

Introduction and Table of Media Literacy Activities

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We gratefully acknowledge the support of the [University of Massachusetts Amherst Interdisciplinary Faculty Research Award](#) for this project.



Bob Maloy, Torrey Trust, Allison Butler, and Chenyang Xu were honored for their collaborative work on this eBook project with the [2021 Learning Technologies Team Award](#).

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

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

2. The Development of United States Government

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

3. Institutions of United States Government

Key Civics, Government, and History Concepts	Critical Media Literacy Activities
Branches of the Government and the Separation of Powers	Hollywood Movies about the Branches of the Government
Checks and Balances between the Branches	Writing an Impeachment Press Release
The President, the Congress, and the Courts	How Members of Congress Use Social Media
Elections	Understanding Public Opinion Polls
Political Parties	Designing a Social Media Campaign for a Political Party

4. The Rights and Responsibilities of Citizens

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

5. The Constitution, Amendments, and Supreme Court Decisions

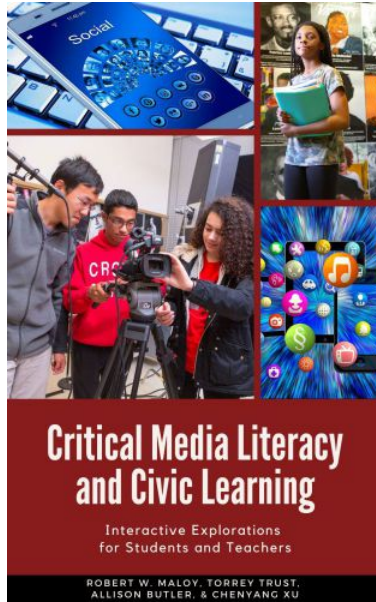
Key Civics, Government, and History Concepts	Critical Media Literacy Activities
The Necessary and Proper Clause	
Amendments to the Constitution	Media For and Against Prohibition The Equal Rights Amendment in the Media
The Civil War, Federal Power, and Individual Rights	News Stories and Advertisements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

6. The Structure of State and Local Government

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

7. Freedom of the Press and News/Media Literacy

Key Civics, Government, and History Concepts	Critical Media Literacy Activities
Freedom of the Press	Press Freedom in the United States
Competing Information	Examining Objectivity in the News Being an Investigative Journalist
Formats for News Writing	Analyzing News Photographs and Newspaper Design Analyzing How Reporters Report Events
Digital News and Social Media	Understanding Recommendation Algorithms Detecting Fake News
Evaluating Print and Online Media	Doing Critical Visual Analysis
Editorials, Editorial Cartoons, and Op-Ed Commentaries	Memes and TicToks as Political Cartoons



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