

# Introduction and Table of Media Literacy Activities

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## Introduction

Welcome to ***Critical Media Literacy and Civic Learning*** - an interactive, multimodal, multicultural, open access eBook for teaching and learning key topics in United States Government and Civic Life. **Open access** means these materials are online, digital, and free of charge (Billings, 2019). This book is available online to anyone with an internet connection. The eBook can also be viewed and printed as a PDF file for offline viewing.

Developed as a companion edition to our [Building Democracy for All eBook](#) (2020), **Critical Media Literacy and Civic Learning** (2021) features more than 100 interactive media literacy learning activities for students organized around key topics in civics, government, and history education derived from the Massachusetts 8th Grade Civics and Government curriculum framework (see tables below). Civics concepts for which we have developed critical media literacy activities include democracy as a political system, a republic as a form of government, the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution, the Bill of Rights, the branches of U.S. government, elections and voting, political parties, citizenship, political leadership and courage, political protest, civil rights and social justice, political action committees, amendments to the Constitution, landmark Supreme Court decisions, functions of state and local government, freedom of the press, digital news and social media, and many more.

Each critical media literacy learning activity includes short written introductions followed by step-by-step directions for students to complete the activities, individually or in small groups. Every activity is designed to promote creative self-expression and higher-order critical thinking among students about the ways that online and print media impact our lives as well as our nation's politics.

## **Media Literacy Activities for Key Civics, Government, and History Concepts**

### **1. Foundations of the U.S. Political System**

<b>Key Civics, Government, and History Concepts</b>	<b>Critical Media Literacy Activities</b>
Democracy as a Political System	<a href="#">Democracy in Social Media Policies and Community Standards</a>
A Republic as a Form of Government	<a href="#">Making the Internet as a Public Utility</a>
Impacts of Enlightenment Philosophies	<a href="#">21st Century Women STEM Innovators</a>
British Influences on American Government	<a href="#">Media Coverage of the Royals</a>
Native American Influences on American Government	<a href="#">Representations of Native Americans in Films and Local History</a>

## **2. The Development of United States Government**

<b>Key Civics, Government, and History Concepts</b>	<b>Critical Media Literacy Activities</b>
Declaration of Independence	<a href="#">Promoting a Declaration of Independence on Social Media</a>
Articles of Confederation	<a href="#">Marketing and Regulating Self-Driving Cars</a>
The Constitutional Convention	<a href="#">Representations of and Racism Toward Black Americans in the Media</a>
Federalists and Anti-Federalists	<a href="#">Political Debates through Songs</a>
The Constitution and the Bill of Rights	<a href="#">Tweeting the Bill of Rights</a>

## **3. Institutions of United States Government**

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**Key Civics, Government, and Critical Media Literacy Activities**  
**History Concepts**

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Branches of the Government and the Separation of Powers	<a href="#">Hollywood Movies about the Branches of the Government</a>
Checks and Balances between the Branches	<a href="#">Writing an Impeachment Press Release</a>
The President, the Congress, and the Courts	<a href="#">How Members of Congress Use Social Media</a>
Elections	<a href="#">Understanding Public Opinion Polls</a>
Political Parties	<a href="#">Designing a Social Media Campaign for a Political Party</a>

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#### **4. The Rights and Responsibilities of Citizens**

Key Civics, Government, and History Concepts	Critical Media Literacy Activities
Citizenship and Becoming a U.S. Citizen	<a href="#">Immigration in the Media</a>
Rights and Responsibilities of Citizens and Non-Citizens	<a href="#">Portrayals of Immigration in TV and Films</a>
Civic, Political, and Private Life	<a href="#">Evaluating Information about COVID-19 Women Political Leaders in the Media</a>
Fundamental Principles and Values of American Democracy	<a href="#">Evaluating Online Messaging by Advocacy Organizations</a>
Voting and Citizen Participation	<a href="#">Designing Digital Games for Civic Engagement</a>
Accurate Information for Voters	<a href="#">Social Media in the Elections</a> <a href="#">Media Spin in the Coverage of Political Debates</a>
Political Leadership	<a href="#">Celebrities' Influence on Politics</a>
Connections between People and Their Elected Representatives	<a href="#">Engaging in Social Media Activism</a>
Careers in Public Service	<a href="#">Recruiting Workers for Public Sector Jobs</a> <a href="#">Images of Teachers and Teaching</a>
Individual Liberty and Social Equality	<a href="#">Representing Trans Identities</a>
Political Courage and Anti-Democratic Actions	<a href="#">Framing the Events of January 6, 2021</a>
Political Protest	<a href="#">Music as Protest Art</a>
Interest Groups, Political Action Committees, and Labor Unions	<a href="#">PACs, SuperPACs, and Unions in the Media</a>

