Critical Media Literacy and Civic Learning

Interactive Explorations for Students and Teachers

Robert W. Maloy, Torrey Trust, Allison Butler, & Chenyang Xu
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Media Literacy Activities for Key Civics Concepts

Senior Contributing Authors

Robert W. Maloy, Senior Lecturer, University of Massachusetts Amherst
Torrey Trust, Associate Professor of Learning Technology, University of Massachusetts Amherst
Chenyang Xu, Graduate Student, University of Massachusetts Amherst
Allison Butler, Senior Lecturer & Director of Undergraduate Advising, Director of Media Literacy Certificate Program, University of Massachusetts Amherst

Media Literacy Project Team

Ifat Gazia, Graduate Student, University of Massachusetts Amherst
J.D. Swerzenski, Graduate Student, University of Massachusetts Amherst
Yuxi (Cecilia) Zhou, Graduate Student, University of Massachusetts Amherst
Natalie Passov, Undergraduate Student, University of Massachusetts Amherst
Eleanor Sprick, Undergraduate Student, University of Massachusetts Amherst
Benjamin Mendillo, Undergraduate Student, University of Massachusetts Amherst
Kyle Balis, Undergraduate Student, University of Massachusetts Amherst
Kendra Sleeper, Undergraduate Student, University of Massachusetts Amherst

We gratefully acknowledge the support of the University of Massachusetts Amherst Interdisciplinary Faculty Research Award for this project.
Critical Media Literacy and Civic Learning

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**

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Defining Critical Media Literacy

By Allison Butler

‘Media literacy’ is defined in a variety of ways. Most commonly it is used as an ‘umbrella term’ that encompasses the analysis of mass-media and pop-culture, digital or technology platform analysis, and civic engagement and social justice action.

Sometimes the terms “media literacy” and “media education” are used interchangeably. The leading global scholar in children’s media cultures, David Buckingham, sees them as two separate actions that are related to each other. He defines:

- Media literacy as “the knowledge, skills and competencies that are required in order to use and interpret media” (2003, p.36).
- Media education as “the process of teaching and learning about the media” and media literacy as “the outcome - the knowledge and skills learners acquire” (2003, p.4).
Interpretation, or evaluation, is a key component of any media literacy work. Sonia Livingstone, of the London School of Economics, notes that “Evaluation is crucial to literacy: imagine the world wide web user who cannot distinguish dated, biased, or exploitative sources, unable to select intelligently when overwhelmed by an abundance of information and services” (2004, p. 5). In media literacy work, interpretation, or evaluation, is the process by which students and teachers dig through their already-existing knowledge in order to share information with each other and build new knowledge.

In the United States, media literacy is defined as “hands-on and experiential, democratic (the teacher is researcher and facilitator) and process-driven. Stressing as it does critical thinking, it is inquiry-based. Touching as it does on the welter of issues and experiences of daily life, it is interdisciplinary and cross-curricular” (Aufderheide, 1993, p. 2). The student of media literacy learns how to access, analyze, and produce a variety of media texts (Aufderheide, 1993).

**What is Critical Media Literacy?**

In this eBook, we have chosen to add the qualifier ‘critical’ to our use of term, media literacy. **Critical media literacy** encourages analysis of the dominant ideology and an interrogation of the means of production. It is rooted in social justice (Kellner & Share, 2007) and explores the “behind the scenes” of ownership, production, and distribution. Critical media literacy is an inquiry into power, especially the power of the media industries and how they determine the stories and messages to which we are the audience.

**There are (at least!) Three Ways to Apply the Term ‘Critical’**

**Critical analysis:** Approach a text from a distance and eliminate the emotional response, while exploring why there is an emotional response. Critical analysis is a clinical approach (asking questions). As part of the interpretation/evaluation process, it involves self-reflection: What do I know/believe and how do I know it/why do I believe it?

**Media literacy is critical:** Six corporations control 90% of all mainstream media in America (Lutz, 2012; Phillips, 2018). Teens report spending more than 7 hours a day on screen-based entertainment media outside of school time (Kaiser Family Foundation, 2010; Rideout & Robb, 2019). More than 90% of U.S. teenagers’ self-report smartphone ownership/access (Anderson & Jiang 2018). Based on quantity of time alone, young people deserve to have formal study of the media in order to better understand what they are spending so much time on.

**Critical media literacy:** It is a process of continuous critical inquiry, diving deeply into questions of ownership, production, and distribution: What is known about the text? How is this known? What is the context for understanding the text?

Sometimes in media literacy work, the question is more important than the answer. The question is an invitation for students and teachers to work together, to share knowledge, and to build collaborative understandings. Because so much of media analysis is about interpretation, there may not be one absolute answer. In many of the lessons, you will see discussion questions posed without corresponding answers or information; please use this as an opportunity to generate shared knowledge with students and, if further questions arise, to check for additional resources.
Concepts of Media Literacy

In 2003, and updated in 2007, David Buckingham codified the concepts of media literacy. The concepts are flexible and can be adapted to multiple media. The following are the basic outlines of each concept:

- **Production**: Media texts are consciously manufactured. Addressing production asks questions about how the media are constructed and for what purpose. It is important to explore the ‘invisible’ commercialization of digital media and global role of advertising, promotion, and sponsorship.

- **Language**: Visual and spoken languages communicate meaning; familiar codes and conventions make meaning clear. Digital literacy also looks at digital rhetoric, especially website design and links.

- **Representation**: Events are made into stories which invite audiences to see the world in one way and not in others. This concept explores authority, reliability, and bias and looks at whose stories are told and whose are ignored.

- **Audience**: Who is engaging with what texts and how are people targeted? This concept looks at how users access sites, how they are guided through sites, and the role of users’ data gathering (2003, pp.53-67; 2007, pp.155-156).

Apply the Concepts/Engaging Media Literacy: News and Information Evaluation

**Critical Media Literacy Guides**

A key component to critical media literacy is critical inquiry. Much of the work of critical media literacy is to ask questions of the media texts that we make use of and study. Critical media literacy focuses on both the content of the media (that is, what we watch, read, or listen to) and, possibly more important, on the power behind the construction of the content (that is, the ownership, production, and distribution of media texts). Critical media literacy pays close attention to the interrogation of power: What media are the object of our study and how did they come to be?

Our [Critical Media Literacy Guides](#) provides some foundational questions for a variety of media, including social media, websites, news & newspapers, movies, television, images, and advertisements. The questions focus both on the forward-facing content as well as the behind-the-scenes of each medium. The questions address both representation of the power of construction and of distribution. The questions are intentionally broad - they will best be used to begin the process of analysis. The questions are designed with popular culture texts in mind and can be used with historic and contemporary media, and for a variety of local, national, independent, and corporate media. The questions are not focused on a particular text or content, so they are adaptable and can be used as a guide for multiple media, over time.

**References**


### Additional Resources

**Popular press coverage on social media & fighting fake news:**

- [Fighting Fake News](#)
- [Teaching kids news literacy could be a matter of life and death](#)
- [How Does "Fake" News Become News?](#)
- [Facebook 'danger to public health' warns report](#)
- [Critical Media Project](#)

**Scholarly works that introduce and apply media literacy:**


**Scholarly work with news analysis component:**


**Young adult work on how to make sense of fake news:**

1. Foundations of the United States Political System

How do you define democracy?

Is the United States a democratic country?

How have the events of 2020 and 2021 impacted your thinking and the thinking of students in schools about our country's political system?

Take a few moments to explore the winning videos from the 2021 "Democracy Challenge" Student Video Contest (sponsored by the League of Women Voters of Massachusetts Citizen Education Fund):

Watch on YouTube https://edtechbooks.org/-ajyf
The students’ videos focus on the United States today. Viewing the development of our government and our democracy historically, it was the political systems of ancient Greece and Rome, revolutionary thinking about individual rights by Enlightenment philosophers, the struggles for power between nobles and kings in medieval England that led to the Magna Carta and the English Bill of Rights, and governmental practices of First American tribes in North America that contributed to the governmental philosophies and practices that emerged from the American Revolution.

The media literacy activities in this section explore modern-day social media policies and democratic principles, peoples’ right to Internet access and control, women as revolutionary technology innovators, media coverage of England’s royal family, and how Native Americans are portrayed in films and television.

You can read more about the definition of democracy and its place as a system of government in different countries in the world in the Introduction to this topic in our companion eBook, Building Democracy for All.

Media Literacy Activities Choice Board
Critical Media Literacy and Civic Learning

Media Literacy Activities

Foundations of the U.S. Political System: Media Literacy Activities Choice Board (view)
[make your own copy of this choice board to remix/share/use]
The foundational principles of Athenian democracy included **equality**, **harmony**, **debate**, and **general education**. In the following activities, you will apply these principles to evaluating how democratic are the community standards, online rules, and user policies found on today's **social media platforms**.

**Activity 1: Evaluate Social Media Community Guidelines**

1. Review the [seven features of Athenian democracy](https://edtechbooks.org/-eUMw) to familiarize yourself with the key concepts.
2. Choose one of the following social media platforms: YouTube, Facebook, TikTok, or Twitter.
3. Open up the community standards for your chosen platform.
   1. **YouTube**: [Community Guidelines](https://edtechbooks.org/-eUMw)
   2. **Facebook**: [Community Standards](https://edtechbooks.org/-eUMw)
   3. **TikTok**: [Community Guidelines](https://edtechbooks.org/-eUMw)
   4. **Twitter**: [Rules & Policies](https://edtechbooks.org/-eUMw)

   * **Pro-tip**: These guidelines tend to be long, so use the “find” function (CTRL + F on PC, CMD + F on Mac) to find specific words or phrases.*

Watch on YouTube [https://edtechbooks.org/-eUMw](https://edtechbooks.org/-eUMw)
4. In a video, podcast, or brief paper, answer the following questions related to how the community standards do or do not uphold the foundational features of democracy:
   1. Does the platform allow all users to post and comment equally, or does it ban certain types of content or actions from the platform? Do you agree with these bans?
   2. How does the platform encourage active dialogue and debate? Does this debate build harmony among users? (harmony means “accepting differences among people”)
   3. Does the platform support citizen wisdom and general education?
   4. Are the guidelines easy to read or understand? If not, why do you think the standards are written in the way that they are?
   5. From your own experience on the platform, how effective do you think these guidelines are in maintaining democratic principles and dialogue on the site?
5. Bonus: Annotate the community standards using Hypothes.is to display your findings/thoughts.

Activity 2: Assessing, Revising, and Writing School Social Media Policies

- Does your school or district have a social media policy?
  - **YES:** Evaluate whether it aligns with the seven features of Athenian democracy. Then, either: 1) write a proposal to administrators to suggest changes to the policy to make it more democratic; or 2) write a social media policy for your class.
  - **NO:** Evaluate the following social media policies to determine whether they align with the seven features of Athenian democracy: Jackson Public Schools, Pottsville Area School District, Guilford County Schools, and Patricia Smeyers' Elementary School Social Media Policy. Then, write a social media policy for your class, school, or district that upholds the foundational features of democracy.

Activity 3: Writing Social Media Posts That Align with Democratic Values

- Compose a social media post about an issue or topic that matters to you.
- Explain how the language you use in your post reflects a commitment to the democratic values of active debate that includes respect for multiple points of view.

Additional Resources

- [From the Polis to Facebook: Social Media and the Development of a New Greek Public Sphere](#) (Journal Article)
- [Teaching Democracy: A Media Literacy Approach](#) (Journal Article)
- [The Internet as a Human Right](#) (Brookings Institute)

Connecting to the eBook

*Building Democracy for All: Athenian Democracy and Democratic Government in the 21st Century - During the Pandemic*
Connecting to the Standards

- **Massachusetts Civics & Government Standards**
  - Explain why the Founders of the United States considered the government of ancient Athens to be the beginning of democracy and explain how the democratic concepts developed in ancient Greece influenced modern democracy (Massachusetts Curriculum Framework for History and Social Studies) [8.T1.1]
  - Explain the democratic political concepts developed in ancient Greece: a) the "polis" or city state; b) civic participation and voting rights, c) legislative bodies, d) constitution writing, d) rule of law (Massachusetts Curriculum Framework for History and Social Studies) [7.T4.3]

- **ISTE Standards**
  - Creative Communicator
    - 6b. Students create original works or responsibly repurpose or remix digital resources into new creations.
    - 6d. Students publish or present content that customizes the message and medium for their intended audiences.

- **DLCS Standards**
  - Safety and Security (CAS.a)
  - Interpersonal and Societal Impact (CAS.c)
  - Collaboration and Communication (DTC.b)
  - Research (DTC.c)

- **English Language Arts > History/Social Studies Common Core Standards**
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.2
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.4
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.2
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.4
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.5
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.2
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.4

- **English/Language Arts Common Core Standards**
The Internet as a Public Utility

In ancient Rome, the government provided public services such as roads, schools, waste management, and plumbing that its citizens needed and demanded. National, state, and local governments in the United States do the same today - providing a range of services from highways, electricity, city water, mail delivery, and more (50 Ways Government Works for Us).

Many Americans are now debating whether the Internet, too, should be provided by the government as a public utility rather than a private service.

A public utility is a “company that supplies ‘utilities’ - such as natural gas, electricity, and telephone services - to consumers. It may be a private sector or state-owned business. In most cases, it is the only supplier” (“What is a Public Utility? Definition and Meaning,” Market Business News, para. 4). The government's role is to ensure equitable access, fair prices, and efficient services for all.

Yet, none of these conditions are in place for many Americans when it comes to the Internet. 2019 data from Microsoft indicates that some 162 million Americans lack access to Internet broadband services, especially in rural regions and Native American tribal areas. Additionally, millions of people who have access do not subscribe to broadband services often because it is too expensive given their individual and family budgets.
Below are two articles arguing for and against making the Internet a public utility:

- **Pro:** [It’s Time For An Internet-For-All Public Utility](#)
- **Con:** [Why Treating the Internet as a Public Utility is Bad for Consumers](#)

Do you favor having national, state, or local government provide Internet? Or, private companies regulated by government agencies provide Internet? Or, private companies who engage in direct competition provide Internet?

How should Internet services be provided so that more people have greater access at fair prices?

**Activity: Evaluate Whether the Government of the Roman Republic Would Have Made the Internet a Public Utility**

- If the Internet had been invented at the time of the Roman Republic, do you think the government of the Roman Republic would have made the Internet a public utility? Why or why not?
- Express your ideas by writing an opinion article and designing an editorial cartoon or TikTok dance. Support your ideas with historical evidence and reasoning.

**Additional Resources**

- [Topic 6.7: Responsibilities of Federal, State and Local Government](#)
- [Topic 6.9: Tax Supported Facilities and Services](#)
- [Push for Internet to Be a Public Utility](#) - Fox 13 News Utah
- [Multnomah County, other cities eyeing internet as public utility](#) - KPTV FOX 12 Oregon
- [Is Internet Access a Public Utility, Like Water or Gas?](#) - NBC News

**Connecting to the eBook**

[Building Democracy for All: Roman Government and Roman Engineering and Public Works Projects](#)
Connecting to the Standards

- **Massachusetts Civics & Government Standards**
  - Describe the government of the Roman Republic and the aspects of republican principles that are evident in modern governments (Massachusetts Curriculum Framework for History and Social Studies) [8.T1.2]

- **ISTE Standards**
  - Knowledge Constructor
    - 3d: Students build knowledge by actively exploring real-world issues and problems developing ideas and theories and pursuing answers and solutions.
  - Creative Communicator
    - 6d: Publish or present content that customizes the message and medium for the intended audiences.

- **DLCS Standards**
  - Interpersonal and Societal Impact (CAS.c)
  - Research (DTC.c)

- **English Language Arts > History/Social Studies Common Core Standards**
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.6
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.7
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.4
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.6
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.4
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.8

- **English/Language Arts Common Core Standards**
Women, whose work in philosophy, science, and politics has been neglected or marginalized in history textbooks and curriculum framework, made change-producing discoveries and advances during the Enlightenment and in every era since. However, still in today’s digital age, the most well-known figures are men: Steve Jobs, Elon Musk, and Mark Zuckerberg.

Rarely do elementary, middle, or high school students learn about women like Margaret Hamilton who wrote the software for the 1969 Apollo Landing and invented the term “software engineer,” Annie Easley, a Black rocket scientist whose work set the stage for space shuttle launches, Radia Perlman, the “mother of the Internet” who invented an algorithm for organizing and moving data, and many more women technology trailblazers.

Indeed, there is a lack of diversity in STEM fields in general. Just 3% of STEM workers are Native American, Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander, or people who identify with 2 or more racial groups. Women earn more than half the bachelor's degree in health and life sciences, but far fewer in engineering and computer science (Pew Research Center, April 14, 2021).
Critical Media Literacy and Civic Learning

fields did you learn about in school?

- Emmy Noether, Mathematician and Physicist
- Ada Lovelace, Mathematician and First Computer Programmer
- Mary Anning, Fossil Finder and Paleontologist
- Maria Mitchell, Astronomer and Educator
- Elizabeth and Emily Blackwell, First American Women in Medicine
- Alice Guy-Blache, Pioneering Woman Filmmaker
- Rosalind Franklin, Molecular Biologist
- Rachel Carson, Environmentalist and author of the book *Silent Spring*
- Margaret E. Knight, Inventor

If the answer is 1 or less, you are not alone.

In the following activities, you will explore how influential women in STEM fields are, and have been, portrayed in the media and think about how to encourage more girls to pursue careers in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM).

**Activity 1: Locate Women in STEM in the Media**

- Search online and in print media for stories about women STEM innovators, then answer the following questions in a video, podcast, or paper:
  - How easy or difficult is it to find examples of women's accomplishments in STEM fields?
  - How are women STEM innovators portrayed in the media? How does this compare to the way male STEM innovators are portrayed in the media?
  - Why do you think many young girls choose not to pursue careers in science, technology, engineering, or math?
  - What life would be like today without the *13 Famous Women Who Changed Tech History Forever*?
Activity 2: Increase the Participation of Girls in STEM

- Write a proposal for how your school can increase opportunities for success for girls in STEM.
  - Include changes in curriculum and courses that are needed to support girls in STEM.
  - Include changes in school culture and climate that are needed to support girls in STEM.
- Create a social media campaign to spread awareness about your proposal.
  - The social media campaign should include at least 2 videos (e.g., YouTube, Snapchat, TikTok), 5 example posts, and 3 images (e.g., memes, graphics, infographics) designed by you.
  - Here is a social media campaign example created by Justin Lo, Daniel Mulno, and David Warde and here is a Twitter campaign example by Sara Shea.
  - Consider using the Made to Stick principles or TED Talk presentation techniques to increase the appeal of your social media campaign.

Activity 3: Analyze the Portrayals of Women in Science and Politics, Then and Now

- Conduct Internet research to examine how women thinkers from the Enlightenment era are currently presented on websites and in various media (e.g., YouTube videos, TikToks).
  - How easy or difficult is it to find examples of women Enlightenment thinkers? What does this say about how women Enlightenment thinkers were perceived at the time?
- Next, explore how influential women in science and politics are presented in the media and
online today. What are the similarities and differences between the portrayals of women Enlightenment thinkers and women in science and politics today?

- To wrap up, **create a TikTok dance** about a women Enlightenment thinker and their impact on present day society.

**Additional Resources**

- [When Women Stopped Coding](#)
- [Code Acts in Education](#) - Prof. Ben Williams’ blog about the influence of software on education
- [The 10 Most Influential Women in Tech Right Now](#)
- [15 unsung women in tech you should know about](#)
- [What Early French Female Press Can Tell Us About a Key Period for Women in Public Life](#)
- [6 Facts of America’s STEM Workforce and Those Training for It](#), Pew Research Center (April 14, 2021)

**Connecting to the eBook**

[BUILDING DEMOCRACY FOR ALL: WHO WERE HISTORY’S IMPORTANT WOMEN CHANGE-MAKERS IN MATH, SCIENCE, AND POLITICS?](#)
Connecting to the Standards

- **Massachusetts Civics & Government Standards**
  - Explain the influence of Enlightenment thinkers on the American Revolution and the framework of American government (Massachusetts Curriculum Framework for History and Social Studies) [8.T1.3]

- **ISTE Standards**
  - Knowledge Constructor
    - 3a: Students plan and employ effective research strategies to locate information and other resources for their intellectual or creative pursuits.
    - 3b: Students evaluate the accuracy, perspective, credibility and relevance of information, media, data, or other resources.
    - 3d: Students build knowledge by actively exploring real-world issues and problems, developing ideas and theories and pursuing answers and solutions.
  - Creative Communicator
    - 6b: Students create original works or responsibly repurpose or remix digital resources into new creations.
    - 6d: Students publish or present content that customizes the message and medium for the intended audiences.

- **DLCS Standards**
  - Interpersonal and Societal Impact (CAS.c)
  - Digital Tools (DTC.a)
  - Collaboration and Communication (DTC.b)
  - Research (DTC.c)

- **English Language Arts > History/Social Studies Common Core Standards**
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.6
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.7
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.6
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.9
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.6
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.7
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.8

- **English/Language Arts Common Core Standards**
Media Coverage of Kings, Queens, and Royal Families

**Monarchy** (mono means one) is a system of government where a single leader -- a king or queen -- inherits political control by birth and family membership and rules for life. A **royal family** refers to the immediate family members surrounding a ruling monarch.

There have been kings and queens in England for more than 1,200 years. The current royal family traces its lineage back to William the Conqueror.

Elizabeth II, the longest reigning British monarch, is Queen of the 16 countries of the Commonwealth realm with a population of 150 million people. She is also head of the 54 states in the Commonwealth of Nations that comprise 20% of the world's land and almost one-third of the world's population. Not surprisingly, whatever the British royal family does generates an enormous response in print and online media.
In the following activities, you will explore how the media covers and portrays influential individuals in the British and U.S. government, specifically the British royal family and United States Presidents.

**Activity 1: Analyze Media Coverage of Harry and Meghan's Interview with Oprah**

In early 2021, Oprah Winfrey’s much-anticipated interview with (Prince) Harry and Meghan Markle aired on television in Great Britain and the United States, creating a huge media event. Online and print media devoted extensive coverage to stories of palace intrigue and family conflict, including revelations about racism within the royal family. The interview followed Harry's and Meghan's break with the royal family in which they voluntarily gave up their royal duties and their His/Her Highness titles.

- Examine the Oprah interview footage as well as the coverage of the interview in online and print news sources.
  - **Curate a [Wakelet, Padlet, or Google Slides collection](https://edtechbooks.org/-gssk)** of news articles and videos from the U.S. (e.g., NPR, CNN, Oprah Magazine, People Magazine, Rolling Stone Magazine) and the U.K. (e.g., BBC, The Guardian, The Times, The Daily Telegraph).
  - What differences do you see in the coverage of the Harry and Meghan interview?
    - Which images and/or interview clips did each news source use? Why do you think these visuals were selected? How do visuals differ between U.S. and U.K. media outlets?
    - Who is the author of the news article or video? What bias might they have in presenting information about U.K. royalty?
    - What type of language is used in the news article or video? How is language used...
Activity 2: Analyze Movie Trailers About British Kings and Queens and American Presidents

- Analyze movie trailers to compare and contrast how British Kings and Queens and American Presidents are portrayed in movies.
  - Potential films:
    - British Kings and Queens: [13 of the best movies about British royalty](#)
    - American Presidents: [The 20 Best Movies About American Presidents](#)
  - Consider:
    - What differences and similarities do you see in how the British royalty and U.S. leaders are portrayed in movies?
    - What perspectives do films take toward these different forms of government leadership?
    - Is it evident that British ideas and practices of government influenced U.S. government? Why or why not?
  - Design a [Hollywood-style movie trailer](#) that showcases how British ideas about and practices of government influenced the American colonists and the political institutions that developed in colonial America.

Activity 3: Investigate Media Coverage of the Independence of Barbados

The Queen of England's role in the country of Barbados changed dramatically on November 29, 2021 when she was removed as head of state and replaced by Sandra Mason, the nation's first democratically elected woman president -- 400 hundred years after English ships first arrived there and established [one of the most oppressive and brutal](#) of England's Caribbean slave colonies.

As Barbados shifted from a constitutional monarchy to a democratic republic, how did the media cover this historic event?

- Conduct Internet research to find at least 7 sources of news coverage about Barbados' independence, including news articles and videos.
- Then, use the [Teacher and Student Guide to Analyzing News & Newspapers](#) to critically examine how different news outlets and mediums portrayed Barbados' shifted from a constitutional monarchy to a democratic republic.
  - Consider: Did the media focus on the role of the Queen and the monarchy, the change in...
the nation's government, or the hard history of slavery in that country, or something else?

- Present your findings in a news report video or TikTok.

**Additional Resources**

- [Prince Harry and Meghan Allege Royal Mistreatment in Oprah Interview](https://allsides.com) - AllSides
- [Balanced News Covering Prince Harry on AllSides](https://allsides.com)
- [Balanced News Covering Meghan Markle on AllSides](https://allsides.com)
- [Balanced News Covering Royal Family on AllSides](https://allsides.com)
- [Movies about British monarchy](https://imdb.com) - IMDB

**Connecting to the eBook**

[Building Democracy for All: The Mayflower Compact, Colonial Governments, Who Voted in Early America, and a Rebellion Against a King](https://example.com)
Connecting to the Standards

- **Massachusetts Civics & Government Standards**
  - Explain how British ideas and practices about government influenced American colonists and the political institutions that developed in colonial America (Massachusetts Curriculum Framework for History and Social Studies) [8.T1.4]

- **ISTE Standards**
  - Knowledge Constructor
    - 3b: Students evaluate the accuracy, perspective, credibility and relevance of information, media, data, or other resources.
    - 3c: Students curate information from digital resources using a variety of tools and methods to create collections of artifacts that demonstrate meaningful connections or conclusions.
  - Creative Communicator
    - 6b: Students create original works or responsibly repurpose or remix digital resources into new creations.
    - 6d: Students publish or present content that customizes the message and medium for the intended audiences.

- **DLCS Standards**
  - Ethics and Laws (CAS.b)
  - Interpersonal and Societal Impact (CAS.c)
  - Digital Tools (DTC.a)
  - Collaboration and Communication (DTC.b)
  - Research (DTC.c)

- **English Language Arts > History/Social Studies Common Core Standards**
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.1
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.2
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.6
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.7
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.8
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.1
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.2
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.6
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.8
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.9
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.1
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.2
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.6
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.8
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.9

- **English/Language Arts Common Core Standards**
Representations of Native Americans in Film, Local History Publications, and School Mascots

More than 8 million American Indian and Alaska Native people live in the United States today, and those numbers are projected to rise to 10 million by 2060 (Indian Country Demographics, National Congress of American Indians, June 2020).

In 2021, October 11 was declared Indigenous Peoples' Day by President Joe Biden and November was proclaimed National Native American Heritage Month.
Most students, however, learn little about Native people, their lives, cultures, and achievements in schools. The indigenous education organization IllumiNative reports that most (87%) state level history standards do not address Native history past 1900. Do you know the Native American tribes in your state? Or the roles of Native American Code Breakers in World War II? Or the story of Elizabeth Peratrovich, a member of the Tlingit Nation in Alaska who efforts led to the passage of the nation’s first anti-discrimination law in 1945?

Much of what students do learn about Native history comes from the media, including movies and television, local history publications, and imagery associated with local and national sports teams.

Hollywood movies and network television shows have long portrayed First American indigenous people in grossly stereotypical terms. Men are depicted as warriors and medicine men. Women are portrayed as either objects of desire or inconsequential members of a tribe. Native peoples are often shown as living in the wilderness or on reservations even though 60% of today's American Indian and Alaska Native population live in cities (5 Common Indigenous Stereotypes in Film and Television, ThoughtCo., January 2021).

Around the country, there are increasing efforts by local tourism and community groups to tell the stories of those left out or marginalized in history through tours, exhibits, and celebrations of important individuals and significant events in Native American, Black, women, and LGBTQ history. For example, "Navajo Tours USA" present Native history in New Mexico, while “Nez Perce Tourism” explores Native sites in the Pacific Northwest. There is an "Unfiltered Truth Collection" in Louisville, Kentucky, a "Truth and Reconciliation" Tour in Montgomery, Alabama, a Black Heritage Trail in Boston, and the Missouri Historical Society operates "Renegade STL" that presents Black, women’s and LGBTQ history tours in St. Louis ("Historical Tours Reach Deeper to Include People Long Left Out," Sunday Travel, Boston Sunday Globe, November 7, 2021, pp. 11,13).

The following activities ask you to critically consider how Native peoples have been represented in films, local historical publications and tours, and school names and mascots and how those representations have shaped people's attitudes.
Activity 1: Analyze how Native Americans are Portrayed in Movies

- Compare the representation of Native Americans in ‘Smoke Signal’ by Chris Eyre to ‘Alone Yet Not Alone’ by Ray Bengston and George Escobar.
- Then, consider:
  - What characters are the focus of each film?
  - What is the attitude towards Native Americans?
  - What stereotypes are upheld in each film? Stereotypes can be used to exoticize groups - is this idea apparent in the films?
  - Whose point of view is represented?
  - Who directed these movies and who acted in them?
- **Design a video, podcast, or website** to present your findings and inform others about how Native Americans are portrayed in movies.

Activity 2: Design a Film or TV show About Native Americans' Influence on the U.S. Government

- Explore the following resources:
  - The Great Law of Peace, YouTube video
  - The Iroquois Confederacy, YouTube video
  - Iroquois Confederacy Timeline: 1600s to 1973
  - The Six Nations Confederacy during the American Revolution, Fort Stanwix National
Monument

- **Viral Meme Says Constitution Owes Its Nation of Democracy to the Iroquois**, *Politifact* (December 2, 2014)
- **How the Iroquois Great Law of Peace Shaped U.S. Democracy**, Native Voices, PBS.
- **Iroquois Constitution: A Forerunner to Colonists’ Democratic Principles**

- Then, write a script for a movie or television show that portrays Native Americans accurately and showcases how Native American government shaped the U.S. government.
  - Consider:
    - What is the name and setting of the movie or show?
    - Who are the main characters and what are their lives like?
    - What is the primary issue or conflict in your story?

### Activity 3: Research & Redesign the First American History of the Place Where You Live Today

- Our college, the University of Massachusetts Amherst, is built on the lands and waters of the Kwintewkw Valley, home to the Nonotuck peoples and all their relations. **Who were the First Americans who lived where you now live?**
- Analyze how local websites (e.g., school website, town/city council website) and history materials (e.g., guidebooks and tourist promotion materials; school system curriculum) present First Americans who were the original owners of the land on which you live today.
  - What imagery, if any, do they use to portray First Americans? Are the images positive or negative? What is emphasized in the images? What is left out?
  - What language is used to describe First Americans? Is the language positive or negative? What information is presented? What information is left out?
- Then, complete one of the following tasks:
  - **Design or redesign a historical webpage** for your school/town to present an accurate representation of the First Americans who made your community their homelands.
  - **Design an Augmented Reality Exhibit** (see “Walk of Notables” and Kinfolk AR App) or **Interactive Map Tour** featuring the hidden histories and untold stories of Native Americans in your community.
    - Augmented Reality Tool: [Reality Composer](#)
    - Interactive Map Tool: [Google My Maps](#)

### Activity 4: Propose a Culturally and Historically Fair School Mascot

- **Question**: How can Native American peoples and cultures be fairly represented in school mascots or names?
- **Action**: Propose a local school district or state government action or policy to create an inclusive mascot and imagery for a school. Would you support any of the following steps:
  - Allow communities to decide to keep or eliminate school mascots by voting.
  - Support state-wide legislation to eliminate Native American mascots in all public school.
  - Let teachers and students make decisions about mascots voluntarily.
  - Have school administrators and school committees make decisions about mascot policies.
  - Require Native American studies as part of the history/social studies curriculum in
elementary, middle and high schools

- **Resources**
  - National School Mascots Tracking Database, National Congress of American Indians (2021)
  - 2,128 Native American Mascots People Aren't Talking About from FiveThirtyEight, September 2014.
  - Timeline - A Century of Racist Sports Team Names, Mother Jones
  - UnLearning Sports Mascots from FiveColleges in Massachusetts.
  - Native Americans Blast Redskins Gambit to Defuse Name Controversy with Financial Contributions, March 24, 2014.

**Additional Resources**

- Stereotypes of Contemporary Native American Indian Characters in Recent Popular Media (UMass ScholarWorks)
- Why I Won't Wear War Paint and Feathers in a Movie Again - Time

**Connecting to the eBook**

Building Democracy for All: The Iroquois Confederacy and the Great Law of Peace
Connecting to the Standards

- **Massachusetts Civics & Government Standards**
  - Analyze the evidence for arguments that the principles of the system of government of the United States were influenced by the governments of Native Peoples (Massachusetts Curriculum Framework for History and Social Studies) [8.T1.5]

- **AP U.S. History**
  - Key Concept 1.1
  - Key Concept 3.2

- **ISTE Standards**
  - Digital Citizen
    - 2c: Students demonstrate an understanding of and respect for the rights and obligations of using and sharing intellectual property.
  - Knowledge Constructor
    - 3a: Students plan and employ effective research strategies to locate information and other resources for their intellectual or creative pursuits.
    - 3b: Students evaluate the accuracy, perspective, credibility and relevance of information, media, data, or other resources.
    - 3d: Students build knowledge by actively exploring real-world issues and problems, developing ideas and theories and pursuing answers and solutions.
  - Creative Communicator
    - 6a: Students choose the appropriate platforms and tools for meeting the desired objectives of their creation or communication.
    - 6b: Students create original works or responsibly repurpose or remix digital resources into new creations.
    - 6d: Students publish or present content that customizes the message and medium for the intended audiences.

- **DLCS Standards**
  - Ethics and Laws (CAS.b)
  - Interpersonal and Societal Impact (CAS.c)
  - Digital Tools (DTC.a)
  - Collaboration and Communication (DTC.b)
  - Research (DTC.c)

- **English Language Arts > History/Social Studies Common Core Standards**
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.6
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.7
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.8
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.6
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.9
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.6
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.7
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.8

- **English/Language Arts Common Core Standards**
2. The Development of United States Government

This section focuses on the historical development of United States Government - an essential area of investigation and exploration in government, civics, and history classes in elementary, middle, and high schools.

The critical media literacy activities in this section connect to the seminal documents and events of the American Revolutionary Era, including the Declaration of Independence, the Articles of Confederation, the Constitutional Convention, the debates between Federalists and Anti-Federalists, the Constitution and the Bill of Rights.

Each of the media literacy activities connects the past to issues people face today - the meaning of independence in an era of social media; the role of government in regulating self-driving automobile technology; the persistence of racism toward Black Americans from the Constitutional Convention to today; the nature of political debates and discourse in American politics; and the current relevance of the Bill of Rights to our lives as members of a democracy.

