

Media Awareness and Critical Thinking with COVID-19

Created by a Middle and High School Teacher

Subject Area

SOCIAL STUDIES and MEDIA LITERACY

Provincial & Territorial Suggested Social Studies Curriculum Connections

Province	Grade Level	Outcome / Big Idea
Alberta & Northwest Territories	6,9,10,11,12	6.1, 9.1, 10.1, 10.2, 11.1, 11.2, 12.1, 12.2
British Columbia & Yukon	5	Use Social Studies inquiry processes and skills to - ask questions; gather, interpret, and analyze ideas; and communicate findings and decisions
Manitoba	9	9S301, 9S302, 9S305, 9S306, 9KI020
New Brunswick	6,9	6.13, 9.5
Newfoundland & Labrador	6,9	6.13, 9.5
Nova Scotia	6,9	6.13, 9.5
Nunavut	6	D (Essential Knowledge 12&13)
Ontario	6	A2.1, A2.2, A2.4, A2.5, B2.2, B2.4, B2.5
Prince Edward Island	6,9	6.13, 9.5
Quebec	7	By helping students to understand the significance of human actions in a territory, take a position on territorial issues and examine major global phenomena, the social sciences program contributes to educating informed, responsible citizens.
Saskatchewan	4,5,6,7,8,9	IN6.3 RW6.1

Lesson Big Ideas / Enduring Understandings Essential Questions

It is essential to be able to use critical thinking and evaluating skills when digesting the information we are surrounded by and to discern fact from fiction, especially in times of crisis or heightened public concern. Through completing the lesson activity, students will determine by who and how information is delivered and develop key evaluation skills to better recognize bias, irrelevance, and disinformation.

Content and Context

- Simple steps to evaluate how helpful and truthful information sources are.
- Hands-on experience seeing how easily news stories can be shaped into different tones and create different understandings of events.

Grade Level: 4 to 12

Time Required: 1-2 hours

Resources

- [Kids Boost Immunity](#) website
- Student worksheet for online lessons (with answer key)
- News stories rubric
- Student worksheet evaluating trusted news sources

Link to worksheets and rubric [here](#)

LESSON ACTIVITY

Activating

Discuss with your students the idea of misinformation (mistaken/inaccurate information), disinformation (setting out to deliberately mislead someone using false information), and fake news (news that is not true). Ask your students:

- What are some examples of this from our own experiences?
- What are some examples of this we have heard about COVID-19? E.g., drinking or eating certain things can save people from getting the virus.
- Why do you think people try to mislead others with fake news and disinformation?
- How can we best make sure our information is correct?

At home adaptation - if students are working away from school, this activity can be completed:

- Using Google Meet or another online class conferencing tool.
- As a discussion board on your classroom's website/portal.
- As an individual written response assignment for students to reflect upon and complete using the prompts above.
- In pairs over the phone, on Google Meet/Hangout, FaceTime, or another online option. Have students complete their responses (i.e., record their Google Meet audio session, type up their answers, etc.) after they have discussed it together.

Acquiring

- Have students sign in to www.kidsboostimmunity.com and go to the [Lessons](#) section of the website, and click on [Critical Thinking and Evaluating information](#) to reveal the lessons.
- Students should complete the quizzes and earn vaccines for people in need around the world!
- Have students work on this [Critical Thinking and Evaluation worksheet](#) as they complete the quizzes.

Teacher Tip: remind students to go to the File menu and select "Make a copy" before they type their answers and to share the doc with you when they are done. This way, all work can be done easily at home or school.

Applying

1. Have students create 2 news stories using a recent COVID-19 article or story from a site that meets all of the TRAAP (grades 4-7) or CRAAP (grades 8-12) criteria. The news stories can either be created in video or written format, depending on what works best with your current classroom situation. Students can share the stories (if in school) or send them to you via email if they are working at home.
 - First news story: students will take 5 facts from the original article or story they found and reword it to make things seem as scary as possible. They should not make up facts but phrase things in a misleading way OR leave out key details. Their word choice should be dramatic, and they should try to create as much fear as possible for the reader or viewer. E.g., instead of saying “a second person has been found to have the virus,” students could say “the virus is now affecting twice as many people.”
 - Second news story: students will rewrite the original article or story presenting only the 5 facts. They should try to tell the reader or viewer the sources for all 5 facts, if possible.

Have students reflect on:

- Why does bad news sometimes spread faster than truth?
- What are some habits we should adopt to make sure we get the best information about COVID-19?

If you would like to use the news stories in your assessments, you can use this [News Stories rubric](#) to help you mark them and remind the students of what is needed.

2. Have students evaluate news sources by:
 - Identifying trusted websites and news sources and giving them the TRAAP/CRAAP test!
 - Searching for trusted news sources at a local, provincial, national, and global level and determining if they exist.
 - Completing this [TRAAP worksheet \(grades 4-7\)](#) OR [CRAAP worksheet \(grades 8-12\)](#) to showcase good quality news sources which they feel pass the TRAAP/CRAAP test.

Extended

As an extended activity, there is a relevant KBI lesson related to misinformation and COVID-19. This can be found in the [Lessons](#) section of the website, click on [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#) and select the lesson called COVID-19 Misinformation: Fighting the Infodemic.

It's often hard for students to think critically if they are very anxious. To help students deal with anxiety, there is a KBI lesson that focuses on relaxation and breathing that is good to do daily or whenever students feel anxious. This can be found in the [Lessons](#) section of the website, click on [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#) to select the relaxation lesson called Taking a Break is Important Too!

Getting Ready

If you have not used Kids Boost Immunity before, it is very easy to use. In order to use the site, teachers must first register, and that just takes a minute to do. It's a good idea to register a few days before asking your students to do the lessons.

- Teacher registration can be done [here](#).
- Help for setting up your class to use KBI can be found [here](#) (you must be logged in to access).
- Student registration help can be found [here](#) (you must be logged in to access).