

Developing Media Literacy:

Using Critical Thinking to Evaluate News Articles



In this lesson, students will increase their understanding of media literacy by analyzing and evaluating news articles using critical thinking skills, as well as by discerning the author's purpose.

Grades: 3-5		Subject(s): Media Literacy; ELA
Essential Question(s)	Can social media affect your health? What impact can AI have on someone's mental health?	
Focus Standard(s)	ISTE Standard 1.3.b Students evaluate the accuracy, perspective, credibility and relevance of information, media, data or other resources. R.I.3.6 Distinguish their own point of view from that of the author of a text. R.I.4.8 Explain how an author uses reasons and evidence to support particular points in a text. R.I.5.8 Explain how an author uses reasons and evidence to support particular points in a text, identifying which reasons and evidence support which point(s).	
Learning Objective(s)	TSWBAT interpret media information and use text evidence to express their own feelings and opinions about the relationship between social media and mental health.	
Materials/Resources	Leaders Warn of Social Media Risks TikTok Filter Faces Questions TikTok: Time to Take a Break?	
Vocabulary	Media literacy - ability to access, analyze, evaluate, and create media in various forms, including print, digital, and visual	
Anticipatory Set	Begin the lesson by inviting students to talk about their favorite social media app. Be sure to ask students why they enjoy using the app or platform and how it benefits them. If some students don't use social media apps, ask them if they would like to share why they don't use social media. (i.e. uninterested; don't have time; parents won't allow it, etc.)	
Mini-lesson	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Explain to the students that today they will be reading articles about social media and its effects on a person's mental health.• While reading the articles, they should consider the following questions: What question is the author trying to answer? Why are they looking to answer that question? [author's purpose]• Ask students to imagine themselves as private investigators searching for the key [author's purpose] to unlock an article.	
Guided Practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Begin by reading the article "Leaders Warn of Social Media Risks." Read the first paragraph and pause. Ask students who is worried about the possible harm of social media on kids' mental health. (Answer: U.S. officials) Then ask students what types of harm social media can cause. (Answer: unknown, not specified in the first paragraph) Continue reading.• Pause after the second paragraph and ask students again, what are the potential harms of social media? (Answer: unknown) Explain to students that sometimes general statements are made, and it's important to read further to find evidence that supports claims.	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read the third paragraph and pause, asking students the same question. (Answer: unknown) • Read the fourth and fifth paragraphs, and then ask students what the harmful effects of social media on mental health are. (Answer: sleeping problems, poor body image, low self-esteem, depression) Reiterate the importance of reading more than just the beginning of an article, especially when claims are being made. • Continue reading the rest of the article aloud to students and then lead a discussion referring back to the previously mentioned questions: What question is the author trying to answer? Why are they looking to answer that question? Ask students to share their thoughts. (Possible answers: What are the risks of too much social media use? How does social media impact a person's mental health? What are the benefits and consequences of social media? The author wants to inform people about the possible harmful side effects of too much social media use so that we, as students, can make positive choices.)
Independent Practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students should choose an article to read and analyze using the same technique demonstrated by the teacher. • After reading, students should answer the following questions for the article "TikTok Filter Faces Questions": What question is the author trying to answer? (Possible answer: Do face-changing filters have a negative impact on a person's mental health?) and Why is the author looking to answer that question? (Possible answer: to provide ideas on how to protect oneself from false or edited images; to raise awareness about the existence of these filters). • For the article "TikTok: Time to Take a Break?": What question is the author trying to answer? (Possible answer: How much time should individuals spend on TikTok? Or How can screen time be limited?) and Why is the author looking to answer that question? (Possible answer: to share strategies on how TikTok can help users gain control of their screen time; to emphasize the importance of maintaining a healthy balance between technology usage and non-usage).
Closure/Assessment	Exit Ticket: Why is it important to ask questions about the author's purpose for a news article? (Possible answers: to make sure we have all the facts; to help the reader understand what the text is about; to evaluate the text)
Differentiation	Adjust lexile levels as needed. Answer questions as a whole group or individually. Use accessibility features and read-to-me feature as needed.