Media Literacy Activities Choice Board
Media Literacy Activities
Declarations of Independence on Social Media

Throughout U.S. history, oppressed and disenfranchised groups (women, African Americans, farmers, workers, indigenous peoples, and more) have set forth their declarations of independence.

Modelled after the original Declaration of Independence written by Thomas Jefferson in 1776, each document presents a vision for achieving full rights, freedoms, and liberties as members of American democracy.

Imagine that these groups had access to modern social media platforms. How would they have utilized social media to express their ideas and gain support for their Declarations of Independence?

Activity 1: Design a Social Media Campaign for a Declaration of Independence

- Choose either the original Declaration of Independence or one of the those written by other groups.
• Identify the grievances and discriminations faced by the writers of the declaration as well as their goals and hopes for a fairer, more just society.

• **Design a social media campaign** to build support for the document. The social media campaign should include at least 2 videos (e.g., YouTube, Snapchat, TikTok), 5 example posts, and 3 images (e.g., memes, graphics, infographics) designed by you.
  ◦ As you design your campaign, consider the following:
    ▪ What visuals and language will you use to highlight key ideas from the declaration?
    ▪ Which social media platforms will you use?
    ▪ What will you write in your posts to capture attention and inspire action?
    ▪ How will you use media (e.g., images, videos, audio) to make a convincing argument?

• *Here is a [social media campaign example](#) created by Justin Lo, Daniel Mulno, and David Warde and here is a [Twitter campaign example](#) by Sara Shea.

**Activity 2: Design a Modern-Day Declaration of Independence**

• **Create a modern-day Declaration of Independence** (on TikTok or Snapchat, rather than as a document) for any group you think needs one to achieve freedom and justice in today’s society.

**Additional Resources**

• [The Declaration of Independence in Modern English](#)
• [Declaration of Digital Independence](#)
• [A Call to Arms: The Social Media Declaration of Independence](#)
• [The Declaration of Independence was Published without Social Media](#)

**Connecting to the eBook**

[Building Democracy for All: What Do Other Declarations of Independence Declare?](#)
Connecting to the Standards

- **Massachusetts Civics & Government Standards**
  - Apply knowledge of the history of the Revolutionary period to determine the experiences and events that led the colonists to declare independence and explain key ideas about equality, representative government, limited government, rule of law, natural rights, common good, and the purpose of government as contained in the Declaration of Independence (Massachusetts Curriculum Framework for History and Social Studies) [8.T2.1]

- **AP U.S. History**
  - Key Concept 3.1
  - Key Concept 3.2

- **ISTE Standards**
  - Digital Citizen
    - 2c: Students demonstrate an understanding of and respect for the rights and obligations of using and sharing intellectual property.
  - Knowledge Constructor
    - 3d: Students build knowledge by actively exploring real-world issues and problems, developing ideas and theories and pursuing answers and solutions.
  - Creative Communicator
    - 6a: Students choose the appropriate platforms and tools for meeting the desired objectives of their creation or communication.
    - 6b: Students create original works or responsibly repurpose or remix digital resources into new creations.
    - 6d: Students publish or present content that customizes the message and medium for the intended audiences.

- **DLCS Standards**
  - Digital Tools (DTC.a)
  - Collaboration and Communication (DTC.b)
  - Research (DTC.c)

- **English Language Arts > History/Social Studies Common Core Standards**
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.2
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.4
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.6
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.7
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.2
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.4
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.5
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.8
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.4
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.5
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.8
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.9

- **English/Language Arts Common Core Standards**
Media Marketing and Government Regulating of Self-Driving Cars and Electric Vehicles

Despite impressive advances, the technology does not exist yet to create fully self-driving cars that are capable of responding to all possible driving and weather conditions.

Meanwhile, in television and online advertisements, automobile manufacturers are stressing the ease and convenience of letting the car do the driving for you. Using smart technology to implement what Volvo automobile ads call “standard driver assistance features,” cars engage in parallel parking, adapt cruise control to match speed to posted speed limits, give blind spot warnings, engage in emergency braking, and take over steering functions in some situations.

Many new cars already have built-in entertainment centers with Internet-connected Infotainment screens available for drivers and passengers (although in late 2021, Tesla announced it was installing a software update to prevent drivers from playing video games while the vehicle is in motion (Tesla to halt games on infotainment screens, The Boston Globe, December 24, p. B9)).

Even more connectivity is on the way, such as cars communicating directly with stop signs to determine the right of way; cars receiving highway database information to navigate away from traffic jams; cars which wirelessly exchange information with other cars to improve traffic flow; cars
with biosensors to adjust in-the-vehicle environment to reduce stress for drivers and passengers (Fast Forward: The Future of Automobile Technology Is Now, Your AAA Magazine, Winter, 2021). There are plans to make it possible for cars to stop operating if the vehicle detects a driver has had too much alcohol to drink. What health and safety features would you mandate in self-driving cars and electric vehicles?

Many of these self-driving technologies have been shown to improve traffic safety and save lives in accidents. Left unsaid in the ads, however, is that many drivers can and do disable these features, negating any positive impacts (see Uber disabled Volvo’s safety system before self-driving accident), and that split-second, sometimes life-or-death decisions, usually made by humans are being handed over to artificial intelligence (AI) algorithms.

Watch on YouTube https://edtechbooks.org/-LHe

The following activities are drawn from debates over the role and powers of the federal government versus state government that have existed since the Articles of Confederation and the writing of the U.S. Constitution. You will investigate how auto manufacturers are marketing self-driving cars and electric vehicles and what local, state, and national governments should be doing to create safer driving for everyone.

**Activity: Evaluate Who Should Regulate Self-Driving Cars**

1. Research the recommendations and rules regarding self-driving cars (if any) from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, the National Traffic Safety Board, and your local town/city and state governments.
2. Watch ads for new cars on television and/or online and focus on how self-driving and autonomous operation features are promoted in words and visuals. Use the questions on the
Critical Media Literacy and Civic Learning

3. Then, consider the following question:
   ○ Do you think the state government (like under the Articles of Confederation), the federal
government (under the Constitution’s federal system), or private companies (as in a
competitive marketplace) should take responsibility for regulating self-driving
technology?

4. **Design a TV or social media advertisement**, using the techniques you uncovered in step 2,
that persuades viewers to understand your point of view regarding who should regulate self-
driving technology.

### Activity: Design an Electric Vehicle Charging Plan for Your Community

While Electric Vehicles (EVs) represented only 2% of new car purchases in 2021, the trend is racing
rapidly forward. The Biden Administration has a goal of making EVs half of all new vehicle sales by
2030. It is estimated that the country will need 1.25 million public charging outlets by then (there are
currently about 150,000 gas stations, although with multiple pumps (Electric Vehicle Charging

Currently charging stations are either operated privately by homeowners or available to car owners
in parking lots and other spaces where users pay a fee to use them. Such stations are either owned
by the business that has the space where the charger is located or that business pays another
organization that produces, operates and maintains the charger.

**Design a plan** to make more charging stations available to drivers in your community.

- How will your plan work economically? Do users pay for the charging service? How will you
  avoid overcharging or excessive prices? Will charging station operators make a profit in
  providing this service?
- What role should local, state, or federal government play in the process? How much regulation
  should government have in the market?

### Additional resources:

- [Autonomous Vehicles | Self-Driving Vehicles Enacted Legislation](#) - National Conference of
  State Legislatures
- [Regulating Autonomous Vehicles](#) - National Conference of State Legislatures
- [The state of self-driving car laws across the U.S.](#)
- [The Evolution of In-Car Voice Control](#)

### Connecting to the eBook

[Building Democracy for All: How Much Power Should the Federal Government Have in the 21st
Century? The Case of Self-Driving Cars and Trucks](#)
Connecting to the Standards

- **Massachusetts Civics & Government Standards**
  - Analyze the weaknesses of the national government under the Articles of Confederation and describe the crucial events (e.g. Shays' Rebellion) leading to the Constitutional Convention (Massachusetts Curriculum Framework for History and Social Studies) [8.T2.2]

- **ISTE Standards**
  - Digital Citizen
    - 2c: Students demonstrate an understanding of and respect for the rights and obligations of using and sharing intellectual property.
  - Knowledge Constructor
    - 3a: Students plan and employ effective research strategies to locate information and other resources for their intellectual or creative pursuits.
    - 3b: Students evaluate the accuracy, perspective, credibility and relevance of information, media, data, or other resources.
    - 3d: Students build knowledge by actively exploring real-world issues and problems, developing ideas and theories and pursuing answers and solutions.
  - Creative Communicator
    - 6a: Students choose the appropriate platforms and tools for meeting the desired objectives of their creation or communication.
    - 6b: Students create original works or responsibly repurpose or remix digital resources into new creations.
    - 6d: Students publish or present content that customizes the message and medium for the intended audiences.

- **DLCS Standards**
  - Ethics and Laws (CAS.b)
  - Interpersonal and Societal Impact (CAS.c)
  - Digital Tools (DTC.a)
  - Collaboration and Communication (DTC.b)
  - Research (DTC.c)

- **English Language Arts > History/Social Studies Common Core Standards**
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.4
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.6
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.8
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.4
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.6
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.8
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.9
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.4
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.6
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.7
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.8

- **English/Language Arts Common Core Standards**
Representations of and Racism Toward Black Americans in the Media

At the Constitutional Convention, the American Revolutionary era declaration that “all men are born free and equal” was denied for Black people. The **Three-Fifth Compromise**, which counted those in slavery to determine representation in Congress, gave greater power to southern slave-owning states and helped elect slave-owning Presidents in the years before the Civil War. A **Fugitive Slave clause** was included in the Constitution and the slave trade was allowed to continue for 20 more years. Black slavery that lasted until after the Civil War was followed by Jim Crow segregation and a long civil rights movement that demanded equality and justice, but racial stereotypes persisted.

Powerful, persistent, and pervasive White racism toward Black Americans that began with the forced arrival of the first slaves in North America in 1619 continues today in multiple areas of modern society, including social media. In a video lecture, Emory University professor Nathan McCall has tracked the history of negative, racist imagery toward Black Americans in the media from the founding of the U.S. to the Presidency of Barack Obama.
Racist imagery is only one means of racism in the media. Limited opportunities for creative expression online, racist algorithms, and allowing White people to the steal and get credit for the work of people of color are all different means of maintaining existing systems of inequality and racism.

During summer 2020, amidst protests for racial justice following the death of George Floyd, TikTok faced extensive criticism about treating content created by African Americans unfairly on the platform. The company responded saying it was committed to diversity and equal opportunities for Black content creators to post on the site (A Message to Our Black Community, June 1, 2020).

More than a year later, civil rights leaders say social media platforms have not done enough to address bias toward and unequal treatment of people of color, a frustrating situation given the ways social media platforms, like TikTok, can support and extend social and civic activism.

Black artists staged a strike against TikTok at the beginning of July 2021 (learn more: Many Black TikTok creators are on strike from the platform. Here are voices from the boycott). For many content creators, the popularity of their posts produces income to sustain their artistic and creative work. However, far too often, Black artists often lose credit and income when White artists steal the styles, dances, and trends they create, as in the case of the Renegade dance designed by Black teenager...
Jalaiah Harmon, and then platforms like TikTok spotlight and promote the White artists' posts rather than the original content creator's post.

The following activities ask you to analyze media representation of, and social media use by, Black Americans; and, then, design media that affirm and celebrate Black lives and culture.

**Activity 1: Uncover Media Stereotypes Toward Black Americans**

- Explore the following videos:
  - A look into how movies, TV shows and food labels push racist stereotypes
  - Disturbingly Racist Moments in Cartoons
- Consider and discuss the following questions:
  - What are some stereotypes of Black Americans you have seen in the media?
  - Where did these stereotypes originate?
  - Are the stereotypes different based on the medium (e.g., social media vs. TV)?
  - What might be the effect of such stereotypical depictions on how people think, communicate, and interact with Black Americans?
- **Design a video, podcast, or website** that connects decisions made during the Constitutional Convention to how Black Americans are portrayed in the media today.

**Activity 2: Analyze Black American Content Creators on Social Media**

- Choose a platform of your preference: YouTube, Snapchat, or TikTok.
  - Explore Black American content creators on the platform (e.g., 27 Top Black YouTube Stars).
  - Consider:
    - How do these content creators portray stereotypical or counter-stereotypical Black American identity?
    - Do you think that platforms such as YouTube, Snapchat, or TikTok (where users generate content) help to provide counter-stereotypical examples of Black American people?
    - Who owns the platforms? What might the relationship be between the corporate owner and the content?
    - Do you think that these content creators are supported by the social media platform (e.g., is their work spotlighted? Are they credited for their work?)?
  - Then:
    1. **Interact with one of the content creators** (i.e., send a positive message, write a thoughtful comment, share their work), AND
    2. **Write a PRAISE or PROTEST letter** to the platform CEO (YouTube, Snapchat, or TikTok) about how their platform shapes Black lives and culture.
Activity 3: Curate a Collection of Images of Black Lives and Culture

It is 2050 and enormous strides have been made toward civil rights and social justice in the United States. You are working as a historian for the Smithsonian and you have been asked to create a digital collection of images that represent Black Lives and Culture in the first two decades of the 21st century.

- Explore the Image Files for Media Use from the Smithsonian's National Museum of African American History & Culture.
- Then, assemble a digital collection of images that combat racism and affirm Black lives and culture on a Wakelet, Google Site, Jamboard, Google Slides, or Adobe Spark page.
  - See the University of Massachusetts Amherst’s Black Presence Website and Timeline as examples.

Additional Resources

- Documentaries
  - The 13th
  - Ethnic Notions (Kanopy)
  - I am not your negro (Kanopy)
- Novels:
  - Octavia Butler’s sci-fi novels: Kindred; Wild Seed
- TED Talks
  - Whoever Controls the Media, the Images, Controls the Culture | Min Kim | TEDxLehighU

Connecting to the eBook

Building Democracy for All: Did the Three-Fifths Compromise Make the Constitution a Pro-Slavery Document?
Connecting to the Standards

- **Massachusetts Civics & Government Standards**
  - Identify the various leaders of the Constitutional Convention and analyze the major issues they debated and how the issues were resolved (Massachusetts Curriculum Framework for History and Social Science) [8.T2.3]

- **ISTE Standards**
  - Digital Citizen
    - 2b: Students engage in positive, safe, legal and ethical behavior when using technology, including social interactions online or when using networked devices.
    - 2c: Students demonstrate an understanding of and respect for the rights and obligations of using and sharing intellectual property.
  - Knowledge Constructor
    - 3a: Students plan and employ effective research strategies to locate information and other resources for their intellectual or creative pursuits.
    - 3b: Students evaluate the accuracy, perspective, credibility and relevance of information, media, data, or other resources.
    - 3c: Students curate information from digital resources using a variety of tools and methods to create collections of artifacts that demonstrate meaningful connections or conclusions.
    - 3d: Students build knowledge by actively exploring real-world issues and problems, developing ideas and theories and pursuing answers and solutions.
  - Creative Communicator
    - 6a: Students choose the appropriate platforms and tools for meeting the desired objectives of their creation or communication.
    - 6b: Students create original works or responsibly repurpose or remix digital resources into new creations.
    - 6d: Students publish or present content that customizes the message and medium for the intended audiences.

- **DLCS Standards**
  - Interpersonal and Societal Impact (CAS.c)
  - Digital Tools (DTC.a)
  - Collaboration and Communication (DTC.b)
  - Research (DTC.c)

- **English Language Arts > History/Social Studies Common Core Standards**
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.1
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.6
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.7
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.8
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.1
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.1
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.3
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.7
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.8
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.9

- **English/Language Arts Common Core Standards**
Political Debates Through Songs from Hamilton: An American Musical

Hamilton: An American Musical written by Lin-Manuel Miranda tells the story of Alexander Hamilton and the founding of the United States using hip hop, R&B, pop, and soul music as well as Broadway-style show tunes. It opened in February 2015 and won the 2016 Pulitzer Prize for Drama as well as numerous Tony Awards that same year.

Lin-Manuel Miranda described the musical as about "America then, as told by America now" (The Atlantic, September 29, 2015, para. 2).

Activity 1: Analyze the Lyrics from Hamilton

1. Listen to the songs from Hamilton:
   - Cabinet Battle #1
2. Listen to the songs again while reading the lyrics. Feel free to take a look at the way that Genius analyzes the lyrics after forming your own opinions and takeaways.

   - **Cabinet Battle #1**
     - Genius Lyrics
   - **Cabinet Battle #2**
     - Genius Lyrics
   - **Cabinet Battle #3**
     - Genius Lyrics

3. Then, either:
   - **Write a Yelp or Amazon review** for each song based on the accuracy, credibility, relevance, and presentation of historical events and issues (see example Amazon Review template by Madeline Hill), OR
   - **Design a podcast, video, or website** in which you discuss the following questions:
     - Are these songs factual? To what degree? Do they leave anything out? How do they complement what you’ve learned in social studies classes?
     - How is Manuel-Miranda able to make these historical moments contemporary? How does Manuel-Miranda utilize music and lyrics to convey history?
     - Does seeing history in a more contemporary light aid your learning? How can this be applied to other disciplines and/or mediums?
     - What parallels can you draw between the points Hamilton and Jefferson bring up in these cabinet battles and contemporary political issues/debates?

**Activity 2: Write Your Own Hamilton-Style Lyrics**

*Hamilton* highlights the Federalist/Anti-Federalist debates of the time - a set of tensions between federal and state power that still dominate U.S. politics today as different levels of government seek to solve problems of racial justice and inequality, climate change, the COVID-19 pandemic, the struggling economy, and attacks on truth and democracy.

1. Choose an issue that interests you and investigate how federal, state, and local government are dealing with it.
   - You could look at:
     - Pandemic policies such as mask mandates, vaccine requirements, or school reopenings.
     - Environmental and climate change initiatives such as plastic bans at grocery stores.
     - Automobile emissions and other fuel-saving transportation regulations.
     - Food safety and agricultural regulations.
     - Another area where there is disagreement between levels of government.

2. **Write your own Hamilton-style debate lyrics** about the topic of your choosing. Focus on the tensions between federal and state power related to your issue.

3. Bonus Points: Perform and record your rap song on TikTok, Snapchat, or Flipgrid.
Additional resources:

- *Hamilton Cast Read Along entirely in Spanish*
- Hamilton Cast Read Along of *"The Storyteller's Candle/La Velita de los Cuentos"* in Spanish (with English close captions)

Connecting to the eBook

*Building Democracy for All: The Federalist-Anti-Federalist Debates*
Critical Media Literacy and Civic Learning

Connecting to the Standards

- **Massachusetts Civics & Government Standards**
  - Compare and contrast key ideas debated between the Federalists and Anti-Federalists over ratification of the Constitution (Massachusetts Curriculum Framework for History and Social Science) [8.T2.4]

- **ISTE Standards**
  - Knowledge Constructor
    - 3a: Students plan and employ effective research strategies to locate information and other resources for their intellectual or creative pursuits.
    - 3b: Students evaluate the accuracy, perspective, credibility and relevance of information, media, data, or other resources.
    - 3d: Students build knowledge by actively exploring real-world issues and problems, developing ideas and theories and pursuing answers and solutions.
  - Creative Communicator
    - 6a: Students choose the appropriate platforms and tools for meeting the desired objectives of their creation or communication.
    - 6b: Students create original works or responsibly repurpose or remix digital resources into new creations.
    - 6d: Students publish or present content that customizes the message and medium for the intended audiences.

- **DLCS Standards**
  - Interpersonal and Societal Impact (CAS.c)
  - Digital Tools (DTC.a)
  - Collaboration and Communication (DTC.b)
  - Research (DTC.c)

- **English Language Arts > History/Social Studies Common Core Standards**
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.2
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.4
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.6
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.8
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.2
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.4
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.5
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.2
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.4
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.7
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.8
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.9

- **English/Language Arts Common Core Standards**
The first 10 amendments to the Constitution, known as the Bill of Rights, consists of 475 words. The U.S. Bill of Rights was signed on September 28, 1789. Here is the full text read aloud.

Fourteen official copies of the Bill of Rights were printed - one for the federal government and one each for the original 13 states. Only 9 originals remain today (Bill of Rights FAQs, National Constitution Center).

When the Bill of Rights was drafted there were about 200 weekly newspapers in the country (Newspapers and the Press, David L. Jamison, 2008). But there was no social media, no television, no streaming services. But what if Twitter had been around at that time? In 2021, about one in five adults use Twitter, sending some 500 million tweets each day (Twitter by the Numbers, Omnicore, January 6, 2021).

How would you have helped James Madison and the other members of Congress spread the word about the Bill of Rights on Twitter?
Activity: Tweet the Bill of Rights

- **Directions:** Rewrite the Bill of Rights with Twitter’s 280 character limit in mind.
  - Each amendment should have its own tweet.
  - Be as concise as possible!
  - Make them contemporary - draw connections to present-day events and/or news.
  - Include visuals - memes, GIFs, videos, etc...
- **Tweeting:**
  - To engage in this activity without signing up for Twitter, use TweetGen to generate realistic screenshots of your tweets and then curate them in a Jamboard, Google Doc, or Padlet. Here is a faux Twitter thread example by Sara Shea.
  - To engage in this activity with Twitter, post your Bill of Rights tweets on Twitter. Reply to the tweets and discuss the role of the Bill of Rights in today's society.

Additional Resources

- [National Archives Challenges the Twitter-verse to Tweet the Bill of Rights](#)
- [The Bill of Rights in 4 Tweets](#)

Connecting to the eBook

[Building Democracy for All: The Articles of the Constitution and the Many Bills of Rights in United States History](#)
Connecting to the Standards

- **Massachusetts Civics & Government Standards**
  - Summarize the Preamble and each article in the Constitution and the rights enumerated in the Bill of Rights; explain the reasons for the addition of the Bill of Rights to the Constitution in 1791 (Massachusetts Curriculum Framework for History and Social Science) [8.T2.5]

- **ISTE Standards**
  - Creative Communicator
    - 6b: Students create original works or responsibly repurpose or remix digital resources into new creations.
    - 6d: Students publish or present content that customizes the message and medium for the intended audiences.

- **DLCS Standards**
  - Safety and Security (CAS.a)
  - Collaboration and Communication (DTC.b)

- **English Language Arts > History/Social Studies Common Core Standards**
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.2
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.4
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.2
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.4
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.2
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.4

- **English/Language Arts Common Core Standards**
3. Institutions of United States Government

Democratic government in the United States consists of a complex interplay of formal institutions and evolving political practices. Under a system of federalism that establishes a separation of powers, different branches of government perform different functions:

- The Legislature makes the laws,
- The Executive administers the laws,
- The Judiciary interprets the laws.

This separation of powers exists on the federal, state, and local levels. In theory, members of the Legislature and leaders of the Executive branch are elected by the people, but historically and still today, not everyone is allowed to vote because of legal barriers and voter suppression policies. Two major political parties dominate American politics. At times in the past, third parties have raised new issues and policies for wider discussion and debate.

The media literacy activities in this section invite explorations of the branches of the government, the impeachment process, social media use by members of Congress, public opinion polls, and how political parties deliver the messages to voters.

Media Literacy Activities Choice Board
Media Literacy Activities
Hollywood Movies About the Branches of Government


Watch on YouTube https://edtechbooks.org/-TXcn

In these activities, you will critically evaluate how political films portray the roles of each branch of the government and then design a movie trailer for your own political film.
Activity 1: Analyze Political Films About the Branches of the Government

- View a political film from Hollywood about each branch of the government.
  - Examples:
    - **Congress**: *Mr. Smith Goes to Washington* (1939) celebrates the ideal of a single man of principle making a difference in politics.
    - **President**: *Lincoln* (2012) shows presidential leadership in getting Congress to enact the 13th Amendment to permanently abolish slavery.
    - **Courts**: *12 Angry Men* (1957) shows a jury struggling with a life and death decision to convict a defendant.
- Use the Teacher and Student Guide to Analyzing Movies to explore and ask critical questions about the content and the power behind the construction of the content of each film.
- Then, consider:
  - How do the films portray the roles of each branch of the government?
  - What is ‘accurate,’ and what is altered?
  - Why might certain historical elements be altered?
  - Whose perspective is dominant? Whose perspective is missing?
  - What message does the film convey to viewers about how government works?
- Based on your analysis, **re-design a movie poster** for one of the films to showcase your findings.

Activity 2: Design a Movie Trailer for Your own Political Film

- Watch one or more films from the following resources for inspiration:
  - The 34 best political movies ever made, The Washington Post
  - The 22 Best Political Movies Ever, Ranked, Insider (November 3, 2020)
- Review this article: How to Make a Movie Trailer that Grabs Attention.
- Then, **design a movie trailer** for a new film that explores the separation of powers between the three branches of the government.
- Consider:
  - What issues would your film address?
  - What role will each branch of the government play in the film?
  - What perspectives would you explore in the film?
  - Why would people want to come to watch your film?
  - Who would be the actors in your film?

Additional Resources

- Americans’ Civics Knowledge Increases But Still Has a Long Way to Go
- Political Funny: Name the three branches of government (YouTube)
- Understanding Branches of Power Game (iCivics)
Connecting to the eBook

Building Democracy for All: Federalism and the Branches of the Government

Connecting to the Standards

- **Massachusetts Civics & Government Standards**
  - Distinguish the three branches of the government (separation of powers).
    (Massachusetts Curriculum Framework for History and Social Science) [8.T3.1]

- **ISTE Standards**
  - Digital Citizen
    - 2c: Students demonstrate an understanding of and respect for the rights and obligations of using and sharing intellectual property.
  - Knowledge Constructor
    - 3b: Students evaluate the accuracy, perspective, credibility and relevance of information, media, data, or other resources.
  - Creative Communicator
    - 6a: Students choose the appropriate platforms and tools for meeting the desired objectives of their creation or communication.
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  - Ethics and Laws (CAS.b)
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  - Research (DTC.c)

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  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.5
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.6
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.6
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.8

- **English/Language Arts Common Core Standards**
A Press Release is an official statement provided to the media by an individual or organization. Its purpose is to provide information in a short, simple, highly readable format.

In politics, a press release also serves as a way to promote one’s side of an issue as favorably as possible within the boundaries of facts. The White House, on behalf of the President as well as individual politicians, political party organizations, and political interest groups, constantly issues press releases stating their positions and actions on the issues of the day.

In this activity, you will write an Impeachment Press Release for one of the Presidential Impeachments in U.S. History. You can write a statement from either the President who is being impeached, the Impeachment Managers from the House of Representatives who are presenting the case against the President, or both.

Activity: Write an Impeachment Press Release

- First, evaluate historical impeachment press releases. Examine how these press releases are structured. How language is used. And, what information is presented or left out.
  - Here are two press releases related to the second impeachment of Donald Trump:
• **Trial Memorandum from House Committee on the Judiciary**, February 2, 2021
  • **Trump Will Not Testify or Provide Any Statement at Impeachment Trial**, February 4, 2021

  Then, select one of the Presidential Impeachments in U.S. History:
  • President Johnson’s impeachment
  • President Nixon’s impeachment or *Frost/Nixon* (Netflix)
  • President Clinton’s impeachment
  • President Trump’s first impeachment
  • President Trump’s second impeachment

  Finally, write an impeachment press release.
  • Your goal is to make a case for or against Presidential impeachment in a press release that presents information as objectively as possible. You must include the actual facts of the situation and state the position of both those arguing for or against impeachment.

**Additional Resources**

• *How to Write a Press Release: The 11-Step Guide [2021 Update]*, Class: PR
• *How To Write a Press Release, with Examples*, CBS News
• *Understanding Branches of Power Game* (iCivics)
• *A Lesson for an Impeachment Inquiry*, The Educator's Playbook, University of Pennsylvania
• *The Impeachment Process and President Trump*, Choices Program, Brown University

**Connecting to the eBook**

*Building Democracy for All: When, and For What, Should a President Be Impeached?*
Connecting to the Standards

- **Massachusetts Civics & Government Standards**
  - Examine the interrelationship of the three branches (the checks and balances system).
  (Massachusetts Curriculum Framework for History and Social Science) [8.T3.2]

- **ISTE Standards**
  - Knowledge Constructor
    - 3a: Students plan and employ effective research strategies to locate information and other resources for their intellectual or creative pursuits.
    - 3d: Students build knowledge by actively exploring real-world issues and problems, developing ideas and theories and pursuing answers and solutions.
  - Creative Communicator
    - 6d: Students publish or present content that customizes the message and medium for the intended audiences.

- **DLCS Standards**
  - Collaboration and Communication (DTC.b)
  - Research (DTC.c)

- **English Language Arts > History/Social Studies Common Core Standards**
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.4
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.5
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.4
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.5
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.8
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.3
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.5
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.9

- **English/Language Arts Common Core Standards**
Members of Congress' Use of Social Media

Congress Soars to New Heights on Social Media declared the Pew Research Center in July 2020. Virtually every member of the Senate and the House of Representatives is now active on social media, including Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube. Members of Congress share information with voters, react to events, and take positions on public policy issues, all while seeking to add more followers to their accounts.

The volume of social media content generated by Congress is huge. Scholars from the Pew Research Center noted that "as a collective, the 116th Congress maintains over 2,000 active official, campaign and personal accounts on Facebook and Twitter (not counting institutional accounts that periodically change hands, such as committee chair or leadership accounts) with over a quarter-billion total followers between them" (2020, para. 8). Congressional accounts generated 100,000 tweets and Facebook posts every month, on average, in 2020. Between 2016 and 2020, Democrats posted more often on Twitter while Republicans had greater levels of engagement with others as measured by reactions, shares, favorites, and retweets.

Some members of Congress have become social media "stars" in that they have large numbers of followers and they exert considerable influence on political matters. They are in the news all the time. In 2019, for example, Senators Bernie Sanders (I-Vt.), Elizabeth Warren (D-Mass), Ted Cruz (R-Tex), Corey Booker (D-NJ), and Rep Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (D-NY) were most active on Twitter (For more, see "Their Public Whatever and Their Twitter World." The Washington Post Magazine, August 27, 2019).
The following activities encourage a critical in-depth exploration of how members of congress use social media.

**Activity 1: Analyze the Social Media Activity of Members of Congress**

In this activity, you will investigate and document the social media presence of at least two members of Congress. You can choose individuals who are in the news, who represent your state or Congressional district, or who come from different regions of the country or from different political parties.

- Analyze the number and type of followers the congressperson has on each of the following platforms: Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Instagram, and TikTok.
- Collect text from at least 100 Twitter or Facebook posts and then paste it into the Databasic.io Word Counter to examine common words and phrases.
- Then, closely examine the content of the posts across the different social media platforms:
  - What issues or policies are most frequently discussed online?
  - What types of visuals are used?
  - What language is used? Is the language use different on each platform?
  - Which types of posts get the most responses (shares, likes, retweets, comments)?
  - How does the congressperson attempt to persuade social media followers (e.g., use of specific visuals or language or calls to action)?
  - How accurate are the posts (collect a randomly selected set of posts and then verify their accuracy)?
  - Do the posts increase or decrease the credibility of the congressperson?
• Write a respectful response to a post that you agree or disagree with.
  ○ Did you receive any response to your post?
• Design a social media campaign that includes a series of posts with text and visuals (e.g., memes, videos, gifs, graphics) to showcase, and educate others about, your findings.
  ○ Here is a social media campaign example created by Justin Lo, Daniel Mulno, and David Warde and here is a Twitter campaign example by Sara Shea.

Activity 2: Explore Political Campaigning through Social Media

Political campaigning has evolved over the years. William Henry Harrison was the first candidate to actively campaign for the office of President in 1840 using the slogan "Tippecanoe and Tyler too" (referring to his leadership in a famous 1811 battle between U.S. soldiers and Native American warriors in Indiana; John Tyler was his vice-Presidential candidate who became President when Harrison died suddenly after taking office). But mainly during the 19th century, candidates did not campaign out in public, instead they worked behind the scenes to secure support and votes.

Mass media changed has changed political communication between politicians and people. "Eisenhower Answers America" (1952) is considered the first political ad broadcast on television. The first televised political debates happened in 1960 between John F. Kennedy and Richard Nixon. Today we follow politicians’ every move through social media (e.g., watching AOC assembling her house furniture or Elizabeth Warren opening a New Year’s beer on Instagram).

• Reflect upon the following questions:
  ○ How has political campaigning evolved over the years - from the time before TV to an age where we follow politicians’ every move through social media?
  ○ What distinguishes members of Congress from other social media ‘influencers’?
  ○ What is the role of social media in influencing public opinion? For example, how do you think social media posts from members of Congress influence voters' opinions about candidates and important political issues?
  ○ How does social media impact US elections?
• Then, design an infographic or interactive timeline that presents political campaigning in the past, the present, and future (what you predict it will look like in the future).

Additional Resources

• The congressional social media landscape
• Members of the 116th Congress rail against social-media companies but posted to Twitter and Facebook a record 2.2 million times
Connecting to the eBook

Building Democracy for All: Congress, the Legislative Branch: House of Representatives and the Senate

Connecting to the Standards

- **Massachusetts Civics & Government Standards**
  - Describe the respective roles of each the branches of the government (Massachusetts Curriculum Framework for History and Social Science) [8.T3.3]

- **ISTE Standards**
  - Knowledge Constructor
    - 3a: Students plan and employ effective research strategies to locate information and other resources for their intellectual or creative pursuits.
    - 3b: Students evaluate the accuracy, perspective, credibility and relevance of information, media, data, or other resources.
  - Computational Thinker
    - 5b. Students collect data or identify relevant data sets, use digital tools to analyze them, and represent data in various ways to facilitate problem-solving and decision-making.
  - Creative Communicator
    - 6b: Students create original works or responsibly repurpose or remix digital resources into new creations.
    - 6d: Students publish or present content that customizes the message and medium for the intended audiences.

- **DLCS Standards**
  - Interpersonal and Societal Impact (CAS.c)
  - Digital Tools (DTC.a)
  - Collaboration and Communication (DTC.b)
  - Research (DTC.c)

- **English Language Arts > History/Social Studies Common Core Standards**
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.2
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.6
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.7
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.8
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.2
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.5
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.8
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.2
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.5
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.7
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.8
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.9

- **English/Language Arts Common Core Standards**
Political Impacts of Public Opinion Polls

**Public Opinion Polls** have become an prominent feature of American politics. A poll is a survey given to a small sample of chosen respondents as a way to reveal what larger numbers of people think about a political issue or election candidate.

Poll results are often widely reported in both print and online media. They are meant to provide information about people and politics that would not be readily available in other ways.

As a matter of media literacy, it is important to understand what polls can and cannot tell us about what people want from government or who people want to elect to public office. There are two important factors to keep in mind.

