Name: _____ Date: _____ Score: _____

ProtonVPN Security

Analyzing ProtonVPN security architecture including Secure Core servers, NetShield DNS filtering, Swiss privacy jurisdiction, open-source audited apps, and Stealth protocol.

PROTONVPN SECURITY LEARNING OVERVIEW

LEARNER
STUDENT STATUS
Network Defender Track

SECURE
CONNECTION STATUS
Shielding data packets

ON
LEAK PROTECTION
DNS & IPv6 leak protection

Welcome! This activity packet guides you through Proton VPN's security architecture. You will explore Secure Core double-hop servers, NetShield DNS blocking, Swiss privacy laws, and Stealth obfuscation.

WORKSHEET CHECKPOINTS

- [ ] **Part 1-4: Master VPN and network security configurations.**
- [ ] **Part 5-7: Solve crossword & word search puzzles.**
- [ ] **Part 8-9: Solve case studies & cipher challenge.**
- [ ] **Part 10: Review basic & advanced FAQ pages.**
- [ ] **Part 11: Explore 10 interesting real-world facts.**
- [ ] **Bonus: Think Fast challenge.**

Open the VPN.com Best VPNs Guide

URL: https://www.vpn.com/vpn/protonvpn/security/

Your ProtonVPN Security Learning Roadmap

- Analyze the technical architecture and configuration rules of ProtonVPN Security.
- Configure client settings to prevent IP, DNS, and WebRTC traffic leaks.
- Compare custom pricing, trial, and performance features against standard models.

PROTONVPN SECURITY GUIDE INSTRUCTIONS

Answer the multiple choice and true/false questions, complete the fill-in-the-blank sentences using the word bank, match definitions, and solve the crossword and word search puzzles. Apply your knowledge to Secure Core double-hop routing and Swiss privacy governance. Finish with the Bonus Activity: Think Fast.

SECURE CORE DOUBLE-HOP ARCHITECTURE & SWISS PRIVACY JURISDICTION

Proton VPN protects user traffic with Proton-owned Secure Core servers in Switzerland, Iceland and Sweden, open-source audited applications, and the Stealth obfuscation protocol designed to bypass deep packet inspection.

(INTRODUCTION)

Proton VPN protects user traffic with Proton-owned Secure Core servers in Switzerland, Iceland and Sweden, open-source audited applications, and the Stealth obfuscation protocol designed to bypass deep packet inspection.

READ EACH CHECKPOINT CAREFULLY AND SELECT OR WRITE THE CORRECT RESPONSE.

Checkpoint 1: Multiple Choice Challenge

1. **1. What kind of facilities house Proton's Secure Core servers?**
   - A) Public Cloud VMs
   - B) High-Security Sites
   - C) Public Data Centers
   - D) Shared Racks

2. **2. Which protocol helps bypass strict government censorship?**
   - A) PPTP
   - B) Stealth Protocol
   - C) OpenVPN UDP
   - D) IKEv2

3. **3. What is the function of Proton VPN's NetShield feature?**
   - A) Speed Booster
   - B) DNS Ad & Malware Block
   - C) Cloud Storage
   - D) Port Forwarding

4. **4. Under which country's privacy laws does Proton AG operate?**
   - A) United States
   - B) United Kingdom
   - C) Switzerland
   - D) Panama

5. **5. How are Proton VPN client applications verified by experts?**
   - A) Secret Code
   - B) Open Source Audits
   - C) Proprietary License
   - D) Government Review

Checkpoint 2: True or False Challenge

6 Question 6

6. Secure Core routes traffic through privacy-friendly nations before exit.

○ True ○ False

7 Question 7

7. Switzerland is a member of the 14-Eyes intelligence surveillance alliance.

○ True ○ False

8 Question 8

8. NetShield blocks ads and malicious domains directly at the DNS level.

○ True ○ False

9 Question 9

9. Proton VPN applications are 100% open source and publicly audited.

○ True ○ False

10 Question 10

10. The Stealth protocol uses standard WireGuard headers without obfuscation.

○ True ○ False

Checkpoint 3: Key Term Insertion

Read each sentence below and fill in the blank with the correct term from the Word Bank.

