



TAKE THE QUIZ

Read each statement and check True or False.

1. Most Internet child molesters look for young children and preteens.
 True False
2. Internet child molesters are often violent and abduct their victims.
 True False
3. Internet predators looking for sex with teens usually pretend to be teenagers themselves.
 True False
4. Adults who express feelings of love for the teens they meet online want sex, not romance.
 True False
5. Predators don't tell teens they are interested in sex until they get them into a face-to-face meeting.
 True False
6. Teens who decide to meet their online acquaintances in person for sex often say they have feelings of closeness and romantic love.
 True False
7. Posting private identity information online puts teens at risk of unwanted invitations for sex.
 True False
8. Talking about sex to people only known online puts a teen at greater risk of invitations for face-to-face sex.
 True False
9. Teens who post sexy photos online are more likely to receive sexual invitations from strangers.
 True False
10. Sending sexy photos of yourself or other teens over the Internet may result in these photos being passed around the Internet.
 True False
11. It's illegal for adults to use the Internet to seek sex with teens.
 True False



GET THE FACTS

1. Most Internet child molesters look for young children and preteens.

False. Most online child molesters are *not* looking for children below the age of puberty. They are actually looking for relationships with teenage girls and boys.

2. Internet child molesters are often violent and abduct their victims.

False. While this could happen, it is actually extremely rare. People who resort to violence often do so because they cannot relate well to other people. The Internet is not an easy environment for these violent kinds of people because they do not have the communication skills to establish close personal relationships.

3. Internet predators looking for sex with teens usually pretend to be teenagers themselves.

False. Actually, most adults looking for sex with teens usually tell their real ages.

4. Adults who express feelings of love for the teens they meet online want sex, not romance.

True. Most online child molesters patiently develop romantic relationships and trust with their victims before moving the relationships offline for sex. The process may involve expressions of understanding about the teen's problems, sending gifts or money, and offering job opportunities.

5. Predators don't tell teens they are interested in sex until they get them into a face-to-face meeting.

False. Actually, most teens who decide to meet face to face know that the encounter will include sex. So if teens are willing partners, what's the problem? The problem is that sex between an adult and a teen below the age of consent (usually around 16) is a crime.

6. Teens who decide to meet their online acquaintances in person for sex often say they have feelings of closeness and romantic love.

True. The adult may also have feelings of love for the teen. But because the adult is much older and more experienced, the teen may be unfairly convinced to get involved in sexual activity that they are not ready for. That is the reason the law says this is a crime—even if both people willingly agree to it.

7. Posting private identity information online puts teens at risk of unwanted invitations for offline sex.

False. Contrary to media hype, the typical online child predator does not carefully piece together identity information to locate and abduct unwilling teens. More typically, teens who go off with adult predators go willingly after a period of online romantic and sexual talk. It's the *combination* of talking sexually to a stranger and providing private identity information that is risky.

8. Talking about sex to people only known online puts a teen at greater risk of invitations for face-to-face sex.

True. Talking about sex online with strangers is risky. However, there does not seem to be a great risk in talking online with strangers about other topics. But you have to be careful because, in any conversation, one thing leads to another and if it starts turning to sex, then alarm bells should go off in your head.



MAKING GOOD DECISIONS

9. Teens who post sexy photos online are more likely to receive sexual invitations from strangers.

True. If you post sexually provocative photos of yourself online, you are probably going to get more contacts from strangers. And some of those contacts may be aggressive and scary. Some will be from adults and some will be from other teens.

11. It's illegal for adults to use the Internet to seek sex with teens.

True. When older people use their greater experience to take advantage of a younger person, it's called "online solicitation of a minor." There are laws in most states and in the federal penal code to punish the offender, even if the teen is a willing participant.

10. Sending sexy photos of yourself or other teens over the Internet may result in these photos being passed around the Internet.

True. Strangers who ask for sexual photos of teens may end up passing them along on the Internet, in violation of child pornography laws. These laws say that the possession, distribution, or production of sexual images of minors is a crime. There has been at least one case in which a boyfriend and girlfriend who e-mailed intimate photos of themselves back and forth were arrested for child pornography.

THINK ABOUT IT

What's Normal?

When young people reach puberty and their bodies begin to mature sexually, they cannot help but be interested in romance. It's natural. Both girls and boys think about how to make themselves attractive to potential partners. This is why it is also natural for flirting and sexual talk to go on in high schools. It can become offensive sometimes, but most kids can handle it because the students are all about the same age, maturity, and experience level. It's also normal for teens to flirt and talk with their classmates about sexual matters online.

What's Wrong?

But there are enormous problems with teens getting involved in sexual relationships with adults. For one thing, it's illegal. Why is this true even if the sex is something the teen agrees to?

The law recognizes that it is impossible for sex between an adult and a minor to really be mutual because of the older person's power over the younger person. The law recognizes that, in our society, adults are often seen as being in a position of power or authority. The law also recognizes that when a teen has sex with an adult there can be a negative impact on the healthy sexual and emotional development for the younger person. So the law tries to prevent this from happening to a younger person.

What About Online?

You might think it's just having fun to test out your power to be sexy online. You might also think about talking about sex to online acquaintances and posting sexy photos of yourself for strangers to see. But these are risky

behaviors. They can result in you receiving crude comments you aren't prepared for and don't want. Or it might feel romantic at the time. But going further and meeting face to face can harm you emotionally later.