First, ideally polls support democracy. The information they provide contributes to everyone’s knowledge and understanding of politics and policy. As the Pew Research Center crucially noted, “in nations without robust polling, the head of government can simply decree citizens’ wants and needs instead” ([Key Things to Know about Election Polling in the United States](https://www.pewresearch.org/factTank/2020/08/05/key-things-to-know-about-election-polling-in-the-united-states/), August 5, 2020, para. 1).

Second, in reality polls have limitations and shortcomings. Any poll is just a snapshot in time and may
not reflect people’s changing attitudes or behaviors. For example, a person may complete a poll saying they intend to vote in an election and then decide not to. Or, a person may not answer a poll honestly, saying they voted for one candidate when in fact they voted for another candidate instead. For these reasons, polls may miss the levels of support or opposition for issues or candidates actually present in society.

Watch on YouTube https://edtechbooks.org/-XFaQ

In the following activities, you will gain firsthand experience in conducting and reporting public opinion polls and then you will explore what happens when public opinion polls do not represent the opinion of the public.

**Activity 1: Conduct an Opinion Poll on an Issue of Interest**

- Design a list of questions to collect data about how people plan vote in an upcoming election or whether people support a currently elected political candidate of your choosing.
  - Explore the Pew Research Center's Methods 101 Series: [How do you write survey questions that accurately measure public opinion?](https://edtechbooks.org/-XFaQ)
  - Here is an example prompt for election voting:
    - Who do you plan to vote for... [insert political position; president, state senate]?
  - Here are some example prompts and potential responses for polls about a political candidate:
    - Do you approve or disapprove of [insert person's name]?
    - Do you support [insert person’s name] policy about ...? Yes/No
- Create a list of survey questions to collect data about people's opinions of the issue you have chosen.
  - Explore the Pew Research Center's Methods 101 Series: [How do you write survey questions that accurately measure public opinion?](https://edtechbooks.org/-XFaQ)
questions that accurately measure public opinion?
  ○ Here are some example prompts and potential responses:
    - Do you support ...? Yes/No
    - Do you favor or oppose...? Favor/Oppose
    - Do you agree or disagree with the following statement...? Agree/Disagree
  • Embed your questions into a Google Form.
  • Then, share the link to your Google Form with your family, classmates, friends, teachers, neighbors, and/or community members.
  • Use the "show summary of responses" feature to analyze your results.
  • Compare and contrast your responses to available state and national polls on your selected topic (e.g., here is a poll on mask wearing during the pandemic from National Geographic).
  • Ask those who completed your poll what they think of public opinion polls and how reliable they are.
  • Create a newspaper article or blog post to present your findings. Include visuals, such as graphs and charts.

**Activity 2: Conduct an Opinion Poll on Election Voting or a Political Candidate**

  • Design a list of questions to collect data about how people plan vote in an upcoming election or whether people support a political candidate of your choosing.
    ○ Explore the Pew Research Center's Methods 101 Series: How do you write survey questions that accurately measure public opinion?
    ○ Here is an example prompt for election voting data:
      - Who do you plan to vote for... [insert political position; president, state senate]?
    ○ Here are some example prompts and potential responses for polls about a political candidate:
      - Do you approve or disapprove of [insert person's name]?
      - Do you support [insert person's name] policy about ...? Yes/No
  • Embed your questions into a Google Form.
  • Then, share the link to your Google Form with your family, classmates, friends, teachers, neighbors, and/or community members.
  • Use the "show summary of responses" feature to analyze your results.
  • Compare and contrast your responses to available state and national polls (e.g., Biden Approval Rating).
  • Ask those who completed your poll what they think of public opinion polls and how reliable they are.
  • Create your own television news report based on your findings. Make sure to include visuals.

**Activity 3: Evaluate how Election Polls can be Misleading**

  • Review the following resources:
    ○ How Did the Media — How Did We — Get This Wrong?
    ○ When the media gets a close election wrong
    ○ The Polling Crisis is a Catastrophe for American Democracy
  • Then, create a video, podcast, or sketchnote about why many people felt mislead by the
media after reading the 2016 election polls.

- Bonus: Propose a way to change public opinion polling about elections so that it is more accurate.

**Additional Resources**

- [Q&A: After misses in 2016 and 2020, does polling need to be fixed again? What our survey experts say](#)
- [What Are Public Opinion Polls? American Historical Association](#)
- [LEARNING PLAN: Polling Pitfalls, PBS Newshour](#)

**Connecting to the eBook**

*Building Democracy for All: Is It Time to Adopt Instant Runoff/Ranked Choice Voting?*
Connecting to the Standards

- **Massachusetts Civics & Government Standards**
  
  - *Explain the process of elections in the legislative and executive branches and the process of nomination/confirmation of individuals in the judicial and executive branches* (Massachusetts Curriculum Framework for History and Social Science) [8.T3.4]

- **ISTE Standards**
  
  - Knowledge Constructor
    
    - 3b: Students evaluate the accuracy, perspective, credibility and relevance of information, media, data, or other resources.
    - 3d: Students build knowledge by actively exploring real-world issues and problems, developing ideas and theories and pursuing answers and solutions.
  
  - Computational Thinker
    
    - 5b. Students collect data or identify relevant data sets, use digital tools to analyze them, and represent data in various ways to facilitate problem-solving and decision-making.
  
  - Creative Communicator
    
    - 6a: Students choose the appropriate platforms and tools for meeting the desired objectives of their creation or communication.
    - 6b: Students create original works or responsibly repurpose or remix digital resources into new creations.
    - 6d: Students publish or present content that customizes the message and medium for the intended audiences.

- **DLCS Standards**
  
  - Interpersonal and Societal Impact (CAS.c)
  - Digital Tools (DTC.a)
  - Collaboration and Communication (DTC.b)
  - Research (DTC.c)

- **English Language Arts > History/Social Studies Common Core Standards**
  
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.7
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.8
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.7
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.8
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.7
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.8
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.9

- **English/Language Arts Common Core Standards**
Website Design for New Political Parties

In theory, multiple political parties give voters multiple choices during elections. In 2020, there were 21 Presidential candidates on the ballot in Vermont and Colorado and in all other states voters could choose between 3 and 13 different candidates.

In reality, though, candidates from parties other than the Democratic or Republican parties have only a small chance of winning a state-wide election (Independent Senators Bernie Sanders of Vermont and Angus King of Maine are exceptions to that statement). In Minnesota, for example, the Legal Marijuana Now Party candidate for U.S. Senate won 185,064 votes (5.77%) while the winner, Democrat Tina Smith, received 1,566,522 votes (48.81%).

Still, this does not mean that supporting a third party candidate means "wasting" one's vote on someone who cannot win an election. Multiple political parties raise public awareness of issues facing society which can lead to social, economic, and political change.
Each state has its own rules for determining when a group or activist organization can become a recognized political party and have its candidates appear on an election ballot. A potential political party must demonstrate actual voter support (usually by filing a petition for formal recognition signed by a representative number of citizens of the state) and then it must receive a sufficient number of votes in an election to maintain its status as a political party. Here are the rules for Qualifying as a Political Party from the U.S. Federal Election Commission.

In politics today, any new political party needs to utilize technology to communicate with voters. A party website can serve as a hub or home base for information, showcasing the party's logo, highlighting its policies, introducing its candidates, and raising funds to support itself and its efforts. In this activity, you get to design a website for a new political party.
Activity: Design a Website for a New Political Party

1. Use the Teacher and Student Guide to Analyzing Websites to closely examine the websites of several members of Congress.

2. Come up with a name and a mascot or symbol for your new political party.
   - You can choose any name you think conveys the message of your party. As a resource for names, check out "Democrat" vs. "Republican": Where Did the Parties Get Their Names? from Dictionary.com.
   - You can design any symbol or mascot as well (learn more: How Did US Political Parties Get Their Mascots; Wisconsin Public Radio, November 8, 2016).

3. Create a website for your political party, using a web design tool such as Google Sites, Wix, Weebly, or Adobe Spark, to influence others to vote for the party.
   - Incorporate design strategies you uncovered during your analysis of congress members' websites and from watching 6 Things Your Political Campaign Website Needs.
   - Make sure to include a logo for your new party, a slogan, and the party's political goals.
   - Use Tweetgen to create a series of tweets for your political party (explore how members of Congress use social media). Download images of these tweets (or take screenshots) and add them to your website.

4. As a class, review everyone's websites and select a winning party.

Additional Resources:

- The best political campaign websites to use as inspiration
- Best Political Campaign Websites of 2020
- How Social Media is Shaping Political Campaigns (University of Pennsylvania)
Connecting to the eBook

Building Democracy for All: Should Voters Join a Political Party?

Connecting to the Standards

- **Massachusetts Civics & Government Standards**
  - Describe the structure and role of political parties at the state and national levels (Massachusetts Curriculum Framework for History and Social Science) [8.T3.5]

- **ISTE Standards**
  - Digital Citizen
    - 2c: Students demonstrate an understanding of and respect for the rights and obligations of using and sharing intellectual property.
  - Knowledge Constructor
    - 3a: Students plan and employ effective research strategies to locate information and other resources for their intellectual or creative pursuits.
    - 3b: Students evaluate the accuracy, perspective, credibility and relevance of information, media, data, or other resources.
  - Creative Communicator
    - 6a: Students choose the appropriate platforms and tools for meeting the desired objectives of their creation or communication.
    - 6b: Students create original works or responsibly repurpose or remix digital resources into new creations.
    - 6d: Students publish or present content that customizes the message and medium for the intended audiences.

- **DLCS Standards**
  - Ethics and Laws (CAS.b)
  - Interpersonal and Societal Impact (CAS.c)
  - Digital Tools (DTC.a)
  - Collaboration and Communication (DTC.b)
  - Research (DTC.c)

- **English Language Arts > History/Social Studies Common Core Standards**
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.5
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.6
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.7
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.5
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.8
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.5
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.7

- **English/Language Arts Common Core Standards**
4. The Rights and Responsibilities of Citizens

“A citizen is a participatory member of a political community. Citizenship is gained by meeting the legal requirements of a national, state, or local government” (Center for the Study of Citizenship, Wayne State University, 2021, para. 6).

In the United States, both citizens and non-citizens have rights and responsibilities in their civic, political, and private lives. They enjoy the freedoms of a democratic society while having responsibilities that they are expected to perform, including obeying laws, voting in elections, working with elected leaders, engaging in peaceful protests, and affirming the fundamental principles of American political and civic life.

U.S. history has numerous examples of individuals who showed political courage and leadership in support of democratic values and freedoms, but it also includes multiple times when individuals and groups failed to live up to the ideals of the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution. In modern society, public and private interest groups, political action committees, and labor unions, more than individual citizens, play powerful roles in lobbying for social and economic change.

The media literacy activities in this section explore topics related to citizen engagement and involvement in politics and society, including immigration, the COVID-19 pandemic, voting, gender in leadership, trans identities, political activism, political protest, political advertising, and the January 6, 2021 insurrection.

Media Literacy Choice Board
Media Literacy Activities
Immigration in the News

The United States has always been peopled by the world - by native peoples who lived here when the first European settlers arrived, by Africans who were brought here against their will as slaves, by those who came voluntarily, and by those who fled oppression and terror at home.

Immigration tripled following the passage of the 1965 Immigration and Nationality Act, as people from Africa, Asia, and the Americas became more than 90% of the foreign-born people coming to this country. NPR journalist Tom Gjelten (2015) calls the United States "a nation of nations."

Watch on YouTube https://edtechbooks.org/-sGf

The United States now has more immigrants than any other country in the world, reports the Pew Research Center - some 40 million people or about 14% of the nation's total population. But immigration is a complex and contentious political issue. Read Why Is Immigration Such a Hot-Button Issue? from the St. Mary's College Newsletter to get a sense of the wide range of viewpoints about immigration. Some commentators want to provide more opportunities for immigration; others want to restrict immigration even more drastically.

Focusing on news and current events, this activity asks you to compare and contrast different media treatments of immigration and present your findings to a school or local newspaper.
Activity: Evaluate the News From All Sides About Immigration

- In groups of 3, go to the All Sides Immigration Issue webpage and select one member in the group to read an article from "News from the Left," one member to read an article from "News from the Center," and one member to read an article from "News from the Right."
  - Each member of the group should use the Teacher and Student Guide to Analyzing News & Newspaper to critically evaluate their article.
- Then, collaboratively as a group, write a letter to your school or local newspaper that reveals what you found during your critical evaluation of left-leaning, center-leaning, and right-leaning news articles and provides tips for the readers of your article to critically evaluate news about immigration.

Additional Resources

- Documentary Forgotten Ellis Island (on Amazon Prime)
- Immigration Gateways and Ports of Entry
  - Castle Island, New York City
  - Ellis Island, New York City
  - Sullivan's Island, South Carolina
  - Angel Island, San Francisco
  - Pelican Island, Galveston, Texas
  - The US/Mexican Border

Connecting to the eBook

Building Democracy for All: When Should Someone Be Granted Asylum in the United States?
Connecting to the Standards

- **Massachusetts Civics & Government Standards**
  - Explain the different ways one becomes a citizen of the United States. (Massachusetts Curriculum Framework for History and Social Studies) [8.T4.1]

- **ISTE Standards**
  - Knowledge Constructor
    - 3b: Students evaluate the accuracy, perspective, credibility and relevance of information, media, data or other resources.
  - Creative Communicator
    - 6d: Students publish or present content that customizes the message and medium for the intended audiences.
  - Global Collaborator
    - 7b: Students use collaborative technologies to work with others, including peers, experts or community members, to examine issues and problems from multiple viewpoints.
    - 7c: Students contribute constructively to project teams, assuming various roles and responsibilities to work effectively toward a common goal.

- **DLCS Standards**
  - Interpersonal and Societal Impact (CAS.c)
  - Collaboration and Communication (DTC.b)
  - Research (DTC.c)

- **English Language Arts > History/Social Studies Common Core Standards**
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.1
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.5
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.6
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.8
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.1
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.5
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.6
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.8
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.1
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.6
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.8
Portrayals of Immigrants in Television and Film

Portrayals of immigrants and the immigrant experience are frequent themes in television and film.

A portrayal is how an individual or group is presented in media, but such representations may or may not be factually accurate. Sometimes these representations offer an idealized view of the immigrant experience. While the Statue of Liberty portrays a nation welcoming newcomers, the reality is that the United States was and is not a land of opportunity for many who come here.
In other instances, immigrants may be presented in harmfully stereotypical terms, often as criminals or threats. In the report Change the Narrative, Change the World: How Immigrant Representation on Television Moves Audiences to Action, researchers from the University of Southern California found viewers who saw programs with more inclusive immigration storylines had more welcoming, supportive attitudes toward immigrants than those who did not.

In these activities, you will explore whether current portrayals and representations of immigrants in television and film media are accurate or stereotypical, and while so doing, consider: “What does media representation of immigrants mean to immigrants?”

Activity 1: Write a Letter of Praise or Protest (Persuasive Writing)

- Pick a present-day (within the last 5 years) TV program, film, podcast, or other media content that includes representation of immigrants.*
  - Use the Teacher and Student Guide to Analyzing Movies or Teacher and Student Guide to Analyzing Television to critically evaluate the media.
- Decide whether you’d like to PRAISE it or PROTEST the media based on how it presents immigrants.
- Look up the producer of the content and write them a letter.
  - **PRAISE:** If you feel immigrants are portrayed accurately and authentically, explain why and express your appreciation.
  - **PROTEST:** If you feel immigrants are portrayed inaccurately and/or stereotypically, explain why and express your lack of appreciation. You can also make suggestions for changes and improvement.
*If students select *Master of None*, consider also exploring the media portrayal and personality of Aziz Ansari.

**Activity 2: Evaluate Representation of Immigrants in the Movies**

- Use this list of YouTube clips of movies from the website Digital History to evaluate how immigrants have been portrayed in films throughout history.
  - What are the differences in immigrant portrayals between mainstream Hollywood films (e.g., *The Godfather*) and movies from less well-known studios and directors?
  - How do the images of immigrants relate to the social and cultural contexts of the time period when the film was made?
  - How do movies from the 1950s or 1960s differ in their portrayal of immigrants compared to more recent films?
- Create a video in which you respond to the previous prompts and critically evaluate the representation of immigrants in movies throughout history.

**Additional Resources**

- [TV and Film Have Mixed Portrayals of Immigrants](#)
- [How the News Media Portray Latinos in Stories and Images](#)
- [Immigration and Democracy Podcast Series](#)

**Connecting to the eBook**

[Building Democracy for All: The Rights of Citizens and Non-Citizens](#)
Connecting to the Standards

- **Massachusetts Civics & Government Standards**
  - Describe the rights and responsibilities of citizens as compared to non-citizens.
    (Massachusetts Curriculum Framework for History and Social Studies) [8.T4.2]
- **ISTE Standards**
  - Knowledge Constructor
    - 3b: Students evaluate the accuracy, perspective, credibility and relevance of information, media, data or other resources.
  - Creative Communicator
    - 6a: Students choose the appropriate platforms and tools for meeting the desired objectives of their creation or communication.
    - 6b: Students create original works or responsibly repurpose or remix digital resources into new creations.
    - 6d: Students publish or present content that customizes the message and medium for the intended audiences.
- **DLCS Standards**
  - Interpersonal and Societal Impact (CAS.c)
  - Collaboration and Communication (DTC.b)
  - Research (DTC.c)
- **English Language Arts > History/Social Studies Common Core Standards**
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.5
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.6
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.7
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.8
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.5
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.6
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.8
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.5
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.6
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.7
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.8
COVID-19 Information Evaluation

There has been an array of fake and false claims in the media about the severity and duration of the COVID-19 pandemic. This has led to very different responses by people throughout the country to government-based COVID-19 policies and recommendations (e.g., mask requirements, lockdown, social distancing).

In one of the first studies to look at the impact of fake news on people’s behaviors in 2021, researchers at the University College Dublin found that reading a fabricated news story (e.g., “certain foods will protect you against COVID-19” or “vaccines are not safe”) just once could produce a small, but measurable change in how people intended to act toward the virus. Left unexamined by this study
was the potential impact of repeated exposure to pandemic-related misinformation on people’s thinking and acting.

Activity 1: Counter False News About COVID-19

It is the year 2021 and you have just been elected to serve as President Biden’s marketing director. Biden has been struggling to increase the overall vaccination rates for the country and he has asked you to use your research and marketing skills to educate individuals who do not believe in or understand the risks of the COVID-19 virus.

- Identify individuals or groups who might not believe in the severity of the COVID-19 virus or think the virus is a hoax.
- Conduct Internet research and survey family and community members to identify possible explanations for why these individuals/groups developed inaccurate opinions about COVID-19 and what can be done about it.
- Then, explore the following resources to learn how to create persuasive scientific media:
  - Stories are better than lectures at teaching us about health.
  - Khan Academy and the Effectiveness of Science Videos.
  - The Science of Storytelling: What Listening to a Story Does to Our Brains.
  - Multimedia Design.
- Develop a digital video or podcast to bring awareness and truthful information about COVID-19.
COVID-19 to the individuals who might not believe in or understand the risks of the virus.
  ○ Make sure to start by addressing any misconceptions they might have about COVID-19.

Activity 2: Evaluate Twitter Posts About COVID-19 in Regards to Civic, Political, and Private Life

- Explore posts about COVID-19 on Twitter (e.g., #covid19).
- Curate at least 15 tweets each from individuals engaging in: 1) Civic life; 2) Political life; and 3) Private life in a spreadsheet, Wakelet, slide deck, or virtual bulletin board (e.g., Padlet).
  ○ Critically examine the differences in tweets between the three groups:
    ▪ What issues or policies are most frequently discussed?
    ▪ What types of visuals are used?
    ▪ What type of language is used?
    ▪ How do the individuals seek to influence others through their posts?
    ▪ Which types of posts got the most responses (shares, likes, retweets, comments)?
    ▪ How accurate, reliable, trustworthy, and credible are the posts?

- Create a screen recording or interactive image to present your findings.
  ○ Interactive image:
    ▪ Start a new Google Drawings canvas.
    ▪ Upload a screenshot of selected tweets to the middle of the canvas.
    ▪ Insert text boxes and shapes to call attention to your findings.
    ▪ Add links to additional information (e.g., the original image source).
  ○ Screenrecording:
    ▪ If you have a Mac computer, use this shortcut.
    ▪ If you have access to Quicktime, here’s how to screenrecord using Quicktime.
    ▪ Otherwise, use a web-based screenrecording tool such as Screencastify, Screencast-o-Matic, or Loom.

Additional Resources

- Tips for Detecting COVID-19 Misinformation Online
- How to Spot COVID-19 Misinformation
- Teaching with Infographics is Essential for Visual Literacy

Connecting to the eBook

Building Democracy for All: People's Lives and Government Responses to COVID-19

Connecting to the Standards

- Massachusetts Civics & Government Standards
  ○ Distinguish among civic, political, and private life. (Massachusetts Curriculum Framework for History and Social Studies) [8.T4.3]
- ISTE Standards
  ○ Digital Citizen
    ▪ 2c: Students demonstrate an understanding of and respect for the rights and
obligations of using and sharing intellectual property.

○ **Knowledge Constructor**
  - 3a: Students plan and employ effective research strategies to locate information and other resources for their intellectual or creative pursuits.
  - 3b: Students evaluate the accuracy, perspective, credibility and relevance of information, media, data or other resources.
  - 3c: Students curate information from digital resources using a variety of tools and methods to create collections of artifacts that demonstrate meaningful connections or conclusions.
  - 3d: Students build knowledge by actively exploring real-world issues and problems, developing ideas and theories and pursuing answers and solutions.

○ **Computational Thinker**
  - 5b: Students collect data or identify relevant data sets, use digital tools to analyze them, and represent data in various ways to facilitate problem-solving and decision-making.

○ **Creative Communicator**
  - 6a: Students choose the appropriate platforms and tools for meeting the desired objectives of their creation or communication.
  - 6b: Students create original works or responsibly repurpose or remix digital resources into new creations.
  - 6c: Students communicate complex ideas clearly and effectively by creating or using a variety of digital objects such as visualizations, models or simulations.
  - 6d: Students publish or present content that customizes the message and medium for the intended audiences.

- **DLCS Standards**
  - Ethics and Laws (CAS.b)
  - Interpersonal and Societal Impact (CAS.c)
  - Digital Tools (DTC.a)
  - Collaboration and Communication (DTC.b)
  - Research (DTC.c)

- **English Language Arts > History/Social Studies Common Core Standards**
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  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.7
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.8
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  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.6
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.7
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.8
Women Political Leaders in the Media

In early 2021, the website *Insider* presented a list of the Most Famous Female Politician from Every State. Some were nationally known figures like Speaker of House Nancy Pelosi from California or former presidential candidate Hillary Rodham Clinton who was born in Illinois. Others were historical figures, such as Jeannette Rankin from Montana who was the first woman elected to Congress, or modern-day trailblazers, including Sarah McBride, Delaware's first openly transgender state senator, and Kristi Noem, South Dakota's first woman governor.

Media coverage of women in political roles can vary greatly. Some women are in the news all the time; others are hardly ever mentioned. Those who appear regularly are often presented differently depending on the political lean of different media outlets. Social scientists have shown that the media cover women and men political leaders differently. Stories about women in politics more often mention their appearance, clothing, family, and instances of combative behavior, all in line with traditional gender stereotypes. Such gender bias hinders women and helps male leaders politically.

Thinking about your own media experience...have you seen women represented in leadership positions (e.g., Mulan and Elsa from Disney; World leaders such as Angela Merkel and Jacinda Ardern; Individuals thrust into the spotlight such as Greta Thunberg, Emma Watson, Meghan Markle)? Do you think it is important for women to be represented in leadership roles in the media?
In these activities, you will examine how women political leaders are represented in the media, both in the United States and in different countries around the world.

**Activity 1: Examine the Representation of Women Political Leaders in the Media**

- Identify a female political leader from the United States. Here are some of the examples of female leaders:
  - Michelle Obama
  - Nancy Pelosi
  - Ruth Bader Ginsburg
  - Amy Coney Barrett
  - Hillary Clinton
  - Kamala Harris
  - Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez
- Curate a digital collection of media content, including videos, news articles, blog posts, and social media tweets, about the individual you selected on a Wakelet, Padlet, or slide deck.
  - Make sure to include media from all sides.
- Critically evaluate how various media outlets and media professionals portray and discuss the individual you selected.
  - Use the following prompts to guide your investigation:
    - What gender stereotypes are used? What might be the consequences of depicting female leaders in stereotypical ways?
    - How does the portrayal of the individual you selected compare to the portrayal of male political leaders?
• How do different media outlets portray and/or discuss the individual you selected? Do they use different language and visuals? Do they focus on different topics/perspectives? Why do you think this is?

• Write an article for your school or local newspaper in which you share your findings and identify ways that media outlets can improve the presentation of women political leaders.

Activity 2: Evaluate the Media Portrayal of Women Leaders in Different Countries and Careers

• Evaluate the differences in media representation of women political leaders from the United States and women leaders in other countries and/or other fields (see Forbes Magazine "The World's Most Powerful Women").
  ○ Are women political leaders in the United States portrayed differently than women political leaders in other countries?
  ○ Are women political leaders discussed differently than women leaders in other fields like business and science?

• Create a social media campaign to illuminate the differences in media portrayals of women leaders from different fields/countries.
  ○ The social media campaign should include at least 2 videos (e.g., YouTube, Snapchat, TikTok), 5 example posts, and 3 images (e.g., memes, graphics, infographics) designed by you.
  ○ Here is a social media campaign example created by Justin Lo, Daniel Mulno, and David Warde and here is a Twitter campaign example by Sara Shea.

Additional Resources

• Exploring the effect of media images on women's leadership self-perceptions and aspirations
• Facts and figures: Leadership and political participation
• Women politicians must still bend to gender stereotypes

Connecting to the eBook

Building Democracy for All: Women's Political Participation Around the World
Connecting to the Standards

- **Massachusetts Civics & Government Standards**
  - Distinguish among civic, political, and private life. (Massachusetts Curriculum Framework for History and Social Studies) [8.T4.3]

- **ISTE Standards**
  - Digital Citizen
    - 2c: Students demonstrate an understanding of and respect for the rights and obligations of using and sharing intellectual property.
  - Knowledge Constructor
    - 3a: Students plan and employ effective research strategies to locate information and other resources for their intellectual or creative pursuits.
    - 3b: Students evaluate the accuracy, perspective, credibility and relevance of information, media, data or other resources.
    - 3c: Students curate information from digital resources using a variety of tools and methods to create collections of artifacts that demonstrate meaningful connections or conclusions.
  - Creative Communicator
    - 6a: Students choose the appropriate platforms and tools for meeting the desired objectives of their creation or communication.
    - 6b: Students create original works or responsibly repurpose or remix digital resources into new creations.
    - 6d: Students publish or present content that customizes the message and medium for the intended audiences.

- **DLCS Standards**
  - Ethics and Laws (CAS.b)
  - Interpersonal and Societal Impact (CAS.c)
  - Digital Tools (DTC.a)
  - Collaboration and Communication (DTC.b)
  - Research (DTC.c)

- **English Language Arts > History/Social Studies Common Core Standards**
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  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.5
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.6
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.7
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.8
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.1
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.5
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.6
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.8
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.9
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.1
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.6
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.7
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.8
Online Messaging by Special Interest Groups

Special interest groups (also known as Advocacy organizations) are groups that support a political issue or cause (What is an Advocacy Group?). These organizations engage in fundraising, conduct public awareness and information campaigns, lobby legislators, and contribute to political campaigns.

You can learn more about public and private interest groups in Topic 4.13 of our Building Democracy for All eBook.

Advocacy Organizations and Special Interest Groups make extensive use of social media. In the following activities, you will explore how civil rights and social justice advocacy organizations use social media and online messaging to promote equality in society and then you will design your own advocacy group and website.

Watch on YouTube https://edtechbooks.org/-PmBI

Critical Media Literacy and Civic Learning 99
Activity 1: Evaluate the Social Media Messaging of Advocacy Organizations

- Choose a civil rights, social justice, and/or equality advocacy organization that is important to you, or select one from the list below:
  - NAACP
  - The Human Rights Campaign
  - Black Lives Matter
  - The Innocence Project
  - ACLU
  - NOW - The National Organization of Women
  - Asian Americans Advancing Justice

- Explore how these organizations use social media.
  - Compare and contrast their posts across platforms. Do they share the same or different information, text, and visuals on each platform? Why do you think that is?
  - How well do their posts display and advance the fundamental principles of American life?
  - Use the Teacher and Student Guide to Analyzing Social Media to take a deeper dive in your critical analysis.

- Now, imagine you are the social media manager of this organization. Create a series of social media posts that highlight how the organization is aligned with the fundamental principles and values of American life.

Activity 2: Analyze Persuasion Techniques in Advocacy Groups' Websites

- Select three of the following advocacy groups:
  - NAACP
  - The Human Rights Campaign
  - Black Lives Matter
  - The Innocence Project
  - ACLU
  - NOW - The National Organization of Women
  - Asian Americans Advancing Justice
  - The American Conservative Union
  - American Family Association
  - Americans for Prosperity
  - Eagle Forum
  - Freedom Watch
  - Freedom Works
  - The Heritage Foundation

- Use the Teacher and Student Guide to Analyzing Websites to critically evaluate the content and design of each site.
- Then, compare and contrast the use of persuasion techniques in each website. What did you find persuasive? Why?
• Finally, **design your own advocacy group** based on a social issue of interest to you and **create a mock design of a website** that features some of the persuasion and design techniques you discovered during this activity.

**Additional Resources**

• [Special Interest Groups' Use of Social Media as a Weapon](#)
• [#AdvocatingForChange: The Strategic Use of Hashtags in Social Media Advocacy](#)

**Connecting to the eBook**

*Building Democracy for All: Fundamental Principles and Values of American Life*
Connecting to the Standards

- **Massachusetts Civics & Government Standards**
  - Define and provide examples of fundamental principles and values of American political and civic life. (Massachusetts Curriculum Framework for History and Social Studies) [8.T4.4]

- **ISTE Standards**
  - Digital Citizen
    - 2c: Students demonstrate an understanding of and respect for the rights and obligations of using and sharing intellectual property.
  - Knowledge Constructor
    - 3a: Students plan and employ effective research strategies to locate information and other resources for their intellectual or creative pursuits.
    - 3b: Students evaluate the accuracy, perspective, credibility and relevance of information, media, data or other resources.
  - Creative Communicator
    - 6a: Students choose the appropriate platforms and tools for meeting the desired objectives of their creation or communication.
    - 6b: Students create original works or responsibly repurpose or remix digital resources into new creations.
    - 6d: Students publish or present content that customizes the message and medium for the intended audiences.

- **DLCS Standards**
  - Ethics and Laws (CAS.b)
  - Interpersonal and Societal Impact (CAS.c)
  - Digital Tools (DTC.a)
  - Collaboration and Communication (DTC.b)
  - Research (DTC.c)

- **English Language Arts > History/Social Studies Common Core Standards**
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.5
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.6
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.7
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.8
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.5
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.6
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.8
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.5
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.7
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.8
Youngsters from elementary school to high school and college play digital games for entertainment on gaming devices, computers, and smartphones. NIM, the first mathematical game on a computer was introduced at the World's Fair of 1939-1940. NIMROD, the next version of that game, was created in 1951. In 1962, Spacewar! became the first game playable on multiple stations. Space Invaders arrived in 1980 in advance of a huge expansion of gaming on the then newly created Internet. Xbox was released in 2002; Nintendo Wii in 2006; Angry Birds in 2009; and Pokemon Go in 2016 (see [The History of Online Gaming](https://medium.com), Medium, January 20, 2017)

Online gaming is now everywhere, with mixed and virtual reality experiences emerging as the newest innovation in the gaming industry. But can game play influence young people to become voters and actively-engaged democratic citizens?

[VotingLand](https://voteland.com) by Elizabeth Mooney & Leanna Van is licensed under CC BY NC SA 4.0
Many educators and game designers believe so and are developing serious games to promote civic awareness and participation.

iCivics, founded in 2008 by former Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O’Connor, offers a wide-ranging collection of online games about all aspects of American government and law.

In the run-up to the 2020 Presidential election, the organization Rock the Vote created the game Build the Vote in Minecraft.

The United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction published Stop Disasters! - games that challenge players to take governmental and environmental actions to prevent floods, earthquakes, and other natural calamities.

Spent is an online game about surviving poverty and homelessness.

In these activities, you will evaluate a currently available, politically themed online digital game, then design your own game about voting and politics.

Activity 1: Evaluate a Politically Themed Digital Game

- Choose a politically themed digital game from iCivics, Minecraft, Stop Disasters!, or another source and play it enough so you understand its purpose and structure.
- Critically analyze the purpose, design, and structure of the game, using the following prompts as a guide:
  - What do you think young people will learn from the game?
  - Whose stories are told in the game? Whose stories are left out?
○ How credible and trustworthy is the information in the game?
○ What type of language and visuals are used in the game? How might the language and/or visuals influence the players of the game? Why do you think the game designers chose the specific language/visuals?
○ Why is the game designed the way it is? How do you know this?
○ Do you believe this game can influence young people to vote or to become more engaged as citizens in their communities?

• Then, complete the following activities:
  1. **Create a screen recording video** in which you present your findings.
  2. Identify at least 3 ways to improve the game to increase voting and civic participation by young people and **share these ideas with the game designer** (e.g., write a letter, Tweet to the game company).

**Activity 2: Design Your Own Game**

• Imagine you have been asked to design a game for elementary, middle, or high school students that would influence their thinking about voting and/or civic engagement.
• First, explore gamification principles:
  ○ [Gamification principles for user engagement](#).
  ○ [Gamification Trends in 2019](#).
  ○ [How To Succeed With Gamification By Including Social Learning And Epic Meaning In Your Learning Strategy](#).
• Consider the following prompts:
  ○ How would that game function?
  ○ How would you balance competition for points with social problems to solve?
• Then, **design a pencil and paper or digital prototype of the game**. Check out the following examples for inspiration:
  ○ Example 1: [Sorry not Sorry: How to Vote](#) by Caroline Gabriel, Ruihan Luo, & Sara Shea
  ○ Example 2: [VotingLand](#) by Elizabeth Mooney & Leanna Van
  ○ Example 3: [Memory Matching Game: Voting 101](#) by by Sophia Hajjar and Kayleigh Francis
  ○ Example 4: [CivicsLand](#) by Liv Sanfacon, Brendan Sarles, & Christopher Spinozzi
Game Board:

Card Example:

Uh Oh!
One of your opponents sent in an absentee ballot, but they missed the deadline! Choose an opponent to send back to home.

