

Who are you, really?

Here are five scenarios of messages anyone could get online or on their phone. Each has a list of ways you could respond, some great and others not so much. See if they make sense to you – or if you think of other responses. If one of these scenarios really happens to you and you're not sure what to do, the easiest response is no response. You can always ignore or block them. It also never hurts to talk with a parent or teacher about it.

Scenario 1

You get this message from someone you don't recognize: "Hey! You seem like a fun person to hang out with. Let's have some fun together! Can you add me to your friends list? —Peter." What do you do?

- **Ignore Peter.** If you don't know him, you can just decide not to talk to him, period.
- **"Hi, Peter. Do I know you?"** If you aren't sure, ask first.
- **Block Peter.** If you've checked who he is and decide to block him, you won't get any more messages from him. On most social media platforms, he won't even know you blocked him.
- **Check Peter's profile.** Be careful – fake profiles are easy to make! Check this guy's friends list and see whom he's connected to. His circle of friends can be another way to tell whether or not he's real – especially if you don't know anyone he knows! If not much is going on on his page, that's another hint that he isn't for real.
- **Add Peter to your friends list.** IF he seems okay. This isn't recommended, unless you've verified who he is and checked with an adult you trust.
- **Give him personal info.** Never give personal information to people you don't know.

Scenario 2

You get a text message on your cell phone from someone you don't recognize. "Hey, this is Arthur! Remember me from last summer?" What do you do?

- **Block Arthur.** This would feel rude if you actually know her. But if you're sure you didn't meet anyone named Arthur last summer or she's sending you too many texts and oversharing about herself, it would be fine to block her.

- **Ignore Arthur.** If you don't know this person, you can just not respond.
- **"Hi, Arthur. Do I know you?"** This is a safe option if you aren't sure whether you met her and want to figure out if you did by finding out a little more. But don't tell Arthur where you were last summer!
- **"I don't remember you but we can still meet sometime."** Really not a good idea; you should never offer to meet with anyone you don't know.

Scenario 3

You get a direct message from @soccergirl12, someone you don't follow. "Hey! Love your posts, you are SO funny! Give me your phone number and we can talk more!" What do you do?

- **Ignore @soccergirl12.** You don't have to respond if you don't want to.
- **Block @soccergirl12.** If you find this person strange and block them, you'll never hear from them again – unless they start a new fake profile and contact you as a different fake person.
- **"Hi, do I know you?"** If you aren't sure, be sure to ask questions before giving out personal information like your phone number.
- **"Okay, my number is..."** Nope! Even if you've verified who this person is, it isn't a good idea to give out personal information over social media. Find another way to get in touch, whether it's through parents, teachers, or some other trusted person.

Scenario 4

You get a chat from someone you don't know. "I saw you in the hall today. U R CUTE! What is your address? I can come over 2 hang out." What do you do?

- **Ignore.** Probably a good choice.
- **Block this person.** Don't hesitate if you get a bad feeling about someone.
- **"Who are you?"** Probably not. If the message sounds sketchy, it might be better not to answer – or just block them.
- **"Is that you Justine? U R CUTE too! I live in 240 Circle Ct."**
This isn't a good idea, even if you think you know who it is. Before you give someone new your address or any other personal information, check them out, even if you think you know them. Never meet someone in person that you know only from online interactions.

Scenario 5

You receive this message: “Hey, I just met your friend Sam! She told me about you, would love to meet you. What’s your address?” What do you do?

- **Ignore.** If you don’t know this person but you do have a friend named Sam, the best thing to do is check with Sam first before responding to this message.
- **Block.** If you don’t know this person and you don’t have a friend named Sam, it’s probably best to use your settings to block this person from contacting you further.
- **“Who are you?”** Probably not a great idea. If you don’t know the person, it’s better not to answer, at least until you’ve heard back from Sam.