1. Multi-hop routing through Proton-owned servers in privacy-friendly countries is called _____ architecture.

2. To defeat deep packet inspection and network firewalls, users activate _____ mode.

3. Malware domains, trackers, and advertising scripts are filtered by _____ DNS.

4. Proton says that under _____ it is not obligated to keep logs of user activity.

5. If the VPN tunnel disconnects unexpectedly, internet traffic is blocked by the _____ guard.

6. Independent security researchers verify client integrity because apps are _____ code.

VOCABULARY WORD BANK

AES-GCM | KILL SWITCH | NETSHIELD | OPENSOURCE | SECURE CORE | STEALTH | SWISS LAW | WIREGUARD

Write your answers here:

1. _____ 2. _____

3. _____ 4. _____

5. _____ 6. _____

Checkpoint 4: VPN & Network Concept Match

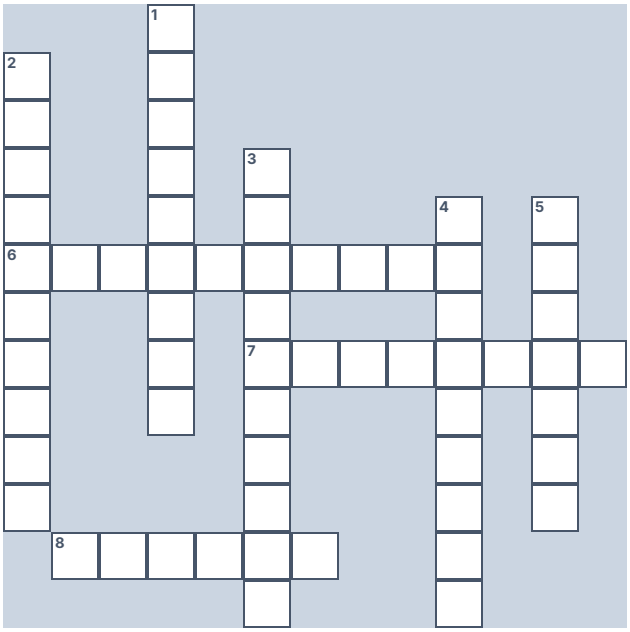
DEFINITION MATCHING

Match each vocabulary term on the left with its correct definition on the right by writing the corresponding letter (A-H) in the fillable input box.

☐	1. SECURE CORE	A	Publicly accessible and independently audited client application software.
☐	2. STEALTH	B	Symmetric cipher standard that encrypts the VPN's data packets.
☐	3. NETSHIELD	C	Strict legal privacy statutes in Switzerland outside 14- Eyes jurisdiction.
☐	4. SWISS LAW	D	An obfuscated tunneling protocol disguised as standard HTTPS web traffic.
☐	5. KILL SWITCH	E	A modern lightweight protocol providing robust cryptography and fast speeds.
☐	6. OPENSOURCE	F	A DNS-based filter blocking advertisements, telemetry trackers, and malware.
☐	7. WIREGUARD	G	A multi-hop design routing traffic through Proton-owned first-hop servers.
☐	8. AES-GCM	H	A security safeguard halting network transmission during connection drops.

Checkpoint 5: Crossword Puzzle

Solve the crossword puzzle by typing letters into the active white boxes. The numbers correspond to the clues below.



ACROSS CLUES

6. A multi-hop design routing traffic through Proton-owned first-hop servers (10)

7. Strict legal privacy statutes in Switzerland outside 14-Eyes jurisdiction (8)

8. Symmetric cipher standard that encrypts the VPN's data packets (6)

DOWN CLUES

1. A modern lightweight protocol providing robust cryptography and fast speeds (9)

2. A security safeguard halting network transmission during connection drops (10)

3. Publicly accessible and independently audited client application software (10)

4. A DNS-based filter blocking advertisements, telemetry trackers, and malware (9)

5. An obfuscated tunneling protocol disguised as standard HTTPS web traffic (7)

Checkpoint 5 Alternative: Accessible Crossword Clues

Screen-reader and keyboard users can type the crossword answers directly in the text fields below.

