Be Internet Awesome

Media Literacy Lessons

from the Be Internet Awesome Curriculum

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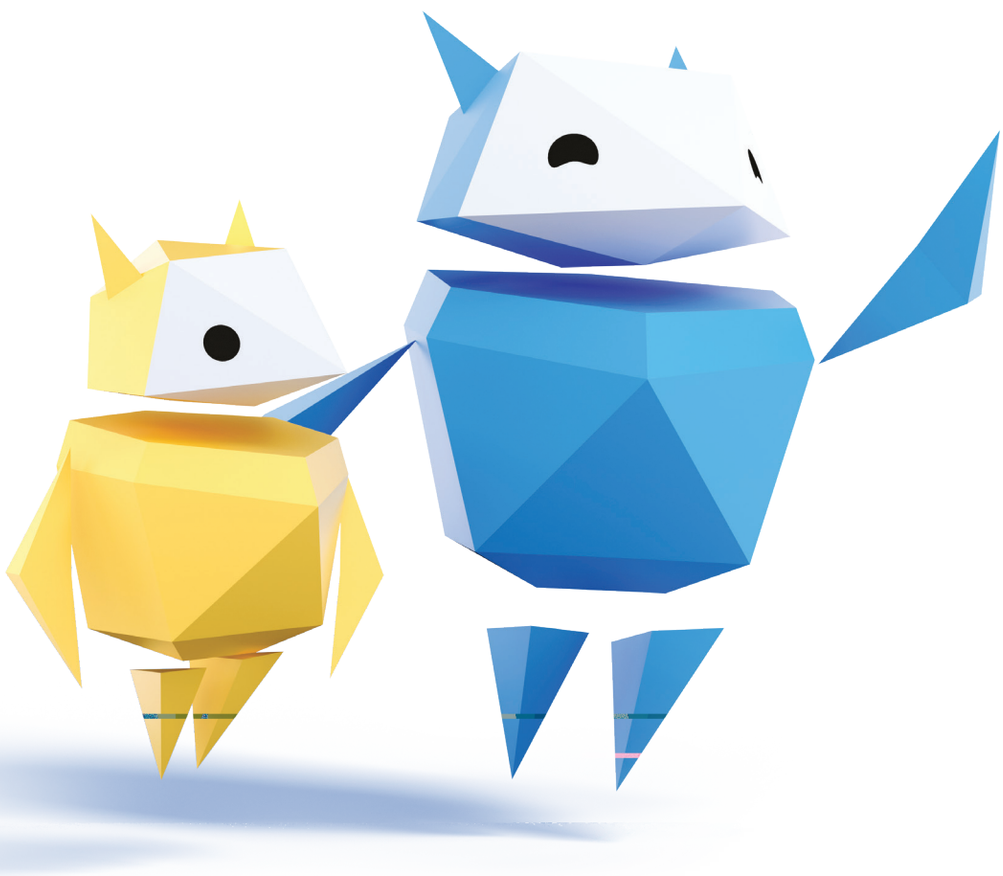

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Be Internet Awesome

Understanding media literacy is more important than ever before.

There probably isn't a teacher on the planet who isn't feeling that at least a little bit, now—because the ways our children are consuming, making and sharing media have changed so much since we were in their shoes.

So where do we start? With the lessons in this little handbook. They offer the foundational tools and concepts of literacy for today's media environment. You'll find six activities designed specifically for elementary school students. They'll learn about…

- **Perspective** and how we're all media makers now, each maker with their own views and ways of interpreting what they see in media
- **Framing**—how media makers make choices about what to leave in and leave out of what they create or share
- **Credibility**: what it means and how to look for it to spot misinformation
- **Deception and manipulation** in media so they can spot disinformation online
- **Sourcing and representation**—why we need to make it a practice to ask, "Who made this and why?"

Your students will also learn what media makers have always needed to think about: the impact of their messages. So welcome to a little handbook that offers something really big: learning how to navigate our media environment with confidence and competency.

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Themes

Teachers and parents understand how digital mistakes can hurt feelings, reputations, and privacy. But it can be harder to convince kids that a seemingly harmless post today could be misunderstood tomorrow—let alone in the future and by people they never thought would see it.

These activities use concrete examples and thought-provoking discussions to teach young learners how to maintain a positive online presence and protect their privacy.

Goals for students

- ✓ **Create and manage** a positive reputation both online and offline.
- ✓ **Respect** the privacy boundaries of others, even if different from one's own.
- ✓ **Understand** the potential impact of a mismanaged digital footprint.
- ✓ **Ask** for adult help when dealing with sticky situations.

Standards addressed

ISTE Standards for Educators: 1a, 1b, 2a, 2c, 3b, 3c, 3d, 4b, 4d, 5a, 6a, 6b, 6d, 7a
ISTE Standards for Students: 1c, 1d, 2a, 2b, 2d, 3b, 3d
AASL Learning Standards: I.a.1, I.b.1, I.c.1, I.d.3, I.d.4, II.a.2, II.b.1, II.b.2, II.b.3, II.c.1, II.c.2, d.2., III.a.1, III.a.2, III.a.3, III.b.1, III.c.1, III.c.2, III.d.1, III.d.2, IV.a.1, IV.a.2, V.a.2, VI.a.1, VI.a.2, VI.a.3

Share with Care
Vocabulary

Lesson 3

Code: A word or phrase, an image (like a logo or emoji) or some other symbol or collection of symbols that represent a certain meaning or message. Sometimes it's a secret code that only certain people understand; often it's just a symbol that stands for something almost everybody understands.

Context: Information that surrounds the message or whatever we're seeing which helps us understand it. Context can include the place where the message is, the time when it appears or who it's coming from.

Interpret: The way a person understands a message, or the meaning they get from it

Representation: A picture, symbol or description that says a lot about (or expresses a truth about) a thing, a person or a group

Lesson 4

Frame: When you take a photo or video of a landscape, person or object, the frame is what defines the section that the viewer can see. The part you decide to leave outside the frame is what your viewer won't be able to see.

Share with Care: Lesson 3

That's not what I meant!

Using only emojis, students create t-shirts to represent themselves. In the process, they learn that different people can interpret the same message differently.