Sorry not Sorry: How to Vote by Caroline Gabriel, Ruihan Luo, & Sara Shea is licensed under CC BY NC SA 4.0
Additional Resources

- [Serious Games for Government & Politics](#)
- [Serious Game To Experience Leading A Country In Political Turmoil Wins German Award](#)
- [Why You Should Teach With Celeste](#) (video game design)

Connecting to the eBook

[Building Democracy for All: Voting by Mail and How Would You Get More People, Especially Young People, to Vote?](#)

Connecting to the Standards

- [Massachusetts Civics & Government Standards](#)
  - Describe how a democracy provides opportunities for citizens to participate in the political process through elections, political parties and interest groups. (Massachusetts Curriculum Framework for History and Social Studies) [8.T4.5]
- [ISTE Standards](#)
  - Digital Citizen
    - 2c: Students demonstrate an understanding of and respect for the rights and obligations of using and sharing intellectual property.
  - Knowledge Constructor
    - 3a: Students plan and employ effective research strategies to locate information and other resources for their intellectual or creative pursuits.
- 3b: Students evaluate the accuracy, perspective, credibility and relevance of information, media, data or other resources.
- 3d: Students build knowledge by actively exploring real-world issues and problems, developing ideas and theories and pursuing answers and solutions.
  - Innovative Designer
    - 4a: Students know and use a deliberate design process for generating ideas, testing theories, creating innovative artifacts or solving authentic problems.
    - 4b: Students select and use digital tools to plan and manage a design process that considers design constraints and calculated risks.
    - 4c: Students develop, test and refine prototypes as part of a cyclical design process.
    - 4d: Students exhibit a tolerance for ambiguity, perseverance and the capacity to work with open-ended problems.
  - Creative Communicator
    - 6a: Students choose the appropriate platforms and tools for meeting the desired objectives of their creation or communication.
    - 6b: Students create original works or responsibly repurpose or remix digital resources into new creations.
    - 6c: Students communicate complex ideas clearly and effectively by creating or using a variety of digital objects such as visualizations, models or simulations.
    - 6d: Students publish or present content that customizes the message and medium for the intended audiences.

- **DLCS Standards**
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  - Collaboration and Communication (DTC.b)
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  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.8
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.5
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.5
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.7
It is estimated that 72% of U.S. voters actively use social media (Social Media Could Determine the Outcome of the 2020 Election, Forbes, October 26, 2020). Social media provides politicians with expansive new opportunities to use political language and visuals to influence voters.

As Pinar Yildirim of the University of Pennsylvania pointed out, social media platforms, like Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram, allow political figures, particularly newcomers and candidates, to reach millions of people at little or no cost (How Social Media is Shaping Political Campaigns, Knowledge@Wharton, August 17, 2020).

The 2020 election saw enormous investments in social media by candidates and political parties. Both Presidential campaigns set new records for spending on political ads on Facebook.

In these activities you will evaluate social media campaigns for an upcoming election at the local, state, or national level, then you will design an online campaign to support your run for political office.
Activity 1: Evaluate Social Media Campaigns for an Upcoming Election

- Choose a political candidate who is running for office in an upcoming election (within the next 1-2 years). It can be a candidate for President, Senate, House of Representatives, or a state or local office.
- Curate a digital collection (e.g., Wakelet, Padlet, Google Slides) of social media posts by the political candidate.
- Evaluate the political candidate's use of political language, visuals, and propaganda techniques in their social media posts for how it might influence the partisan brain.
- Then, take a deep dive to critically analyze their social media posts within and across social media platforms using the Teacher and Student Guide to Analyzing Social Media.
- Create an interactive image or screen recording in which you deconstruct the meaning behind the words and visuals of the social media posts that you analyzed and share your digital media product with the public to inform their thinking.
  - Interactive image:
    - Start a new Google Drawings canvas.
    - Upload screenshots of social media posts to the canvas.
    - Insert text boxes and shapes to call attention to your findings.
    - Add links to additional information (e.g., the original image source).
  - Screenrecording:
    - If you have a Mac computer, use this shortcut.
    - If you have access to Quicktime, here's how to screenrecord using Quicktime.
    - Otherwise, use a web-based screenrecording tool such as Screencastify, Screencast-o-Matic, or Loom.

Activity 2: Design a Social Media Campaign to Support Your Run for Political Office

- Explore the use of propaganda techniques in the History of Presidential Campaign Posters and Political Commercials from 1952 to 2016.
- Decide which of these propaganda techniques you are going to use to persuade others to vote for you.
- Design a social media campaign to support your run for political office.
  - The social media campaign should include at least 2 videos (e.g., YouTube, Snapchat, TikTok), 5 example posts, and 3 images (e.g., memes, graphics, infographics) designed by you.

Additional Resources:

- 2020 social media voter scorecard
- Is breaking news broken on social media lesson plan
- 5 Things to Check Before Sharing News About Politics
- How to Find Credible Information About the Election (and Avoid Getting Duped)
Connecting to the eBook

Building Democracy for All: Persuasion, Propaganda, and Political Language in Elections

Connecting to the Standards

- **Massachusetts Civics & Government Standards**
  - Evaluate information related to elections. (Massachusetts Curriculum Framework for History and Social Studies) [8.T4.6]

- **ISTE Standards**
  - Digital Citizen
    - 2c: Students demonstrate an understanding of and respect for the rights and obligations of using and sharing intellectual property.
  - Knowledge Constructor
    - 3b: Students evaluate the accuracy, perspective, credibility and relevance of information, media, data or other resources.
    - 3c: Students curate information from digital resources using a variety of tools and methods to create collections of artifacts that demonstrate meaningful connections or conclusions.
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  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.1
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  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.8
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.1
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.7
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.8
Media Spin in the Coverage of Political Debates

Political debates provide politicians with a platform to share ideas and information with their constituents and potential voters. At the presidential level, debates have become huge media events. Some 73 million people watched the first debate between Joe Biden and Donald Trump in 2020.

Leading up to, during, and after the debates, political campaigns and partisan groups try to spin the results. Spin (also called political spin) is a term for how individuals use words and images to portray what happened in ways that put themselves or their political parties in the most favorable terms. Commentators, too, often spin the results of debates in partisan terms.

The origins of spin as a media phenomenon can be traced back to President Theodore Roosevelt, noted historian and journalist David Greenberg in his book, The Republic of Spin (2016). Before then, most newspaper reporters did not even cover the White House. But Roosevelt aggressively began communicating directly with the public as President. He gave Presidential addresses, participated in sit-down interviews with reporters, and went on speech-making tours around the nation. Since then, politicians have been using the media every chance they can to present themselves and their ideas in forcefully positive terms.

Meanwhile, news outlets, eager for viewers as a way to sell advertising, seek to capture and maintain audience attention.

How do these different agendas influence the way messages are framed to viewers?
In these activities, you will examine how news outlets covered the 2020 Vice Presidential debate between Kamala Harris and Mike Pence, then write purposefully biased reports in which you generate political spin about the event from different political perspectives.

**Activity 1: Examine how News Outlets Covered the 2020 Vice Presidential Debate**

- Watch the [2020 vice presidential debate](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2020VicePresidentialDebate), then find news articles from different sides that discuss the performance of Vice President Mike Pence and Senator Kamala Harris.
- Examine how news outlets framed the performance of both candidates using the following prompts as a guide:
  - **Production**: Who wrote this article? What is the article’s message?
  - **Language**: What words are used to tell the story? What do the stories say? How do you know? Give some examples of language showing the author’s bias.
  - **Audience**: Who is this story aimed at? How do you know? How do people access this story?
  - **Bias**: How did the author use biased language, visuals, or perspectives in the news report?
- Then, use the [Teacher and Student Guide to Analyzing News & Newspapers](https://edtechbooks.org/-gSwI) to take a deeper dive into evaluating the news articles.
- **Present your findings in the form of a news report video.**
Activity 2: Produce a Biased Media Report for the 2020 Vice Presidential Debate

- In groups of 3, have one member write a news report purposefully favorable to VP Pence (Fox News style), one member write a news report purposefully favorable to Senator Harris (MSNBC style), and one member write an objective news report for a major newspaper (e.g., New York Times).
- Then, critically review one another's reports using the following prompts as a guide:
  - **Production**: What is the news report’s message? Why was this message chosen?
  - **Language**: What types of words were used to tell the story?
  - **Audience**: Who is the story aimed at? How do you know? How will people access the story?
  - **Bias**: How did the author use biased language, visuals, or perspectives in the news report?
- Based on what you learned, create a presentation, interactive image, or video to inform your peers and family members about political spin as well as the differences between left-leaning, center, and right-leaning news articles about political debates.

Connecting to the eBook

[Building Democracy for All: Presidential Debates in U.S. Politics]
Connecting to the Standards

- **Massachusetts Civics & Government Standards**
  - Evaluate information related to elections. (Massachusetts Curriculum Framework for History and Social Studies) [8.T4.6]

- **ISTE Standards**
  - Digital Citizen
    - 2c: Students demonstrate an understanding of and respect for the rights and obligations of using and sharing intellectual property.
  - Knowledge Constructor
    - 3a: Students plan and employ effective research strategies to locate information and other resources for their intellectual or creative pursuits.
    - 3b: Students evaluate the accuracy, perspective, credibility and relevance of information, media, data or other resources.
  - Creative Communicator
    - 6a: Students choose the appropriate platforms and tools for meeting the desired objectives of their creation or communication.
    - 6b: Students create original works or responsibly repurpose or remix digital resources into new creations.
    - 6d: Students publish or present content that customizes the message and medium for the intended audiences.

- **DLCS Standards**
  - Ethics and Laws (CAS.b)
  - Interpersonal and Societal Impact (CAS.c)
  - Digital Tools (DTC.a)
  - Collaboration and Communication (DTC.b)
  - Research (DTC.c)

- **English Language Arts > History/Social Studies Common Core Standards**
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.1
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.6
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.7
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.8
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.1
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.5
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.6
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.8
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.9
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.1
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.6
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.7
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.8
Celebrities' Influence on Politics

Celebrities have considerable influence in today's media-dominated environment. Celebrities set trends in fashion, food, language, and lifestyles among other things, and people follow their leads.

Many youngsters, both pre-teens and teens, want to become famous when they grow up, defining fame as celebrity status. A research study showed that kids ages 6 to 17 are more likely to want to become a YouTube star, blogger, or vlogger than a doctor, nurse, athlete, teacher, or lawyer (Daily Mail, 2017).

So do celebrities impact how young people think about politics, political figures, or public policy debates?

During elections, celebrities might endorse a political candidate or issue in hopes that their fans will follow in their footsteps. Oprah Winfrey's endorsement of Barack Obama for President in 2008 has been cited as the most impactful celebrity endorsement in history (U.S. Election: What Impact Do Celebrity Endorsements Really Have? The Conversation, October 4, 2016).

Do celebrity endorsements make a real difference for voters? Researchers are undecided. In 2018, 65,000 people registered to vote in Tennessee after Taylor Swift (who had 180 million followers on Instagram) endorsed two Democratic Congressional candidates - one candidate won and the other lost. Swift's endorsement was followed by more than 212,000 new voter registrations across the country, mostly among those in the 18 to 24 age group. Perhaps what celebrities say has more impact on younger voters?
Can you think of some examples of celebrities who have shared their political views or endorsements on social media? Who are these celebrities? In what ways did they influence politics?

In these activities, you will analyze media endorsements by celebrities, and then develop a request (or pitch) to convince a celebrity to endorse your candidate for President in the next election.

**Activity 1: Analyze Celebrity Endorsements in the Media**

- Find an example of a celebrity endorsement of a political figure or a political issue.
  - The example can be any piece of media content (e.g., website, clip from a TV program or movie, a trailer from a video game, social media post, YouTube video, news article).
- Then, consider the following questions:
  - How did the celebrity use persuasive language and/or visuals to communicate their message?
  - How credible, accurate, reliable, and trustworthy was the celebrity’s endorsement? How did you determine this?
  - What influence, if any, will the endorsement have on voters? Why do you think this?
  - Do you think the endorsement will encourage young people to think and/or act differently? Why or why not?
- Share the celebrity endorsement with peers, family members, and community members and survey them about their initial thoughts and reactions. Did this endorsement influence their thinking about the political candidate/issue in any way?
- **Present your findings** from your own analysis and your survey of others in the form of a video, podcast, or blog post.
Activity 2: Request a Celebrity Endorsement for a Presidential Candidate

- Imagine that you are the campaign manager for a Presidential candidate for the next election and you have been tasked with requesting celebrity endorsements for the candidate.
  - Which celebrities would you ask?
  - What message would you want the celebrities to promote?
  - What would you want the celebrities to say in their endorsement?
  - How would you want the endorsement to happen (e.g., in a video game dance? A TikTok video? A news article? A magazine cover?)?
- **Write a letter or social media post** in which you ask a celebrity to endorse a presidential candidate for the next election.

Additional Resources

- [iHeartRadio’s podcast “Why I’m Voting”](#)
- [The Taylor Swift effect: Nashville sounds off on singer’s political endorsements](#)
- [From Sinatra to Taylor Swift: 100 Years of Celebrity Political Endorsements](#), CBC Radio (October 12, 2018)

Connecting to the eBook

[Building Democracy for All: Who Do You Think Are the Most Famous Americans?](#)
Connecting to the Standards

- Massachusetts Civics & Government Standards
  - Apply the knowledge of the meaning of leadership and the qualities of good leaders to evaluate political leaders in the community, state, and national levels. (Massachusetts Curriculum Framework for History and Social Studies) [8.T4.7]

- ISTE Standards
  - Knowledge Constructor
    - 3a: Students plan and employ effective research strategies to locate information and other resources for their intellectual or creative pursuits.
    - 3b: Students evaluate the accuracy, perspective, credibility and relevance of information, media, data or other resources.
    - 3d: Students build knowledge by actively exploring real-world issues and problems, developing ideas and theories and pursuing answers and solutions.
  - Creative Communicator
    - 6a: Students choose the appropriate platforms and tools for meeting the desired objectives of their creation or communication.
    - 6b: Students create original works or responsibly repurpose or remix digital resources into new creations.
    - 6d: Students publish or present content that customizes the message and medium for the intended audiences.

- DLCS Standards
  - Digital Tools (DTC.a)
  - Collaboration and Communication (DTC.b)
  - Research (DTC.c)

- English Language Arts > History/Social Studies Common Core Standards
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.7
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.8
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.8
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.7
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.8
Political Activism Through Social Media

What is activism? The climate justice activist Anjali Appadurai said it is “the practice of addressing an issue, any issue, by challenging those in power” (Activist Handbook, 2021, para. 5). According to Newsela, activism happens “when people fight for social change” (para. 1). Faculty in the Department of Anthropology at Syracuse University frame activism as “organizing, strategizing, mobilizing, and educating” (para. 1). All of these definitions connect activism and change.

Social media is an important tool for activism, advocacy, and change.

In this activity, you will explore how to use social media to advocate for an issue of personal interest while also considering the following questions: What might be the upsides and downsides of online activism? How do individuals evaluate the impact of their activism through social media?

Watch on YouTube https://edtechbooks.org/-fUGG
Activity: Advocate for an Issue You Care About on Social Media

- Research an issue you care about.
- Then, review the Social Media Guide for Advocates.
- Advocate for your issue by interacting with local, state, and/or national elected officials and community members on a social media platform of your choosing.
- Critically evaluate your experience and outcomes.
  - What did you write in your social media posts? How did you determine which words to use?
  - Did you include visuals? Why or why not?
  - How did you use language and visuals to persuade others?
  - How did you interact with elected officials and community members? (e.g., Did you write a post and tag people in it? Reply to posts by elected officials? Direct message community members?)
  - Which posts received the most engagement (e.g., replies, likes, retweets)? Which received the least engagement? Why do you think that is?
  - How did it feel to advocate for an issue you cared about on social media?
  - What impact do you think your actions had on others and/or the community?
- Share your results in the form of a video, blog post, or podcast.

Additional Resources

- Young People, the Internet, and Civic Participation: An Overview of Key Findings from the CivicWeb Project
- UNICEF report: Digital civic engagement by young people
- A Unit on Teaching Student Activism
- 6 Youth-Led Political Movements to Inspire You to Vote
- Six tips to advocate socially
- 10 Picture Books to Introduce Young Readers to Activism

Connecting to the eBook

Building Democracy for All: Youth Activists and Change Makers
Connecting to the Standards

- **Massachusetts Civics & Government Standards**
  - Explain the importance of individuals working cooperatively with their elected leaders. (Massachusetts Curriculum Framework for History and Social Studies) [8.T4.8]

- **ISTE Standards**
  - Digital Citizen
    - 2a: Students cultivate and manage their digital identity and reputation and are aware of the permanence of their actions in the digital world.
    - 2b: Students engage in positive, safe, legal and ethical behavior when using technology, including social interactions online or when using networked devices.
  - Knowledge Constructor
    - 3a: Students plan and employ effective research strategies to locate information and other resources for their intellectual or creative pursuits.
    - 3d: Students build knowledge by actively exploring real-world issues and problems, developing ideas and theories and pursuing answers and solutions.
  - Creative Communicator
    - 6a: Students choose the appropriate platforms and tools for meeting the desired objectives of their creation or communication.
    - 6b: Students create original works or responsibly repurpose or remix digital resources into new creations.
    - 6d: Students publish or present content that customizes the message and medium for the intended audiences.

- **DLCS Standards**
  - Safety and Security (CAS.a)
  - Collaboration and Communication (DTC.b)
  - Research (DTC.c)

- **English Language Arts > History/Social Studies Common Core Standards**
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.7
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.7
The **public sector** is the part of the United States economy that is owned and operated by federal, state, and local governments. It includes governmental agencies, police and fire departments, public schools and colleges, the military, and other agencies and departments. The U.S. Post Office, National Parks, the Internal Revenue Service (IRS), and the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) are all part of the public sector.

State and local governments are currently experiencing enormous challenges in recruiting workers for public sector jobs. An ongoing “**silver tsunami**” (the steady retirement of older baby boom-age workers) combined with a decline in job applications due to the COVID-19 pandemic has created a significant number of public sector employment openings throughout the country. And, the public sector is facing increasingly stiff competition from the private sector organizations for highly talented professional, managerial, and technical workers, especially those with two- and four-year college degrees.

In these activities, you will design a job recruitment commercial and social media post to influence others to pursue careers in the public sector.

**Activity 1: Design a Public Sector Job Recruitment Commercial**

Imagine you work for a state government that has a significant shortage of workers in a certain public service sector (education, agriculture, postal service, transportation, etc...). In this activity you will create a TV or online commercial to recruit adults to pursue careers in that public sector area.
• Start by curating a Wakelet, Padlet, or Google slides collection of TV and online (e.g., YouTube, social media) commercials for public sector and private sector jobs.
• Use the Teacher and Student Guide to Analyzing Advertisements to take a deep dive into learning more about the production, design, and messaging of the commercials you found.
• Then, apply the design and persuasion techniques that you uncovered during your critical analysis to create your own job recruitment commercial.
  ◦ Select a public sector job and conduct research to learn more about who works in that field and why they work there (e.g., what are their goals?).
  ◦ Next, write a script and design a storyboard using the following prompts as a guide:
    ▪ Why is the job important to this state/country?
    ▪ What might happen if there is a shortage of workers and how will that influence people/society?
    ▪ What is the projected future landscape and growth potential of the job?
  ◦ Finally, use digital tools or apps to turn your script and storyboard into a TV or web commercial.

**Activity 2: Post About Public Sector Jobs on Social Media**

• Read the article What Are Public Service Jobs (And Are They Right For You)?
• Then, create a tweet, TikTok, Snapchat, Instagram, or other social media post to influence others to apply to public sector jobs.

**Additional Resources**

• Governmentjobs.com is the leading online job board for public sector employment
• What Are Public Sector Jobs and Are They Right for You?

**Connecting to the eBook**

Building Democracy for All: Working for Local, State, and Federal Government
Connecting to the Standards

- **Massachusetts Civics & Government Standards**
  - Explain the importance of public service and identify career and other opportunities in public service at the local, state and national levels. (Massachusetts Curriculum Framework for History and Social Studies) [8.T4.9]

- **ISTE Standards**
  - Digital Citizen
    - 2c: Students demonstrate an understanding of and respect for the rights and obligations of using and sharing intellectual property.
  - Knowledge Constructor
    - 3a: Students plan and employ effective research strategies to locate information and other resources for their intellectual or creative pursuits.
    - 3b: Students evaluate the accuracy, perspective, credibility and relevance of information, media, data or other resources.
    - 3d: Students build knowledge by actively exploring real-world issues and problems, developing ideas and theories and pursuing answers and solutions.
  - Creative Communicator
    - 6a: Students choose the appropriate platforms and tools for meeting the desired objectives of their creation or communication.
    - 6b: Students create original works or responsibly repurpose or remix digital resources into new creations.
    - 6d: Students publish or present content that customizes the message and medium for the intended audiences.

- **DLCS Standards**
  - Ethics and Laws (CAS.b)
  - Digital Tools (DTC.a)
  - Collaboration and Communication (DTC.b)
  - Research (DTC.c)

- **English Language Arts > History/Social Studies Common Core Standards**
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.5
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.6
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.7
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.8
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.5
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.6
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.7
Images of Teachers and Teaching

What images come to mind when you think of the word “teacher?” What would you create if you were asked to "Draw a Teacher Teaching?"

Over the decades, when children were asked to draw a scientist, nearly every youngster in the 1960s and 1970s, regardless of gender identity, drew a male scientist (Edutopia, May 22, 2019). Gradually, over time, the pattern shifted, and today about 58% of students who identify as female are more likely to draw a woman scientist. Nevertheless, despite progress toward gender equity in many fields, at the high school level, across all students and genders, drawings of male scientists outnumber drawings of female scientists 4 to 1. Longstanding educational and career stereotypes about women in science remain entrenched.

Conventional images of teachers also seem resistant to change. In a study comparing the drawings of teachers by college undergraduates, student teaching interns, and practicing teachers, the undergraduates tended to display a teacher at the front of the classroom with students sitting in rows passively listening, while student teaching interns drew students rather than adults at the center of the learning process, and practicing teachers drew more teacher-centered scenes that showed
frustration and unhappiness on the part of the adults (Sinclair et al., 2013). What is happening that might explain these different visions of teaching and teachers?

In these activities, you will first design an interactive image of a teacher in a 21st century school before evaluating images of teachers taken from different media sources over the past 100 years. As you engage in these activities, consider: "How do you think images of teaching might impact how students in K-12 schools think about teaching and education as a possible career choice?"

**Activity 1: Design an Interactive Image of a 21st Century Teacher**

1. Start a new Google Drawings canvas.
2. Sketch an image of a 21st century teacher teaching.
3. Add text boxes with more information and/or hyperlinks to external sources (e.g., information about 21st century teachers).
4. Go to Insert --> Image --> Search the Web and find Creative Commons/Public Domain images to enrich your drawing. Hyperlink the images to go to external sources (e.g., a YouTube video, article, information about the image).
5. Next, complete Activity 2 (below).
6. Then, return to your drawing and determine whether you want to revise it based on what you learned during Activity 2.

**Activity 2: Evaluate Images of American Teachers**

- Curate a digital collection or a digital timeline of images of teachers and teaching. Include at least one image created during each decade from the 1920s to today. Here are some images you might add to your collection:
  - 1910 imagines what 2020 will look like
  - Image of teaching, 1920s
  - 1957 stamp from the National Education Association
  - The American teacher, 2020-2021 by Art of Al Abbazia
  - Remote Teaching is Hard
  - Super Teacher
- Use the Teacher and Student Guide to Analyzing Images to critically examine the production, design, and message of these images.
- Based on what you learned from your critical visual analysis of the images:
  1. Return to Activity 1 and consider whether you want to revise your drawing.
  2. Design a TikTok or Snapchat video to inform others about the role of teachers and teaching in present-day society and discuss how media can influence and distort people's perspective of teachers/teaching.

**Connecting to the eBook**

Building Democracy for All: Is Teaching a Career for You?
Connecting to the Standards

- **Massachusetts Civics & Government Standards**
  - Explain the importance of public service and identify career and other opportunities in public service at the local, state and national levels. (Massachusetts Curriculum Framework for History and Social Studies) [8.T4.9]

- **ISTE Standards**
  - Digital Citizen
    - 2c: Students demonstrate an understanding of and respect for the rights and obligations of using and sharing intellectual property.
  - Knowledge Constructor
    - 3b: Students evaluate the accuracy, perspective, credibility and relevance of information, media, data or other resources.
  - Creative Communicator
    - 6b: Students create original works or responsibly repurpose or remix digital resources into new creations.
    - 6d: Students publish or present content that customizes the message and medium for the intended audiences.

- **DLCS Standards**
  - Ethics and Laws (CAS.b)
  - Interpersonal and Societal Impact (CAS.c)
  - Digital Tools (DTC.a)
  - Collaboration and Communication (DTC.b)
  - Research (DTC.c)

- **English Language Arts > History/Social Studies Common Core Standards**
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.1
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.5
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.6
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.7
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.6
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.5
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.7
For Whom is and Could Your School Be Named

Every one of the nation's 130,930 public schools has a name. While many are named for the town or street where they are located (e.g., Boston Latin School; Pleasant Street School) or a nearby geographic feature (e.g., Monument Mountain School), thousands are named for historically important individuals.

Many schools are named after former Presidents (see list of educational institutions named after presidents). Some schools are named for other prominent historical figures. For example, Dunbar High School in Washington, DC, the first public high school for Black children in the United States, is named for the poet Paul Lawrence Dunbar.
School names express not only the history of the school but of the country. In 2020, there were approximately 300 schools in 20 states named for men associated with the Confederacy during the Civil War (Mitchell, 2020). Dozens of those schools are in Texas, Georgia, and Alabama. Robert E. Lee is the most frequently named former Confederate figure. Some of these schools have been renamed following the death of George Floyd and the Black Lives Matter protests in 2020.

For whom is your school named and for whom might it be renamed to? The question is both timely and complicated. The online activity When Should a School Be Renamed? from KQED Learn poses the following questions for students and teachers to consider:

- What should be done if the person for whom a school is named engaged in problematic activities or undemocratic activities?
- What other names for a school might more closely reflect the values of a school’s curriculum?

In this activity, you will research the name of your school. Then you will design a proposal for changing the name of your school or another school in your state.
Activity 1: Research and Present the History of the Name of Your School

- Do you know the history of the name of your school? Do other students? Do teachers?
- Engage in critical research to learn more about the history of the name of your school:
  - Conduct an Internet search to see what you can find about the history of the name of your school.
  - Look at digital and print materials, such as your school website and brochures, for your school.
  - Survey and/or interview members of the school (e.g., classmates, school librarian, administrators, PTA members) and broader community (e.g., family members, local librarians, town or city government officials) to see what they know about the history of the name of your school.
- Then, design a video to educate your school and local community about the history of the name of your school. Make sure to present a critical perspective that dives deep into the history of the naming of the school and discusses the social, historical, and political contexts of the time in which the school was named (e.g., was the school named in the 1960's when many individuals were fighting for civil rights? How might that have influenced the naming decision?).

Activity 2: Propose the Renaming of a School

In New York City, an activist named Jacob Morris has led an effort to rename city streets after Black New Yorkers (Boyer-Dry, 2021). Gold Street is now Ida B. Wells Place and there are 40 other roadways renamed for individuals including singer Paul Robeson, civil right activist Ella Baker, lawyer Charles Hamilton, and Supreme Court Justice Thurgood Marshall.

Not everyone in the African American community appreciates the efforts of Mr. Morris who is White and works alone. They urge a more collaborative approach that involves more community members in renaming streets to more accurately convey the history of the city and its peoples.

In this activity, you will take a collaborative approach to proposing the renaming of a school by collecting and analyzing data from school and community members.

- First, read the picture book *Who Came Down That Road?* by George Ella Lyon (illustrated by Peter Catalanotto) that tells the story of a mother and child imagining all the people who traveled down an old, old road in their community.
- Then, conduct extensive research to identify diverse individuals who should be recognized in your community, including African Americans, Native Americans, Hispanic Americans, Women, LGBTQ individuals, Disabled Individuals, and other traditionally marginalized groups of individuals whose lives encompass the American ideals of liberty and justice for all. Make sure to:
  - Examine Internet articles, videos, and resources.
  - Survey classmates, friends, family members, and individuals in the broader school community.
  - Interview at least three people.
- Identify a school in your local town or region of the state that you think should be renamed.
- Write a proposal to town or city officials making the case to rename that school. Include data
from your research to showcase the collaborative approach you took to developing your proposal.

**Additional Resources**

- [Under proposal, two Guilford schools could be renamed after A&T Four, Carolyn Coleman](#)
- [MMSD outlines renaming process for Thomas Jefferson Middle School](#)

**Connecting to the eBook**

**Connecting to the Standards**

- [Massachusetts Civics & Government Standards](#)
- [ISTE Standards](#)
- [DLCS Standards](#)
- [English Language Arts > History/Social Studies Common Core Standards](#)
Representing Trans Identities

Transgender refers to “people whose gender identity differs from the sex they were assigned at birth” (GLADD Media Reference Guide: Transgender, para. 5).

Nearly 2% of high school students in the U.S. identify as transgender, and more than one-third of them attempt suicide (The Washington Post, January 24, 2019). Discrimination based on gender identity is prohibited in schools, yet many LGBTQ+ students face bullying, harassment, and feel unsafe in classrooms and corridors (Education in a Pandemic, U.S. Department of Education, Office of Civil Rights, 2021).

What role does the media play in influencing how transgender students are treated by others?

If you were (or are) a part of a minority group or stigmatized community, would you want a more realistic representation of your group in the media that could victimize your group or an idealistic representation that could present a new reality for your group? Do media producers have a responsibility to make sure that their portrayals of marginalized groups are accurate?

In the following activities, you will analyze transgender representation in television and movies and then create a transgender character who accurately reflects the realities of gender identity and
gender expression in today's society.

Activity 1: Analyze Transgender Representation in TV and Movies

- Explore the following resources:
  - Television Shows and Movies with Transgender Representation.
  - Victims or Villains: Examining Ten Years of Transgender Images on Television.
  - 2020 GLAAD Studio Responsibility Index.
- Then, select a producer, writer, and/or director of a TV show or movie from one of the previous resources and write a PRAISE or PROTEST letter or social media post to them based on how they portrayed transgender characters in their show or film.

Activity 2: Create a Transgender Character for TV or Movies

- Create a transgender main character for a movie or TV show.
- Consider the following prompts:
  - What kinds of challenges would your transgender character face - related and unrelated to their gender identity?
  - How does the conflict between the majority attitudes and individual goals influence transgender individuals' daily lives?
  - How can you create characters that are more realistic and complex?
  - What misconceptions and stereotypes would you include or leave out? Why?
- Then, write a script for a new TV episode or movie sequel featuring the transgender character as they navigate the issue of their individual rights/liberty conflicting with majority attitudes and perspectives.

Additional Resources

- Transgender Representation in the Media
- With a Critical Eye: Transgender Representation in the Media
- The Misrepresentation Of Transgender People In Media And Why It Needs To Change

Connecting to the eBook

Building Democracy for All: What are Transgender Students' Rights at School?
Connecting to the Standards

**Massachusetts Civics & Government Standards**
- Analyze issues involving liberty in conflict with equality or authority, individual rights in conflict with the common good, or majority rule in conflict with minority rights.  
(Massachusetts Curriculum Framework for History and Social Studies) [8.T4.10]

**ISTE Standards**
- **Knowledge Constructor**
  - 3a: Students plan and employ effective research strategies to locate information and other resources for their intellectual or creative pursuits.
  - 3b: Students evaluate the accuracy, perspective, credibility and relevance of information, media, data or other resources.
- **Creative Communicator**
  - 6a: Students choose the appropriate platforms and tools for meeting the desired objectives of their creation or communication.
  - 6b: Students create original works or responsibly repurpose or remix digital resources into new creations.
  - 6d: Students publish or present content that customizes the message and medium for the intended audiences.

**DLCS Standards**
- Interpersonal and Societal Impact (CAS.c)
- Collaboration and Communication (DTC.b)
- Research (DTC.c)

**English Language Arts > History/Social Studies Common Core Standards**
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.5
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.6
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.7
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.6
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.7
Media Framing of the Events of January 6, 2021

What really happened on January 6, 2021 at the U.S. Capitol?

How will it be discussed in history and civics classes not only today, but 10, 20, 30 or more years from now?

Was it a protest, a riot, an insurrection, a siege, or something else?

Was it done by a mob, a few bad actors, lawful protestors, political opportunists, or a group of carefully planned conspirators?

Defenders claimed that the people who marched to the Capitol were living up to the ideals of the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution by demonstrating against what they regarded as an unfair election.

Critics claimed nothing could be further from what actually happened. They contended that a crowd,
intentionally inflamed by speeches by political leaders, became a violent mob, and sought to overturn the results of a free and fair presidential election, and in so doing, turned against the ideals and values of American democracy.

The public's understanding of January 6 depends in large part on how the media chose to frame it. **Media framing** is how reporters and editors present what happened - the words used in stories, the images shown in videos, the pictures that accompany news bulletins, the choice of who to interview to gain information and insights, etc...

Different media outlets offered different framing, as evidenced by this report from PBS Newshour (There’s a Battle of Words to Describe January 6, 2021, Here’s Why It Matters). The following resources from AllSides.com offer more examples of different media framing: Capitol Breach Coverage Demonstrates Media Bias and Capitol Chaos.

In the following activities, you will compare and contrast different media framing of the January 6, 2021 events at the Capitol.

**Activity 1: Compare and Contrast the Media Framing of January 6, 2021**

- Choose at least three media outlets that have different political perspectives (e.g., left-leaning, right-leaning).
- Use the Teacher and Student Guides to Analyzing Media to critically examine their print and TV/livestream coverage from the day of January 6, 2021 until now.
- Then, based on your findings, create a video in which you discuss how different media outlets framed the people who were involved with the events of January 6, 2021 as either individuals who demonstrated political courage or individuals who failed to live up to the ideals of the Constitution.
  - Include screenshots of news articles/images and screenrecorded news clips in your video.
  - Screenrecording:
    - If you have a Mac computer, use this shortcut.
    - If you have access to Quicktime, here's how to screenrecord using Quicktime.
    - Otherwise, use a web-based screen recording tool such as Screencastify, Screencast-o-Matic, or Loom.

**Activity 2: Examine Media About and By the United States House Select Committee on the January 6 Attack**

The events of January 6 continue to make news months later. In July, 2021, the United States House Select Committee on the January 6 Attack held its first hearings on what happened that day. The committee's investigations have continued throughout 2021.

- Use the Teacher and Student Guides to Analyzing Media to critically examine how the House Select Committee is using media, including social media, news articles, and their website, to convey information to readers and viewers.
- Then, explore the AllSides page about the January 6 Commission.
What differences in coverage do you find between different media sources? Why do you think this is?