ACROSS CLUES

6 Across: A multi-hop design routing traffic through Proton-owned first-hop servers (10 letters):

7 Across: Strict legal privacy statutes in Switzerland outside 14-Eyes jurisdiction (8 letters):

8 Across: Symmetric cipher standard that encrypts the VPN's data packets (6 letters):

DOWN CLUES

1 Down: A modern lightweight protocol providing robust cryptography and fast speeds (9 letters):

2 Down: A security safeguard halting network transmission during connection drops (10 letters):

3 Down: Publicly accessible and independently audited client application software (10 letters):

4 Down: A DNS-based filter blocking advertisements, telemetry trackers, and malware (9 letters):

5 Down: An obfuscated tunneling protocol disguised as standard HTTPS web traffic (7 letters):

Checkpoint 6: Hidden Word Search

Find the 8 key vocabulary terms hidden in the grid below. Words can be horizontal, vertical, or diagonal.

U S T E L J B W A B C P X L K
Y K X T K D Q I M J S D I N N
H K Q P G M M R Q R W S T T G
C M C S Q O H E S B I W D S Z
T C V C Z S W G F K S H Z O D
I G N D Q E X U P C S U B P A
W S Z N D C K A N A L D O E D
S E F H I U D R E S A R Q N M
L A E I R R Z D T T W S F S Q
L V F A A E Q O S E N P T O X
I Q K R U C S D H A N Y B U F
K S X W J O A R I L Z Y Y R L
G I M R J R M L E T T O H C Q
Q H Z A O E V G L H U B Y E R
Y B H L Z G J O D P N W C M Z

VOCABULARY WORD LIST

SECURECORE STEALTH NETSHIELD SWISSLAW KILLSWITCH OPENSOURCE
WIREGUARD AESGCM

Checkpoint 6 Alternative: Accessible Vocabulary Matching

Match each of the 8 vocabulary terms from the Word Search to its correct definition by writing the letter (A-H) in the blank space.

VOCABULARY TERMS

- **A. SECURECORE**
- **B. STEALTH**
- **C. NETSHIELD**
- **D. SWISSLAW**
- **E. KILLSWITCH**
- **F. OPENSOURCE**
- **G. WIREGUARD**
- **H. AESGCM**

DEFINITIONS & MATCH FIELDS

_____ 1. An obfuscated tunneling protocol disguised as standard HTTPS web traffic.

_____ 2. A modern lightweight protocol providing robust cryptography and fast speeds.

_____ 3. Strict legal privacy statutes in Switzerland outside 14-Eyes jurisdiction.

_____ 4. A multi-hop design routing traffic through Proton-owned first-hop servers.

_____ 5. Symmetric cipher standard that encrypts the VPN's data packets.

_____ 6. A security safeguard halting network transmission during connection drops.

_____ 7. A DNS-based filter blocking advertisements, telemetry trackers, and malware.

_____ 8. Publicly accessible and independently audited client application software.

Checkpoint 7: Scrambled Word Challenge

Unscramble the letters below to reveal key Virtual Private Network (VPN) concepts and terms. Write your answers in the input boxes provided.

1. RCERESOEUC
2. DNLSEIEHT
3. KWCIISHLTL
4. GDREAUWIR
5. LHAESTT
6. AWSLSSWI
7. PNOUORCESE
8. SMACGE

Bonus Activity: Think Fast

3 ITEMS FROM EACH CATEGORY. FIRST PERSON TO COMPLETE THE LIST WINS.

1	Things you do online every day			
2	Countries known for strong privacy laws			
3	Security features in Proton VPN			
4	Types of VPN leaks			
5	Situations where a kill switch helps			
6	Things an audit can check			
7	Settings you turn on for extra security			
8	Things encryption protects			
9	Words that describe a good VPN app			
10	Reasons to choose Proton VPN			
11	Buttons or menus in a VPN app			
12	Streaming services you watch			
13	Threats on public Wi-Fi			
14	Ways to make a strong password			
15	Countries where you'd want Proton VPN servers			

Checkpoint 8: VPN & Network Case Studies

Apply the concepts you have learned to solve the real-world scenarios below.