Media literacy background for teachers: *When we wear t-shirts featuring corporate logos, sports teams, schools, musicians, politicians, etc., we are essentially walking billboards. This activity demonstrates that a t-shirt is both direct communication and media at the same time and helps students see that screens aren't the only kind of place where media can be found.*

Goals for students

- ✓ **Learn** the importance of asking the question: How might others see this message differently from me?
- ✓ **Grow awareness** of the many visual cues people use to communicate.
- ✓ **See** that sharing something online as well as on a t-shirt is making media.
- ✓ **Learn** what "context" and "representation" mean.

Let's talk

Has anyone ever misunderstood something you said, did, wrote or posted online? Did they get mad or sad, so you had to explain that you didn't mean what they thought you meant?

Sometimes when we are communicating, **we** know what we mean, but the people we are communicating with don't understand, especially if we aren't in the same space. That's because people's experiences affect the way they interpret things like images and words.

To add to the confusion, there are a lot of messages we communicate without even knowing it. We tell people who we are—and judge who they are—using cues like our clothes, our hair style, and even the way we walk or gesture with our hands. This is called "representation"—expressing something about a thing, person, or group by using pictures, symbols, style and words.

Here's an example: If you were online and saw a picture of a person wearing a sports jersey with a team logo, you would probably think that the person is a fan of that team, and you'd probably be right. That's because most of us recognize the design of sports jerseys—we know that's sports "code." So even if we aren't sure which team is being represented, we know it's probably a sports team.

But what if you saw a picture of someone wearing a cheese wedge on top of their head? What would you think about that person? If you live in Wisconsin or you're a football fan, you know that "cheese head" is a nickname for Green Bay Packers football fans. The person in the picture was using the cheese wedge hat to represent their support for the Packers.

If you didn't know the Packers fan "code," you might think that the cheese hat was part of a Halloween costume or just plain weird. You might even be tempted to comment on

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how weird it was. That might make Packer fans mad. To them, your comment is rude and they might be tempted to respond with a mean comment about you. That makes you mad, so we end up with a mess of negative comments and hurt feelings.

So how do we make sure other people will understand what we mean when we post online? One way is to see ourselves as media creators—not just communicators or players. Every time we create an online profile, text someone, comment in game chat, or share a picture, we are making media. Like all good media creators, we want to be thoughtful about the media we make and share by pausing before we post and asking: "How might someone who is different from me interpret my message?"

Activity

Materials needed:

- Handout: "Blank t-shirt" (one per student)
- Handout: "Emoji grid" (projected or posted so everyone can see)
- Markers, colored pencils, or crayons to draw with
- Tape (or a way to display t-shirt drawings for a walkabout)

1. Describe yourself with emojis

To help us think about being skillful media creators, we're going to decorate t-shirts. Using the handout of the blank t-shirt outline, draw a representation of yourself using only emojis. You can use one, two, or three emojis, but no more. You can copy emojis from the grid or invent your own.

2. Show and tell

Pair up and try to guess what the emojis on your partner's t-shirt say about them. Are your guesses accurate or do you have to explain to each other what your emoji picks mean?

3. Learn about each other

Post the "t-shirts" around the room so everyone can look at everyone else's shirt. Can you accurately match each shirt with its owner?

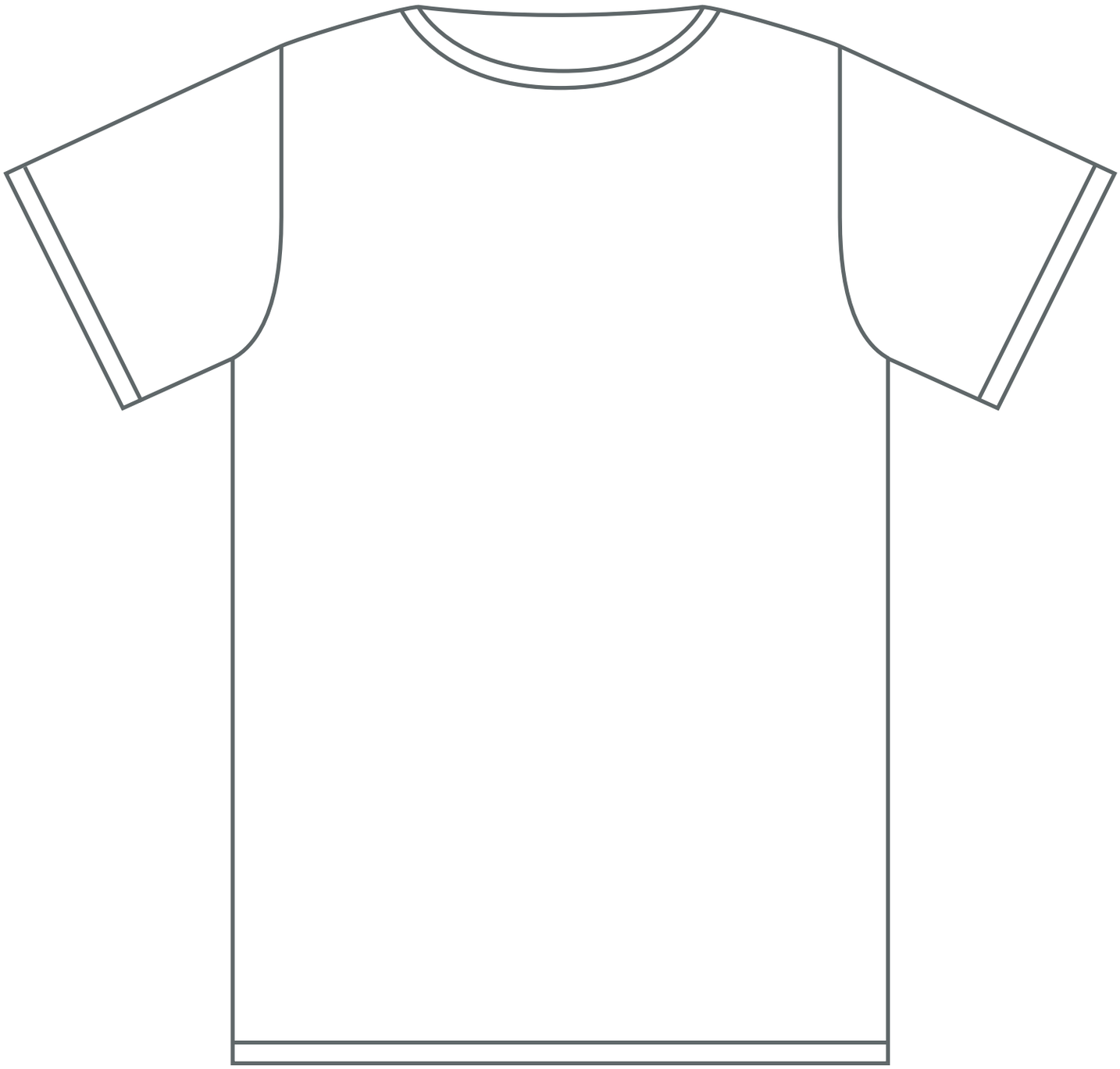
4. As a class, discuss:

