

Media Education Teaching Resources

This curated collection of resources is designed to support preK–12 ELA teachers in implementing the four strands of media education practices in the 2026 NCTE *Position Statement on Media Education*:

- **Interpreting: Multimodal Reading, Viewing, and Listening**
- **Composing: Writing, Speaking, and Producing**
- **Evaluating; Media Ethics, Relationships, and Well-Being**
- **Analyzing: Media, Technology, and Society**

Interpreting: Multimodal Reading, Viewing, and Listening

ELEMENTARY RESOURCES

Skill	Resource Title and Link	Description
Comprehend complex texts	Once upon a Time	In this lesson from Media Smarts Canada, students learn about stereotyping and the role that stereotypes play in the stories and movies they enjoy. They learn how media techniques can affect how we feel about a character and consider how stories may be different when told from different points of view.
Analyze textual features	Moving Images in the Classroom: Basic Teaching Techniques	From the British Film Institute, this teacher guide introduces eight instructional practices for teaching about moving media’s core features (sound, image, editing, and more).

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Evaluate credibility	Using <i>The True Story of the Three Little Pigs</i> to Teach Children Philosophy	This lesson from the Prindle Institute for Ethics engages children in questions that explore philosophical issues like whether or not it is possible to determine the truth about an event that has occurred. Students also explore the question of intentionality versus accidents and the process of determining the truth in a court of law.
Evaluate persuasive texts	Recognizing Emotional Appeals	From Media Smarts Canada, this lesson helps students identify emotionally charged words in an article and a video to analyze their persuasive effect. Students consider the possible risks or drawbacks of using emotional appeals and create their own persuasive work using emotionally charged language, images, and music.
Analyze representation and power	Buy Nothing Day	From Media Smarts Canada, students explore how consumer culture is depicted in media messages and consider its benefits and drawbacks, noticing where and how they receive messages about purchases driven by wants and needs.

SECONDARY RESOURCES

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Comprehend complex texts	Power in Art: The Watchdog Role of Editorial Cartoonists	In this lesson from the News Literacy Project, students learn about the history of editorial cartooning as a unique and powerful form of opinion journalism and practice analyzing cartoons from the 1700s to the present day.

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Comprehend complex texts	Practicing Media Literacy Skills	In this lesson from Facing History and Ourselves, students explore media literacy by learning how to determine the values and limitations of pieces of media content.
Analyze textual features	Inoculation Science	This website from the Cambridge Social Decision Making Lab includes introductory videos and interactive games to help students explore attention-getting techniques and defend against misinformation.
Evaluate credibility	Teaching Lateral Reading	In this lesson from the Digital Inquiry Group, students practice lateral reading and learn how checking what other websites say about a source is a better evaluation strategy than trusting what the source says about itself.
Evaluate persuasive texts	Mind over Media	From the Media Education Lab, these lesson plans help students define and analyze contemporary propaganda as they learn to recognize the hallmarks of propaganda found in advertising, news and journalism, government and politics, entertainment, education, and activism.
Evaluate persuasive texts	Black Protest and Social Movements	From the Critical Media Project, this playlist uses media as a lens to explore the history, underlying causes, politics, and representation of Black protest and social movements in the US. Students explore how activists and creators use media to advance their message and cause.
Evaluate persuasive texts	Propaganda Techniques in Literature and Online Political Ads	From ReadWriteThink, powered by NCTE, this four-lesson unit plan for grades 9–12 is designed to help students make connections between literary and contemporary real-world examples of propaganda as part of a unit on <i>Brave New World</i> with suggestions for additional literary pairings.
Analyze representation and power	Media Issues MediaSmarts	From Media Smarts Canada, these lesson plans and videos explore media issues including body image, marketing and consumerism,

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		gender representation, violence, and intellectual property.
Analyze representation and power	I Too Am Critical Makers Lab	From the Critical Media project, this curriculum combines media analysis with creative media production on issues including identity, place, belonging, stereotypes, visibility, and advocacy.

