Student Material

A New Kind of Literacy for a 21st Century World



Think for a moment: When was the last time you used the internet? Shared something on social media? Video-conferenced with someone? Read news from an online source? Chances are, you did all of those things today, perhaps even minutes or seconds ago!

Now that the internet has become accessible to more people, and social media sites like Twitter and Snapchat are widely used, the sharing of information has become easier than ever before. It can take only seconds to send an email message to someone across the world, or to find a how-to sheet or video that you need for a project. We can make purchases online instead of going to a store, and our news can be sent directly to us through RSS feeds. People all over the world can organize and rally together for a cause, and we never have to get lost again with a GPS in hand! In many ways, life has become better and easier with the advent of this technology. However, in other ways, this new development has made life more difficult.

Information overload is a term that was coined by Bertram Gross, a professor of political science, back in 1964. Gross wrote, “Information overload occurs when the amount of input to a system exceeds its processing capacity." Today, between email messages, phone apps, texts, social media, and websites, we are victims of information overload more than at any point in history. On our Twitter and Instagram feeds, new stories and comments are shared with us literally every second. The information that is coming our way keeps increasing, but our capacity to *process* all of the information has not. As a result, Gross writes, “it is likely that a reduction in decision quality will occur.” In other words, information overload either causes people to delay making decisions or to make the wrong decisions.

We see this play out in our world today. For example, how many people have you heard of who have lost money because they chose to divulge sensitive information to phishing emails, phone scams, and/or fake websites? Or how many stories have you heard of people reacting negatively to something they heard, only to realize later that the information was untrue? This occurs often in schools, where rumors spread like wildfire, but it also occurs in communities. For example, in December 2016, a man decided to fire a rifle in a Washington, D.C., pizza shop when he saw a fictitious article written online that the business had child slaves. It is clear to see that information overload is not only harmful to our personal well-being, but it is also dangerous to society as a whole.

In order to navigate this new age of information, we need to become "media literate" and gain a better understanding of our sources of information. Only then can we make wise decisions about how to act and what information to share with others. Conduct an analysis of the news sources you use. Research and discover strategies for reading and thinking critically about informational text. Then, in the medium of your choice (e.g., a website, video, pamphlet, speech, etc.), inform the wider public about how they can also become critical consumers of information.

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Student Material

A New Kind of Literacy for a 21st Century World *Rubric*

	Novice	Apprentice	*Practitioner*	Expert

Research Journal: Media Audit Selection	• identifies one social media platform and two websites for analysis
	• lists formats available for each source (e.g., video, blog, article, etc.)
	• selects one story from each source
	  ○ at least one story must be an article
	  ○ two stories must report same issue/event
		• identifies two social media platforms and three websites for analysis with at least one website specializing in world news
		• lists formats available for each source (e.g., video, blog, article, etc.)
		• selects one story from each source
		  ○ at least one story must be an article
		  ○ two stories must report same issue/event
			• identifies three or more social media platforms and four or more websites for analysis with at least one website specializing in world news
			• lists formats available for each source (i.e., video, blog, article, etc.)
			• selects one story from each source
			  ○ at least one story must be an article
			  ○ at least one story must be from a blog
			  ○ two stories must report same issue/event
				all of *Practitioner* plus: includes one traditional news source in selection (e.g., newspaper, evening news broadcast, etc.)

Research Journal: Media Audit	for each story: • identifies as a primary or secondary source • determines objectivity of summary of information • identifies author's claim • lists development of events for two stories on same issue/event: • lists discrepancies between accounts, including omissions and points of emphasis and impact of format used	for each story: • identifies as a primary or secondary source and supports with text evidence • determines objectivity of summary of information and provides own objective summary of information • identifies author's claim and purpose for story • identifies connections author makes within development of events • describes impact of word choice on tone of piece for two stories on same issue/event: • describes discrepancies between accounts including omissions and points of emphasis and impact of format used	for each story: • identifies as a primary or secondary source, supports with text evidence, and describes effect on reliability • analyzes objectivity of summary of information and provides own objective summary of information • describes rhetoric used to advance author's claim and purpose • identifies connections author makes within development of events • analyzes impact of word choice on tone of piece for two stories on same issue/event: • analyzes discrepancies between accounts including omissions and points of emphasis and impact of format used	all of *Practitioner* plus: drafts personal reflection on news analysis
Research Journal: Example Analysis	provides step-by-step instructions for: • determining objectivity of a story • identifying author's claim	provides step-by-step instructions for: • determining objectivity of a story • identifying author's claim • determining impact of word choice on meaning and tone	provides step-by-step instructions for: • determining objectivity of a story and potential bias of author • identifying author's claim • determining impact of word choice on meaning and tone • identifying and interpreting rhetoric	all of *Practitioner* plus: includes how to analyze to accounts of same issue/event