- What made it hard or easy to match shirts with classmates? What did you notice about the symbols on the shirts that were easy to match? Were some emojis used by lots of people? Were some used by only one person?
- Did everyone agree on the meaning of every emoji? How can context change the meaning of the emoji? Look at the emoji of the hands with the two fingers. How do you know if it means peace, victory, or the number 2? How about the fire emoji? Does it mean danger/emergency? Really popular or successful ("You're on fire, dude!")? Does the meaning change depending on where it appears (grinning emoji on your homework might mean that your teacher thinks you did good work but in a text from a friend it might mean they're happy or joking)? Does the meaning change depending on what other emojis it's with?

Takeaway

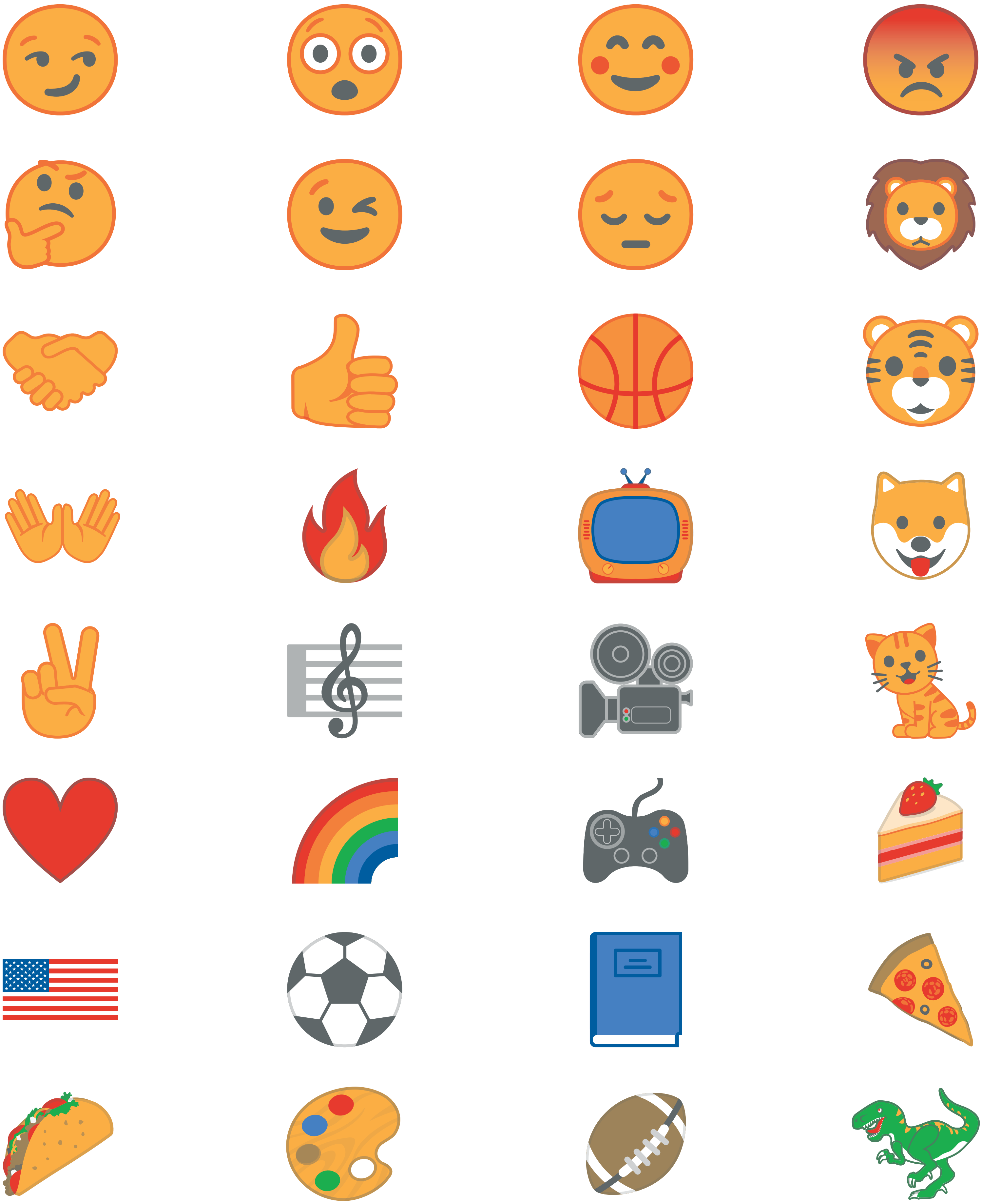
As media creators, before we post messages or pictures online, it's a good idea to pause and ask: "How could someone who is different from me interpret this? Am I sure they'll understand what I mean?" Could they take it wrong? And we should ask ourselves the same things before **we** post or comment too. "Am I sure I understand what they mean? How can I know?"

Blank t-shirt



Handout: Lesson 3

Emoji grid



Share with Care: Lesson 4

Frame it

Media literacy background for teachers: *Media are made by people who make choices. The most basic of these are what to include and exclude. This lesson helps students see themselves as media makers when they decide what to share online.*

Goals for students

- ✓ **Visualize** themselves as media creators.
- ✓ **Understand** media makers make choices about what to show and what to keep outside the frame.
- ✓ **Use** the concept of framing to understand the difference between what to make visible and public and what to keep secure or invisible.

