

Topic 4.5: 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.



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

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.

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.
 - Which platforms do they use - Facebook? Twitter? Reddit? Instagram? TikTok? YouTube? Something Else?
 - 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

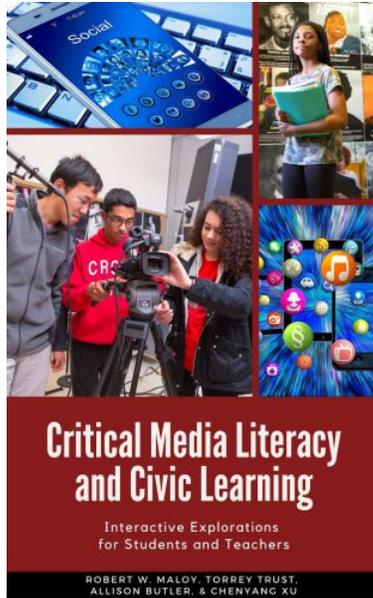
- [Special Interest Groups' Use of Social Media as a Weapon](#)
- [#AdvocatingForChange: The Strategic Use of Hashtags in Social Media Advocacy](#)

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



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