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Informative Piece for Public Distribution: Content	includes: • title • introduction to topic • section headings • description of "critical consumer of information" • one set of instructions from "Example Analysis" in research journal • transitions between sections • style based on intended audience • conclusion	includes: • title • introduction to topic • section headings • description of "critical consumer of information" • one set of instructions from "Example Analysis" in research journal • definition and one example of bias and impact on story • transitions between sections • style based on intended audience • conclusion	includes: • title • introduction to topic • section headings • description of "critical consumer of information" • one set of instructions from "Example Analysis" in research journal • definition and one example of bias and impact on story • example and explanation of impact of format on story • transitions and cohesion between sections • style based on intended audience • conclusion	all of *Practitioner* plus: includes techniques such as metaphors, similes, and/or analogies
Informative Piece for Public Distribution: Mechanics	includes: • parallel structure • two or more prepositional phrases for variety	includes: • parallel structure • two or more prepositional phrases for variety and specific meaning • properly used colon *or* semicolon	includes: • parallel structure • two or more prepositional phrases for variety and specific meaning • properly used colon *and* semicolon • correct spelling throughout	all of *Practitioner* plus: includes one other type of phrase, either adverbial or absolute

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A New Kind of Literacy for a 21st Century *Scaffold for Learning*

Teacher Material



Benchmark Video and Discussions

- Unit launch to create felt need
- Introduction to Critical Media Literacy
- What is objectivity?
- Ethos, Pathos, Logos . . . Oh My!

Instructional Activities: Learning

Instructional Texts/Websites

- Primary/secondary sources
- Cite text evidence
- Determine central idea (HW)
- Trace central idea development
- Determine objectivity (IV)
- Find examples of ethos, pathos, and logos (I, P)
- Prepositional phrases (P)
- Cite sources
- Author's claim/purpose (IV)
- Rhetoric (P, SG)

Instructional Videos

- Primary/secondary sources
- Cite text evidence
- Determine central idea (HW)
- Trace central idea development
- Determine objectivity (IV)
- Find examples of ethos, pathos, and logos (I, P)
- Prepositional phrases (P)
- Cite sources
- Author's claim/purpose (IV)
- Rhetoric (P, SG)

How-to Sheets

- Identify a source as primary or secondary
- Cite text evidence
- Cite sources
- Determine central idea
- Write an objective summary
- Identify appeals to morals, logic, and emotions
- Identify forms of rhetoric
- Prepositional phrases
- Use of colon or semicolon
- Set up Research Journal

Interactive Websites

- Primary vs. Secondary Sources
- Making inferences
- Prepositional phrases
- Freerice.com
- Khan Academy
- IXL
- Flocabulary
- Social media sites (P)

Learning Centers

- Differentiate primary/secondary sources
- Match evidence to inferences from text (I, P)
- Categorize rhetorical devices (ethos, logos, pathos) (P, SG)
- Prepositional phrases
- Specific word choice
- Tone
- Semicolon/colon
- Inferences (P)

Small-Group Mini-Lessons

- Primary/secondary sources
- Cite text evidence
- Determine central idea
- Trace central idea development
- Determine objectivity
- Find examples of ethos, pathos, and logos
- Prepositional phrases
- Cite sources
- Author's claim/purpose
- Rhetoric

Instructional Activities: Additional

Practice

- **Set up research journal (I)**
- **Identify social media platforms/websites to review (I, HW)**
- **List format of stories (I, P)**
- **Identify statements as obj/subj (I)**
- **Prepositional phrases (I, P)**
- **Cite text evidence (I, P)**

Application

- **Note implied meaning of text (P, SG)**
- **Cite text evidence (P, SG)**
- **Determine rhetoric in writing (P, SG)**
- **Trace dev. of central idea (I, P)**
- **Write objective summaries (I, P)**

Assessment

- **Using rubric, peer edit for: text evidence, obj/sub statements, prepositional phrases (P)**
- **Using rubric, self-assess journal (I)**
- **Self-assess w/ ethos, pathos, logos (I)**
- **Self-assess for any bias (I)**

Reflection

- **What was your group's biggest success? (SG)**
- **What will you choose to teach someone else about this unit? (I)**
- **How will you apply this experience to your social media going forward? (I)**

Key: Individual **(I)**, Pairs **(P)**, Small Groups **(SG)**, Activities suitable for homework **(HW)**, Insights Video **(IV)**

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A New Kind of Literacy for a 21st Century World *Content Facilitation Grid (Week 1 Sample)*

Teacher Material

Student	Identifies story as being from primary source or secondary source.	Supports primary/secondary source identification with text evidence.	Tells what the text explicitly states.	Makes inferences about what the text states.	Support inferences with evidence from the text.	Defines *objectivity*.	Defines *subjectivity*.	Identifies statements as subjective or objective.	Writes objective summaries of texts.	Determines central idea of text.	Traces development of central idea.	Defines *rhetoric*.	Defines *ethos*.	Defines *logos*.	Defines *pathos*.	Identifies use of rhetoric in texts.	Identifies type of rhetoric used in texts.	Defines *prepositional phrase*.	Identifies use of prepositional phrases.	Uses prepositional phrases in writing.