CASE STUDY 1: BYPASSING RESTRICTIVE FIREWALLS

👷

Scenario: A user travels to a country where standard VPN traffic like OpenVPN and WireGuard is blocked by DPI.

Discussion Question: Which Proton VPN protocol configuration allows the user to bypass state-level inspection?

CASE STUDY 2: ADVANCED ADVERSARY PROTECTION

👷

Scenario: A financial auditor suspects their local ISP exit node might be compromised by advanced persistent threats.

Discussion Question: How does Secure Core protect the auditor's identity against an exit node compromise?

Checkpoint 9: Decrypting the Cipher

A network engineer secures routing channels and client tunnels. Use the Letter-to-Number key below to decrypt the message by writing the matching letters in the blank spaces.

LETTER-TO-NUMBER ENCRYPTION KEY

A=1 B=2 C=3 D=4 E=5 F=6 G=7 H=8 I=9 J=10 K=11 L=12 M=13

N=14 O=15 P=16 Q=17 R=18 S=19 T=20 U=21 V=22 W=23 X=24 Y=25 Z=26

19	5	3	21	18	5		3	15	18	5		8	1	18	4	5	14	5	4

19	5	18	22	5	18	19		16	18	15	20	5	3	20		21	19	5	18

4	1	20	1

Decoded message:

TIP: EACH NUMBER REPRESENTS THE POSITION OF THAT LETTER IN THE ALPHABET (E.G. 1 = A, 2 = B, 26 = Z).

Checkpoint 10: Basic VPN FAQs (Part A)

Review the most common questions and answers regarding Virtual Private Networks (VPNs) and tunneling.

Q1: What is Proton VPN Secure Core?

Secure Core routes traffic through multiple servers in privacy-friendly nations before exit.

Q2: What is the Stealth protocol?

Stealth is an obfuscated protocol that hides VPN connections as regular TLS/HTTPS traffic.

Q3: How does NetShield protect users?

NetShield is a DNS-based tool that blocks ads, trackers, and malware domains automatically.

Q4: Is Proton VPN legally protected in Switzerland?

Yes, Switzerland has strict privacy laws and is outside US and EU/14-Eyes jurisdiction. [4]

Q5: Are Proton VPN apps open source?

Yes. Proton VPN's apps are open source and have undergone published security audits.

Checkpoint 10: Basic VPN FAQs (Part B)

Review the most common questions and answers regarding Virtual Private Networks (VPNs) and tunneling.

Q6: What encryption ciphers are utilized?

Proton VPN uses AES-256-GCM or ChaCha20-Poly1305 with HMAC-SHA384 and RSA-4096 handshakes.

Q7: Does Proton VPN have a Kill Switch?

Yes, Proton VPN includes a standard and Permanent Kill Switch to prevent unencrypted leaks.

Q8: Can Proton VPN leak DNS queries?

No, all DNS queries are routed through encrypted private DNS servers owned by Proton.

Q9: Does Proton VPN keep connection logs?

No, Proton VPN keeps a strict no-logs policy, confirmed by annual Securitum audits. [3]

Q10: Is Proton VPN vulnerable to WebRTC leaks?

No, Proton clients include built-in firewall rules and routing policies blocking WebRTC leaks.

Checkpoint 10: Advanced VPN FAQs (Part C)

Explore advanced technical aspects of VPN tunneling protocols, mobile client integrations, and enterprise deployment.

Q1: Where are Secure Core data centers physically located?

They are in Switzerland, an ex-military base in Iceland, and an underground site in Sweden. [1]

Q2: How does Perfect Forward Secrecy operate in Proton VPN?