- Based on your critical analysis, **write a proposal or a series of tweets** to the January 6 Commission that offers advice about how to improve the media portrayal and reach of their work.

## Additional Resources

- [The January 6, 2021 Insurrection at the Capitol](#)
- [United States House Select Committee's Media Center](#)

## Connecting to the eBook

[Building Democracy for All: McCarthyism, the Red Scare, and the Lavender Scare](#)
Connecting to the Standards

- **Massachusetts Civics & Government Standards**
  - Examine the varied understandings of the role of elected representatives and discuss those who have demonstrated political courage or those whose actions have failed to live up to the ideals of the Constitution. (Massachusetts Curriculum Framework for History and Social Studies) [8.T4.11]

- **ISTE Standards**
  - Digital Citizen
    - 2c: Students demonstrate an understanding of and respect for the rights and obligations of using and sharing intellectual property.
  - Knowledge Constructor
    - 3b: Students evaluate the accuracy, perspective, credibility and relevance of information, media, data or other resources.
    - 3d: Students build knowledge by actively exploring real-world issues and problems, developing ideas and theories and pursuing answers and solutions.
  - Creative Communicator
    - 6a: Students choose the appropriate platforms and tools for meeting the desired objectives of their creation or communication.
    - 6b: Students create original works or responsibly repurpose or remix digital resources into new creations.
    - 6d: Students publish or present content that customizes the message and medium for the intended audiences.

- **DLCS Standards**
  - Ethics and Laws (CAS.b)
  - Interpersonal and Societal Impact (CAS.c)
  - Digital Tools (DTC.a)
  - Collaboration and Communication (DTC.b)
  - Research (DTC.c)

- **English Language Arts > History/Social Studies Common Core Standards**
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.1
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.5
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.6
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.7
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.8
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  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.3
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.5
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.6
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.8
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.1
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.3
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.6
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.7
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.8
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.9
Music as Protest Art

Music has been at the center of expressing protest and speaking out against social injustice from the American Revolutionary era to the Black Lives Matter protests in the summer of 2020.

"Yankee Doodle" is widely regarded as the first American protest song, though it was originally written by British soldiers to mock the Americans and then adopted by the colonists as a rallying song for revolution.

"Free America" was another one of the first protest songs. It was composed by Joseph Warren, the man who enlisted Paul Revere and William Dawes to spread the alarm that the British were coming on April 18, 1775.

Protest songs are performed by singers who bring the music and its message to the people. A Jewish poet, Abel Meeropol (pseudonym Lewis Allen), wrote the song "Strange Fruit," which was sung by Billie Holiday to close her concerts (Blues as Protest, Library of Congress). Woody Guthrie, born in Oklahoma in 1912, became a voice for ordinary people after traveling the country during the economic hard times of the Great Depression. His ballad "This Land Is Your Land" is one of 3000 songs he wrote during his lifetime.
In the current era, Black artists are speaking aggressively against White racism through music.

In these activities, you will remix lyrics from famous protest songs in U.S. history to create your own protest piece related to an issue you care about deeply. Then, you will analyze a political protest song and explore how it is used in social media today.

**Activity 1: Remix Lyrics into Your Own Protest Song**

- Then, **remix song lyrics** from historical American protest songs into your own song of protest for an issue of interest to you today.
  - Songs you might include:
    - Go Down Moses
    - John Brown’s Body
    - The Battle Hymn of the Republic
    - Strange Fruit
    - This Land Is Your Land
    - Blowin’ in the Wind
    - A Change is Going to Come

**Activity 2: Analyze Political Songs on Social Media**

- Find a song that **expresses political protest**.
- Research the song:
  - What is the main political message behind the lyrics?
  - What was the social, historical, and cultural context of the song?
  - What impact did the song make?
- Search this song on social media, including TikTok and YouTube. What are some ways young people engage with the song today?
  - What kind of comments do they get from posting the song?
  - Does sharing the song on social media help raise awareness of the political issue?
- **Present your findings in the form of a podcast or music video.**

**Additional Resources**

- [From Lil Baby to T-Pain: 10 New Black Lives Matter Protest Songs That You Have to Hear](#)
- [Social Justice Songs for Kids: A Playlist](#)
- [Why 2020's Protest Songs Aren't Part of a Passing Trend](#), Billboard (December 19, 2020)

**Connecting to the eBook**

[Building Democracy for All: How Can Books and Music Express Political Protests?](#)
Connecting to the Standards

- **Massachusetts Civics & Government Standards**
  - Examine the role of political protest in a democracy. (Massachusetts Curriculum Framework for History and Social Studies) [8.T4.12]

- **ISTE Standards**
  - Digital Citizen
    - 2c: Students demonstrate an understanding of and respect for the rights and obligations of using and sharing intellectual property.
  - Knowledge Constructor
    - 3a: Students plan and employ effective research strategies to locate information and other resources for their intellectual or creative pursuits.
    - 3b: Students evaluate the accuracy, perspective, credibility and relevance of information, media, data or other resources.
    - 3d: Students build knowledge by actively exploring real-world issues and problems, developing ideas and theories and pursuing answers and solutions.
  - Creative Communicator
    - 6a: Students choose the appropriate platforms and tools for meeting the desired objectives of their creation or communication.
    - 6b: Students create original works or responsibly repurpose or remix digital resources into new creations.
    - 6d: Students publish or present content that customizes the message and medium for the intended audiences.

- **DLCS Standards**
  - Ethics and Laws (CAS.b)
  - Digital Tools (DTC.a)
  - Collaboration and Communication (DTC.b)
  - Research (DTC.c)

- **English Language Arts > History/Social Studies Common Core Standards**
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.4
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.5
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.6
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.4
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.5
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.4
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.5
Special Interest Groups, Political Action Committees (PACs), and Labor Unions are constantly engaging in political advocacy through advertising. They devote enormous amounts of time and resources to persuading voters and citizens to support their positions on issues and candidates.

In the past, these organizations relied mainly on newspapers, direct mail, and television advertising to influence voters and citizens.

However, when running for President in 2008, Barack Obama's campaign changed the political advertising landscape by using social media posts and online ads to reach voters. Since then, the amount of money spent on online ads has gone from the millions to the billions and continues to grow with every election cycle on Facebook and Google and other online platforms. Many of these ads are carefully designed to microtarget specific groups with specific messages.

Paradoxically, as the American Bar Association has pointed out, “lying in political ads is also perfectly legal” because what is said is considered political speech and that is protected under the First Amendment (Political Advertising on Social Media, June 26, 2020). As a consequence, misinformation and disinformation keeps reappearing during and after elections, including in 2021 with the "Big Lie" that the 2020 Election was stolen from the former President.
In these activities, you will examine the relationship between PACs and labor unions and the media and consider how these organizations' use of and inclusion in the media influences voters and shapes democracy.

**Activity 1: Evaluate Political Action Committee (PAC) Advertisements**

- Curate a digital collection of political ads from PACs during the 2020 election. Here are some examples you might include:
  - America First Action Super PAC
  - Preserve America PAC
- Use the Teacher and Student Guide to Analyzing Advertisements to critically evaluate the ads.
- Closely look at the information provided in the ads - Did you find any potential inaccuracies and misinformation in their appeals to voters? (see Super PAC ad attacks Comey before testimony). Were some PACs less truthful than others? Why do you think that might be?
- Based on your analysis, create a social media campaign to bring awareness about how PACs seek to influence voters and shape democracy through ads.
  - The social media campaign should include at least 2 videos (e.g., YouTube, Snapchat, TikTok), 5 example posts, and 3 images (e.g., memes, graphics, infographics) designed by you.
  - Here is a social media campaign example created by Justin Lo, Daniel Mulno, and David Warde and here is a Twitter campaign example by Sara Shea.

**Activity 2: Investigate the Portrayal of Unions in the News**

- Many prominent news sources have sections of their websites dedicated to labor unions.
- Select at least 3 stories from each of the following news outlets:
  - Labor Unions - US News
  - Labor Unions - Fox News
  - Labor Unions - CNBC
  - Organized Labor - The New York Times
- Then, use the Teacher and Student Guide to Analyzing News & Newspaper to conduct a critical evaluation of the articles you selected.
- Create a TikTok video, Snapchat video, or social media post in which you discuss how the news portrayal of unions influences citizens, voters, and democracy.

**Additional Resources**

- Top PACS 2019-2020
- The Labor Press Project - University of Washington
- Labor Union Opinion - Gallup

**Connecting to the eBook**

Building Democracy for All: Special Interest Groups, Political Action Committees (PACs and Super PACs), and Labor Unions

Critical Media Literacy and Civic Learning
Connecting to the Standards

- **Massachusetts Civics & Government Standards**
  - Examine the influence of public and private interest groups in a democracy, including policy organizations in shaping debate about public policy. (Massachusetts Curriculum Framework for History and Social Studies) [8.T4.13]

- **ISTE Standards**
  - Digital Citizen
    - 2c: Students demonstrate an understanding of and respect for the rights and obligations of using and sharing intellectual property.
  - Knowledge Constructor
    - 3a: Students plan and employ effective research strategies to locate information and other resources for their intellectual or creative pursuits.
    - 3b: Students evaluate the accuracy, perspective, credibility and relevance of information, media, data or other resources.
    - 3c: Students curate information from digital resources using a variety of tools and methods to create collections of artifacts that demonstrate meaningful connections or conclusions.
  - Creative Communicator
    - 6a: Students choose the appropriate platforms and tools for meeting the desired objectives of their creation or communication.
    - 6b: Students create original works or responsibly repurpose or remix digital resources into new creations.
    - 6d: Students publish or present content that customizes the message and medium for the intended audiences.

- **DLCS Standards**
  - Ethics and Laws (CAS.b)
  - Interpersonal and Societal Impact (CAS.c)
  - Digital Tools (DTC.a)
  - Collaboration and Communication (DTC.b)
  - Research (DTC.c)

- **English Language Arts > History/Social Studies Common Core Standards**
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.5
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.6
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.7
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.8
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.5
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.6
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.8
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.6
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.7
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.8
5. The Constitution, Amendments, and Supreme Court Decisions

The United States Constitution sets forth a government, in Abraham Lincoln’s famous phrase, “of the people, by the people, for the people.” It is a living, evolving document, its meaning changing over time through Congressional use of the “necessary and proper clause,” the passing of amendments, and decisions by the Supreme Court under its practice of judicial review.

The Civil War challenged the very existence of the Constitution in its dispute over the continuing slavery of Black Americans. Indeed, all of U.S. history has included struggles by individuals and groups to achieve constitutionally guaranteed civil rights and equal protection for race, gender, and disability.

The media literacy activities in this section explore the Prohibition era in U.S. history, efforts to pass the Equal Rights Amendment and the Equality Act, how the Civil War is presented in historical publications, how race and gender are represented on U.S. currency, the importance of reading aloud Supreme Court dissents, and the potential impacts of cameras in federal and state courtrooms.
# Media Literacy Activities Choice Board

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Media Literacy Choice Board</th>
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| **Make Social Media For and Against Prohibition**  
Research and create short videos about the prohibition movement from both sides. |
| **Evaluate the ERA Is Discussed on Twitter**  
Examine people's opinions about the ERA on Twitter and create a video, paper, or podcast about your findings. |
| **Examine Civil War Recruitment Advertisements**  
Review recruitment advertisements and design a modern-day ad on social media. |
| **Campaign for Changes in the Images on Currency**  
Create a social media campaign to promote adding a woman, Native American, or Black American of your choosing to U.S. currency. |
| **Compare and Contrast Politicians' Use of Twitter Regarding the Equality Act**  
Evaluate how Congress members discussed the Equality Act on Twitter and create a video, blog, or paper detailing your findings. |
| **The Constitution, Amendments, and Supreme Court Decisions Media Literacy Choice Board** |
| **Design a Social Media Campaign for the ERA**  
Design a social media campaign to build support for the inclusion of the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) in the Constitution. |
| **Design a Format for Future Supreme Court TV Coverage**  
Propose how to broadcast the Supreme Court oral arguments on TV. |
| **Analyze the Implications of Cameras in Courtrooms**  
Conduct research and write an opinion piece about pros and cons of allowing cameras in the Supreme Court. |
| **Examine the Images of Women and People of Color on Currency**  
Evaluate a currency featuring a woman, Native American, or African American and present your findings. |

*The Constitution, Amendments and Supreme Court Decisions* Choice Board by Robert W. Maloy, Ed.D., Sara Shea, & Taney Trust Ph.D., College of Education, University of Massachusetts Amherst is licensed under CC BY NC SA 4.0

The Constitution, Amendments, and Supreme Court Decisions Media Literacy Choice Board (view)  
(make your own copy of this choice board to remix/share/line)
Prohibition in the Media

Prohibition and its repeal was a much more complex era of American history than has been typically understood. The support for and against Prohibition was created by a mix of social, economic, and political factors surrounding the use of alcohol. Some considered alcohol as a threat to traditional values, while others considered it just another commodity to be managed by businesses and consumers.

Individuals and groups (known as Wets and Drys) on each side of the issue used the media of the day (radio, newspapers, music) to influence public policy. But what media messages would people have created if they had access to modern-day social media?

In this activity, you will examine how individuals and groups used advertisements, cartoons, videos, and other media to spread messages for and against Prohibition and then you will create your own video advertisement for and against Prohibition.

**Activity: Make Social Media For and Against Prohibition**

Imagine you are a social media marketer, but the year is 1919. One manager of a pro-prohibition
group and one manager of an anti-prohibition group have come to you asking to create a one-minute video supporting their cause for social media platforms.

- First, conduct Internet research and curate a collection of primary source advertisements, cartoons, videos, and any other media for and against Prohibition on a Wakelet, Padlet, website, slide deck, or spreadsheet.
  - Resources to get started:
    - Anti-Saloon League Museum website
    - Prohibition in the 1920s: Political Cartoons
    - Brewers’ Campaign Against Prohibition: Topics in Chronicling America
- Use the Teacher and Student Guide to Analyzing Advertisements & Teacher and Student Guide to Analyzing Cartoons, Comics, and Memes to closely examine the primary sources that you found.
- Then, using what you learned from your research, design a one-minute video for each group (pro-prohibition and anti-prohibition) to persuade political decision-makers (e.g., House of Representative members; State Legislators) to vote for their movement. Make sure to include supporting context evidence for either side that covers the social, economic, historical, and political factors surrounding prohibition in 1919.

**Additional Resources**

- Prohibition - Primary Sources
- Why You Couldn’t See a Liquor Ad on TV for Half of the 20th Century
- The Twenties in Political Cartoons
- Media Literacy Connections: Analyzing the Equal Rights Amendment in the Media

**Connecting to the eBook**

[Building Democracy for All: Prohibition and the 18th and 21st Amendments]
Connecting to the Standards

- **Massachusetts Civics & Government Standards**
  - *Explain the historical context and significance of changes in the Constitution, including key amendments.* (Massachusetts Curriculum Framework for History and Social Studies) [8.T5.2]

- **ISTE Standards**
  - Digital Citizen
    - 2c: Students demonstrate an understanding of and respect for the rights and obligations of using and sharing intellectual property.
  - Knowledge Constructor
    - 3a: Students plan and employ effective research strategies to locate information and other resources for their intellectual or creative pursuits.
    - 3b: Students evaluate the accuracy, perspective, credibility and relevance of information, media, data, or other resources.
    - 3c: Students curate information from digital resources using a variety of tools and methods to create collections of artifacts that demonstrate meaningful connections or conclusions.
  - Creative Communicator
    - 6a: Students choose the appropriate platforms and tools for meeting the desired objectives of their creation or communication.
    - 6b: Students create original works or responsibly repurpose or remix digital resources into new creations.
    - 6d: Students publish or present content that customizes the message and medium for the intended audiences.

- **DLCS Standards**
  - Ethics and Laws (CAS.b)
  - Digital Tools (DTC.a)
  - Collaboration and Communication (DTC.b)
  - Research (DTC.c)

- **English Language Arts > History/Social Studies Common Core Standards**
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.1
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.2
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.7
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.9
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.1
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.2
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.6
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.9
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.1
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.2
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.6
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.7
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.8
The Equal Rights Amendment on Twitter and Other Social Media

The Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) continues to be a sharply contested constitutional topic. An Associated Press/NORC Center for Public Affairs Research poll in 2020 found that 3 in 4 Americans support the amendment, but that support has not translated into making the ERA part of the Constitution.

Meanwhile, proponents and opponents make extensive use of the media, particularly social media, to build support for their side of the issue.

In these activities, you will explore how the ERA is being discussed on social media and then you will design a social media campaign to convince politicians to vote for the passage of the ERA.

Activity 1: Evaluate how the ERA is Discussed on Twitter

- On Twitter, review how citizens and politicians discuss their opinions on passing the ERA.
- Start by looking into political hashtags like #passtheERAnow, #equalrightsamendment, and
Then, type "equal rights amendment" into the Twitter search tool and explore the results.

Curate a collection of social media accounts and posts in support of or opposition to ratification of the ERA on a Wakelet, Padlet, slide deck, Jamboard, or spreadsheet.

Based on your Twitter research, respond to the following prompts in a video, paper, or podcast:

- Is there more support or opposition present for the passage of the ERA on Twitter? Why do you think this is?
- Are the majority of tweets from citizens or politicians? Why do you think this is?
- How accurate, credible, and relevant are the tweets about the ERA? How did you determine this?
- What are common themes or central ideas presented in the tweets?
- What type of language and visuals are typically used in ERA-related tweets?
  - Do you think the language and visuals used are effective? Why or why not?
- What is missing from these tweets (e.g., certain people's voices? Specific topics)?

Activity 2: Design a Social Media Campaign for the ERA

A manager of a pro-ERA group has come to you asking for your help with designing a social media campaign to convince political leaders to vote for the inclusion of the ERA in the Constitution.

Design a social media campaign to build support for the ERA. The social media campaign should include at least 2 videos (e.g., YouTube, Snapchat, TikTok), 5 example posts, and 3 images (e.g., memes, graphics, infographics) designed by you.

- As you design your campaign, consider the following:
  - What visuals and language will you use to persuade politicians?
  - Which social media platforms will you use?
  - What will you write in your posts to capture attention and inspire action?
  - How will you use media (e.g., images, videos, audio) to make a convincing argument?

*Here is a social media campaign example created by Justin Lo, Daniel Mulno, and David Warde and here is a Twitter campaign example by Sara Shea.*

Bonus Activity: Rewrite a Hollywood Script

Watch episode 18, Season 2 (“17 People”) of West Wing on Netflix. Choose either the pro ERA or anti-ERA storyline and rewrite the script for the side you have chosen.

Additional Resources

- ERA Coalition (Twitter)
- Vote Equality US (Twitter)
- ERA Social Media Kit (National Organization for Women Foundation)
- Not For Ourselves Alone: The Story of Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony (PBS)
Connecting to the eBook

Building Democracy for All: Alice Paul and the History of the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA)

Connecting to the Standards

- **Massachusetts Civics & Government Standards**
  - Explain the historical context and significance of changes in the Constitution, including key amendments. (Massachusetts Curriculum Framework for History and Social Studies) [8.T5.2]

- **ISTE Standards**
  - Digital Citizen
    - 2c: Students demonstrate an understanding of and respect for the rights and obligations of using and sharing intellectual property.
  - Knowledge Constructor
    - 3a: Students plan and employ effective research strategies to locate information and other resources for their intellectual or creative pursuits.
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- **DLCS Standards**
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- **English Language Arts > History/Social Studies Common Core Standards**
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  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.2
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  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.8
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  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.2
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.6
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.7
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.8
In an interview with Ken Burns, the historian Stephen B. Oates called the Civil War the "great central experience" of United States history (1989, para 14). The Declaration of Independence and the United States Constitution promised liberty and justice for all, but Black slavery in southern states contradicted and undermined those values and questioned the survival of democracy as a form of government.

In many ways, the Civil War is still with us as a nation today. Black Americans still seek equality under the law. Racism toward Black people still permeates through all aspects of society. Conservative white politicians in red states seek to limit the political participation and voting of people of color. In 1968, the Kerner Commission declared “Our nation is moving toward two societies, one black, one white - separate and unequal” (para. 2). That reality remains true in the third decade of the 21st century.
To understand the present, it is important to understand the past, and the activities in this section explore different dimensions of the Civil War and its impacts on civil rights through the lens of newspapers and advertisements.

Activity 1: Read Stories Across State Lines

- The 2018 Massachusetts History and Social Science Curriculum Framework lists the following critical policies and events leading to the Civil War:
  - The Missouri Compromise (1831-1832)
  - South Carolina Nullification Crisis (1832-1833)
  - Wilmot Proviso (1846)
  - The Mexican-American War (1846-1848)
  - Compromise of 1850
  - Publication of Harriet Beecher Stowe’s *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* (1851-1852)
  - Kansas-Nebraska Act (1854)
  - The Supreme Court decision in *Dred Scott v. Sanford* (1857)
  - Lincoln-Douglas debates (1858)
  - John Brown’s raid on Harper’s Ferry (1859)
Select one of these events/policies and find two original news articles - one published in Northern territory and one published in Southern territory.

- Use the [Teacher and Student Guide to Analyzing News & Newspapers](#) to critically evaluate each publication.

- **Create a screen recording or interactive image to present your findings.**
  - Interactive image:
    - Start a new [Google Drawings canvas](#).
    - Upload a screenshot of the newspaper article to the middle of the canvas.
    - Insert text boxes and shapes to call attention to your findings.
    - Add links to additional information (e.g., the original image source).
  - Screen recording:
    - If you have a Mac computer, [use this shortcut](#).
    - If you have access to Quicktime, [here's how to screen record using Quicktime](#).
    - Otherwise, use a web-based screen recording tool such as [Screencastify](#), [Screencast-o-Matic](#), or [Loom](#).

### Activity 2: Examine Recruitment Advertisements

- Review the following advertisements intended to recruit soldiers for the Civil War:
  - [Recruitment Broadside for Black Soldiers](#)
  - [54th Massachusetts Infantry Regiment Advertisement](#)
  - [The Civil War's Black Soldiers: Recruitment of Black Soldiers](#)
  - [Civil War Posters](#)

  - What are commonly used terms or words to recruit soldiers? Why do you think those words were used?
  - How did the advertisers attempt to persuade men to enlist?
  - How is the language different in advertisements for Black soldiers versus white soldiers? What about for the advertisements from the North versus the South? Why do you think that is?

- **Design a modern-day advertisement**, using TikTok or Snapchat, to persuade individuals to enlist in the Civil War.

### Additional Resources

- [Policies and Events Leading to the Civil War](#), resourcesforhistoryteachers wiki

### Connecting to the eBook

[BUILDING DEMOCRACY FOR ALL: HARRIET TUBMAN, WILLIAM STILL, AND THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD](#)
Connecting to the Standards

- **Massachusetts Civics & Government Standards**
  - Analyze the Constitutional issues that caused the Civil War and led to the eventual expansion of the power of the federal government and individual civil rights. (Massachusetts Curriculum Framework for History and Social Studies) [8.T5.3]

- **ISTE Standards**
  - Digital Citizen
    - 2c: Students demonstrate an understanding of and respect for the rights and obligations of using and sharing intellectual property.
  - Knowledge Constructor
    - 3a: Students plan and employ effective research strategies to locate information and other resources for their intellectual or creative pursuits.
    - 3b: Students evaluate the accuracy, perspective, credibility and relevance of information, media, data, or other resources.
  - Creative Communicator
    - 6a: Students choose the appropriate platforms and tools for meeting the desired objectives of their creation or communication.
    - 6b: Students create original works or responsibly repurpose or remix digital resources into new creations.
    - 6d: Students publish or present content that customizes the message and medium for the intended audiences.

- **DLCS Standards**
  - Ethics and Laws (CAS.b)
  - Interpersonal and Societal Impact (CAS.c)
  - Digital Tools (DTC.a)
  - Collaboration and Communication (DTC.b)
  - Research (DTC.c)

- **English Language Arts > History/Social Studies Common Core Standards**
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.1
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.2
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.5
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.6
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.7
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.8
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.1
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.2
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.5
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.6
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.9
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.1
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.2
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.3
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.6
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.7
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.8
Representations of Gender and Race on Currency

The proposal to include Harriet Tubman on the $20 bill and Maya Angelou and Sally Ride on quarters opens an important topic for critical media analysis.

Given their constant use, the images on banknotes and coins become part of everyone's accepted stock of knowledge. We take for granted that George Washington looked like just he appears on the $1 bill, Alexander Hamilton like he does on the $10 bill, and so on. At the same time, the vast majority of images on U.S. money have been of White men, conveying a message that women and people of color are less deserving of the honor of currency recognition.

Watch on YouTube https://edtechbooks.org/-wVyZ

The history of women and people of color on currency are largely untold stories. Since World War I, women have appeared only on coins, namely Susan B. Anthony, Sacagawea, and Helen Keller. Martha Washington appeared on $1 silver certificates in 1886 and Pocahontas on the $20 bill in the 1860s. Booker T. Washington was the first African American on a coin in 1946; Jackie Robinson, Duke Ellington, Rosa Parks, Martin Luther King, Jr. and Coretta Scott King, and the Tuskegee Airmen, among others have appeared since then. A Native American figure appeared on the Indian Head penny, but the model was a liberty lady wearing an Native American head-dress; only a few million
Buffalo nickels were minted in the early 20th century.

In these activities, you will analyze how women and people of color have been displayed on currency before proposing new images that suggest their importance and impact on American society and culture.

**Activity 1: Examine the Images of Women and People of Color on Currency**

- Explore the following resources about women, African Americans, and Native Americans on money:
  - Women on Money, National Museum of American History
  - Native American Images on Money, South Dakota Public Broadcasting
  - For the Love of Money: Black Icons on U.S. Currency, Google Arts & Culture
- Select one currency image featuring a woman, African American, or Native American and critically evaluate it using the Teacher and Student Guide to Analyzing Images.
- **Create a video, screen recording, or interactive image to present your findings.**
  - Interactive image:
    - Start a new Google Drawings canvas.
    - Upload a screenshot of the currency image to the middle of the canvas.
    - Insert text boxes and shapes to call attention to your findings.
    - Add links to additional information (e.g., the original image source).
  - Screenrecording:
    - If you have a Mac computer, use this shortcut.
    - If you have access to Quicktime, here’s how to screenrecord using Quicktime.
    - Otherwise, use a web-based screenrecording tool such as Screencastify, Screencast-o-Matic, or Loom.

**Activity 2: Campaign for Changes in the Images on Currency**

- Select a woman, Native American, Black American, or other traditionally marginalized individual who you believe deserves to be on U.S. currency.
- Then, **design a social media campaign** to encourage people to write to political leaders to add that individual to U.S. currency.
  - The social media campaign should include at least 2 videos (e.g., YouTube, Snapchat, TikTok), 5 example posts, and 3 images (e.g., memes, graphics, infographics) designed by you.
    - Here is a social media campaign example created by Justin Lo, Daniel Mulno, and David Warde and here is a Twitter campaign example by Sara Shea.
  - Make sure to describe why the person you selected should be on U.S. currency.
  - Bonus: Create a prototype drawing (digital or pencil/paper) of what the currency might look like with the individual you selected on it.

**Activity 3: Design Images for Digital Currency**

Digital currency is emerging as a means of exchange around the world. For example, early in 2021, China began testing in cities its own homegrown digital currency, the Electronic Chinese Yuan (New
Design a digital currency for use by the United States and other countries featuring influential individuals from history.

You can use the following [Create Your Own Currency app](https://create-your-own-currency.frb-chicago.org) from the Federal Reserve Bank of Chicago to assist with your design process.

**Additional Resources**

- [The Faces on Every US Bill](https://www.federalreserve.gov/newsevents/releases/h6200.20190524.0100.pdf)
- [An Extremely Brief History of Women on U.S. Paper Currency](https://www.theatlantic.com/arts/culture/archive/2019/05/women-on-us-currency/587776/), *The Atlantic*

**Connecting to the eBook**

Connecting to the Standards

- **Massachusetts Civics & Government Standards**
  - Analyze the Constitutional issues that caused the Civil War and led to the eventual expansion of the power of the federal government and individual civil rights. (Massachusetts Curriculum Framework for History and Social Studies) [8.T5.3]

- **ISTE Standards**
  - Digital Citizen
    - 2c: Students demonstrate an understanding of and respect for the rights and obligations of using and sharing intellectual property.
  - Knowledge Constructor
    - 3a: Students plan and employ effective research strategies to locate information and other resources for their intellectual or creative pursuits.
    - 3b: Students evaluate the accuracy, perspective, credibility and relevance of information, media, data, or other resources.
    - 3d: Students build knowledge by actively exploring real-world issues and problems, developing ideas and theories and pursuing answers and solutions.
  - Creative Communicator
    - 6a: Students choose the appropriate platforms and tools for meeting the desired objectives of their creation or communication.
    - 6b: Students create original works or responsibly repurpose or remix digital resources into new creations.
    - 6d: Students publish or present content that customizes the message and medium for the intended audiences.

- **DLCS Standards**
  - Ethics and Laws (CAS.b)
  - Interpersonal and Societal Impact (CAS.c)
  - Digital Tools (DTC.a)
  - Collaboration and Communication (DTC.b)
  - Research (DTC.c)

- **English Language Arts > History/Social Studies Common Core Standards**
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.7
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.7
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.7
The Equality Act on Twitter

At the end of February, 2021, the U.S. House of Representatives passed the **Equality Act**, a bill designed to amend the **1964 Civil Rights Act** by banning discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity. The 1964 legislation banned discrimination based on “sex.”

The Equality Act expands that protection against discrimination to explicitly include lesbian, gay, and transgender Americans. The Act was one of the policies that President Joe Biden wanted to have passed during his first 100 Days in office.

Support and opposition for the bill is sharply divided along partisan lines - Democrats support and Republicans oppose. Both sides cite the importance of individual freedoms to support their views.

Court decisions are divided as to what is **discriminatory conduct**. In **Bostock v. Clayton County**, the Supreme Court ruled that an employer cannot fire an employee for participating in a gay recreational softball league. But, the Court also ruled in **Masterpiece Cakeshop, LTD v. Colorado Civil Rights Commission** that a baker can refuse to make a wedding cake for a same-sex couple.

In this activity, you will investigate how members of Congress took to Twitter to discuss, promote, or oppose the Equality Act and then consider how you might have done it differently.
Activity: Compare and Contrast Politicians' Use of Twitter Regarding the Equality Act

- Read the following articles:
  - [AOC Hits Back at Qanon Congresswoman Over Transphobic Opposition to Equality Act](#)
  - [Rep. Greene criticized for escalating Equality Act debate by hanging sign outside office](#)
- Then, critically evaluate how members of congress used Twitter to discuss, promote, or oppose the Equality Act.
  - Do you think their tweets were effective in persuading their viewers' thoughts about the Equality Act? Why or why not?
  - What are common themes or central ideas presented in the tweets?
  - How was language used to try to convince people to support one side or the other?
  - Do you think the language and visuals used were effective? Why or why not?
  - What might you have done differently if you were a member of Congress trying to persuade your constituents to think a certain way about the Equality Act?
- **Present your critical analysis via a video, blog, or paper.**

Additional Resources

- [House Passes The Equality Act: Here's What It Would Do, NPR](#)
- [House passes Equality Act which would expand LGBTQ protections, CNBC](#)

Connecting to the eBook

[Building Democracy for All: Gender - Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972](#)
Connecting to the Standards

- **Massachusetts Civics & Government Standards**
  - *Explain the historical context and significance of laws passed by Congress that have expanded the civil rights and equal protection for race, gender and disability.* (Massachusetts Curriculum Framework for History and Social Studies) [8.T5.4]

- **ISTE Standards**
  - Knowledge Constructor
    - 3b: Students evaluate the accuracy, perspective, credibility and relevance of information, media, data, or other resources.
    - 3d: Students build knowledge by actively exploring real-world issues and problems, developing ideas and theories and pursuing answers and solutions.
  - Creative Communicator
    - 6a: Students choose the appropriate platforms and tools for meeting the desired objectives of their creation or communication.
    - 6b: Students create original works or responsibly repurpose or remix digital resources into new creations.
    - 6d: Students publish or present content that customizes the message and medium for the intended audiences.

- **DLCS Standards**
  - Interpersonal and Societal Impact (CAS.c)
  - Digital Tools (DTC.a)
  - Collaboration and Communication (DTC.b)
  - Research (DTC.c)

- **English Language Arts > History/Social Studies Common Core Standards**
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.1
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.2
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.6
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.7
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.8
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.1
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.2
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.6
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.1
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.2
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.6
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.7
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.8
Each term (the time period from the first Monday in October to late June/early July), the United States Supreme Court decides between 70 and 80 cases and there are dissents in 60% of them. A dissent or dissenting opinion is a statement by a judge expressing and explaining disagreement with the Court’s majority opinion.

Occasionally, but notably, these dissents are read aloud from the bench by a dissenting justice. The impacts of a read aloud can be far-reaching.


In 1999, Lilly Ledbetter sued her employer, Goodyear Tire & Rubber Company on the grounds that she had been receiving lower pay than her male coworkers for 19 years. She won a $3.8 million settlement in federal court. However, the Supreme Court (by a 5 to 4 vote) reversed that decision, saying Ledbetter’s claim had not been made within a 180 day time charging period.

Ginsburg, the only woman justice on the Court at the time, dissented passionately, declaring that
Court “did not comprehend or is indifferent to the insidious way in which women can be victims of pay discrimination.”

Two years later, President Obama signed the [Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act of 2009](https://www.lillyledbetterfairpayact.com) that reversed the Supreme Court’s decision. Ginsburg’s dissent is credited as providing the political and social momentum needed to enact this major milestone in the quest for equal rights for women.

In this activity, you will listen to Ruth Bader Ginsburg's famous dissent spoken aloud and consider how hearing a dissent spoken directly by a Supreme Court justice might influence people's thinking.

### Activity: Evaluate the Impact of Spoken Words in Supreme Court Dissents

- Listen to the [audio of Ruth Bader Ginsburg’s Ledbetter v. Goodyear Tire & Rubber Co. dissent](https://www.lillyledbetterfairpayact.com).
- Choose a paragraph from the Ginsburg dissent that you find meaningful and memorable.
  - Record yourself reading it aloud.
  - Then, ask friends, neighbors, and/or family members to listen to your read aloud, and then read the text on their own and share with you which one was more influential to their learning.
- Based on your assessment, write a children’s book that starts with the following sentence, "Every evening after supper, Malisha and her family tuned in to hear the latest Supreme Court case dissent read aloud by one of the Justices..."
  - In this children's book, consider what impact hearing the spoken words in Supreme Court dissents might have on the general public's understanding of law, government, civics, and society as opposed to just reading the text.
- Bonus Activity: Make an accessible version of the [audio of Ruth Bader Ginsburg’s dissent](https://www.lillyledbetterfairpayact.com) for learners who are deaf or hard of hearing by presenting the text or designing a text-based video in a way that emphasizes tone and emotion and other features that make the read aloud impactful for listeners.