## 5. The Constitution, Amendments, and Supreme Court Decisions

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<b>Key Civics, Government, and History Concepts</b>	<b>Critical Media Literacy Activities</b>
The Necessary and Proper Clause	
Amendments to the Constitution	<a href="#">Media For and Against Prohibition</a> <a href="#">The Equal Rights Amendment in the Media</a>
The Civil War, Federal Power, and Individual Rights	<a href="#">News Stories and Advertisements from the Civil War</a> <a href="#">Representations of Gender and Race on Currency</a>
Equal Rights and Protections for Race, Gender, and Disability	<a href="#">Tweeting For and Against the Equality Act</a>
Marbury v. Madison	<a href="#">Reading Supreme Court Dissents Aloud</a>
Landmark Supreme Court Decisions	<a href="#">Debating Cameras in the Courtroom</a>

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## 6. The Structure of State and Local Government



<b>Key Civics, Government, and History Concepts</b>	<b>Critical Media Literacy Activities</b>
Functions of State and National Government	<a href="#">Native American Mascots and Logos</a>
Distribution of Powers	<a href="#">Writing a Constitution for the Internet</a>
Enumerated and Implied Powers	<a href="#">Using the Media for Military Recruitment</a>
Protection of Individual Rights The 10th Amendment	<a href="#">Your Privacy on Social Media</a> <a href="#">Informing the Public about Pandemic Policies</a>
The Massachusetts State Constitution	<a href="#">Gendered Language in Media Coverage of Women in Politics</a>
<a href="#">Responsibilities of Federal, State, and Local Government</a>	<a href="#">Environmental Campaigns Using Social Media</a> <a href="#">Assessing Trusted Messengers during the COVID-19 Pandemic</a>
Leadership of Massachusetts State Government	<a href="#">Campaigning for Political Office Online</a>
Tax Supported Facilities and Services	<a href="#">Advertising the Lottery</a>
The Functions of Local Government	<a href="#">Local Government and Social Media</a>

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

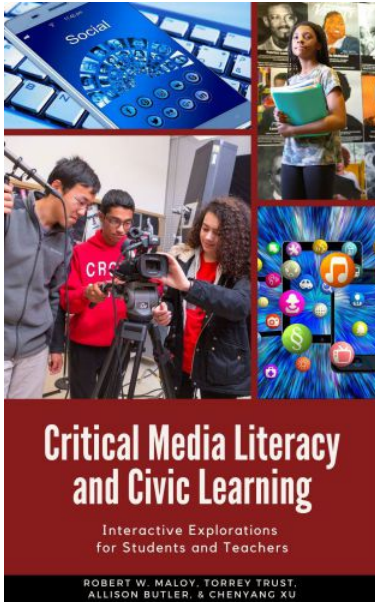
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**Key Civics, Government, and Critical Media Literacy Activities  
History Concepts**

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Freedom of the Press	<a href="#"><u>Press Freedom in the United States</u></a>
Competing Information	<a href="#"><u>Examining Objectivity in the News</u></a> <a href="#"><u>Being an Investigative Journalist</u></a>
Formats for News Writing	<a href="#"><u>Analyzing News Photographs and Newspaper Design</u></a> <a href="#"><u>Analyzing How Reporters Report Events</u></a>
Digital News and Social Media	<a href="#"><u>Understanding Recommendation Algorithms</u></a> <a href="#"><u>Detecting Fake News</u></a>
Evaluating Print and Online Media	<a href="#"><u>Doing Critical Visual Analysis</u></a>
Editorials, Editorial Cartoons, and Op-Ed Commentaries	<a href="#"><u>Memes and TicToks as Political Cartoons</u></a>

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<https://edtechbooks.org/mediaandciviclearning>