Let's talk

Visual media makers control how much information they want to share by **framing**. They decide what to include **inside the frame** (what we can see), and they decide what stays **outside the frame** (what's invisible).

Activity

Materials needed:

- Index cards and scissors (one set per student)
- Handout: "What's in the frame?" or screen or smartboard with images projected

Run through each activity as a class, then discuss:

1. Framing

All pieces of media are the product of a series of choices by their media makers. One important choice is what to include and another is what to leave out. When we take pictures or video, "in" and "out" are separated by a frame.

To see how this works, take your index card and cut a rectangle out of the center to make your own frame.

Hold the frame at arm's length and move it slowly toward your face and back out (you could also try this with the zoom function on a camera). What do you notice about what you can see inside the frame? How about if you move it side to side? Is there a way to hold the frame so you can see some of your classmates but not others, or some of the things on a wall but not others?

When you control the frame, you are the media maker. You have the power to decide what to include or leave out. What you choose to leave outside the frame is still there in real life, but people who view the media you made would never be able to see it.

2. Keep it in or leave it out?

Grab a handout, and look at picture 1A. What do you think you're looking at and how do you know? Now look at 1B. How does the added information help you get a better idea of what you're looking at?

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Try it again with picture 2A. What do you think is casting the shadow? What's your evidence? 2B adds more information. Was your guess correct?

3. Too Much Information (TMI)?
Extra information isn't always welcome. Sometimes it's a distraction that takes away from our ability to enjoy or understand the smaller frame image. Take a look at example #3 on the handout.

It's fun to see how things are made sometimes. But what would it be like if every time you watched a movie, a TV show, or video you weren't just seeing the small frame—what if you were also seeing all the cameras, microphones, crew members, and the edges of the set? Do you think you would enjoy the story as much?

4. You decide
Every time you share something online, you are making media. And like the producers of a film, video or TV show, you can decide what people will see—what's inside the frame and what stays out of sight, outside the frame.

Takeaway

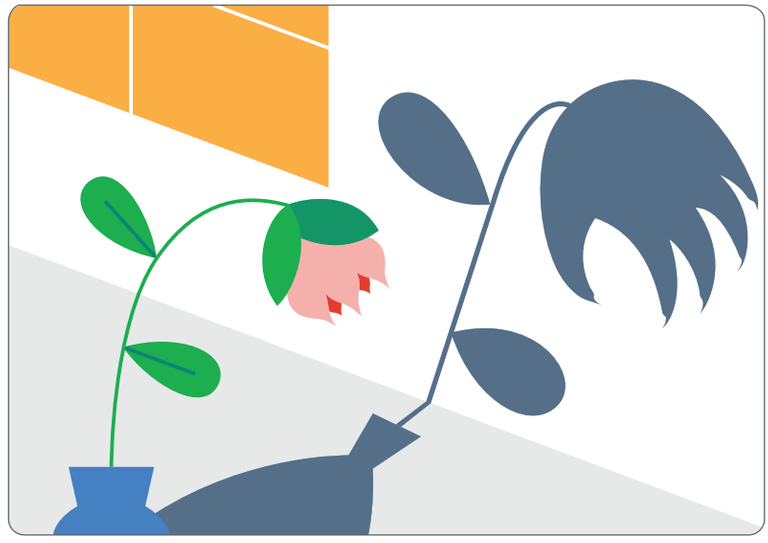
As a media maker, you put a "frame" around what you share online so other people see only what you want them to see.

What's in the frame?

1A

1B

2A



2B

3A

3B

Unit 02: Be Internet Alert

Don't Fall for Fake

Steering clear of scammers, fakers, info that doesn't help and other Internet stuff that tries to trick your brain—and learning how to find the good stuff

Media literacy lesson overview

Lesson 3	**Is that really true?**	Grades **2-6**
Lesson 4	**Spotting untrustworthy information online**	Grades **4-6**
Lesson 5	**If we were a search engine**	Grades **2-6**
Lesson 6	**Practicing Internet search**	Grades **2-6**

Themes

It's important for kids to understand that contacts or content they encounter online aren't necessarily true or reliable, and could involve efforts to trick them or steal their information, identity or property. Online scams aim to get Internet users of all ages to respond to fraudulent posts and pitches—sometimes from people pretending to be someone they know.

Goals for students

- ✓ **Understand** that what people tell you online isn't necessarily true.
- ✓ **Learn** how scams work, why they're a threat, and how to avoid them.
- ✓ **Determine** the validity of information and messages online and be wary of manipulation, unsubstantiated claims, fake offers or prizes and other online scams.

Standards addressed

ISTE Standards for Educators: 1a, 2c, 3b, 3c, 4b, 5a, 6a, 6d, 7a
ISTE Standards for Students 2016: 1c, 1d, 2b, 2d, 3b, 3d, 7b, 7c
AASL Learning Standards: I.b.1, I.c.1, I.c.2, Ic.3, I.d.3, I.d.4, II.a.1, II.a.2, II.b.1, II.b.2, II.b.3, II.c.1, II.c.2, II.d.1, II.d.2., III.a.1, III.a.2, III.a.3, III.b.1, III.c.1, III.c.2, III.d.1, III.d.2, IV.a.1, IV.a.2, IV.b.3, V.a.2, VI.a.1, VI.a.2, VI.a.3

Don't Fall for Fake
Vocabulary

Lesson 3

Credible: Believable; someone who is credible uses evidence, and you can be confident they are telling the truth.

Expertise: Special skill or knowledge about a particular thing; experts have expertise

Motive: The reason that someone does something; intention

Source: Someone or something that provides information

Vlogger: A person who is known for regularly posting short videos on a blog or social media.

Lesson 4

Deceptive: False; an action or message designed to fool, trick or lie to someone

Deceptive news: News that intentionally lies or distorts the truth—the popular name for it these days is "fake news"

Disinformation: False information intended to trick or mislead you

Evidence: Facts or examples that prove something is true or false

Misinformation: False Information

Skeptical: Willing to question claims of truth

Lessons 5 and 6

Clickbait: Content that attracts attention and could push you to click on a link to a certain site by using interesting formatting or catchy phrases

Keyword: A word directly related to the topic of your Internet search—one of the words you really need to do your search because no other word describes your topic better

Query: A keyword, set of keywords or a question you type into a search window (or box) to find information online. Sometimes a search takes more than one query to find what you're looking for.