### Additional Resources

- [Teaching Students how to Dissent is a Part of Democracy](https://salon.com) (Salon)
- [Looking Back: Famous Supreme Court Dissents](https://www.nationalconstitutioncenter.org) from National Constitution Center
- ONLINE GAME: In [Argument Wars](https://www.icivics.com) from iCivics, players argue an actual landmark Supreme Court cases

### Connecting to the eBook

[Building Democracy for All: Do Supreme Court Dissents Make a Difference to the Law?](https://www.newbooksforteachers.org)
Connecting to the Standards

- **Massachusetts Civics & Government Standards**
  - Explain the Principle of Judicial Review established in Marbury v. Madison and explain how cases come before the Supreme Court, how cases are argued, and how the Court issues decisions and dissents. (Massachusetts Curriculum Framework for History and Social Studies) [8.T5.5]

- **ISTE Standards**
  - Knowledge Constructor
    - 3b: Students evaluate the accuracy, perspective, credibility and relevance of information, media, data, or other resources.
    - 3d: Students build knowledge by actively exploring real-world issues and problems, developing ideas and theories and pursuing answers and solutions.
  - Creative Communicator
    - 6b: Students create original works or responsibly repurpose or remix digital resources into new creations.
    - 6d: Students publish or present content that customizes the message and medium for the intended audiences.

- **DLCS Standards**
  - Interpersonal and Societal Impact (CAS.c)
  - Digital Tools (DTC.a)
  - Collaboration and Communication (DTC.b)
  - Research (DTC.c)

- **English Language Arts > History/Social Studies Common Core Standards**
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.5
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.7
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.9
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.9
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.6
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.7
Television Cameras in Courtrooms

During the COVID-19 Pandemic (April 2020), for the first time in history, the Supreme Court announced it would make publicly available an audio feed of oral arguments between lawyers and the justices, which were being conducted by telephone conference calls. Before that, no audio/video recording, photography, or television/live streaming had been allowed in the Supreme Court's courtroom.

Since 1996, a small number of federal courts of appeals and district courts have begun allowing photography and television coverage of oral arguments (SCOTUS blog, April 27, 2020).

Many lawmakers, lawyers, and members of the public believe cameras and television should be allowed in the Supreme Court and other courtrooms, while other people are unwilling to depart from historical precedent. The first bill to allow cameras in federal courts was introduced in 1937. C-Span (Cable-Satellite Public Affairs Network) began broadcasting the House of Representatives in 1979 and the Senate in 1986.

Presently, Congress is considering the Cameras in the Courtroom Act, introduced in 2019, which would permit television coverage of all open sessions of the Supreme Court, unless a majority of the Justices voted otherwise in order to protect the rights of those involved in a case.
In these activities, you will analyze the question of whether cameras (either still photographs or live streaming) should be allowed in judicial courtrooms, and if so, how Supreme Court proceedings should be televised or livestreamed. In so doing, you will consider how the nation's legal system can best balance every individual's right to a fair trial with the public's right to know what is happening in courts.

**Activity 1: Analyze the Implications of Cameras in Courtrooms**

- Conduct research, including Internet research and surveying friends and family, for one or more of the following prompts:
  - What are the arguments for and against allowing cameras in the Supreme Court?
  - What are the arguments for and against televising or live streaming the proceedings of the Supreme Court?
  - How might television coverage, live streaming, real-time audio recordings, and photography in courtrooms impact the Supreme Court's consideration of cases that will significantly influence people's lives, such as freedom of speech, due process under the law, freedom of religion, and the other rights?
  - Would public opinion be influenced in positive or negative ways by media coverage of the Supreme Court?
  - Would the Supreme Court justices be less impartial and more influenced by how the public might perceive them based on the media coverage?
- Based on your findings, **write an opinion piece for your school or local newsletter** about whether there should be cameras allowed in the Supreme Court courtroom.

**Activity 2: Design a Format for Future Supreme Court TV Coverage**

- Begin by watching [C-Span coverage of the House](https://www.c-span.org/segment/115533-1/) and [Senate](https://www.c-span.org/segment/115533-2/) to see one model for broadcasting the activities of the legislative branch of government. Pay attention to camera angles, audio, captions, and other features of the broadcast.
- Then consider: How does C-Span's coverage differ from other televised events, such as the Super Bowl, the World Series, the State of the Union address, or the Academy Awards?
- Imagine that you work at a TV production company that has been selected to design the first-ever live TV broadcast of the Supreme Court oral arguments. Your boss asks for a proposal from everyone in your company for the best way to design a TV broadcast that will have the most viewers of all ages...
- **Design a proposal for how you would produce a TV broadcast of the Supreme Court oral arguments.**
  - How will you captivate the attention of younger and older viewers alike?
  - What camera angles would suggest? Why?
  - Would you include graphics? Sidebars? Scrolling text at the bottom of the screen? Why or why not?
  - Would you have hosts and commentators describing the action?
  - Would you include interactive features such as opportunities for viewers to post comments online?
Connecting to the eBook

Building Democracy for All: First Amendment Rights: Selected Landmark Cases

Connecting to the Standards

- **Massachusetts Civics & Government Standards**
  - Research, analyze and report orally or in writing on one area in which Supreme Court Decisions have made significant changes over time in citizens’ lives. (Massachusetts Curriculum Framework for History and Social Studies) [8.T5.6]

- **ISTE Standards**
  - Knowledge Constructor
    - 3a: Students plan and employ effective research strategies to locate information and other resources for their intellectual or creative pursuits.
    - 3d: Students build knowledge by actively exploring real-world issues and problems, developing ideas and theories and pursuing answers and solutions.
  - Creative Communicator
    - 6b: Students create original works or responsibly repurpose or remix digital resources into new creations.
    - 6d: Students publish or present content that customizes the message and medium for the intended audiences.

- **DLCS Standards**
  - Interpersonal and Societal Impact (CAS.c)
  - Digital Tools (DTC.a)
  - Collaboration and Communication (DTC.b)
  - Research (DTC.c)

- **English Language Arts > History/Social Studies Common Core Standards**
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.5
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.9
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.6
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.7
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.9
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.5
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.7
6. The Structure of State and Local Government

If “all politics is local,” as former Speaker of the House Tip O'Neill among others once said, then it is vitally important to understand the functions of state and local government. Such governments are the ones closest to where people live and their policies can have the greatest impacts on people’s daily lives.

The media literacy activities in this section investigate topics where state and local government actions impact people and where people impact state and local government policies, including Native American mascots and logos, individual rights and privacy online, military recruitment, state-
sponsored lotteries, COVID-19 pandemic and environmental protection policies, campaigns for public office, and digital democracy at state and local levels.

Media Literacy Activities Choice Board

Media Literacy Activities
Critical Media Literacy and Civic Learning

Native American Mascots and Logos

In 1933, the Washington Braves NFL football team changed their name to the Washington Redskins. In 2020, facing increasing public pressure over its racially-themed mascot and logo, the team is planning to change their name again and drop the use of “redskins.” As a placeholder, they are called the Washington Football team.

What do you think their new team name should be?

How can their new name/image rectify their previous culturally insensitive history?

Does it matter that other professional sports teams have similar names (Kansas City Chiefs, Atlanta Braves) and high schools across the country still use Native American symbols and images?

A bill to prohibit the use of Native American Mascots in public schools has been introduced in

Watch on YouTube https://edtechbooks.org/-zQC
the Massachusetts legislature. Multiple states have laws or resolutions prohibiting or limiting Native American mascots in public schools: Maine, Oregon, California, Wisconsin, Minnesota, Washington, New York, New Hampshire, and Michigan (MA Indigenous Legislative Agenda).

There are efforts in other places to address how the names of places reflect the realities of local and state histories. In Minnesota, students, teachers, families, and community members led an effort to change the name of Alexander Ramsey Middle School (Ramsey was a territorial governor in the mid-19th century who forced Native Americans from their homelands) to Alan Page Middle School (Page is the first African American Justice of the Minnesota Supreme Court and was a Hall of Fame football player for the Minnesota Vikings).

What steps do you think state and local governments might take to combat racial/cultural stereotypes and promote fully inclusive histories of indigenous peoples?

How might schools, streets, walkways, parks and other public places be named or renamed to honor those who accomplishments and achievements may be unrecognized or forgotten?

**Activity 1: Analyze Native American Mascots and Logos**

- **Conduct research** based on the following prompts:
  - What public schools and colleges still have Native American mascots or logos in your region?
  - How are Native American mascots and logos used on school websites and social media posts?
  - How do national sports team and businesses use Native American imagery and symbols in their marketing?
- Select one Native American logo from a school or sports team to analyze.
  - Who designed the logo?
  - What is the history of the logo (why is it designed the way it looks)?
  - What do the colors and illustrations symbolize?
  - What bias or stereotypes does the logo present about Native Americans?
  - Do you think Native Americans were consulted during the design of this logo? Why or why not?

- **Create a screen recording or interactive image to present your findings.**
  - Interactive image:
    - Start a new Google Drawings canvas.
    - Upload the logo image to the middle of the canvas.
    - Insert text boxes and shapes to call attention to your findings.
    - Add links to additional information (e.g., the original image source).
  - Screenrecording:
    - If you have a Mac computer, use this shortcut.
    - If you have access to Quicktime, here’s how to screenrecord using Quicktime.
    - Otherwise, use a web-based screenrecording tool such as Screencastify, Screencast-o-Matic, or Loom.
Activity 2: Propose a New Logo Honoring Native Peoples' Influence on U.S. Government

- **Propose a new logo design** for a local or state government committee, department, council, or community youth organization that would honor Native American people and their influence on U.S. government (see Native American Tribal Governments & Native American Influences on U.S Government).
  - What features of native culture and life would you include?
  - How would your logo combat racial/cultural stereotypes and promote fully inclusive histories of indigenous peoples?
  - How would your logo support culturally relevant learning for students and community members?

**Sinagua High School JROTC Insignia**

Before it was closed in 2010, Sinagua High School in Flagstaff, Arizona were known as the Mustangs. The shoulder sleeve insignia for the school's Junior Reserve Officers' Training Corps (JROTC) featured a mustang in the center with a row of mountains in the background symbolizing the San Francisco Peaks - one of the state's highest landmarks and sacred ground to local indigenous people. In this way, the logo honored Native people along with the school's nickname.

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*Flagstaff Sinagua HSJROTCSSI* | Public Domain
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**Additional Resources**

- [Native American Heritage Sites](#), National Park Service
- [Impact of American Indian on American Culture](#) (Wiley)
- [I am Native American and a Former Football Player. Our History is Much Darker than Racist](#)
Mascots, Vox (July 19, 2020).

- Indians, Braves and Chiefs: what now for US sports' other Native American names?
- School Mascots as a Native American Stereotype (Yale Insights)
- Cleveland changing name from Indians to Guardians after 2021 season

Connecting to the eBook

Building Democracy for All: Native American Tribal Governments

Connecting to the Standards

- **Massachusetts Civics & Government Standards**
  - Compare and contrast the functions of state government and national government. (Massachusetts Curriculum Framework for History and Social Studies) [8.T6.1]

- **ISTE Standards**
  - Knowledge Constructor
    - 3a: Students plan and employ effective research strategies to locate information and other resources for their intellectual or creative pursuits.
    - 3d: Students build knowledge by actively exploring real-world issues and problems, developing ideas and theories and pursuing answers and solutions.
  - Creative Communicator
    - 6a: Students choose the appropriate platforms and tools for meeting the desired objectives of their creation or communication.
    - 6b: Students create original works or responsibly repurpose or remix digital resources into new creations.
    - 6d: Students publish or present content that customizes the message and medium for the intended audiences.

- **DLCS Standards**
  - Collaboration and Communication (DTC.b)
  - Research (DTC.c)

- **English Language Arts > History/Social Studies Common Core Standards**
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.2
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.7
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.2
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.7
In addition to the federal constitution, every U.S. state and territory has its own constitution that serves as its governing document. Massachusetts has the oldest state constitution (1780); Rhode Island is the newest (revised in 1986). Adopted by the people, a constitution is the supreme law that defines the rights of individuals and the powers of the government. You can read the constitutions of every state and territory here.

The Internet has no constitution and the laws about its use and rights of people using it are still being debated and defined, country by country, state by state.

In these activities, you have the opportunity to create a constitution and bill of rights for the Internet.

**Activity 1: Envision a Bill of Rights for the Internet**

- Explore the [many Bills of Rights in United States history](https://edtechbooks.org/-FGK).
- Then, **write a Bill of Rights for the Internet**.
  - Include articles regarding respect for privacy, personal data protection, freedom of speech, freedom of usage, and protection from harassment and false information.
You can use the proposed 2010 Bill of Rights in Cyberspace to guide your planning.

Share your Internet Bill of Rights on social media and/or with family members to get feedback. Consider whether to make revisions based on the feedback you receive.

Activity 2: Design a Constitution for the Internet

- Explore the United States Constitution and the Constitution of your state.
- Then, come up with a list of fundamental rules and principles that all Internet users should have to abide by.
- **Write a Constitution for the Internet** that features at least 5 Articles (see example by Joseph Shink).
  - Remix language from the federal and state constitutions into your constitutional document.
  - You can also include your Bill of Rights in your document.
- Create a set of guidelines for how to amend your Constitution for the Internet.
- Share your Constitution for the Internet with classmates.
  - Bonus points: Propose an amendment for a classmate’s Constitution for the Internet.

Activity 3: Evaluate Whether the Internet Needs a Constitution

- Watch: A Free and Fair Internet Benefits Everyone, a TED Talk by Priscilla Chomba-Kinywa
- Consider the following prompts:
  - Does the Internet need a Constitution? Why or why not?
  - Who should be responsible for ensuring that all Internet users abide by the Articles in the Constitution of the Internet - Local governments? State governments? Countries? Businesses? Internet users?
  - Should the Constitution be a living document (subject to change and interpretation) or is it rooted in its time/place (fixed rules rarely if ever changed)?
- **Create a TikTok or Snapchat video** to inform others about your thoughts regarding a Constitution for the Internet.

Additional Resources

- A Constitution for the Internet
- Connecting Human Rights and Internet Protocols (Internet Society)
- Interactive Constitution Media Library (Interactive Constitution)
- What can social media platforms do for human rights? (Open Democracy)

Connecting to the eBook

Connecting to the Standards

- **Massachusetts Civics & Government Standards**
  - *Describe the provisions of the United States Constitution and the Massachusetts Constitution that define and distribute powers and authority of the federal and state government.* (Massachusetts Curriculum Framework for History and Social Studies) [8.T6.2]

- **ISTE Standards**
  - Digital Citizen
    - 2d: Students manage their personal data to maintain digital privacy and security and are aware of data-collection technology used to track their navigation online.
  - Knowledge Constructor
    - 3a: Students plan and employ effective research strategies to locate information and other resources for their intellectual or creative pursuits.
    - 3d: Students build knowledge by actively exploring real-world issues and problems, developing ideas and theories and pursuing answers and solutions.
  - Creative Communicator
    - 6b: Students create original works or responsibly repurpose or remix digital resources into new creations.
    - 6d: Students publish or present content that customizes the message and medium for the intended audiences.

- **DLCS Standards**
  - Safety and Security (CAS.a)
  - Interpersonal and Societal Impact (CAS.c)
  - Collaboration and Communication (DTC.b)
  - Research (DTC.c)

- **English Language Arts > History/Social Studies Common Core Standards**
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.2
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.4
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.5
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.7
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.2
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.4
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.5
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.2
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.5
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.7
Military Recruitment and the Media

Recruiting soldiers to serve in the nation's military offers an example of the complex political dynamics surrounding the government's enumerated and implied powers.

The Constitution gives the federal government the **enumerated power to raise armies and a navy**. Article I states Congress has the power “to provide for the common Defense and general Welfare of the United States.”

But, establishing a **draft** (mandatory enrollment in the armed forces) is an **implied power** that was used at different times in U.S. history from the Civil War to 1973. The first peacetime draft, the [Selective Training and Service Act](https://www.history.army.mil/html/books/ww2/tms/training/3.html), was instituted in 1940 just before U.S. entry into World War II. In 1939, the U.S. army consisted of 174,00 soldiers. Between 1940 and 1947, 10 million men entered the nation's armed services ([Training the American GI](https://www.history.army.mil/html/books/ww2/tms/training/3.html), National World War II Museum).

The U.S. military has been an all-volunteer force since that time with now more than 1.3 million active troops in six armed services: Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, Coast Guard, and Space Force.
Presently, men ages 18 to 25 are required to register with the Selective Service System in case the draft were reinstated. Women do not have to register and cannot be drafted, although all combat jobs in the military are open to volunteer women enlistees. Women presently make up 16% of all enlisted personnel and 19% of military officers (Demographics of the U.S. Military, Council on Foreign Relations, July 13, 2020).

There are multiple debates surrounding what Congress should do with its implied powers regarding military service.

- Should the United States continue with **all-volunteer** armed forces?
- Should the demographic composition of the military more closely resemble society as a whole?
- Should **military service be mandatory** for all young people, as it is in many countries around the world?
- Is excluding women from the draft unconstitutional?
- Should Congress use its implied powers to institute a **military or national service** option where women and men have the option of joining the Armed Services or participating in infrastructure projects like the Civilian Conservation Corps during the New Deal?

In this activity, you will investigate how the military uses the media to recruit individuals into the armed services as a backdrop to whether the U.S. should continue to have all-volunteer forces.
Activity: Assess Media Use for Military Recruitment

- Choose two of the following armed services: Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, Coast Guard, and Space Force.
- Conduct Internet research to examine how the two armed services you selected use media (e.g., websites, posters, graphics, videos, social media, and podcasts) to recruit members.
- Compare and contrast the use of media by the two different armed services you selected.
  - How does each armed force seek to convince young people to enlist?
  - What visuals and colors do they use? Why do you think that is?
  - How do they use language to motivate people to enlist?
  - What biases or stereotypes are built into the media you reviewed?
  - Who is their intended audience (based on the visual design and language used)? Or, do they have different intended audiences based on the platform they use (e.g., website vs. Facebook vs. Instagram)?
- Based on your research, do you think that the use of media to recruit individuals into the military is an effective means of ensuring that the military will have enough service members or should Congress use its implied powers to institute mandatory military/national service instead of an all-volunteer armed forces? Why or why not?
- **Present your findings and recommendation as a curated virtual collection** (e.g., Wakelet, Padlet, Jamboard) of media (e.g., recruitment posters/YouTube ads) and your own commentary (as text, video, or audio).

Additional Resources

- [Military Recruiting FAQ](http://www.aclu.org) - ACLU New Jersey
- [Mandatory Service Around the Globe](http://www.buildingdemocracyforall.com)
- [Contact a Recruiter for the Army](http://www.buildingdemocracyforall.com)

Connecting to the eBook

Connecting to the Standards

- **Massachusetts Civics & Government Standards**
  - Distinguish among the enumerated and implied powers in the United States and the Massachusetts Constitution. (Massachusetts Curriculum Framework for History and Social Studies) [8.T6.3]

- **ISTE Standards**
  - Knowledge Constructor
    - 3a: Students plan and employ effective research strategies to locate information and other resources for their intellectual or creative pursuits.
    - 3b: Students evaluate the accuracy, perspective, credibility and relevance of information, media, data or other resources.
    - 3c: Students curate information from digital resources using a variety of tools and methods to create collections of artifacts that demonstrate meaningful connections or conclusions.
    - 3d: Students build knowledge by actively exploring real-world issues and problems, developing ideas and theories and pursuing answers and solutions.
  - Creative Communicator
    - 6a: Students choose the appropriate platforms and tools for meeting the desired objectives of their creation or communication.
    - 6b: Students create original works or responsibly repurpose or remix digital resources into new creations.

- **DLCS Standards**
  - Interpersonal and Societal Impact (CAS.c)
  - Digital Tools (DTC.a)
  - Collaboration and Communication (DTC.b)
  - Research (DTC.c)

- **English Language Arts > History/Social Studies Common Core Standards**
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.5
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.6
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.7
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.8
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.5
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.9
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.5
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.7
Your Privacy on Social Media

A person's right to privacy has become a contentious issue with regards to the information and data that is collected by technologies, social media platforms, and digital tools and apps. Social media sites collect your personal information as soon as you register. Websites use trackers to capture and share your data. Apps that you download can track your location and even share it with authorities.

How protected is your data online? Explore the New York Times article I Visited 47 Sites. Hundreds of Trackers Followed Me and then watch the following video Adam Ruins Everything - The Terrifying Cost of "Free" Websites.

Privacy means freedom from "interference or intrusion" while information privacy is having "some control over how your personal information is collected and used" (International Association of Privacy Professionals, 2021, para. 1).

Information privacy is central to our everyday experiences during what Harvard Business School professor Shoshana Zuboff (2019) calls the current age of "surveillance capitalism." This digital-age form of profit-making "unilaterally claims human experience as free raw material for translation into behavioral data" (Zuboff, 2019, p. 8). Google, Amazon, Facebook, and other technology firms have organized their businesses around collecting and selling people's personal information. Apps, search
engines, and even smart appliances, track users' online activities. Manufacturers and advertisers buy that data and use it to target products to consumers. In Zuboff's (2019) view, your private information is used to create "prediction products" that anticipate what you will do now, soon, and later (p. 8).

While the Constitution has no explicitly stated right of privacy, courts have ruled that there is, in the words of Supreme Court Justice William O. Douglas, a "zone of privacy" that includes privacy of beliefs (established by the First Amendment), privacy of the home (Third Amendment), privacy of one's person, possessions, papers, records (Fourth Amendment), and personal liberty (Fourteenth Amendment). Learn more at The Right of Privacy from the Exploring Constitutional Conflicts website by the University of Missouri Kansas City School of Law.

In the following activity, you will review the privacy policies of various websites, apps, and social media platforms and then, based on what you learn, propose an amendment to the Constitution that focuses on the right to privacy in digital settings.

**Activity: Propose an Amendment for the Right to Privacy in Digital Settings**

- Conduct a research study in which you review the privacy policies and terms of service of at least 3 social media platforms (e.g., TikTok, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube), 3 apps that you have downloaded, and 3 websites that you visit often.
  - What personally identifiable information is collected (e.g., location data? IP address? demographic data? browsing history?)?
  - How is the personally identifiable information protected by the company? Does their privacy policy explicitly state how they protect and secure your data?
  - How is the personally identifiable information used by the company? Do they use it for internal benefits (e.g., improving their user interface)? Sell it to third-party companies? Share it with authorities?
- Then, explore the length of the Terms of Service of 14 popular apps. Why do you think these agreements are so long?
- Next, consider what personal information you are willing to share by using the Data, Privacy, and Identity Drag and Drop Cards.
- Finally, based on what you discovered during your research, write a proposal to add an Amendment to the U.S. Constitution that focuses on giving people the explicit right to privacy in digital settings.

**Additional Resources:**

- What New Amendments to the Constitution are Needed Today?
- You Are Now Remotely Controlled: Surveillance capitalists control the science and the scientists, the secrets and the truth.
- Privacy and Internet Life: Lesson Plan for Immediate Classrooms
- Tips for Protecting Your Social Media Privacy
- Evaluating Cost, Privacy, and Data
Connecting to the eBook

Building Democracy for All: The Bill of Rights, the 14th Amendment, and Article I of the Massachusetts Constitution

Connecting to the Standards

- **Massachusetts Civics & Government Standards**
  - Compare core documents associated with the protection of individual rights, including the Bill of Rights, the 14th Amendment, and Article 1 of the Massachusetts Constitution. (Massachusetts Curriculum Framework for History and Social Studies) [8.T7.4]

- **ISTE Standards**
  - Digital Citizen
    - 2d: Students manage their personal data to maintain digital privacy and security and are aware of data-collection technology used to track their navigation online.
  - Knowledge Constructor
    - 3a: Students plan and employ effective research strategies to locate information and other resources for their intellectual or creative pursuits.
    - 3d: Students build knowledge by actively exploring real-world issues and problems, developing ideas and theories and pursuing answers and solutions.

- **DLCS Standards**
  - Safety and Security (CAS.a)
  - Interpersonal and Societal Impact (CAS.c)
  - Digital Tools (DTC.a)
  - Collaboration and Communication (DTC.b)
  - Research (DTC.c)

- **English Language Arts > History/Social Studies Common Core Standards**
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.2
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.4
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.5
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.2
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.4
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.5
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.2
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.4
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.5
Pandemic Policy Information in the Media

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, states have used their 10th Amendment powers to implement emergency public health and education policies (e.g., declarations of emergency, stay-at-home orders, mask mandates and mask mandate bans, travel restrictions, and vaccination rules), generating strong public debate and, in some cases, intense opposition.

As the COVID-19 Delta variant surged in summer 2021, schools and the education sector became one of the most highly disputed areas of COVID-related policies. In some cases, state policies were in direct opposition to local rules. For example, throughout 2021, Florida’s governor maintained steadfast opposition to masks for students and teachers in public schools, while local school boards voted to continue requiring face covering in classrooms and corridors. The governor threatened “maximum sanctions,” including loss of state education funding while the Biden Administration suggested it would provide federal funds if state monies were withheld (Politico, August 10, 2021).

In Texas as well, school leaders in Dallas and Austin, among other districts, defied the state governor’s executive order that schools cannot require masks. Disputes over COVID-19 policies have heightened tensions within communities. In one Colorado county, sheriff’s deputies were posted at schools for the first day of class to prevent disruptions from parents who objected to the district’s in-school mask requirements (Bradbury, 2021).
Masks are just one of the public policy issues raised by the COVID-19 pandemic. What level of government (local, state, federal) should decide vaccination mandates, vaccine passports, travel restrictions, eviction policies, and other matters? Or should these decisions be left to individuals and families?

Now, consider for a moment - how have you learned about your state’s government policies during the COVID-19 Pandemic? Does your state government use the media to inform, persuade, and educate citizens about their pandemic policies?

In this activity, you will examine how state governments have used the media to communicate their COVID-19 pandemic policies.

Activity: Evaluate State Government’s Media Use

- Select at least 3 states from different parts of the country.
- Explore these states’ websites (e.g., www.mass.gov) and social media profiles (e.g., Mass Gov on Facebook; Mass Gov on Twitter; Mass Gov on YouTube).
- Compare and contrast how the three states use media (e.g., images, videos, audio, social media posts) to inform the public about their COVID-19 pandemic policies.
- Consider the following prompts:
  - How does each state government website communicate COVID-19 policy information to viewers?
  - How does each state government use social media to communicate COVID-19 policy information to viewers?
  - Is there a difference in messaging, style, and design based on the platform (e.g., website vs. Facebook vs. Instagram)? Why do you think that is?
  - Who might the audience be for each platform? Why do you think this?
  - Given that many COVID-19 policies are subject to intense debate, how does each state seek to use media to convince people to follow its advice? Which state do you think is the most effective at using media in a convincing manner? Why do you think this?

- Then, complete one of the following tasks:
  1. Complete a SWOT analysis of each state government’s use of media to inform the public about COVID-19 policies.
  2. Redesign a state government webpage, social media post, or social media video in a way that you believe would more effectively inform the public about a COVID-19 policy.
  3. Write a Yelp or Amazon review about each of the three state government’s use of media (see example Amazon Review template by Madeline Hill).

Additional Resources

- U.S. state and local government responses to the COVID-19 pandemic
- Why Does the 10th Amendment Matter? (Forbes)

Connecting to the eBook

Building Democracy for All: State Government Pandemic Policies
Connecting to the Standards

- **Massachusetts Civics & Government Standards**
  - Explain why the 10th Amendment to the United States Constitution is important to state government and identify the powers granted to the states by the Tenth Amendment and the limits to state government outlined in it. (Massachusetts Curriculum Framework for History and Social Studies) [8.T6.5]

- **ISTE Standards**
  - Knowledge Constructor
    - 3a: Students plan and employ effective research strategies to locate information and other resources for their intellectual or creative pursuits.
    - 3b: Students evaluate the accuracy, perspective, credibility and relevance of information, media, data or other resources.
    - 3d: Students build knowledge by actively exploring real-world issues and problems, developing ideas and theories and pursuing answers and solutions.
  - Creative Communicator
    - 6a: Students choose the appropriate platforms and tools for meeting the desired objectives of their creation or communication.
    - 6b: Students create original works or responsibly repurpose or remix digital resources into new creations.
    - 6d: Students publish or present content that customizes the message and medium for the intended audiences.

- **DLCS Standards**
  - Interpersonal and Societal Impact (CAS.c)
  - Digital Tools (DTC.a)
  - Collaboration and Communication (DTC.b)
  - Research (DTC.c)

- **English Language Arts > History/Social Studies Common Core Standards**
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.1
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.5
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.6
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.7
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.8
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.1
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.5
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.6
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.1
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.6
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.8
Gendered Language in Media Coverage of Women in Politics

How many times have you heard the statement “You Guys” spoken almost automatically as part of everyday conversation, as though everyone present is a member of one gender? To object or try to correct the statement seems hopeless. Few speakers take the time to use gender-inclusive or gender-neutral terms such as “folks,” “everybody,” “friends,” “y’all,” or “team.”

Words, and the meanings we assign to them, matter hugely in how people think and act not only in everyday conversations, but in how the media covers women and men in politics. Consider how the media writes and talks differently about political campaigns and job performances of women and men in government positions such as mayor, representative, senator, or judge. A commitment to equality under the law and justice for all is harder to sustain when the words used are specific to a male gender.

Does language use by the media impact people’s attitudes and behaviors? Does it matter if news reports or reporters say "policemen" or "law enforcement officers" or "firemen" or "firefighters" or if they describe women and men in politics differently?

A recent cross-national study established that genderless language or gender-inclusive language...
combats negative stereotypes toward women while promoting broader career opportunities for females in traditionally male-dominated fields, including politics (Perez & Tavits, 2019).

You can explore more about gender-inclusive, non-binary, and anti-racist language in state constitutions, laws and materials in Topic 6.6 of our Building Democracy for All eBook.

In the following activities, you will examine the use of gendered language in media coverage of women in politics while envisioning how people's views might develop if more genderless language were used instead in politics and in everyday interactions in schools and society.

**Bonus Media Literacy Activity 1: Examine the Use of Gendered Language on Television Shows and YouTube Channel Streams**

Choose a particular woman in politics, a specific election, or a specific political job where women’s presence is still minimal/rare (e.g., Hillary Clinton and the 2008 or 2016 election; Elizabeth Warren, Kamala Harris, or Amy Klobuchar and the 2020 election; or the women justices on the Supreme Court, past and present - Sandra Day O’Connor, Ruth Bader Ginsburg, Sonya Sotomayor, Elena Kagan, Amy Coney Barrett).

- Conduct a search for news media (e.g., online articles, videos) that reference the female you selected.
- See how many times and in what context are they:
  - (a) are referred to by their first names;
  - (b) are referred to by their last names;
  - (c) have mentions of their bodies, facial expressions, and/or appearances;
  - (d) are given an infantilizing or insulting nickname.
- Then, conduct counter research. Select a male politician.
- See how many times and in what context are they:
  - (a) are referred to by their first names;
  - (b) are referred to by their last names;
  - (c) have mentions of their bodies, facial expressions, and/or appearances;
  - (d) are given an infantilizing or insulting nickname.
- What similarities and differences did you notice between how women and men in politics are presented in the media? Why do you think this is so? How might this influence the general public's thoughts about these individuals?
- **Present your analysis in a video, interactive timeline, or paper.**

**Bonus Media Literacy Activity 1: Examine the use of Gendered Language on Television Shows and YouTube Channel Streams**

- Record how many times the term "You Guys" is said in a single episode of your favorite TV shows or YouTube channel streams.
- **Write a PRAISE or PROTEST letter** to the producer of the TV show or YouTube Channel Stream creator about the use gendered language or gender-inclusive language.
Gendered Language and Gender-Based Toy Marketing

In October, 2021, California passed a Gender Neutral Retail Departments law requiring all large scale department stores (500 or more employees) to maintain a "reasonable" number of toys and other items for children in a gender-neutral area of the store. The law does not ban traditional boys and girls sections, but does force changes in how and where items are marketed in stores.

Consumer advocates supported this first-in-the-nation law as a response to how traditional marketing to children has reinforced gender-stereotypes and reinforced some skill and mindset over others (boys' toys for example emphasize construction, movement, and building). Critics claim this law is a form of government interference on the rights of parents to raise children as they see fit.

Also in 2021, the toymaker LEGO announced it would no longer label its products by gender (LEGO to Remove Gender Bias from its Toys after Findings of Child Survey, October 10, 2021). LEGO took action following a study by the Geena Davis Institute on Gender in Media that found 71% of boys feared they would be made fun of if they played with what are considered to be "girls" toys.

Gendered language in marketing has a huge impact on how items are perceived by both children and adults. To see this dynamic in action try the Gendered Advertising Remixer at https://genderremixer.com/ Put an ad targeting boys in box 1 and an ad targeting girls in box two and press mashup and watch what happens.

Suggested Learning Activities

1) Begin this activity by visiting one or more of the large department stores in your community (like Target or Walmart) and record where toys and related children's items (e.g., clothing to toothbrushes) are displayed.
   ○ What marketing patterns do you notice?
   ○ Are toys and other items divided by gender?
   ○ Is there a gender-neutral section for children's items?

2) Look at the packaging and advertising of the items you find in the children's section(s) of the store.
   ○ What type of gendered language is used on the packaging of the items and store displays?
   ○ How is art and design used to suggest that certain items are directed to boys or to girls?

3) Next consider the gendered messages and meanings that children are receiving from the media they encounter in the children’s section(s) of the store.
   ○ How might gendered toys and gendered sections influence girls’ future careers in politics or government?
   ○ Are there any toys or other items that might be considered "presidential" or "CEO-related," or reflect women as leaders and change-makers

4) Write a response to your experience.
   - Write a PRAISE or PROTEST letter to the store about its gender-based marketing of items
• Write a persuasive letter or design a social media campaign to urge other states to adopt legislation similar to the law in California for gender-neutral retail departments.

Additional Resources

• Women in Congress
• Women in the Senate
• Women on the Supreme Court
• “You Guys”: Is There A Better Option?

