



Scam or Real? A Fun Scam-Spotting Activity

Read each example. Check **Scam** or **Real**. All names, numbers and links are made up.

Name: _____ Date: _____

1. ☐ Scam ☐ Real

 TEXT MESSAGE · EXAMPLE

+1 (555) 014-2290

ParcelPost (example): Your package is on hold due to an unpaid \$1.99 fee. Pay within 12 hours or it will be returned: parcelpost-redelivery.example-pay.top

2. ☐ Scam ☐ Real

 TEXT MESSAGE · EXAMPLE

CornerDrug Pharmacy (example)

CornerDrug (example): Your prescription is ready for pickup at the Main St store. Questions? Call the number on your prescription label. Reply STOP to opt out.

3.

☐ Scam ☐ Real

 PHONE CALL · EXAMPLE

 Unknown caller

"Grandma? It's me. I'm in trouble, I was in a car accident and I need \$2,000 for bail. Please don't tell Mom and Dad. Can you buy gift cards and read me the numbers?"

4.

☐ Scam ☐ Real

 POP-UP ON A COMPUTER · EXAMPLE

Pop-up window

 WINDOWS SECURITY ALERT (example)  Your computer is infected with 5 viruses! Your bank details are at risk. Do NOT close this window. Call Certified Support now: 1-555-0199

5.

☐ Scam ☐ Real

 EMAIL · EXAMPLE

Valley Family Clinic (example) <reminders@valleyclinic.example> ·
Appointment reminder

Hello, this is a reminder of your appointment on Tuesday at 10:30 AM with Dr. Lee. If you need to reschedule, please call our office. We look forward to seeing you.

6.

☐ Scam ☐ Real

 EMAIL · EXAMPLE

Example Bank Security <alert@examp1e-bank-secure.example> ·

URGENT: Account Suspended

Dear Valued Customer, We detected unusual activity and your account has been suspended. Verify your identity within 24 hours to avoid permanent closure: [Click Here To Verify](#)

7.

☐ Scam ☐ Real

 SOCIAL MEDIA MESSAGE · EXAMPLE

Mega Prize Giveaway (example) ✓

 CONGRATULATIONS! You were randomly selected to win \$5,000! To claim your prize, send a \$49 processing fee and your date of birth in a private message. 

8.

☐ Scam ☐ Real

 EMAIL · EXAMPLE

StreamFlix (example) <info@mail.streamflix.example> · New this month on StreamFlix

Here are the new shows and movies coming this month. Open the StreamFlix app on your TV to start watching. You can change your email preferences in your account settings.

9.

☐ Scam ☐ Real

 PHONE CALL · EXAMPLE

 **"Government Benefits Office"**

"This is Officer Grant from the Benefits Office (example). Your benefit number has been suspended due to suspicious activity. Press 1 now to speak with an agent, or a warrant will be issued for your arrest."

10.

☐ Scam ☐ Real

 TEXT MESSAGE · EXAMPLE

55501

Example Bank: Your sign-in code is 482913. It expires in 10 minutes. We will NEVER call or text to ask you for this code.

Free from aiseniors.app, copy and share freely. Answer key on the next page.

Answer key

1. SCAM

- **“unpaid \$1.99 fee”**: A tiny fee is a common trick to get your card number.
- **“within 12 hours”**: They rush you with a deadline.
- **“parcelpost-redelivery.example-pay.top”**: The real website name is example-pay.top, not the delivery company.

2. REAL

- **“ready for pickup”**: It asks for nothing: no money, no link, no password.
- **“Call the number on your prescription label”**: It tells you to use a number you already have.

3. SCAM

- **“Please don't tell Mom and Dad”**: Real family members can ask for help, but scammers use secrecy so you will not check.
- **“buy gift cards”**: Nobody pays bail with gift cards. Gift cards = scam.
- **“It's me”**: AI can copy voices. Hang up and call your grandchild on their usual number.

4. SCAM

- **“Call Certified Support now”**: Real security warnings never ask you to call a phone number.
- **“infected with 5 viruses”**: Scary words are meant to make you panic.
- **“Do NOT close this window”**: You CAN close it. Close the browser, or restart the computer.

5. REAL

- **“appointment on Tuesday at 10:30 AM”**: It matches something you expect (an appointment you made).
- **“please call our office”**: No links to click and no personal details requested.

6. SCAM

- **“examp1e-bank-secure”**: The sender address uses the number 1 instead of the letter l.
- **“Dear Valued Customer”**: Real banks use your name, not "Valued Customer."
- **“Verify your identity within 24 hours”**: Threats plus a deadline plus a link = scam.

7. SCAM

- **“randomly selected to win”**: You cannot win a contest you never entered.
- **“send a \$49 processing fee”**: Real prizes never ask you to pay a fee.
- **“your date of birth”**: Never share your date of birth with strangers.

8. REAL

- **“new shows and movies”**: It does not ask for payment or passwords.
- **“Open the StreamFlix app”**: It sends you to the app you already use, not a strange link.

9. SCAM

- **“a warrant will be issued for your arrest”**: Government agencies do not threaten arrest by phone.
- **“has been suspended”**: Benefit numbers do not get "suspended."
- **“Press 1 now”**: Hang up. Call the agency using the number on its official website or your letters.

10. REAL

- **“Your sign-in code is 482913”**: This is real if you were just signing in yourself.
- **“We will NEVER call or text to ask you for this code”**: Never read this code to anyone who calls you.

Tips to stay safe

- Slow down. Scammers rush you.
- Never pay with gift cards, wire transfers or cryptocurrency.
- Never share passwords, sign-in codes, or your Social Security or bank numbers.
- Hang up and call back using a number you already trust.
- Look at the real website name, just before the first single slash.
- Talk to someone you trust before you act. Report scams at ReportFraud.ftc.gov.

Facilitator note for group leaders

Time: 20 to 30 minutes. **You need:** one copy of the activity per person, pencils, and this answer key.

1. **Welcome (3 min):** “Scammers are clever, and anyone can be fooled. Today we practice spotting the tricks.”
2. **Solo or pairs (10 min):** Everyone checks Scam or Real for each example.
3. **Review (10 min):** Go through the answer key. For each one, ask “What clue gave it away?”
4. **Wrap up (5 min):** Read the safety tips together. Encourage people to share stories.

Discussion questions

- Have you or someone you know received a message like these? What happened?
- Which example was hardest to decide? Why?
- What would you do if a “grandchild” called asking for money?
- Who could you call to double-check something that feels wrong?

Want more? The online quiz with 15 examples and a free link checker are at **aiseniors.app/tools**.