Search engine/Internet search: A software program or "tool" people use to find information—including locations, photos and videos—on the Web

Search results: A collection of information you get in a search engine after you type your query and hit the "Search" or "Send" button

Don't Fall for Fake: Lesson 3

Is that really true?

Media literacy background for teachers: *In addition to helping students use analytical questions to evaluate source credibility, we also want them to understand that information comes from lots of places (not just textbooks). So they need to apply their skills to analyze all types of media. When they get to that point, they're ready to move on to analyzing special categories of media, like news or scientific data.*

Note: This is a media literacy lesson good for everybody to learn but may be a little over the heads of students in grades 2–3, so see a suggested modification below under "Activity."

Goals for students

- ✓ **Identify** the tools you already use to know that information is **credible**.
- ✓ **Consider** how certain things like **expertise** and **motive** affect credibility.
- ✓ **Learn** 4 questions for evaluating source credibility.
- ✓ **Understand** that a source that's credible on one topic is not necessarily credible on other topics.
- ✓ **Know** that checking multiple sources often helps you see whether information is credible.

Let's talk

What makes something or someone credible or trustworthy?

Every day you make decisions about what to believe and what not to believe. Was that video you saw credible? Was it trying to persuade you of something? Is your older brother telling you the truth or teasing? Is that rumor you heard about a friend true?

What do you do when you're trying to decide if someone is telling the truth? Do you already use these clues?:

- **What you know about a person**
  For example, you know if a classmate is really good at something or has a history of being truthful or playing practical jokes or being mean, so you can usually tell when they are serious or joking or lying.

- **What a person knows about you**
  For example, your parents know what kinds of foods give you a stomachache; the ads on TV do not, so you follow your parents' advice about what to eat. The school librarian knows your interests and what kinds of books you like, so you trust her book recommendations.

- **Tone of voice and facial expression**
  For example, you know that your friend means the opposite of the words they say if they roll their eyes and act snarky while they tell you they had a **terrible** time at the new skate park.

- **The situation**
  For example, when friends are playing around and one teases you about your new haircut, you know it's just a joke. But if someone at school says the exact same words to embarrass you in front of the whole class, it's an insult.

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When we hear things from a media source like a video, a person on TV, or website, we don't personally know the source and they don't know us. We may not be sure about whether to believe them.

Even when someone we know sends us a text there are no clues from facial expressions or tone of voice, so we might not be sure what they mean. That's when we need to ask questions…

Activity

Materials needed:

- Handout: "Deciding what's credible" (one per student)

Recommended modification for grades 2–3: *If you feel your students are ready to discuss whether a source is credible, complete steps 1 and 2 only.*

1. Evaluating sources

If you wanted a recommendation for a great new video game, would you ask your grandmother? Or, to ask it another way, is your grandmother a **credible** source for information on video games? A **credible** source is one that we can trust to give us accurate **and** relevant information.

Make a pro/con list to explain the benefits and drawbacks of asking your grandmother for video game advice.

Did your list look something like this?

PRO	CON
Grandma loves me and wants me to be happy	Grandma doesn't play video games and doesn't know much about them
Grandma is pretty good at finding information when she doesn't know the answer herself	Grandma doesn't know which games I already have or what types of games I like

If your list looked like that, you've just used two of the most common tools we have to decide if a source is credible: **motive** and **expertise**. "Expertise" is a special skill or knowledge about a particular thing; experts have expertise. "Motive" is someone's intention, the reason they say or do something.

Which item in the list gives you information about grandma's motives? Which items say something about her expertise? So is the grandma on this pro/con chart a credible source for information about which new video game to get? She wouldn't lie, but it would probably be better to ask someone who cares about us **and** who also knows something about gaming and the types of games we like.

We may also know that Dad is a great cook but is clueless about fashion, our coach knows basketball but not gymnastics, or that Grandma can fix almost any toy but doesn't know anything about video games. **Just because a person is an expert on one thing doesn't make them an expert on *everything*.**

2. Make your own pros and cons list

If this is the first time you have thought about how you use **motive** and **expertise** as clues to decide which information sources are credible, you might want to practice some more.

Imagine that you want to know how to be a better soccer player. Make pro/con lists for these choices so you can decide if they're credible sources:

- your grandma
- a blog by a winning high school basketball coach
- the best player on your team
- a website that sells soccer shoes and gives advice
- Videos that teach soccer practice techniques

What do you notice about the strengths and weaknesses of each source?

- Is there one that knows how to teach, but may not be familiar with soccer skills?
- Is there one that is a soccer expert but may not know how to teach?
- Is there one whose advice always seems to include buying something from them?
- Is there one that knows soccer but doesn't know you or which skills you need to work on?

Discuss: Who would be a good source to go to and why do you think so?

Credibility is rarely an all-or-nothing call. Most sources have strengths and weaknesses. That's why **the very best answers often come from asking many sources** and comparing their answers.

3. Steps to consider

Credibility isn't just about **who** we believe. It's also about **what** we believe. We get ideas about the world from all sorts of places, not just directly from people. A movie about a tsunami shows a giant wave—taller than a skyscraper—heading towards people on shore. Is that what tsunamis **really** look like? An ad implies that most scientists are men with crazy hair who wear thick glasses and white lab coats all the time. Is that true?

We can check out any source using the 3 Steps on the **Deciding what's credible** handout. They're about what we already know about motive and expertise.

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Step 1: Use common sense

Ask: Is it logical—does it make sense?

If a) what you're seeing doesn't make sense, b) you know it isn't true from your own experience, or c) it just doesn't work with facts you already know, you don't have to take any additional steps. You are looking at a source that is not credible.

Step 2: Ask questions

Not just any questions, but these four:

Expertise

a) Does this source know me or care about me?

The answer to this question depends on the information you're looking for. If you're checking some information about plastic water bottles polluting the ocean, it really doesn't matter if the source knows you or not. But if a site promises that you will love their new toy, it would need to know what kinds of toys, games, or activities you like for their promise to be credible.

b) Does this source know a lot about this topic? How did they learn what they know?