Connecting to the eBook

Building Democracy for All: Gender-Inclusive, Non-Binary, and Anti-Racist Language and Images in State Constitutions, Laws, and Materials
Connecting to the Standards

- **Massachusetts Civics & Government Standards**
  - Identify additional protections provided by the Massachusetts Constitution that are not provided by the U.S. Constitution. (Massachusetts Curriculum Framework for History and Social Studies) [8.T6.6]

- **ISTE Standards**
  - Knowledge Constructor
    - 3a: Students plan and employ effective research strategies to locate information and other resources for their intellectual or creative pursuits.
    - 3b: Students evaluate the accuracy, perspective, credibility and relevance of information, media, data or other resources.
    - 3d: Students build knowledge by actively exploring real-world issues and problems, developing ideas and theories and pursuing answers and solutions.
  - Creative Communicator
    - 6a: Students choose the appropriate platforms and tools for meeting the desired objectives of their creation or communication.

- **DLCS Standards**
  - Interpersonal and Societal Impact (CAS.c)
  - Collaboration and Communication (DTC.b)
  - Research (DTC.c)

- **English Language Arts > History/Social Studies Common Core Standards**
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.5
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.6
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.7
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.8
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.4
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.6
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.6
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.7
Environmental Campaigns Using Social Media

Environmental and climate justice organizations make extensive use of Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, Instagram and many other social media platforms to communicate their ideas for sustainability and change to wide audiences. For instance, take a look at The Majestic Plastic Bag video from Heal the Bay (embedded below), which has nearly 3 million views, and the Shorty Social Good Awards, which feature several social media campaigns that successfully "promote, protect, and preserve our environment" (para. 1).

Watch on YouTube [https://edtechbooks.org/-BnYq](https://edtechbooks.org/-BnYq)

However, while environmental and climate justice organizations put funding into media production and social media initiatives to create change and spread awareness, local and state governments rarely do the same. How can you help your local or state government promote one of their environmental policies so that it gains momentum?

In this activity, you will serve as a digital media expert who is tasked with improving your local or state government's use of multimedia and social media for environmental policies.
Activity: Design an Environmental Awareness Campaign for Your Local or State Government

- Explore the "Best in Environment & Sustainability" category of the Shorty Awards and identify how the winners used social media to help their initiative go viral.
  - What strategies and approaches did these organizations use to communicate their messages?
  - What visuals were used and why? What language was used? Who was the audience?
  - What did you find effective in educating you and others?
  - What features did you find less effective in making a case for awareness or change?
- Next, review your local town and state government's environmental policies (e.g., plastic ban, more bicycle lanes, more pedestrian walkways) and identify one that you think needs more support from citizens.
- Conduct research to determine how your local/state government promotes that environmental policy via print media (e.g., TV, newspapers, magazines) and social media (e.g., YouTube, Twitter, Facebook, TikTok).
- Then, **design a social media campaign** for that environmental policy to share with your local/state government officials.
  - The social media campaign should include at least 2 videos (e.g., YouTube, Snapchat, TikTok), 5 example posts, and 3 images (e.g., memes, graphics, infographics) designed by you.
  - Here is a social media campaign example created by Justin Lo, Daniel Mulno, and David Warde and here is a Twitter campaign example by Sara Shea.
  - Consider using the Made to Stick principles or TED Talk presentation techniques to increase the appeal of your social media campaign.

Additional Resources

- Environmental policy in the United States
- State environmental policy pages

Connecting to the eBook

Connecting to the Standards

- **Massachusetts Civics & Government Standards**
  - Contrast the responsibilities of government at the federal, state and local levels. (Massachusetts Curriculum Framework for History and Social Studies) \[8.T6.7\]

- **ISTE Standards**
  - Digital Citizen
    - 2c: Students demonstrate an understanding of and respect for the rights and obligations of using and sharing intellectual property.
  - Knowledge Constructor
    - 3a: Students plan and employ effective research strategies to locate information and other resources for their intellectual or creative pursuits.
    - 3b: Students evaluate the accuracy, perspective, credibility and relevance of information, media, data or other resources.
    - 3d: Students build knowledge by actively exploring real-world issues and problems, developing ideas and theories and pursuing answers and solutions.
  - Creative Communicator
    - 6a: Students choose the appropriate platforms and tools for meeting the desired objectives of their creation or communication.
    - 6b: Students create original works or responsibly repurpose or remix digital resources into new creations.
    - 6d: Students publish or present content that customizes the message and medium for the intended audiences.

- **DLCS Standards**
  - Ethics and Laws (CAS.b)
  - Interpersonal and Societal Impact (CAS.c)
  - Digital Tools (DTC.a)
  - Collaboration and Communication (DTC.b)
  - Research (DTC.c)

- **English Language Arts > History/Social Studies Common Core Standards**
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.5
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.7
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.5
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.7
Trusted Messengers, the Media, and the Pandemic

By the summer of 2021, responses to the COVID-19 pandemic by people and state governments had produced two starkly different Americas: One with high rates of vaccinations and low rates of infections; the other with low rates of vaccinations and high and rising rates of infections, especially from the new Delta Variant and its variant, Delta Plus.

While two-thirds of adults in west coast and northeastern states had been vaccinated by July 2021, in other locations, particularly in the south, less than half the population had received even one dose of the vaccine.
By August 2021, 99.2% of all U.S. COVID-19 deaths were among unvaccinated people. Dr. Rochelle Walensky, director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention called it “a pandemic of the unvaccinated” (Andone & Holcombe, 2021, para. 2).

Vaccination for COVID-19 is a complex problem in U.S. democracy. Many people believe it is a personal choice whether or not to get vaccinated. While governments and businesses can issue vaccine mandates to protect public health and to establish safe workplaces for workers and customers, a mandate is not the same as forcing someone to be vaccinated. No government - local, state, or federal - can force a person to be vaccinated; the police cannot arrest someone who is not vaccinated and then make them get the vaccine.

Instead, businesses, governments, and organizations can prevent an unvaccinated individual from using their services or working for them. For example, an unvaccinated student cannot attend the University of Massachusetts Amherst or some 600 other colleges starting fall 2021. Similarly, an unvaccinated person may not be able to board a cruise ship or continue to work in a hospital. However, every organization issuing a vaccine mandate must allow for medical or religious exemptions.

Since the power of governments to compel vaccination is limited, public health officials, including Dr. Anthony Fauci, Director of the U.S. National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases and the chief
medical advisor to the President, began emphasizing trusted messengers as a way to combat the spread of COVID-19 by increasing vaccinations among unvaccinated groups. A trusted media messenger is a person or organization that people respect, believe, and will follow its recommendations. In July, the 18-year-old actress and singer Olivia Rodrigo joined the President to urge young people (at the time only 42% of those 18 to 24 were fully vaccinated) to get their shots.

People do listen to someone they trust, including family members, friends, local community leaders, pastors or priests, celebrities, doctors, and even television or radio personalities. But there is no single source of trusted information about the virus and vaccinations whose advice most people will follow.

Who are your trusted messengers about the pandemic?

In this activity, you will examine the media messages of different individuals and organizations in your school and community to assess how they are seeking to influence people’s thinking and behaviors. Then, you will propose ways to deliver trusted messages to young people.

**Activity 1: Analyze Pandemic Media Messengers in Your Community**

- Conduct an online survey of classmates and peers in your school about their trusted media messengers. Who do they listen to on social media, television, and the radio? Who do they trust for information about the COVID-19 pandemic?
- Select two of these media messengers to analyze.
  - What strategies do they use to influence readers and viewers?
  - What language do they use?
  - How do they captivate attention?
  - Who is their audience? How do you know this?
  - How effective do you think their approaches are? Why?
- Design an interactive graphic organizer to showcase your findings.

**Activity 2: Propose Ways to Deliver Trusted Messages to Young People**

“In the COVID-19 pandemic vaccine push, no one is speaking Gen Z’s language,” declared Nicholas Florko (2021). Nationwide, perhaps as many as 25% of young people ages 18 to 24 are vaccine reluctant. What media strategies might help them change their minds?

- Rate the potential effectiveness of the following youth-centered messaging ideas:
  - Text messaging alerts
  - Vaccine messages at concerts
  - TikTok videos
  - Pinterest boards filled with credible resources
  - Ask Me Anything discussion on Reddit
  - Messages from Instagram influencers
  - Interactive infographics
  - Snapchat stories
○ Free swag (e.g., shirts, hats, pens, bags)
○ Posters placed around school and at restaurants where young people hangout
○ Promotions (e.g., free month of Spotify, virtual hangout with Taylor Swift) or coupons (e.g., free pizza)
○ Community competition (e.g., competing against a neighboring town/neighborhood for most vaccinations)

• Then, **design a trusted messenger strategy** that would convince teens to get the COVID-19 vaccine.
  ○ Who are the trusted messengers for your approach?
  ○ Why will your proposed approach reach young people?

**Additional Resources**


**Connecting to the eBook**

Connecting to the Standards

- **Massachusetts Civics & Government Standards**
  - *Contrast the responsibilities of government at the federal, state and local levels.* (Massachusetts Curriculum Framework for History and Social Studies) [8.T6.7]

- **ISTE Standards**
  - **Knowledge Constructor**
    - 3a: Students plan and employ effective research strategies to locate information and other resources for their intellectual or creative pursuits.
    - 3b: Students evaluate the accuracy, perspective, credibility and relevance of information, media, data or other resources.
    - 3d: Students build knowledge by actively exploring real-world issues and problems, developing ideas and theories and pursuing answers and solutions.
  - **Creative Communicator**
    - 6a: Students choose the appropriate platforms and tools for meeting the desired objectives of their creation or communication.
    - 6b: Students create original works or responsibly repurpose or remix digital resources into new creations.
    - 6d: Students publish or present content that customizes the message and medium for the intended audiences.

- **DLCS Standards**
  - **Interpersonal and Societal Impact (CAS.c)**
  - **Digital Tools (DTC.a)**
  - **Collaboration and Communication (DTC.b)**
  - **Research (DTC.c)**

- **English Language Arts > History/Social Studies Common Core Standards**
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.6
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.8
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.6
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.6
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.8
Online Campaigning for Political Office

In Massachusetts, like most states, voters elect people to multiple positions in state government: Governor, Lieutenant Governor, Secretary of the Commonwealth (or Secretary of State), Attorney General, Treasurer, Auditor, Governor’s Council Member, State Senator, and State Representative. In some states, people also elect State Supreme Court Justices while in others judges are appointed, not elected. You can learn more at Who Are My Elected Officials?

Crafting an image and creating a memorable slogan are key ingredients for anyone campaigning for political office. Historian David S. Reynolds (2020) recounts how the image of Abraham Lincoln as the "Illinois Rail-Splitter" helped propel him to the White House in 1860: "the symbols fit the candidate: Lincoln had split rails, he had lived in frontier cabins; he had piloted flatboats; and so forth" (p. 491). In recent elections, successful Presidential candidates have had memorable slogans: "All the Way with LBJ" for Lyndon Johnson in 1964, "Let's Make America Great Again" for Ronald Reagan in 1980, and "Change We Can Believe In" for Barack Obama in 2008.

Social media has become a powerful tool for candidates running for political offices. Researchers have demonstrated that new political candidates (those running for office for the first time) can receive substantial boosts in financial donations and public recognition using Twitter as a campaign marketing tool (Petrova, Sen, & Yildirim, 2020). The advantages of social media for political candidates are clear: Twitter, Facebook, and other social media sites are: 1) free to use and 2) can reach large numbers of potential voters - both essential for successful election campaigns.

However, in the current highly polarized political climate of the U.S. and other democracies around the world, some online campaigners actively engage in deceptive claims, hateful or violent speech, and outright disinformation. Social media companies have been slow to respond to these anti-
democratic practices. In Fall 2021, in advance of Spring 2022 elections, Dutch political parties and Internet/social media platforms (Facebook, Google, Snapchat, and TikTok) agreed to the "Netherlands Code of Conduct Transparency Online Political Advertisements." In agreeing to this first-ever online code of conduct, those running for office in Holland promise not to post misleading messages, hateful content, or take hidden donations from foreign sources.

In the following activities, imagine that you have decided to run for a political office in your state's government. Since considerable amounts of time and money are involved in traveling the state and meeting voters face-to-face, you have decided to do most of your campaigning online. What office will you run for? How will you organize your online campaign? What image and what slogan will you create to help voters identify with you positively as a candidate? What personal code of conduct will you abide by while campaigning online?

**Activity 1: Design an Online Political Campaign for a State Political Office**

- Select a position in your state government that you want to be elected to.
- Explore how current members of congress use social media.
- Then, design a campaign website and at least 2 social media spaces (e.g., Facebook, TikTok, Instagram, YouTube) where potential voters could interact with you. You can create a digital version (e.g., design a website on Google Sites) or use pencil and paper or a digital drawing/mindmapping tool to develop a prototype.
- Next, devise a strategy for increasing voter participation with your online campaign spaces (e.g., virtual events, virtual office hours, social media challenges).
- Share your online political campaign plans with peers and family members for feedback.

**Activity 2: Design Your Personal Code of Conduct for Online Campaigning**

- Review the Dutch Code of Conduct for Online Political Advertisements.
- List your core values for fair and open online campaigning for democratic elections.
- State what you promise to do and not do in online campaigning (e.g., you will provide truthful information; you will not promote misleading content and you will refrain from using distorted audio-visual messages, including deep fakes).
- Explain what you expect social media platforms to do to maintain a fair election (e.g., remove hateful or violent content).
- Then, create a personal code of conduct for online campaigning.

**Additional Resources**

- [How To Run For Office](NPR)
- Running for Office? Try These Political Campaign Slogan Ideas [2021]
- Running for Office the First Time? Here’s How to Run a Local Political Campaign
Connecting to the eBook

Building Democracy for All: The Structure of Massachusetts Government

Connecting to the Standards

- **Massachusetts Civics & Government Standards**
  - Explain the leadership structure of the government of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and the function of each branch. (Massachusetts Curriculum Framework for History and Social Studies) [8.T6.8]

- **ISTE Standards**
  - Digital Citizen
    - 2c: Students demonstrate an understanding of and respect for the rights and obligations of using and sharing intellectual property.
  - Knowledge Constructor
    - 3a: Students plan and employ effective research strategies to locate information and other resources for their intellectual or creative pursuits.
    - 3d: Students build knowledge by actively exploring real-world issues and problems, developing ideas and theories and pursuing answers and solutions.
  - Creative Communicator
    - 6a: Students choose the appropriate platforms and tools for meeting the desired objectives of their creation or communication.
    - 6b: Students create original works or responsibly repurpose or remix digital resources into new creations.
    - 6d: Students publish or present content that customizes the message and medium for the intended audiences.

- **DLCS Standards**
  - Ethics and Laws (CAS.b)
  - Digital Tools (DTC.a)
  - Collaboration and Communication (DTC.b)
  - Research (DTC.c)

- **English Language Arts > History/Social Studies Common Core Standards**
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.7
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.7
Advertising the Lottery Online and In Print

A lottery is a game of chance. Players are not guaranteed to win; in fact, hardly anyone ever does. The thrill that keeps people playing and paying is the hope that "today might be your lucky day" - the time when it all comes together and you win big money with its accompanying celebrity status.

Lotteries are a form of regressive taxation where lower-earning individuals spend a higher percentage of their incomes on games of chance in which they have little opportunity to earn back what they spend. A few people do win large amounts of money, but the likelihood is extremely small. The chance of winning a Mega Millions jackpot is about 1 in 302.5 million; the odds of being struck by lightning are only 1 in 500,000.
You can learn more about lotteries as a form of taxation at Progressive, Proportional and Regressive Taxation.

In the following activities, you will uncover how lottery advertisements are designed to persuade people to gamble their money and then you will inform people about their chances of winning the lottery.

**Activity 1: Analyze Lottery Advertisements**

- Examine online and print advertisements for Mega Millions and your own or neighboring state lotteries.
  - For a primary source to analyze, here is the Massachusetts Lottery and its promotions.
- During your analysis, consider the following prompts:
  - What do you notice about how lottery advertisements use words, colors, numbers, and graphics to encourage people to play?
  - Where do you see advertisements for the lottery? Sporting events, city billboards, diners, particular television shows, certain websites, other locations? Why do you think the lottery has chosen these places to advertise?
  - What visual and textual techniques do they use to persuade people to buy lottery tickets?
- Then, using the techniques of persuasion you uncovered during your analysis, **design your own print or media advertisement** to convince people to not spend their money on lottery tickets.
Activity 2: Inform People About Their Chances

While psychologists recommend that people only bet what they can afford to lose on lottery tickets and other games of chance, some individuals spend money recklessly in hope of winning big.

- Create a series of TikTok or Snapchat videos to inform people about their odds of winning a lottery.
  - You can review the math for the odds in Mega Millions in this [graphic from the Florida Lottery](https://www.flalottery.com/news/history/odds-millions).
- Include alternative investment strategies where individuals might get a higher return on the money they are spending on lotteries every year.

Additional Resources

- [Teacher and Student Guide to Analyzing Advertisements](#)
- [Study: Lotteries regressive tax on poor](#)
- [Why the Lottery is a Regressive Tax on the Nation’s Poorest](#)
Connecting to the eBook

Building Democracy for All: Should States Expand Lotteries to Raise Money for Communities?

Connecting to the Standards

- **Massachusetts Civics & Government Standards**
  - Give examples of tax-supported facilities and services provided by the Massachusetts state government and by local governments. (Massachusetts Curriculum Framework for History and Social Studies) [8.T6.9]

- **ISTE Standards**
  - Digital Citizen
    - 2c: Students demonstrate an understanding of and respect for the rights and obligations of using and sharing intellectual property.
  - Knowledge Constructor
    - 3a: Students plan and employ effective research strategies to locate information and other resources for their intellectual or creative pursuits.
    - 3b: Students evaluate the accuracy, perspective, credibility and relevance of information, media, data or other resources.
    - 3d: Students build knowledge by actively exploring real-world issues and problems, developing ideas and theories and pursuing answers and solutions.
  - Creative Communicator
    - 6a: Students choose the appropriate platforms and tools for meeting the desired objectives of their creation or communication.
    - 6b: Students create original works or responsibly repurpose or remix digital resources into new creations.
    - 6d: Students publish or present content that customizes the message and medium for the intended audiences.

- **DLCS Standards**
  - Ethics and Laws (CAS.b)
  - Interpersonal and Societal Impact (CAS.c)
  - Digital Tools (DTC.a)
  - Collaboration and Communication (DTC.b)
  - Research (DTC.c)

- **English Language Arts > History/Social Studies Common Core Standards**
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.4
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.5
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.6
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.7
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.4
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.5
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.7
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.5
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.7
Local Governments, Social Media and Digital Democracy

"All politics is local," the former Speaker of the House, Thomas P. "Tip" O'Neill, Jr. famously remarked, suggesting that people are intensely interested in the political matters they believe directly affect themselves, their families, and their communities. It follows from O'Neill's statement that much of what is political locally involves the policies and actions of local governments.

To build greater political engagement among people, cities and towns across the country are using social media to bring the local government to the people. For example, on social media, some communities livestream mayor, council, and select board meetings, send online memes, greetings, messages, and reminders to local individuals and groups, respond to people's requests for information and services, promote programs and initiatives by city and town departments, and notify everyone about natural disasters, impending weather, and other emergencies (The Truth about Local Government and Social Media, CivicPlus, 2020).
Social media has been hailed as a way to promote what has been called digital democracy (or e-democracy or e-government). In theory, online access will give everyone in a community opportunities to express their views and influence public policy. The record to date has been far less than that, as one researcher noted, "democratic institutions have witnessed no digital revolution through the Internet" (Bastick, 2017, p. 3).

Still, can technology revolutionize democracy? One starting point for considering this question is analyzing how your local government uses social media and how might it use it more effectively and democratically.

**Activity: Review and Improve Your Local Town Government's Use of Social Media**

- Examine social media posts from your local city or town government over a period of 2-3 weeks.
  - What type of information is posted?
  - What visuals do they use in their posts? How might these visuals influence viewers'
reactions to the information provided in the post?
- Do city or town officials reply to comments from viewers?
- How accessible are the posts?
- Is information available in multiple languages? Should it be?

- Use the Teacher and Student Guide to Analyzing Social Media to take a deeper dive into analyzing the use of social media by your local government.

- Then, compare how different departments (e.g., city or town council, police, schools, board of health, recreation) use social media.
  - Which one has the largest following on social media? Why do you think that is?
  - Which one has the most engagement (e.g., replies, likes, shares)? Why?
  - Are there differences in how these groups communicate with members of the community? If so, why do you think that is?

- Based on your findings and your own experiences with social media, write a proposal and design a video to help a local government department (e.g., town council, chamber of commerce, recreation) improve their use of social media to engage citizens.

Additional Resources

- Athenian Democracy and 21st Century Digital Government - Before and After the Pandemic
- 15 Social Media Ideas to Showcase Your Town
- A Small City's Path to Getting the Most from Social Media

Connecting to the eBook

Building Democracy for All: Town Meetings, Open Meeting Laws, and Local School Board Elections
Connecting to the Standards

- **Massachusetts Civics & Government Standards**
  - Explain the major components of local government in Massachusetts. (Massachusetts Curriculum Framework for History and Social Studies) [8.T6.10]

- **ISTE Standards**
  - Knowledge Constructor
    - 3b: Students evaluate the accuracy, perspective, credibility and relevance of information, media, data or other resources.
    - 3d: Students build knowledge by actively exploring real-world issues and problems, developing ideas and theories and pursuing answers and solutions.
  - Creative Communicator
    - 6a: Students choose the appropriate platforms and tools for meeting the desired objectives of their creation or communication.
    - 6b: Students create original works or responsibly repurpose or remix digital resources into new creations.
    - 6d: Students publish or present content that customizes the message and medium for the intended audiences.

- **DLCS Standards**
  - Interpersonal and Societal Impact (CAS.c)
  - Collaboration and Communication (DTC.b)
  - Research (DTC.c)

- **English Language Arts > History/Social Studies Common Core Standards**
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.4
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.5
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.7
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.4
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.5
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.5
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.7
The "commons" is the land and resources (forests, fisheries, water sources, and open spaces) that are owned by all members of a society. It is an old old concept, dating back to the Roman Empire.

Unlike private property, commons are public spaces to be used and enjoyed collectively. Everyone (including state and local governments) is expected to maintain and improve shared commons for current and future use.

We often think of national parks as the commons. There are 423 national parks, with the Medgar and Myrlie Evers Home National Monument being the most recent in 2020 (How Many National Parks Are There? National Park Foundation, January 22, 2021).

But just about every community in the United States has some sort of common area, such as a town common, a parkland, a walking path, a wilderness area, an athletic field or court, a splash pad, a skate park, a playground, a historic battlefield, picnic areas, or a reflection bench beside a river or at the top of a hill or mountain.

The Boston Common was the first public open space in America in 1634. The National Mall in Washington, DC opened in 1790. Yellowstone became the first U.S. national park in 1872.
Fundamental tensions exist between common spaces and **private property** (e.g., land or resources owned by a private individual or organization). Private resources are not open to everyone and exist for the use and benefit of the private owner. John Malone, a telecommunications entrepreneur, is the largest landowner in the United States with 2.2 million acres in 5 states - land that is more than half of size of Lake Ontario, one-third the size of Vermont, and twice as large as Rhode Island ([These People Own the Most Land in America](https://www.npr.org/sections/thesalt/2021/02/23/1004262510/these-people-own-the-most-land-in-america), February 23, 2021).

The idea of private property emerged in England in the 17th and 18th centuries. Prior to this time, land was there for everyone’s use (think of Robin Hood and his band living off the land in Sherwood Forest). Rising populations and the need for food, along with the coming of the Industrial Revolution, led to the enclosure of agricultural lands. Through enclosure, private owners could wall off or fence off land from public use (Wall, 2017).

Local, state, and the federal government are responsible for maintaining public common spaces. They get the funds to do so from people’s taxes, user fees (money paid to access a facility), public-private partnerships, and donations from supportive individuals and groups. In times of ever-rising costs and tight budgets, there is never enough money to fully cover the expenses of common spaces. Governments face tough choices about whether to sell public lands to private developers to cover other expenses. For example, the Trump Administration sold low-cost leases to private companies for oil and gas drilling on public lands, a move it defended as good for the economy.
Activity 1: Design a Social Media Video to Increase Interest in Common Spaces in Your Community

- Identify a commons in your local or state community.
- Research this commons - what type of facilities and resources does it provide? Is it free? How does it make money?
- Visit the commons and capture video, audio, and photos.
- **Design a social media video** (e.g., TikTok, Snapchat, Instagram) to encourage members of your community to visit the commons.

Activity 2: Suggest Ways to Use Media to Encourage Citizens to Protect Local and State Commons

- To get started, look at the Town Common webpages for the following Massachusetts communities: Hadley, South Hadley, Greenfield, Easthampton, and Montague/Turners Falls.
- Consider the following prompts:
  - What information is shared? What information is missing?
  - What visuals are provided, if any?
  - How inviting and accessible is this site?
- Now choose a local or state commons and examine how the local or state government shares information about that commons on social media and on websites.
  - Use the Teacher and Student Guide to Analyzing Websites and Teacher and Student Guide to Analyzing Social Media to conduct a critical media literacy analysis.
- Based on your findings, **craft a multimodal proposal** (featuring images, video, and/or audio) to encourage your local or state government to improve their use of media to inspire citizens to protect the commons.

Additional Resources

- The benefits of the commons.

Connecting to the eBook

Connecting to the Standards

- Massachusetts Civics & Government Standards
- ISTE Standards
- DLCS Standards
- English Language Arts > History/Social Studies Common Core Standards
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.

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

![Media Literacy Activities Choice Board](image-url)
Press Freedom in the United States and the World

Journalists and citizens have faced restrictions on the Freedom of the Press throughout United States history. Freedom of the Press is considered one of the most important American rights. Yet according to the [World Press Freedom Index](https://pressfreedomindex.org/), the United States ranks 45th among 180 countries in terms of press freedom.
In this activity, you will act as an expert advisor tasked with helping the U.S. improve its World Press Freedom Index ranking.

**Activity: Improve the United State's World Press Freedom Ranking**

- Read through the ratings on the [World Press Freedom](https://www.freedomofpress.org/) website to critically analyze why the U.S. received its ranking.
- Evaluate the U.S. in comparison to other countries, particularly those above and below it on the list.
  - Note the different factors mentioned in the rankings that determine what makes the press more or less “free.”
- **Provide a list of 3-4 recommendations for how the U.S. can rise in the rankings**, making sure to cite examples from other countries you found during your research.
- Publish your recommendations in an infographic on [Canva](https://www.canva.com/), a Public Service Announcement video or [podcast](https://podcasthub.com/), or a social media post to be viewed by the public.
  - Make sure the design clearly and effectively communicates your message.
- Share what you created with the class and compare and contrast the different recommendations you all contributed.

**Additional Resources:**

- [ACLU Freedom of Press Resources](https://www.aclu.org/)
- Empowering Independent Press ([Center for International Media Assistance](https://cima.org/))
Connecting to the eBook

**Building Democracy for All: Notable Freedom of the Press Court Cases**

Connecting to the Standards

- **Massachusetts Civics & Government Standards**
  - Explain why freedom of the press was included as a right in the First Amendment to the United States Constitution and in Article 16 of the Massachusetts Constitution; explain that freedom of the press means the right to express and publish views on politics and other topics without government sponsorship, oversight, control or censorship. (Massachusetts Curriculum Framework for History and Social Studies) [8.T7.1]

- **ISTE Standards**
  - Knowledge Constructor
    - 3a: Students plan and employ effective research strategies to locate information and other resources for their intellectual or creative pursuits.
    - 3d: Students build knowledge by actively exploring real-world issues and problems, developing ideas and theories and pursuing answers and solutions.
  - Creative Communicator
    - 6a: Students choose the appropriate platforms and tools for meeting the desired objectives of their creation or communication.
    - 6b: Students create original works or responsibly repurpose or remix digital resources into new creations.
    - 6d: Students publish or present content that customizes the message and medium for the intended audiences.

- **DLCS Standards**
  - Digital Tools (DTC.a)
  - Collaboration and Communication (DTC.b)
  - Research (DTC.c)

- **English Language Arts > History/Social Studies Common Core Standards**
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.2
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.4
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.5
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.7
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.2
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.4
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.2
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.7
Most of us are taught that objectivity in journalism means reporting "unvarnished facts in a very neutral manner" (Williams & Stroud, 2020, para. 1). The reality is and always has been quite different. Historically, newspapers had partisan political perspectives and only when the demands of not alienating readers who bought the paper did many journalists claim they were objectively reporting events.

Today, with news available 24/7 every day of the year, print newspapers, television news shows, online news sites, and social media platforms do not all present the news in the same way or even as objectively agreed upon and accurate facts.

The news we read and view, concluded the authors of the report Truth Decay, is a combination of facts and opinions and neutrality and bias packaged to appeal to different audiences (young, old, affluent, working class) and, in some cases, partisan political perspectives (Democrats, Republicans, progressives, conservatives). The same event is likely to be covered differently by Fox News, MSNBC,
At the same time, there are those who contend that objectivity is a false concept and reporters should openly state their own points of view for readers and viewers to embrace or reject. For example, rather than give equal space in a news story to climate deniers or Big Lie proponents, these journalists should expose misinformation and untruths wherever they find them. For these reporters, it is necessary to replace objectivity (the term was removed from journalism’s Code of Ethics in 1996) with “skepticism" and make online and print journalism, in the words of Bill Kovach and Tom Rosenstiel, “a discipline of verification" (The Elements of Journalism: What Newspeople Should Know and the Public Should Expect, Three Rivers Press, 2017).
Critical Media Literacy and Civic Learning

Watch on YouTube https://edtechbooks.org/zlx

In the following activities you will practice evaluating the news from different sides; that is, from different points of view and contrasting political perspectives.

Activity 1: Evaluate the News From All Sides

- Select a Topic (choose one):
  - Coronavirus
  - West Coast Fires
  - Facebook banning political ads
  - QAnon

- Read through the stories featured for your selected topic (at least one left, one center, and one right perspective) and then consider each of the following questions:
  - Which stories most closely follow the Inverted Pyramid format?
    - Do you think that using the Inverted Pyramid format affects the trustworthiness of the story?
  - How does the perspective differ in each story? Pay close attention to who is quoted in each article.
  - How does the descriptive language differ between the stories?
    - Note at least three adjectives in each story and if and how the use of these descriptors changes from one perspective to another.
  - How do the images used in each story differ? Why do you think the images differ?
  - Who do you think is the audience for each story?
    - How do you think the article’s choice of perspective is meant to target that audience?
  - What primary, secondary, tertiary sources are used? How reliable is the content? How did you determine this?
• Create a presentation, interactive image, or video to inform your peers and family members about the differences between left-leaning, center, and right-leaning news articles.

**Activity 2: Write the News From All Sides**

• Choose a school, local, or national issue that interests and impacts you directly.
• **Write three brief news reports** about the issue featuring three different perspectives (i.e., left, center, right) or points of view (e.g., favorable, unfavorable, objective).
  ○ Consider: How will you use descriptive language and images in your story in ways that support your perspective or point of view?

**Additional Resources**

• [Media Bias Chart](https://allsides.com/media-bias) (AllSides)
• [Teacher and Student Guide to Analyzing News and Newspapers](https://allsides.com/guides)
• [SmartNews’ latest news discovery feature shows articles from across the political spectrum](https://smartnews.com)

**Connecting to the eBook**

[Building Democracy for All: History of Newspapers, Then and Now and the History of the Black Press](https://example.com)
Connecting to the Standards

- **Massachusetts Civics & Government Standards**
  - Give examples of how a free press can provide competing information and views about government and politics. (Massachusetts Curriculum Framework for History and Social Studies) [8.T7.2]

- **ISTE Standards**
  - Knowledge Constructor
    - 3b: Students evaluate the accuracy, perspective, credibility and relevance of information, media, data, or other resources.
  - Creative Communicator
    - 6a: Students choose the appropriate platforms and tools for meeting the desired objectives of their creation or communication.
    - 6b: Students create original works or responsibly repurpose or remix digital resources into new creations.
    - 6d: Students publish or present content that customizes the message and medium for the intended audiences.

- **DLCS Standards**
  - Interpersonal and Societal Impact (CAS.c)
  - Digital Tools (DTC.a)
  - Collaboration and Communication (DTC.b)
  - Research (DTC.c)

- **English Language Arts > History/Social Studies Common Core Standards**
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.5
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.6
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.7
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.8
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.5
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.6
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.8
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.9
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.5
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.6
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.8
Investigative journalism and social change

Investigative journalists have helped to create social and political change throughout history from improving worker conditions in the early 1900s (the early muckrakers’ work of Ida Tarbell, Ida B. Wells, Upton Sinclair, and others) to releasing the Pentagon Papers (Daniel Ellsberg; 1971), exposing sexual harassment in the 2010s (#MeToo), and uncovering the workings of the January 6, 2021 Insurrection at the U.S. Capitol.

You can go here to learn more about investigative journalists, past and present, including Nellie Bly (hailed by many as the first investigative reporter), Rachel Carson, and current examples such as the Pandora Papers and the Facebook Files.

Given journalism’s potential to affect social change, what contemporary issues would you investigate?
In this activity, you will act as an investigative journalist as you explore a political topic of interest.

**Activity: Investigate an Issue**

- Partner up with a classmate and select one political issue of interest to you both.
- Then, on your own:
  - Interview at least three credible sources that you think will provide valuable information about the issue.
  - Conduct additional research, including evaluating online sources, reviewing government documents (e.g., proposed laws), and exploring historical artifacts (e.g., supreme court case transcripts), to expand your understanding of the issue. Make sure to evaluate the credibility and accuracy of the information that you find.
  - **Create a 1-2 minute video presenting your findings** about the topic.
    - The video should establish four key things to the viewer: 1) Why the topic matters, 2) Why the topic is important to you, 3) What key information the audience needs to know about it (taken from your sources), and 4) What social action you recommend to help address the issue.
- Finally, watch your partner’s video about the same topic and discuss how the media can provide competing information and views about government and politics.

**Additional Resources:**

- Defining Investigative Reporting: What makes it different from other types of journalism? ([Columbia Journalism School](https://www.columbia.edu/cu/columbia/journalism/))
- Seven standards of quality journalism ([info poster](https://www.journalism.org/standards/))
• How Do We Keep Bias Out of Stories? (ProPublica)
• 21st Century Muckraking (Global Investigative Journalism Network)

Connecting to the eBook

Building Democracy for All: Does Every Citizen Need to be Her or His Own Investigative Journalist?
Connecting to the Standards

- **Massachusetts Civics & Government Standards**
  - Give examples of how a free press can provide competing information and views about government and politics. (Massachusetts Curriculum Framework for History and Social Studies) \[8.T7.2\]

- **ISTE Standards**
  - Knowledge Constructor
    - 3a: Students plan and employ effective research strategies to locate information and other resources for their intellectual or creative pursuits.
    - 3b: Students evaluate the accuracy, perspective, credibility and relevance of information, media, data, or other resources.
    - 3d: Students build knowledge by actively exploring real-world issues and problems, developing ideas and theories and pursuing answers and solutions.
  - Creative Communicator
    - 6b: Students create original works or responsibly repurpose or remix digital resources into new creations.
    - 6d: Students publish or present content that customizes the message and medium for the intended audiences.
  - Global Collaborator
    - 7b. Students use collaborative technologies to work with others, including peers, experts or community members, to examine issues and problems from multiple viewpoints.
    - 7d. Students explore local and global issues and use collaborative technologies to work with others to investigate solutions.

