Spam vs. Scam (Phishing)

Email Checklist

CyberNut

SPAM → *Bulk marketing or "junk" email you didn't ask for. Annoying, but typically not trying to steal anything.*

- [ ] Promo / sales offer
- [ ] Newsletter I didn't sign up for
- [ ] "Buy now" tone (but no threats)
- [ ] Generic greeting ("Hi there", "Dear user")
- [ ] No request for password/MFA/payment/gift cards
- [ ] No unexpected attachment
- [ ] From a brand/vendor (not pretending to be my school/IT)

SCAM → *An email that pretends to be trusted to trick you into sharing info or money, or clicking a harmful link/attachment.*

- [ ] Asks for password/MFA code
- [ ] Asks for payment, gift cards, or banking changes
- [ ] Urgent/threatening ("act now", "account locked", "final notice")
- [ ] Sender name doesn't match the email address
- [ ] Link looks odd / doesn't match the real site
- [ ] Unexpected attachment (invoice/scan/voicemail)
- [ ] "Enable macros," "download," or "open to view"
- [ ] Impersonates IT/HR/admin or a known vendor
- [ ] Tries to move you off email (text/WhatsApp/personal email)
- [ ] Says "don't tell anyone" / secrecy pressure