A unique ephemeral encryption key is generated for every session, preventing retroactive decryption.

Q3: What is Permanent Kill Switch on Windows/Linux?

Permanent Kill Switch blocks all network traffic even if the VPN app is completely closed or crashes.

Q4: Does Proton VPN support IPv6 routing and leak defense?

Proton VPN fully routes IPv6 traffic through tunnels or safely disables it to prevent leaks.

Q5: How does NetShield DNS filtering handle HTTPS inspection?

NetShield operates purely at the DNS resolution layer without requiring invasive TLS decryption.

Checkpoint 10: Advanced VPN FAQs (Part D)

Explore advanced technical aspects of VPN tunneling protocols, mobile client integrations, and enterprise deployment.

Q6: Who performed Proton VPN's third-party code audits?

SEC Consult audited the apps, and Securitum audits the apps and the no-logs policy.

Q7: How does Stealth protocol compare to OpenVPN XOR or Shadowsocks?

Stealth tunnels WireGuard over obfuscated TLS and outperforms older OpenVPN-based obfuscation. [5]

Q8: Can Swiss authorities compel Proton VPN to log traffic?

Proton states that under Swiss law it is not obligated to retain logs of user activity or data.

Q9: How are Proton VPN servers protected against seizure?

All Proton VPN servers are bare-metal machines protected with full-disk encryption. [2]

Q10: Does Proton VPN support custom DNS server configurations?

Yes, paid subscribers can configure custom upstream DNS servers directly in app preferences.

Part 11: 10 Real-World VPN Facts & Insights

Review real-world facts regarding VPN encryption speeds, protocol audits, mobile connectivity, and enterprise remote work.

1. VPN INSIGHT

1. Proton owns and installs its Secure Core servers itself, in high-security sites in Switzerland, Iceland and Sweden. [1]

2. VPN INSIGHT

2. Proton VPN client apps are open source and undergo recurring third-party code audits.

3. VPN INSIGHT

3. The Stealth obfuscation protocol bypasses Deep Packet Inspection by simulating standard TLS traffic.

4. VPN INSIGHT

4. Switzerland is outside the 5-Eyes, 9- Eyes, and 14-Eyes international intelligence sharing alliances. [4]

5. VPN INSIGHT

5. NetShield operates at the DNS resolver level, preventing ads and malware before payload download.

6. VPN INSIGHT

6. Perfect Forward Secrecy ensures compromised keys cannot decrypt previously captured traffic sessions. [7]

7. VPN INSIGHT

7. Proton VPN utilizes full-disk encryption on bare-metal servers to safeguard server configurations. [2]

8. VPN INSIGHT

8. The Permanent Kill Switch prevents unencrypted data leaks even during operating system reboots.

9. VPN INSIGHT

9. Securitum has audited and confirmed Proton VPN's no-logs policy in five consecutive annual audits. [3]

10. VPN INSIGHT

10. Proton VPN was developed by scientists who met at CERN (European Organization for Nuclear Research). [4]

Technical References & Sources

The study guide and interactive puzzles are compiled from global technical standards, specifications, and regulatory frameworks.

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Answer Key: Checkpoint 1 - Multiple Choice

1 Question 1

Correct Answer: B

TEACHING NOTE

Secure Core servers sit in high-security sites, including a former military base in Iceland and an underground data center in Sweden.

2 Stealth Obfuscation Protocol CENSORSHIP DEFENSE

Correct Answer: B

TEACHING NOTE

Proton's Stealth protocol disguises WireGuard connections as standard TLS/HTTPS traffic to bypass Deep Packet Inspection (DPI) firewalls.

3 NetShield DNS Ad-Blocker DNS FILTERING

Correct Answer: B

TEACHING NOTE

NetShield uses DNS-level filtering to block malware domains, spyware, intrusive advertising, and telemetry trackers before web pages load.