Some people think that the easiest way to find credible information is to ask a digital voice assistant. Digital assistants seem to know everything! Did you ever wonder how they can know all those answers? They use mathematical calculations (called "algorithms") to find answers.

For simple questions that only have one possible answer (like the temperature outside or the name of a celebrity famous for singing a particular pop song) they are usually a credible source. But if the question is complicated, it would be better to start with people or groups who have lots of experience or have earned awards or PhDs related to your topic. **Then** you can use a voice assistant to confirm that information (see Step 3).

Motive

c) What does this source want me to do or believe and why would they want me to do or believe that?

Does the source make money if you follow their advice? For example, do you think an influencer earns a fee if you buy the product they're wearing or talking about? Does a professional athlete wear a certain brand of shoe or shirt just because they like that brand or because they're paid to talk about it?

Money can often be one reason why you're seeing a logo or brand name in a video or ad—it can affect what the influencer or athlete is telling you (and what they're **not** telling you). They probably don't intend to hurt you, but it's possible that making money is more important to them than giving you all the facts or saying what is good for you.

d) Who benefits and who might be hurt if people believe this source?

This isn't always easy to tell. Here's an example:

Imagine an ad for an app that promises to make you a better student.

- What are the possible benefits? The app maker would benefit if you buy the app because they would make money. And you might benefit if the app really helped you.
- Who might be hurt if you believed the ad? You might be wasting your money if you bought the app. You might also be spending time practicing the wrong things, and then actually do worse in school. Or you might rely on the app, which can only make guesses about what you need, instead of seeking help from your teacher, who actually knows what you need.

Step 3: Confirm

Ask: Do other **credible** sources back up what this source says?

The job isn't just to check **more** sources. It's to look for a variety of sources. If you can't find a variety of credible sources that agree with the source you are checking, you shouldn't believe that source.

4. Check your sources

Now that you understand, it's time to practice. Pick a question related to something you are covering in class or something you have seen online. Find a source that provides an answer to that question and, in small groups, use the questions on the handout to decide if the source is credible.

If you need some ideas, here you go:

- You need ideas for a birthday present for your friend. An ad for a local store claims their search tool, which has every item offered by the store, can help you find a gift for anyone on your list. Does that work for you?
- You are reading online reviews of a new pizza place and notice that three of the six 5-star reviews are from people with the same last name as the restaurant. Two others say it is the best pizza on the planet and one says it was not bad for a cheap slice. There are also fourteen negative comments. Would the positive reviews convince you to try their pizza?
- A pop up ad says that you are part of a very small group that has been selected to try a special "mermaid pill" that will give you the power to breathe underwater without scuba gear. All you have to do is send $9.99 to cover shipping. Would you do it?
- You like a lot of the videos by a popular vlogger because they're funny, but they also say nasty things that you don't like about minority groups. Do you buy what they say because they're funny and really popular? Do you think that influences people?

Takeaway

Questions are our friends. When you ask good questions about sources **and** the information they provide, you'll get much better information. The more sources you use, the better. And remember that a great source for one subject doesn't mean it's great for everything.

Handout: Lesson 3

Deciding what's credible

Helpful steps to identify credible from non-credible sources.

Step 1

Use common sense

Is it logical?

Step 2

Ask questions

Not just any questions, but these four:

Expertise

- Does this source know me or care about me (and does that matter)?
- Does this source know a lot about this topic? How did they learn what they know?

Motive

- What does this source want me to do or believe and why would they want me to do or believe that?
- Who benefits and who might be hurt if people believe this source?

Step 3

Confirm

Do other **credible** sources back up what this source says? Use online search—or work with your school media specialist in the library—to find other sources of information about your subject (the sources could be book or news or magazine articles, online or offline). Go through Steps 1 and 2 with them too—ask the same questions about these sources too. If they're giving you the same information about your subject, it's pretty likely they're confirming that your source is credible.

Don't Fall for Fake: Lesson 4

Spotting untrustworthy information online

Media literacy background for teachers: *Media literacy questions and observation techniques give students tools to navigate their way through disinformation without getting stuck in arguments or hurting relationships with friends and family. But they need to ask questions and get used to applying critical inquiry to information that comes their way.*

Goals for students

- ✓ **Identify** clues which indicate that a news or information source is deceptive.
- ✓ **Use** analytical questions and careful observation to evaluate source credibility.
- ✓ **Understand** the importance of checking a source's credibility before sharing their message.
- ✓ **Develop** the habit of analyzing **all** news and information, not just the stories we think are suspicious.

Let's talk

Did you ever play one of those games where you hunt for mistakes hidden in a picture? Sometimes dealing with news is like that. There are a lot of people and groups who are so passionate about what they believe that they twist the truth to get us to agree with them. When their twisting is disguised as a news story, that's disinformation.

Some people don't learn how to spot fake information, but they share it anyway. That's how it spreads. And when people make choices about the things they do or believe based on that disinformation, it can get really hard for people to listen to each other calmly, argue respectfully, understand each other better, and solve problems.

So, if something looks or sounds like news, how can we tell the difference between what's real or credible and what's fake or misleading? There are clues we can learn to spot it—tricks used by people who are trying to mislead you. And there are questions we can ask that help us spot stories that aren't based on facts.