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Teacher Material

A New Kind of Literacy for a 21st Century World *Facilitation Questions*

COMPREHENSION *Ask questions that ensure students understand content and skills needed to solve the problem.*	• What does it mean to be literate? Media literate? • What is bias? • What is spin? • What are some persuasive techniques and rhetorical devices that authors use? • What is the central idea? How is it different from theme?
APPLICATION *Ask questions that ensure the ability of students to apply learning to new situations.*	• What is the central idea of this article? • What is this author's point of view on this topic? • What persuasive techniques is this author using? Do you think it is effective? Why or why not?
CONNECTION *Ask questions that ensure the ability of students to apply learning to their lives.*	• What poor decisions might be made by kids your age because of information overload? • From what source(s) do you receive your news? • How often do you check to verify if something you read online is true? • Where do you see bias and the use of persuasive techniques in your everyday life? • What persuasive techniques might you try to use?
SYNTHESIS *Ask questions that encourage students to create new information from existing data.*	• If information overload continues at its current pace, and people are not being educated in media literacy, what possible consequences do you foresee? • What new inventions or innovations do you think could be created to ease information overload? • How do you think this author would respond to this author? Why do you think so?
METACOGNITION *Ask questions that prompt students to think about their own thinking process.*	• Have you come to any realizations through conducting your personal news analysis? • Based on what you have learned, do you think you might change your media consumption behavior in the future? How so? Why or why not? • What was the most challenging part of this assignment?

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Student Material

A New Kind of Literacy for a 21st Century World *Transfer Task*

For the past few weeks, you have been closely analyzing news stories that appear online, through websites and your social media feeds. You should be familiar with the skills associated with media literacy, so now is the chance to practice what you have learned!

Read the two news articles[1] provided. You may annotate directly on the page. For each article, be sure to include:

- The central idea, with at least two supporting details
- The author's point of view
- A description of how the author developed his/her point of view, referring to specific rhetorical techniques used

Then, using these notes, evaluate whether or not each article is credible and reliable. Write a brief paragraph where you state your claim. Be sure to support it with at least three pieces of evidence and refer to specific strategies you used to determine your answer.

[1] For these articles, select pieces that are recent so students must utilize what they have learned, as opposed to just relying on their knowledge of current events.

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Teacher Material

A New Kind of Literacy for a 21st Century World *Teacher Notes*

Unit Overview
Students learn to be critical consumers of online information by examining social media platforms and news websites. They apply media literacy skills to determine bias, reliability, and objectivity in reporting. After completing a media audit, students compile what they've learned to inform others how they can become critical consumers of information!
Common Core State Standards Addressed
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.9-10.1; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.9-10.2; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.9-10.3; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.9-10.4; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.9-10.6; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.9-10.7; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.9-10.8 CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.1; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.3; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.6; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.8 CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.2; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.4; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.6; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.7; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.8; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.9 CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-10.2; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-10.3 CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.9-10.1; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.LL.9-10.2
Other National Standards Addressed
NT.K-12.1; NT.K-12.2; NT.K-12.4; NT.K-12.5; NT.K-12.6

Enduring Understandings	**Essential Questions**
• In order to make informed decisions, it is imperative to be a critical reader and consumer of information. • The rapid increase and accessibility to new technology has created benefits along with drawbacks; we must learn how to navigate this new space in order to grow with the times. • Authors attempt to persuade their audience by utilizing a variety of techniques; being aware of these techniques will help you be a smarter consumer and producer of information.	• Why is digital literacy important today? • How can we learn to navigate this new technological age and manage information overload? • How does being aware of author's craft techniques help us be more critical readers and thinkers?

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21st Century Skills Addressed	
Core Content and Interdisciplinary Themes • Subject-Area Mastery • Global Awareness • Media Literacy *Learning and Innovation* • Critical Thinking and Problem Solving • Creativity and Innovation • Communication and Collaboration	*Information and Media Literacy* • Information Literacy • Media Literacy • Information and Communication Technology *Life and Career* • Flexibility and Adaptability • Initiative and Self-Direction • Social and Cross-Cultural Skills • Productivity and Accountability • Leadership and Responsibility

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