.  |
| x | All of the above.   |

The correct answer is All of the Above!

