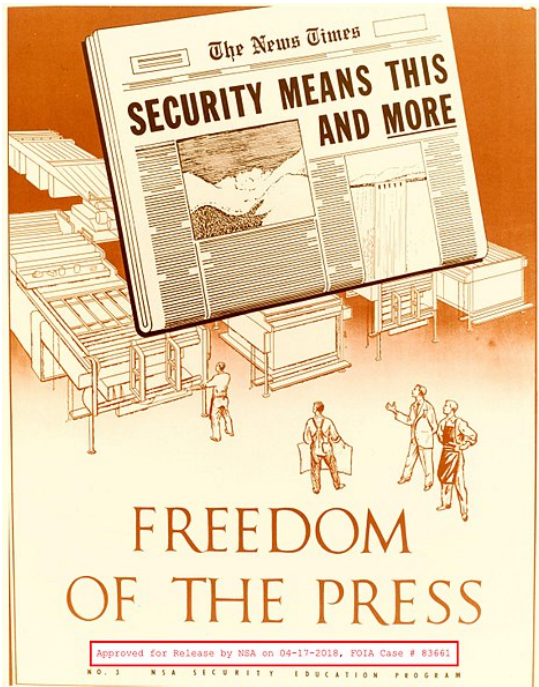


# Topic 7. Freedom of the Press and News/Media Literacy

This topic explores the news and the role of the Press and press freedom in 21st century United States democracy.



[National Security Agency \(NSA\) security/motivational poster from the 1950s or 1960s](#) | Public Domain

The **News** is everything of importance that happens when we are not physically present to see it for ourselves. The **Press** is a broad term, referring to the people (reporters, photographers, commentators, editorial writers and behind-the-scenes workers in media organizations) that bring us the news. It is known as the [Fourth Estate](#), or the Fourth Branch of government in our democracy, because it reports openly and fairly on what is happening in the community, the nation, and the world.

Some researchers are now referring to social media as the **Fifth Estate** ([Educators Meet the Fifth Estate: Social Media in Education](#), *Elementary School Journal* Special Issue, 2021).

**Freedom of the Press** is essential to the existence of democratic government. Journalists must be able to report the news openly and honestly and people must be able to access truthful information from online sources, social media, and print materials.

The media literacy activities in this section explore press freedom in the United States, objectivity in news reporting, the roles of reporters and investigative journalists, and how news-related photographs convey messages and meaning to viewers. These activities feature low-tech and high-tech analysis of the media, including exploring how recommendation algorithms function, detecting fake news, conducting critical visual analyses, and evaluating memes and TikToks as political cartoons.

## **Media Literacy Activities Choice Board**

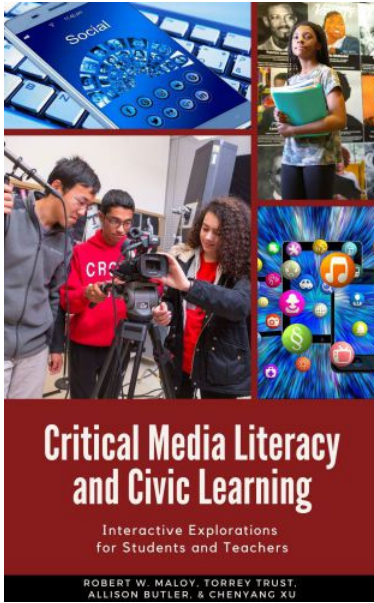
<p><b>Contextualize Press Freedom</b></p> <p>Evaluate and then suggest ways to improve the U.S. ranking on the World Press Freedom Index.</p> 	<p><b>Uncover Reporters' Perspectives</b></p> <p>Analyze how reporters covered the 2016 Hong Kong protests. Report your findings in a TikTok or Snapchat video.</p> 	<p><b>Be an Investigative Journalist</b></p> <p>Investigate an issue that is important to you by conducting research and interviewing credible sources.</p> 	<p><b>Analyze Newspaper Photographs</b></p> <p>Conduct a critical analysis of a famous or recent newspaper photograph.</p> 
<p><b>Interpret Memes and TikToks as Political Cartoons</b></p> <p>Examine political editorial cartoons, memes, and TikToks and then create your own about a political issue you care about.</p> 	<p><b>Freedom of the Press News/Media Literacy Digital Choice Board</b></p>  <p><i>Critical Media Literacy and Civic Learning</i> a free eBook by Robert Maloy, Torrey Trust, Allison Butler, and Chenyang Xu explores these topics and more</p>		<p><b>Write The News From All Sides</b></p> <p>Write a brief news report about an issue that interests you from three different perspectives (i.e., left, center, right) or points of view (e.g., favorable, unfavorable, objective).</p> 
<p><b>Create a News Evaluation Tool</b></p> <p>Create a rubric, checklist, or other instructional tool (e.g., podcast, video) to help others evaluate news sources.</p> <p><b>FAKE NEWS</b></p>	<p><b>Analyze Your Online Search Habits</b></p> <p>Spend 20 minutes conducting an online search about a topic of your choosing. Then, analyze your search actions and history.</p> 	<p><b>Conduct a Critical Visual Analysis</b></p> <p>Conduct a critical visual analysis of an online article, primary source, advertisement, or doctored historical image.</p> 	<p><b>Evaluate &amp; Design a Recommendation Algorithm</b></p> <p>Critically evaluate YouTube's recommendation algorithm and then design your own.</p> 

"Freedom of the Press & News/Media Literacy" 2022 Choice Board by [Robert W. Maloy](#), Ed.D. & [Torrey Trust](#), Ph.D., College of Education, University of Massachusetts Amherst is licensed under [CC BY-NC-SA 4.0](#)

Freedom of the Press & News/Media Literacy Choice Board ([view](#))

([make your own copy of this choice board to remix/share/use](#))

## Media Literacy Activities



Maloy, R. W., Trust, T., , & Xu, C. (2021). *Critical Media Literacy and Civic Learning*. Equity Press.  
<https://equitypress.org/mediaandciviclearning>