- **DLCS Standards**
  - Ethics and Laws (CAS.b)
  - Interpersonal and Societal Impact (CAS.c)
  - Digital Tools (DTC.a)
  - Collaboration and Communication (DTC.b)
  - Research (DTC.c)

- **English Language Arts > History/Social Studies Common Core Standards**
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.6
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.7
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.8
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.9
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.6
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.8
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.9
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.6
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.7
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.8
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.9
News Photographs & Newspaper Design

Photographs in print newspapers and online news sites convey powerful messages to readers and viewers, but they are not to be viewed uncritically.

Every photo represents a moment frozen in time. What happened before and after the photo was taken? What else was happening outside the view of the camera? Why did the photographer take the photo from a certain angle and perspective? Why did a newspaper editor choose to publish one image and not another?

Watch on YouTube https://edtechbooks.org/-BuSY

The meaning of a news photograph depends on multiple levels of context as well as how each of us interpret its meaning.

Photographs can also be altered to create new interpretations or convey specific political messages. David King's book, The Commissar Vanishes (2014) details how the Soviet dictator Joseph Stalin used photographs and art to change how history was remembered and understood. One famous photo example shows how Leon Trotsky was airbrushed out of his position standing beside Vladimir Lenin during a November 7, 1919 anniversary celebration of the Russian Revolution. Go here to learn more about current deepfakes, fake profiles and political messaging in U.S. politics.
The following activities will provide you with an opportunity to act as a critical viewer of newspaper photographs and as a member of a newspaper design team who must decide what photographs to incorporate in a class newspaper.

**Activity 1: Analyze Newspaper Photographs**

- **WARM-UP:** As a class, analyze an image from the *New York Times* section "What's Going On in This Picture?" and collaboratively agree upon a caption that best communicates what is happening in the photograph.
- Then, individually, choose a famous newspaper photograph or a photograph from a recent newspaper (you can also check out *The Most Influential Images of All Time* from *Time* Magazine).
- After choosing a photo, conduct a visual analysis using the following questions suggested by Sophia Modzelewski, a 2020-2021 history teacher candidate at the University of Massachusetts Amherst, and by *The New York Times* Learning Network:
  - What is going on in this photo? What do you see that makes you say that?
  - What emotions do you see in the expressions/actions of the people in the photo?
  - What emotion do you feel when looking at it?
  - Who is one figure in the image whose actions may be misrepresented by the photograph?
  - Why was the name, caption, or description of this image chosen? What do you think might be an alternate name, caption, or description?
  - How might this photo be perceived differently by different groups of people (e.g., people of different ages, gender identities, culture, socioeconomic status)?
  - What else can you find out about the image?
- **Present your visual analysis findings as an interactive image or screenrecording video.**
  - Interactive image:
    - Start a new *Google Drawings canvas*.
    - Upload the image to the middle of the canvas.
    - Insert text boxes and shapes to call attention to your findings.
    - Add links to additional information (e.g., the original image source).
  - Screenrecording:
    - If you have a Mac computer, use this shortcut.
    - If you have access to Quicktime, here's how to screenrecord using Quicktime.
    - Otherwise, use a web-based screenrecording tool such as *Screencastify*, *Screencast-o-Matic*, or *Loom*.

**Activity 2: Design a Class Newspaper with Photos and Images**

- As a class, identify the different roles and responsibilities needed for creating a class newspaper (e.g., photographer, editorial writer, Op-Ed writer, editorial cartoonist, news writer).
- Then, select the top 3 roles of interest to you and write, draw, or record a statement about why you would excel in those roles.
- As a class, democratically determine how to select who will be in each role (e.g., ranked-choice voting, campaigning).
- Once you have your selected role, learn everything you can about it and then get to work...
capture photos, write content, draw cartoons, etc...

- As a class, democratically determine the design of the newspaper, including the layout, what images to include, and font size and style.
- Use digital tools like LucidPress, Google Docs, or Wix to publish the newspaper.
- Once you have completed your responsibilities for the class newspaper, **create a video or presentation about the importance of your designated role**.
- Bonus Activity: Create the front page of the class newspaper with and without photos and then ask family/peers to compare and contrast the two options and reflect on their impact.

### Additional Resources

- [How to Read a Photograph](#)
- [Teacher and Student Guide to Analyzing Images](#)

### Connecting to the eBook

Connecting to the Standards

- **Massachusetts Civics & Government Standards**
  - Explain the different functions of news articles, editorials, editorial cartoons, and “op-ed” commentaries. (Massachusetts Curriculum Framework for History and Social Studies) [8.T7.3]

- **ISTE Standards**
  - Digital Citizen
    - 2c: Students demonstrate an understanding of and respect for the rights and obligations of using and sharing intellectual property.
  - Knowledge Constructor
    - 3a: Students plan and employ effective research strategies to locate information and other resources for their intellectual or creative pursuits.
    - 3b: Students evaluate the accuracy, perspective, credibility and relevance of information, media, data, or other resources.
  - Creative Communicator
    - 6a: Students choose the appropriate platforms and tools for meeting the desired objectives of their creation or communication.
    - 6b: Students create original works or responsibly repurpose or remix digital resources into new creations.
    - 6d: Students publish or present content that customizes the message and medium for the intended audiences.
  - Global Collaborator
    - 7c. Students contribute constructively to project teams, assuming various roles and responsibilities to work effectively toward a common goal.

- **DLCS Standards**
  - Ethics and Laws (CAS.b)
  - Interpersonal and Societal Impact (CAS.c)
  - Digital Tools (DTC.a)
  - Collaboration and Communication (DTC.b)
  - Research (DTC.c)

- **English Language Arts > History/Social Studies Common Core Standards**
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.2
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.5
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.6
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.7
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.8
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.2
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.5
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.2
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.5
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.7
How Reporters Report Events

Print and television news reporters make multiple decisions about how they report the events they are covering, including who to interview, which perspective to present, which camera angles to use for capturing footage, and which audio to record. These decisions structure how viewers think about the causes and consequences of events.

Historian Rick Perlstein (2020) described how, during the beginning of the Iran Hostage Crisis in 1979, ABC News vaulted to the top of the TV news show ratings with its late night broadcasts of "America Held Hostage: The Crisis in Iran" (the show that would soon be renamed Nightline). The network focused on showing images of a burning American flag, embassy employees in blindfolds, Uncle Sam hanged in effigy, and increasingly more people watched the broadcast. Perlstein (2020) noted, "the images slotted effortlessly into the long-gathering narrative of American malaise, humiliation, and failed leadership" (p. 649) - themes Ronald Reagan would capitalize on during his successful 1980 Presidential campaign.

Watch on YouTube https://edtechbooks.org/-WhDG

In the following activities, you will examine reporters' differences in coverage of the 2016 Hong Kong Protests and then you will act as a reporter and create or remix the news.
Activity 1: Evaluate How Reporters Covered the 2016 Hong Kong Protests

Just as the accounts from Marie Colvin, Nellie Bly, and other war correspondents shaped public opinion during the past, photos and videos taken by reporters from today's conflict zones can have a huge influence over how people view and understand those events.

- Below are the links to two videos taken by two different correspondents covering the same event at the same time - the Hong Kong Protests in 2016:
  - Hong Kong Protests 1
  - Hong Kong Protests 2
- After watching the two videos, conduct a critical media literacy analysis using the prompts from the Teacher and Student Guide to Analyzing News and Newspapers.
- Then, consider the following prompts:
  - What is the primary message that each reporter is trying to communicate to the audience about the event?
  - If the goal of a correspondent is to inform the public about an event, which of these correspondents do you think accomplished that goal better? Why?
- Report your findings in a Snapchat or TikTok video, presentation, blog, song, or podcast.
Activity 2: Report an Event From a Different Perspective

- Select a recent local, national, or international news event.
- Find news clips about this event on YouTube.
- **Remix these clips** (screen record the clips; add sound/narration/images) to **present a different perspective of the event**.
  - Screenrecording:
    - If you have a Mac computer, use this shortcut.
    - If you have access to Quicktime, here's how to screenrecord using Quicktime.
    - Otherwise, use a web-based screenrecording tool such as Screencastify, Screencast-o-Matic, or Loom.
  - After completing the remix, explain the reactions you sought to create through your selection of images, audio, and video.

Additional Resources

- Seven standards of quality journalism
- AllSides.com roundup of top weekly stories with articles from across the political spectrum

Connecting to the eBook

[Building Democracy for All: What are the Roles of a War Correspondent and a War Photographer?](#)
Connecting to the Standards

- **Massachusetts Civics & Government Standards**
  - Explain the different functions of news articles, editorials, editorial cartoons, and “op-ed” commentaries. (Massachusetts Curriculum Framework for History and Social Studies) [8.T7.3]

- **ISTE Standards**
  - Digital Citizen
    - 2c: Students demonstrate an understanding of and respect for the rights and obligations of using and sharing intellectual property.
  - Knowledge Constructor
    - 3b: Students evaluate the accuracy, perspective, credibility and relevance of information, media, data, or other resources.
    - 3d: Students build knowledge by actively exploring real-world issues and problems, developing ideas and theories and pursuing answers and solutions.
  - Creative Communicator
    - 6a: Students choose the appropriate platforms and tools for meeting the desired objectives of their creation or communication.
    - 6b: Students create original works or responsibly repurpose or remix digital resources into new creations.
    - 6d: Students publish or present content that customizes the message and medium for the intended audiences.

- **DLCS Standards**
  - Ethics and Laws (CAS.b)
  - Interpersonal and Societal Impact (CAS.c)
  - Digital Tools (DTC.a)
  - Collaboration and Communication (DTC.b)
  - Research (DTC.c)

- **English Language Arts > History/Social Studies Common Core Standards**
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.1
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.5
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.6
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.7
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.8
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.1
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.6
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.1
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.6
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.7
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.8
Recommendation Algorithms on Social Media Platforms

Recommendation algorithms, built into social media media platforms, Internet search tools, e-commerce sites, and other digital applications, influence people's behaviors and choices on a daily basis in often unnoticeable ways.

While algorithms are simply "instructions for solving a problem or completing a task" (Rainie & Anderson, 2017, para. 2), they can be used to shape thinking and behavior by doing things like suggesting “products, services, and information to users based on analysis of data” (Voice Tech Podcast, Medium, June 25, 2019, para. 2). For example, social media platforms use recommendation algorithms to determine what you should see on their sites (e.g., posts, sponsored ads, people) based on data about what you have viewed, bought, or done before.

Systems that have algorithms make everyday life decisions are currently being proposed. Would you prefer having a life decision made for you by another person or a computer algorithm? How do you think most people would respond? The answer may surprise you...

In a survey, 4,000 people were asked whether they wanted a human or an algorithm to decide for
them if they would win a coffee gift card, get a bank loan, join a clinical trial for a promising medical treatment, or face a sizable money fine in civil court. In just over half of the situations, people preferred an algorithm to a human - when they believed the decision would made quicker, was cheaper, and would be more accurate (Bambauer & Risch, "Worse Than Human?" Arizona State Law Review 2021).

On social media and e-commerce platforms, the goal of recommendation algorithms is to keep you on the site, app, or platform as long as possible to make more money. Advocates hail the convenience of personalized digital experiences, while critics worry that users experience only a narrow range of suggestions and choices.

In the following activities, you will critically examine YouTube’s recommendation algorithm and then design your own.

**Activity 1: Evaluate YouTube's Recommendation Algorithm**

- Login to Gmail and then go to YouTube.com.
- Closely examine the suggested videos on your YouTube homepage.
  - Do the recommended videos seem to accurately represent your tastes?
  - Does anything seem out of place?
- Then, open up an incognito or private browser (where you are not logged into Gmail), go to YouTube, and examine the suggested videos on the homepage.
  - How are the videos different from the ones suggested when you were logged into
What surprises you about the differences or similarities between the two sets of recommended videos?
○ What data do you think YouTube is using from you to determine the suggested videos for your homepage when you are logged into Gmail?

Next, click on a video and closely examine the list of “recommended” videos on the right-hand side of the screen.
○ Why do you think these videos were suggested?

Read the following articles:
○ Making of a YouTube Radical, The New York Times, June 8, 2019
○ YouTube’s Algorithms Might Radicalise People - But the Real Problem is We’ve No Idea How They Work, The Conversation, January 21, 2020

Finally, create a social media campaign to respond to the following prompt: How might recommendation algorithms influence the news that people get from social media, Internet search tools (e.g., Google search), and other digital applications?
○ The social media campaign should include at least 2 videos (e.g., YouTube, Snapchat, TikTok), 5 example posts, and 3 images (e.g., memes, graphics, infographics) designed by you.
○ Here is a social media campaign example created by Justin Lo, Daniel Mulno, and David Warde and here is a Twitter campaign example by Sara Shea.
○ Consider using the Made to Stick principles or TED Talk presentation techniques to increase the appeal of your social media campaign.

Activity 2: Design a News Recommendation Algorithm

○ Explore Algorithms for Kids or Initiation to Algorithmics with Scratch (advanced)
○ Then, design a simple algorithm in Scratch in which a user can input data about themselves (e.g., interests, political leaning, location) and get a recommended News site or article to explore.

Additional Resources

○ YouTube Algorithm: The Constantly Updated Guide to YouTube’s Updates & Changes
○ Everything you need to know about social media algorithms

Connecting to the eBook

Building Democracy for All: Social Media, Digital News, and the Spread of Misinformation
Connecting to the Standards

- **Massachusetts Civics & Government Standards**
  - Evaluate the benefits and challenges of digital news and social media to a democratic society. (Massachusetts Curriculum Framework for History and Social Studies) [8.T7.4]

- **ISTE Standards**
  - Digital Citizen
    - 2d. Students manage their personal data to maintain digital privacy and security and are aware of data-collection technology used to track their navigation online.
  - Knowledge Constructor
    - 3b: Students evaluate the accuracy, perspective, credibility and relevance of information, media, data, or other resources.
    - 3d: Students build knowledge by actively exploring real-world issues and problems, developing ideas and theories and pursuing answers and solutions.
  - Creative Communicator
    - 6a: Students choose the appropriate platforms and tools for meeting the desired objectives of their creation or communication.
    - 6b: Students create original works or responsibly repurpose or remix digital resources into new creations.
    - 6d: Students publish or present content that customizes the message and medium for the intended audiences.

- **DLCS Standards**
  - Interpersonal and Societal Impact (CAS.c)
  - Digital Tools (DTC.a)
  - Collaboration and Communication (DTC.b)
  - Research (DTC.c)
  - Human and Computer Partnerships (CS.b)

- **English Language Arts > History/Social Studies Common Core Standards**
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.7
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.7
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.97
People get news today from sources ranging from television, social media (e.g., Twitter, TikTok) and legacy news outlets (i.e., *New York Times, Washington Post*) as well as teachers, parents, family members, and peers. Yet, there is a real difference in quality and reliability between real news and fake news.

Fake news resembles real news in form (it usually has headlines, images, quotes, and a news-like look on screens), but not in how it is produced organizationally. Real news is derived following the standards and rules of journalism. It is fact-based and fact-checked from verified sources. It is presented objectively and truthfully in a journalistic style of writing. It is independent of political or corporate influences. Fake news, by contrast, is just what the term says -- information that is intentionally false and misleading (Molina, et al., 2021).

Given the amount of fake and false news online and in print, every individual must become their own fact checker and news analyst - determining for themselves what is credible and reliable information and what is fake and false misinformation.
Activity 1: Analyze Your Online Search Habits

- Pick a topic that you don’t know much about. Spend 20 minutes investigating and researching it. Find out anything and everything about this topic.
- Then, look through your search history.
  - What words did you use in your search?
  - What sorts of news sources did you tend to seek out?
  - What did you find the most or least valuable during your search process?
  - How did you determine whether a source was credible or not?
- Create a **mindmap that provides a visual overview** of your search process (see examples below).
  - Include boxes on your mindmap for each site you visited. Add details to each box, such as whether you consider the site credible and what you learned from the site.
  - Mindmap Tools: Google Drawings, MindMup, pencil and paper, & more tools.
- Compare and contrast your mindmap with those of your classmates.

![Example Mindmap for the Search Topic “Montessori Schools” by Kayleigh Francis is licensed under CC BY NC SA 4.0](image-url)
Activity 2: Create a News Evaluation Tool

- Consider the following questions:
  - How do you determine if a news story or social media news post contains misinformation?
  - What would you tell someone who didn’t know anything about how to tell if a source is credible to look for when evaluating news articles and social media posts?
  - How would you explain credible news sources to your parents, grandparents, siblings, or friends?

- Create a rubric, checklist, or other instructional tool (e.g., podcast, video) to help others evaluate news sources (see example mindmap below).
Activity 3: Evaluate the Benefits and Challenges of Digital News and Social Media to a Democratic Society

Nearly half of adults ages 18 to 29 in this country get their political news mostly on social media. The figure is one in five across all ages groups. Those individuals also tend to be less well-informed about political issues and policies (Pew Research Center, July 30, 2020).

- Respond to the following prompts in a TikTok, Snapchat, or 60-second video:
  - What do you see as the benefits of digital news and social media?
  - What are the potential drawbacks of getting news mostly from social media?
  - What can be done to address the potential drawbacks of digital news and social media?

Additional Resources

- Teens, social media and technology 2018
- What is News Literacy? & How to Teach It
- “Disinformation, Fake News, and Influence Campaigns on Twitter
- Social Media and Fake News in the 2016 Election
- What are deep fakes?
- What’s Going On In This Photo? (NYTimes Visual Literacy Series)
- Fake News, It’s Complicated
• **The Great Hack (2019)**
• Fact-Checking Sites
  - Fact Check.org
  - Michigan Truth Squad
  - Project Vote Smart
  - ProPublica

### Connecting to the eBook

**Building Democracy for All: Social Media, Digital News, and the Spread of Misinformation**

### Connecting to the Standards

- **Massachusetts Civics & Government Standards**
  - Evaluate the benefits and challenges of digital news and social media to a democratic society. (Massachusetts Curriculum Framework for History and Social Studies) **[8.T7.4]**

- **ISTE Standards**
  - Knowledge Constructor
    - 3a: Students plan and employ effective research strategies to locate information and other resources for their intellectual or creative pursuits.
    - 3b: Students evaluate the accuracy, perspective, credibility and relevance of information, media, data, or other resources.
    - 3d: Students build knowledge by actively exploring real-world issues and problems, developing ideas and theories and pursuing answers and solutions.
  - Creative Communicator
    - 6a: Students choose the appropriate platforms and tools for meeting the desired objectives of their creation or communication.
    - 6b: Students create original works or responsibly repurpose or remix digital resources into new creations.
    - 6d: Students publish or present content that customizes the message and medium for the intended audiences.

- **DLCS Standards**
  - Interpersonal and Societal Impact (CAS.c)
  - Digital Tools (DTC.a)
  - Collaboration and Communication (DTC.b)
  - Research (DTC.c)

- **English Language Arts > History/Social Studies Common Core Standards**
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.6
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.7
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.8
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.6
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.8
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.6
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.7
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.8
Paywalls and Access to Online News

For many people in the United States and around the world, access to news online is limited by paywalls, a method of restricting information to those who pay for it through purchases or subscriptions. Paywalls are now an ever-present feature of today’s online news media environment.

Researchers from the Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism at the University of Oxford (2019) looked at four types of news outlets in the United States and Europe (i.e., daily newspapers, weekly newspapers and news magazines, Television news, and digital news) and found three primary types of paywalls across the platforms:

- **Hard paywalls**: no content is free to readers and viewers.
- **Freemium**: a mix of free material with a charge for premium content.
- **Metered**: limited free content each month.

Many major newspapers and news magazines charge readers for some or all of their digital content using a freemium model. *The New York Times* or *The Washington Post*, for example, require paid
subscriptions to view all of their content while making some stories, especially those related to pressing news, free to the public. On The Washington Post Coronavirus page there is a note that states: "The Washington Post is providing our daily live updates, comprehensive guide to the pandemic and our Coronavirus Updates newsletter for free, so that all readers have access to this important information about the coronavirus pandemic."

Paywalls are not the only business model being used by digital news companies. Some choose to make money by collecting, selling, and using data from visitors to their websites. They collect personally identifiable information from readers, share it with third-parties to create targeted advertising profiles, and then populate their news website with targeted ads. The revenue from user data and targeted advertisements allows these news outlets to "freely" share their articles with the public.

Certain right-wing digital news outlets, as well as Fox News Channel (Fox News is the most watched channel with some 2.14 million viewers in 2021), have the advantage of providing information for free while the New York Times and other center-leaning sources provide access to information behind different types of paywalls.

The implications of pay-for-news business practices are huge -- Paywalls mean that unless people are willing or able to pay for news sources, they will get ‘locked out’ of information gathered by credible and trustworthy journalists. At a time when everyone is encouraged to pay close attention to current events, what happens when people who can’t afford subscriptions or purchase articles are restricted from accessing information from news outlets?

In the following activity, you will have the opportunity to evaluate your level of access to different sources of news and information.

Activity: Compare and Contrast Access to Major Newspapers and Television News

- Select 3 news sites from each of the 5 columns of the AllSides Media Bias Chart (e.g., left, lean left, center, lean right, right).
- Then, go to each news site and click on as many articles as you can until you are stopped and asked to pay (if applicable).
- Consider the following prompts:
  - How many articles could you read without having to pay for access? Why do you think that is?
  - How does the news site make money? How does this influence the way you can access information?
  - Were you able to access more articles in news sites from the left, leaning left, center, leaning right, or right? Why do you think that is?
  - What does your analysis of these news sites reveal about how credible news is disseminated online?
- Based on your analysis, create a TikTok or Snapchat video to inform your peers about how paywalls and access to online news might influence what people think and know to be true about current events.

Critical Media Literacy and Civic Learning
Resources

- [Newspapers Fact Sheet](https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-sheet/newspaper-ownership/), Pew Research Center (August, 2021)
- [27 of the Most Incredible Cable TV Subscribers Statistics for 2021](https://www.techjury.com/), TechJury (August 2021)
- [10 Facts about Americans and Facebook](https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-sheet/10-facts-about-americans-and-facebook/), Pew Research Center (June 2021)

Connecting to the eBook

[Building Democracy for All: Is Internet Access a Human Right?](#)

Connecting to the Standards

- [Massachusetts Civics & Government Standards](#)
- [ISTE Standards](#)
- [DLCS Standards](#)
- [English Language Arts > History/Social Studies Common Core Standards](#)
Critical Visual Analysis of Online and Print Media

Seeing is believing, except when what you see is not actually true. Many people tend to accept without question the images they see in advertising, websites, films, television, and other media. Such an uncritical stance toward visual content can leave one open to distortion, misinformation, and uninformed decision-making based on fake and false information.

Take a moment to watch the Dove evolution YouTube video below to see how the media can present a distorted representation of reality.

Watch on YouTube https://edtechbooks.org/-zRW

Learning how to conduct a critical visual analysis is critical for living in a media-filled society. By engaging in critical visual analysis of the media, you can make more informed decisions regarding your civic, political, and private life.
As a first step in evaluating visual sources, the history education organization, Facing History and Ourselves, suggests the critical viewing approach of See, Think, Wonder. The goal is to evaluate images by asking questions about them before drawing conclusions as to meaning and accuracy.

The following critical visual analysis activities expand the See, Think, Wonder approach by offering opportunities to evaluate different types of visuals for their trustworthiness as information sources.

**Activity 1: Critical Visual Analysis of an Online Article**

The visual content of an online article or website can tell us a lot about its trustworthiness. This activity asks you to perform a critical visual analysis of two news articles to evaluate the credibility of each source.

- Find an online article that you think qualifies as “fake news.” Don’t worry about justifying why you think it is fake yet, just go with your immediate reaction to it.
- Find an online article that you believe is credible, preferably one that covers the same topic as your fake news story.
- Take screenshots of both articles, making sure to include as many visual elements (ads, page menu, bylines, images) from the page as possible.
- Perform a side-by-side comparison of both screenshots by laying them out on a blank Canva presentation or Google Drawing. Justify the reasons why you consider one source is credible and the other not by. Focus specifically on the visual content of each article (page design, font choice, headline images, author byline, page advertisements), using arrows and text boxes to highlight specific elements of the design (refer to this checklist for help).
- **Use a screenrecording tool to present your analysis.**
If you have a Mac computer, use this shortcut.
If you have access to Quicktime, here's how to screenrecord using Quicktime.
Otherwise, use a web-based screenrecording tool such as Screencastify, Screencast-o-Matic, or Loom.

Activity 2: Critical Visual Analysis of a Primary Source

To analyze visual or written sources, the Library of Congress recommends students and teachers follow a three stage process: 1) Observe (describe what you see in the image), 2) Reflect (discuss what you think it means) and 3) Question (record what you want to now know more about).

- Choose a visual primary source from one of the following sites:
  - Library of Congress Primary Source Sets
  - DocsTeach, National Archives
  - Smithsonian Learning Lab
  - National History Day Digital Classroom

- Use one of the Library's source analysis sheets to record your Observe, Reflect and Question thinking. Along with primary sources, the Library has analysis sheets for books, charts and graphs, maps, motion pictures, newspapers, political cartoons, song lyrics, sound recordings, and other materials.

- Create a TikTok or Snapchat video to educate others about your findings.

- Design a new framework for analyzing visual primary sources that encourages higher order thinking and share it with the Library of Congress via social media or email.

Activity 3: Critical Visual Analysis of an Advertisement

- Select a advertisement from a magazine, social media site, or news site (or from this Business Insider list of 24 magazine ads so clever they stopped readers from turning the page).
- Use the Library of Congress' list of visual analysis prompts as well as the Teacher and Student Guide to Analyzing Advertisements to conduct a critical visual analysis.
- Based on your findings, write a love letter or breakup letter to the company that created the advertisement you analyzed.

Activity 4: Critical Visual Analysis of a Doctored Historical Image

- Select a famous doctored historical image (see Photo Tampering Throughout History).
- Use the Library of Congress' list of visual analysis prompts as well as the Teacher and Student Guide to Analyzing Images to conduct a critical visual analysis.
- Create a TikTok or Snapchat video to educate others about your findings.

Additional Resources:

- 10 creative ways to teach visual literacy (Canva)
- Reading the Pictures: Evaluating the credibility of photos
- Evaluating Online Sources: Glossary of terms and guides (tolerance.org)
Connecting to the eBook

Building Democracy for All: Defining “Fake News” and Finding Reliable Information

Connecting to the Standards

- **Massachusetts Civics & Government Standards**
  - Explain methods for evaluating information and opinion in print and online media. (Massachusetts Curriculum Framework for History and Social Studies) [8.T7.5]

- **ISTE Standards**
  - Knowledge Constructor
    - 3b: Students evaluate the accuracy, perspective, credibility and relevance of information, media, data, or other resources.
    - 3d: Students build knowledge by actively exploring real-world issues and problems, developing ideas and theories and pursuing answers and solutions.
  - Creative Communicator
    - 6a: Students choose the appropriate platforms and tools for meeting the desired objectives of their creation or communication.
    - 6b: Students create original works or responsibly repurpose or remix digital resources into new creations.
    - 6d: Students publish or present content that customizes the message and medium for the intended audiences.

- **DLCS Standards**
  - Interpersonal and Societal Impact (CAS.c)
  - Digital Tools (DTC.a)
  - Collaboration and Communication (DTC.b)
  - Research (DTC.c)

- **English Language Arts > History/Social Studies Common Core Standards**
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.1
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.6
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.7
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.8
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.1
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.1
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.7
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.8
Memes and TikToks as Political Cartoons

Political cartoons and comics as well as memes and TikToks are pictures with a purpose. Writers and artists use these genres to entertain, persuade, inform, and express fiction and nonfiction ideas creatively and imaginatively.

Like political cartoons and comics, memes and TikToks have the potential to provide engaging and memorable messages that can influence the political thinking and actions of voters regarding local, state, and national issues.

Activity: Analyze Political Cartoons, Memes, and TikToks

- Examine the following editorial cartoons, memes, and TikToks using the Teacher and Student Guide to Analyzing Cartoons, Comics, and Memes & the Teacher and Student Guide to Analyzing Social Media:
  - Editorial Cartoons:
Using what you learned during your analysis of editorial cartoons, memes, and TikToks, create your own meme or TikTok about a political issue you care about.

Consider the following:
- What is the message(s) of your meme or TikTok?
- How will you effectively communicate your message?
- How will your meme or TikTok inspire a change in thinking and/or behavior about the political issue you chose?
- How do you imagine your creation will fare in comparison to more typical, written opinion pieces or editorial cartoons? Which do you think is more effective?

**Additional Resources**

- [Analyzing Political Cartoons](https://edtechbooks.org/-orFT)
- [The Hidden Biases of Internet Memes](https://edtechbooks.org/-bfJr)
- [Political cartoonists are out of touch – it’s time to make way for memes](https://edtechbooks.org/-Esv) (The Conversation)
- [Political Cartoonists Impact Presidential Races](https://edtechbooks.org/-NKnF) (US News, 2008)

**Connecting to the eBook**

Building Democracy for All: Evaluating Editorials, Editorial Cartoons, and Op-Ed Commentaries
Connecting to the Standards

- **Massachusetts Civics & Government Standards**
  - Analyze the point of view and evaluate the claims of an editorial, editorial cartoon, or op-ed commentary on a public issue at the local, state or national level. (Massachusetts Curriculum Framework for History and Social Studies) [8.T7.6]

- **ISTE Standards**
  - Digital Citizen
    - 2c: Students demonstrate an understanding of and respect for the rights and obligations of using and sharing intellectual property.
  - Knowledge Constructor
    - 3b: Students evaluate the accuracy, perspective, credibility and relevance of information, media, data, or other resources.
    - 3d: Students build knowledge by actively exploring real-world issues and problems, developing ideas and theories and pursuing answers and solutions.
  - Creative Communicator
    - 6a: Students choose the appropriate platforms and tools for meeting the desired objectives of their creation or communication.
    - 6b: Students create original works or responsibly repurpose or remix digital resources into new creations.
    - 6d: Students publish or present content that customizes the message and medium for the intended audiences.

- **DLCS Standards**
  - Ethics and Laws (CAS.b)
  - Interpersonal and Societal Impact (CAS.c)
  - Digital Tools (DTC.a)
  - Collaboration and Communication (DTC.b)

- **English Language Arts > History/Social Studies Common Core Standards**
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.5
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.6
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.7
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.8
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.5
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.6
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.8
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.5
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.6
Book Authors
Robert W. Maloy is a senior lecturer in the College of Education at the University of Massachusetts Amherst where he coordinates the history teacher education program and co-directs the TEAMS Tutoring Project, a community engagement/service learning initiative through which university students provide academic tutoring to culturally and linguistically diverse students in public schools throughout the Connecticut River Valley region of western Massachusetts. His research focuses on technology and educational change, teacher education, democratic teaching, and student learning. He is coauthor of Transforming Learning with New Technologies (4th edition); Kids Have All the Write Stuff: Revised and Updated for a Digital Age; Wiki Works: Teaching Web Research and Digital Literacy in History and Humanities Classrooms; We, the Students and Teachers: Teaching Democratically in the History and Social Studies Classroom; Ways of Writing with Young Kids: Teaching Creativity and Conventions Unconventionally; Kids Have All the Write Stuff: Inspiring Your Child to Put Pencil to Paper; The Essential Career Guide to Becoming a Middle and High School Teacher; Schools for an Information Age; and Partnerships for Improving Schools. Robert has received a University of Massachusetts Amherst Distinguished Teaching Award (2010), the University of Massachusetts President’s Award for Public Service (2010), a School of Education Outstanding Teacher Award (2004), a University Distinguished Academic Outreach Award (2004), and the Chancellor’s Certificate of Appreciation for Outstanding Community Service (1998 and 1993).
Torrey Trust, Ph.D. is an Associate Professor of Learning Technology in the Department of Teacher Education and Curriculum Studies in the College of Education at the University of Massachusetts Amherst. Her scholarship and teaching focus on how technology shapes educator and student learning. Specifically, Dr. Trust studies how educators engage with digitally enhanced professional learning networks (PLNs), how emerging pedagogical tools (e.g., HyperDocs), practices (e.g., Making) and technologies (e.g., 3D printers, augmented reality) facilitate new learning experiences, and how to design and use open educational resources (OERs). Dr. Trust served as a professional learning network leader for the International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE) for five years, including a two-year term as the President of the Teacher Education Network from 2016 to 2018.

Dr. Trust's research, teaching, and service in the field of educational technology has received noticeable recognition, including the 2016 ISTE Online Learning Network Award, 2017 Outstanding Research Paper Award for the Journal of Digital Learning in Teacher Education, 2017 American Educational Research Association (AERA) Instructional Technology SIG Best Paper Award, 2017 ISTE Emerging Leader Award, 2017 Association for Educational Communication & Technology (AECT) Division of Distance Learning Crystal Award (2nd Place), 2019 AERA Technology as an Agent of Change for Teaching & Learning SIG Early Career Scholar Award, and 2020 AECT Annual Achievement Award. In 2018, Dr. Trust was selected as one of the five recipients worldwide for the ISTE Making IT Happen Award, which “honors outstanding educators and leaders who demonstrate extraordinary commitment, leadership, courage and persistence in improving digital learning opportunities for students.” [www.torreytrust.com](http://www.torreytrust.com)
Allison Butler is a Senior Lecturer, Director of Undergraduate Advising, and the Director of the Media Literacy Certificate Program in the Department of Communication at the University of Massachusetts Amherst, where she teaches courses on critical media literacy and representations of education in the media. Butler co-directs the grassroots organization, Mass Media Literacy (www.massmedialiteracy.org), where she develops and runs teacher trainings for the inclusion of critical media literacy in K-12 public schools. She is on the Board of ACME (Action Coalition for Media Education) and serves as the Vice President on the Board of the Media Freedom Foundation. She holds an MA and a PhD from New York University. She is the author of numerous articles and books on media literacy, most recently, Educating media literacy: The need for teacher education in critical media literacy (Brill, 2020) and Key scholarship in media literacy: David Buckingham (Brill, 2021).
Chenyang Xu

Chenyang Xu is a doctoral student in the Math, Science, and Learning Technology program in the College of Education at the University of Massachusetts Amherst. He received his Master of Digital Sciences degree in 2019, and Master of Education degree in 2015. His research interests focus on utilizing social media and data science to support higher education and international student services.

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