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Activity

Materials needed:

- Image: "What's Wrong with this picture"
- Handout: "Deciding what's credible" from Lesson 3 (page 54)
- Worksheet: "Spotting phony URLs"

Answers for worksheet: "Spotting phony URLs"

Real:

abcnews.go.com

bbc.com/news

nbcnews.com

nytimes.com

washingtonpost.com

usatoday.com

Fake:

abcnews.com.co

abcnews-us.com

nbc.com.co

nytimesofficial.com

bbc1.site/business-news

washinqtonpost.com

washingtonpost.com.co

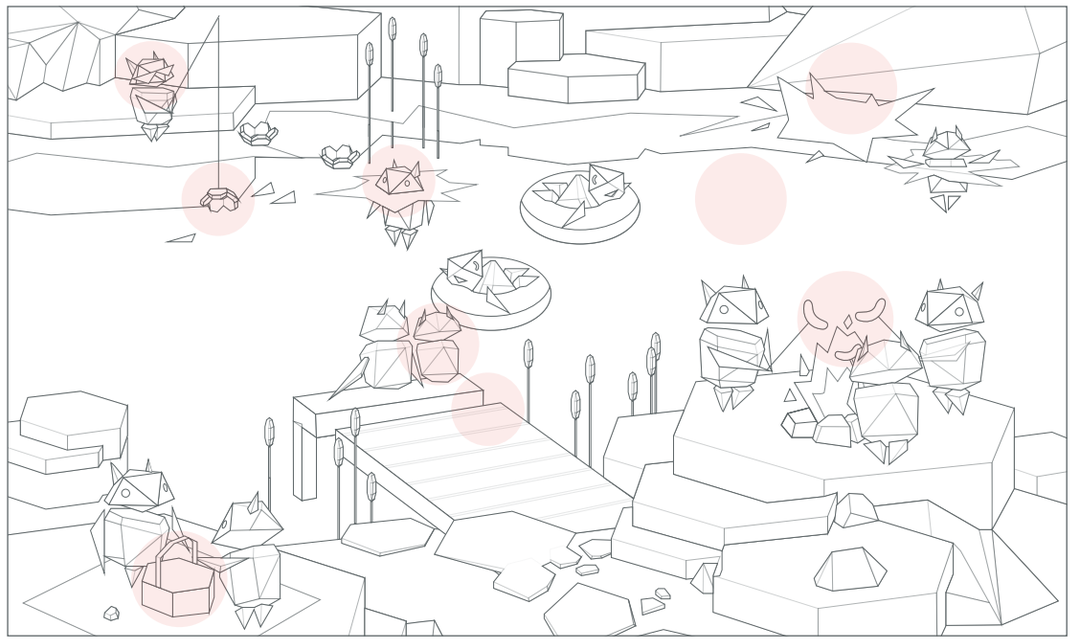
usatosday.com

1. What's wrong with this picture?

Take a look at the image below. Look carefully. Can you spot the differences between the two pictures?

What if someone told you where to look? Would that make it easier?

There are 9 differences, did you spot them all?



Trying to tell if a news story is real or fake is sort of like this picture game. By looking really carefully, you can find important information. And it's a lot easier if you know what to look for.

So here are some clues to finding disinformation. If you spot these things, you are probably looking at a fake, or deceptive, story.

Spotting phony URL's Handout

The first thing to look at is the URL (web address) for the site that published the story. Some fake sites try to fool you by choosing names that mimic a real site but with small differences. Most companies use short URLs because they are easier to remember and type, so URLs with added, unnecessary letters are often sites with false information.

Look at the handout:

- Circle all of the URLs that you think are real.
- When everyone is done, look at the answer key. Did you get them all right?

How could you check to see if a URL was a real news site? One way is to do a web search for the news organization or the URL. If the organization is credible a box can appear to the right of the search results on many platforms with a description of the organization, including their website address. If the URL isn't credible, you will often be able to scroll down and see headlines about the site being reported as a fake—or you'll find out the site isn't available anymore.

Continued on the next page →

2. Inspecting headlines

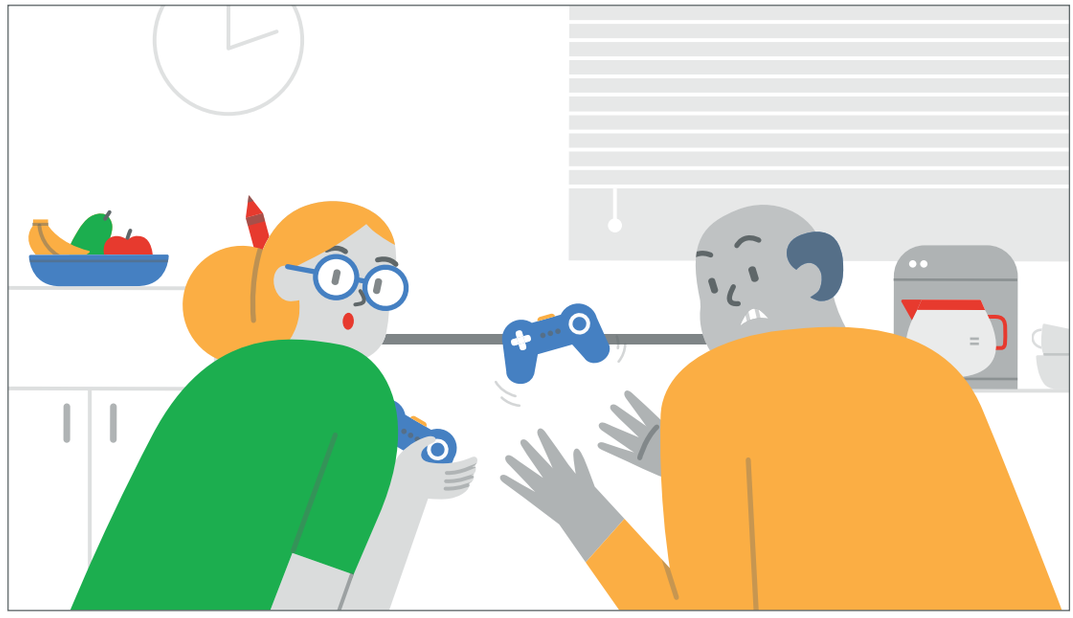
Sometimes someone shares a news story without a URL. In those cases, here are some clues to use:

a) A story starts with a picture of something that would interest us, like a cute dog, a celebrity, or an unusual stunt. But when we click, the story has little or nothing to do with the picture.

b) Instead of letting you decide for yourself, people who are trying to convince you to agree with them sometimes use things like **boldface**, ALL CAPS, underlining, or exclamation points to get you to think what you're seeing is important and click on them, called clickbait. Real journalists don't use those techniques.

c) To get you to read a story, some people include words in the headline like "shocking" or "outrageous" or "surprising." They know words like that make us curious. But **real** journalists let the news speak for itself. They tell the story and let us decide if it is shocking or surprising.