Composing: Writing, Speaking, and Producing

ELEMENTARY RESOURCES

Skill	Resource Title and Link	Description
Communicate with purpose	Media Arts for Elementary Grades	In this lesson from PBS LearningMedia, students in grades K–5 learn filmmaking vocabulary and participate in a hands-on activity where they learn how to record footage and recognize what type of shot they are recording.
Communicate with purpose	Communicating Clearly Online	From Common Sense Media, this lesson helps students understand the gap between intent and impact in online communication as they learn strategies to ensure their messages are interpreted as intended.
Communicate with credibility	Digital Citizenship for Elementary Students	In this lesson from ISTE, students will learn the difference between online and offline activities, how to identify trusted online sources, and how to use digital storytelling tools to express their creativity.

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Communicate with purpose	How to Make a Film	From the British organization Into Film, this curriculum provides the scaffolding needed for high school students with learning disabilities to learn to brainstorm and produce a short film.
Communicate with credibility	Campaigning for Fair Use	From ReadWriteThink, this lesson helps students explore a range of resources on fair use and copyright, then design their own audio public service announcements.
Communicate with credibility	Uncovering Bias Let's Make News	From PBS LearningMedia, this lesson helps students identify and analyze various methods of creating bias in news media, including stereotyping, misrepresentation, and implicit bias. Students uncover how these biases shape public opinion and explore strategies to address them and promote balanced reporting.

Evaluating: Media Ethics, Relationships, and Well-Being

ELEMENTARY RESOURCES

Skill	Resource Title and Link	Description
Recognize how media texts, platforms, and	I Feel	From PBS LearningMedia, this lesson supports children of ages 3–8 in building emotional awareness. In each segment, children name an emotion, and an expert defines it using simple, age-appropriate language. Kids learn to identify, describe, and understand their feelings, helping them develop tools for healthy emotional growth.

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technologies affect well-being		
Recognize how media texts, platforms, and technologies affect well-being	Finding My Media Balance	From Common Sense Media, this lesson helps students learn what makes different media choices healthy or not. Students create a personalized media plan and consider what "media balance" means and how it applies to them.
Apply mindful strategies to make strategic choices	Take Control of Your Social Media Use	From the Center for Humane Technology, this lesson encourages students to reflect on how platforms that are designed to compete for attention hijack behavior.
Apply mindful strategies to make strategic choices	Digital Skills and Parent Tips	From Common Sense Media, this collection of videos and FAQs was designed to help families gain the digital skills needed to use technology, access information, and find resources to stay safe and healthy.
Apply mindful strategies to make strategic choices	Digital Well-Being	From Sesame Workshop, these lessons create awareness of all the daily decisions we make for ourselves and our children. What do our choices say about what is important to us and how we spend time together?
Critically evaluate texts and platforms in relation to social and emotional well-being	Enemy Pie	In this lesson from PBS LearningMedia, students reflect on the power of friendship in a story about spending time with others and overcoming our differences. Students learn that misunderstandings can affect relationships and think about how they can make friends with people from different backgrounds.

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Critically evaluate texts and platforms in relation to social and emotional well-being	My Media Choices	From Common Sense Media, this grade 4 lesson asks students to consider the choices they make in regard to media use, with attention to the social and emotional dimensions of these choices. The lesson pushes students to engage metacognitively about the relationship between their choices and wellness.

SECONDARY RESOURCES

Skill	Resource Title and Link	Description
Recognize how media texts, platforms, and technologies affect well-being	Social Media and How You Feel	From Common Sense Media, this lesson encourages students to reflect on how their social media use makes them feel and how it compares with that of others. Students differentiate between active and passive social media and identify action steps to increase their positive feelings when using social media.
Apply mindful strategies to make strategic choices	Lessons to Teach Media Literacy	From Mediawise, this series of media literacy lessons teaches specific fact-checking skills to help students sort fact from fiction online. Engaging videos in the How2Internet series feature the voices and perspectives of young people.
Critically evaluate texts and platforms in relation	On the Loose: A Guide to Life Online for Post-Secondary Students	This guide from Media Smarts Canada is intended for students at the transition to postsecondary education. It includes advice on a range of digital and cybersecurity issues that students are likely to encounter during this transitional period, including relationships, finances, digital wellness, and academics.