4 Swiss Legal Jurisdiction JURISDICTION

Correct Answer: C

TEACHING NOTE

Proton AG is headquartered in Geneva, Switzerland, benefiting from strong Swiss privacy laws outside US and EU 14-Eyes surveillance alliances. [4]

5 Question 5

Correct Answer: B

TEACHING NOTE

All Proton VPN apps are open source; SEC Consult and later Securitum have audited them.

Answer Key: Checkpoint 2 - True or False

6 **Secure Core Multi-Jurisdiction** ROUTING ARCHITECTURE — **Correct Answer: True**

TEACHING NOTE

Secure Core routes traffic through privacy-hardened jurisdictions before exiting to the destination country, helping protect against a compromised exit server.

7 **Swiss Surveillance Alliance** SURVEILLANCE ALLIANCES — **Correct Answer: False**

TEACHING NOTE

Switzerland is not a member of the 5-Eyes, 9-Eyes, or 14-Eyes intelligence sharing agreements, preserving independent legal sovereignty.

8 **Question 8** — **Correct Answer: True**

TEACHING NOTE

NetShield uses Proton's DNS servers to check domains against lists of known ad, tracker and malware domains.

9 **Open Source Client Auditing** SECURITY TRANSPARENCY — **Correct Answer: True**

TEACHING NOTE

Proton has made its desktop and mobile apps open source and publishes third-party audit reports.

10 **Question 10** — **Correct Answer: False**

TEACHING NOTE

False: Stealth tunnels WireGuard inside obfuscated TLS over TCP so the traffic looks like ordinary HTTPS.

Vocabulary Keys & Grading Rubric

Instructor Grading Rubric: Award 1 point for each correct matching (8 points total) and context term (6 points total).

CHECKPOINT 4: CONCEPT MATCH KEY

G 1. SECURE CORE	D 2. STEALTH	F 3. NETSHIELD	C 4. SWISS LAW
H 5. KILL SWITCH	A 6. OPENSOURCE	E 7. WIREGUARD	B 8. AES-GCM

CHECKPOINT 3: KEY TERM KEY

1 SECURE CORE	2 STEALTH	3 NETSHIELD	4 SWISS LAW
5 KILL SWITCH	6 OPENSOURCE		

CHECKPOINT 6 ALTERNATIVE: VOCABULARY MATCH KEY

1 B – STEALTH	2 G – WIREGUARD	3 D – SWISSLAW	4 A – SECURECORE
5 H – AESGCM	6 E – KILLSWITCH	7 C – NETSHIELD	8 F – OPENSOURCE

DISCUSSION NOTES FOR INSTRUCTORS

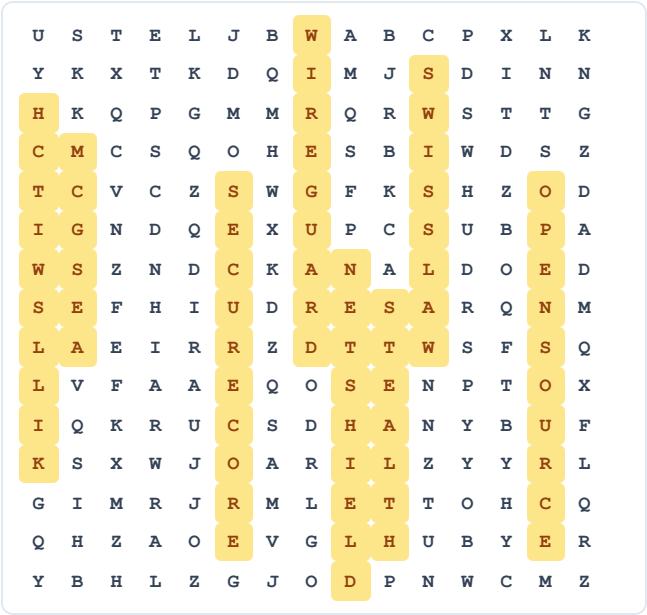
Key Terms:
Check that students can explain SECURE CORE, STEALTH and NETSHIELD in their own words and give an example of each.