Skill	Resource Title and Link	Description
to social and emotional well-being		

Analyzing: Media, Technology, and Society

ELEMENTARY RESOURCES

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Understand how digital platforms compete for user attention and engagement.	Buy Nothing Day	From Media Smarts Canada, this lesson introduces students to Maslow’s hierarchy of needs and considers the role of consumerism in our lives and culture. By examining how they receive consumerist messages, students reflect on the relationship between their wants and their needs. They discuss the pros and cons of having a special day set aside for reflecting on consumer culture and its social, civic, and environmental implications.
Develop a critical awareness of how AI works and make deliberate decisions about when, why, and how to use AI	AI Foundations for Early Childhood	From MIT’s Day of AI, this lesson introduces children of ages 5–7 to artificial intelligence through play, discussion, and creative exploration. Students learn how machines use sensors such as cameras and microphones, and compare these to human senses.

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Develop a critical awareness of how AI works and make deliberate decisions about when, why, and how to use AI	From Data to Decision: AI, Surveillance, and Human Responsibility	From MIT's Day of AI, students examine facial recognition and biometric data to decide whether an AI prediction should be trusted. They analyze how bias can emerge and design human safeguards to reduce harm.
Develop a critical awareness of how AI works and make deliberate decisions about when, why, and how to use AI	Search and Suggest Algorithms	In this News Literacy Project lesson, upper elementary students interact with a mock social media site and search engine to understand the information that algorithms gather about you to personalize what you see online.
Critically analyze claims about the benefits and risks of AI	The Impact of AI on the Environment	From MIT's Day of AI, students learn about the climate impact of AI through both positive and negative examples where students analyze real-world case studies on sustainability, e-waste, and wildlife tracking. Students also explore how personal technology use impacts the planet by calculating their own digital carbon footprint.

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Understand how digital platforms compete for user attention and engagement.	How Social Media Shapes Political Opinions	This lesson from PBS LearningMedia helps students learn how social media platforms have become major news sources and how their popularity has impacted other media platforms and shaped political opinions.
Understand the value of human attention as a commodity for media industries	How to Detect Ads Disguised as News Stories	From Poynter’s MediaWise, this lesson helps students figure out when someone is trying to pressure them into buying their product. They will understand the importance of finding out who’s behind the information.
Understand the value of human attention as a commodity for media industries	Conflict Entrepreneurs	In this lesson from PBS LearningMedia, students dig into the economics of the attention economy, where conflict is a powerful strategy for attracting and holding attention. They examine the tricks and techniques used to amp up social conflict as a means of gaining profit and power.
Develop a critical awareness of how AI works and make deliberate decisions about when, why, and how to use AI	Teaching about AI	This lesson collection from the News Literacy Project asks students to consider: What is AI? How can you tell if something is AI-generated or authentic? What are the ethical considerations of using AI?
Critically analyze claims about the benefits and risks of AI	Technology Reset Simulation	From Civics of Technology, this discussion activity invites students to imagine a future where humans meet with aliens who recognize that humans lost control of their use of technologies. Students generate strategies to fix their relationships with the planet, plants, animals, and each other by starting a “reset” of humanity’s relationship with technology.

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Critically analyze claims about the benefits and risks of AI	Human Rights and Artificial Intelligence	From MIT's Day of AI, this resource offers real case studies having to do with discrimination, privacy, and safety for students of ages 11–18. Students learn how artificial intelligence intersects with fundamental human rights and how AI can both threaten and protect these rights.