Case Studies:
Ask students to support their recommendations with facts from the worksheet rather than assumptions.

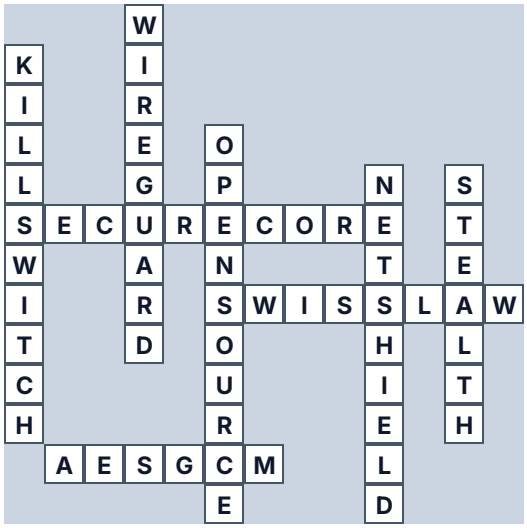
Source Evaluation:
Have students verify at least one claim against the worksheet references, and discuss why figures, prices and rules can change over time.

Puzzles Keys & Instructor Notes

WORD SEARCH SOLUTION



CROSSWORD SOLUTION



INSTRUCTOR GUIDE FOR CROSSWORD SOLUTIONS

ACROSS CLUES

6 Across: SECURECORE A multi-hop design routing traffic through Proton-owned first-hop servers (10 letters)

7 Across: SWISSLAW Strict legal privacy statutes in Switzerland outside 14-Eyes jurisdiction (8 letters)

8 Across: AESGCM Symmetric cipher standard that encrypts the VPN's data packets (6 letters)

DOWN CLUES

1 Down: WIREGUARD A modern lightweight protocol providing robust cryptography and fast speeds (9 letters)

2 Down: KILLSWITCH A security safeguard halting network transmission during connection drops (10 letters)

3 Down: OPENSOURCE Publicly accessible and independently audited client application software (10 letters)

4 Down: NETSHIELD A DNS-based filter blocking advertisements, telemetry trackers, and malware (9 letters)

5 Down: STEALTH An obfuscated tunneling protocol disguised as standard HTTPS web traffic (7 letters)

Scrambled Words & Cipher Solution Key

Grading key for the vocabulary word unscramble activity and Secret Cipher Challenge.

WORD UNSCRAMBLE KEY

1. RCERESOEUC	SECURECORE	5. LHAESTT	STEALTH
2. DNLSEIEHT	NETSHIELD	6. AWSLSSWI	SWISSLAW
3. KWCIISHLTL	KILLSWITCH	7. PNOUORCESE	OPENSOURCE
4. GDREAUWIR	WIREGUARD	8. SMACGE	AESGCM

SECRET CIPHER CHALLENGE KEY

"SECURE CORE HARDENED SERVERS PROTECT USER DATA"

Case Studies Solution Key

A CASE STUDY 1: BYPASSING RESTRICTIVE FIREWALLS

Instructor Solution

GRADING RUBRIC & SOLUTION GUIDELINES

- Scenario Analysis: A user travels to a country where standard VPN traffic like OpenVPN and WireGuard is blocked by DPI.
- Focus Question: Which Proton VPN protocol configuration allows the user to bypass state-level inspection?
- Recommended Strategy & Solution: The user should activate the Stealth protocol, which obfuscates VPN packet headers as regular TLS/HTTPS web traffic, slipping past DPI filters.

B CASE STUDY 2: ADVANCED ADVERSARY PROTECTION

Instructor Solution

GRADING RUBRIC & SOLUTION GUIDELINES

- Scenario Analysis: A financial auditor suspects their local ISP exit node might be compromised by advanced persistent threats.
- Focus Question: How does Secure Core protect the auditor's identity against an exit node compromise?
- Recommended Strategy & Solution: Secure Core routes traffic first through Proton-owned servers in Switzerland, Iceland or Sweden, so a compromised exit server cannot trace the user's IP.