For example, look at this picture and headline:



The shocking truth about what teachers do after school

Without reading ahead, what do you imagine the story is going to say? Why do you think that? What's your evidence?

Here's the story:
"A recent State University survey of teachers found that 86% of teachers do what everyone does after work. They run errands, fix dinner, spend time with family, do household chores, and get ready for the next day. But lately, many teachers have been doing something unexpected.

A decade ago, economic troubles led many states to slash education budgets. That meant years without a pay raise for teachers. Unable to meet basic expenses on low salaries, many teachers now work second jobs. In some states teachers have even gone on strike for pay increases so they can quit second jobs and devote more time to their students."

Was the story what you thought it would be? Do you think that the picture and headline were accurate or misleading? What's your evidence?

3. Inspecting sources

When we analyze news, clues can be helpful, but they aren't always enough. Sometimes trustworthy news stories use techniques to attract our attention, and that can make them seem fake. And sometimes fake sources are so good at copying the real thing that it's hard to tell they're not. It's hard to tell them apart. For example…

Do these sound like trustworthy news organizations to you?:
American News
National Review
News Examiner
World News Daily Report
Weekly World News
NewsWatch33

Actually, only *National Review* is real. How could you find that out? You could start by doing a Web search of the organization's name. See where the name appears besides the organization's own website. If it appears in Wikipedia or an article at a newspaper or news magazine's site, it's probably a credible organization. But see what those articles say about it! It's possible that they're all saying it's fake.

Find a story about your school, community, the latest diet fad, or anything in the news that interests you. Use the 3 Steps on the **Deciding what's credible** handout, along with the new clues you know, to decide if the story is real or deceptive.

Continued on the next page →

Step 1: Use common sense
Ask: Is it logical—does it make sense?

Sometimes it's obvious. If you see a headline like: **CELEBRITY HAS SECRET BABY WITH SPACE ALIEN**, logic probably tells you it isn't real.

Sometimes it isn't so obvious. If:
a) what you're seeing doesn't make sense
b) you know it isn't true from your own experience, or
c) it just doesn't work with facts your already know
…you are looking at a source that is probably fake news.

Step 2: Ask the expertise and motive questions
(see pages 52 and 53)

Step 3: Confirm
Ask: Do other **credible** sources back up what this source says?

Who else is reporting this story? (You can use Internet search to see if this story is covered by other news sources…) What other stories does the site include? Are they all from the same perspective or are there many views included? If you can't find a variety of reliable sources that are covering the story, you should be skeptical of that source.

Takeaway

Now that you know how to use clues and questions to spot disinformation, you can ask smart questions and make careful observation part of your daily routine and with time, you'll be an expert in spotting fake stuff online. You now know how to analyze the information you get online. It's called critical thinking, and it's a media user's superpower.

Worksheet: Lesson 4

Spotting phony URLs

Real or fake?

Circle the correct answer.

usatoday.com	Real	Fake
abcnews.com.co	Real	Fake
washinqtonpost.com	Real	Fake
abcnews-us.com	Real	Fake
bbc.com/news	Real	Fake
abcnews.go.com	Real	Fake
nytimesofficial.com	Real	Fake
nbc.com.co	Real	Fake
washingtonpost.com	Real	Fake
nytimes.com	Real	Fake
washingtonpost.com.co	Real	Fake
bbc1.site/business-news	Real	Fake
nbcnews.com	Real	Fake
usatosday.com	Real	Fake

Don't Fall for Fake: Lesson 5

If we were a search engine

Without using any technology (we'll do that in the next activity), students create "search results" together to start learning how Internet search works from the "inside out."

Goals for students

- ✓ **Learn** fundamentals of online search.
- ✓ **Search** for information about a topic.
- ✓ **Understand** that search results are collections of information, not usually answers to a question.

Let's talk

What is search?

The internet is a place that has a gazillion (well, billions and billions of) pieces of information. Internet search, sometimes called a search engine, helps us narrow down that crazy amount of information that comes from all over the world. It's a software tool that people use to find information on all kinds of topics.

You might already know that, to use this tool, you type a few key words about a topic you want to know more about into the search bar (the empty box on a search engine page) or in your browser window (where you also type web addresses). Then, when you're ready, you hit the Return or Search key, and—voila!—the search engine works its magic (in about a half second), and you get your search results. Ok, so it's not **actually** magic. Internet search uses algorithms, which is a fancy way of saying people at the search company taught the software how to find and turn up information for you. Don't worry about how algorithms work for now. You just need to know that Search does the "searching" for you.

It's also good to know that search results aren't necessarily answers to a question. They're just collections of information you're interested in or looking for. If you do have a question that you're taking to a search engine, you can often find an answer in your search results, but sometimes it takes a few queries to get to the answer you're looking for. That's called "refining" your search.

So let's practice how search works by pretending to be a search engine together…

Activity

Materials needed:

- Worksheet: "If we were a search engine" (one per student)

1. Organize students into groups of 2.

2. Distribute a copy of the worksheet to each student.

3. Share a search topic with the class. Here are some possibilities:

- pizza
- tornado
- airplane
- solar system
- farmer
- soccer
- volcanoes
- cooking
- sharks
- basketball
- dentist
- construction

4. Students work with their partners to create possible "search results" in each category on the handout: "Website," "Image," "Map" and "Video." Their results can be in the form of words or drawings, as appropriate.

Encourage students to be creative, and make sure they know there are no "wrong" answers. For example, if the topic is "sharks," students might brainstorm the following search results:

- Website: information about different kinds of sharks
- Image: a drawing of a shark
- Video: sharks swimming through the ocean
- Map: the location of a beach where people saw a shark

5. When students finish all four search result categories for the given topic, pick which category (website, image, video or map) to talk about as a class.

6. Have one student from each pair share out their example of one of the search results.

For example, let's say the topic is "pizza." You can decide to have each group share their image results for pizza. Students can hold up their drawing and explain what they created. This allows students to see all the different search results that can be generated from a single query.

7. After students share examples, ask the class the following discussion questions:

- About how many different results did we have?
- About how many results were similar?
- If I changed my topic to _____ , how do you think that would change your results? For example, if the search topic was "pizza," how would the results change if I changed my query to "**pepperoni** pizza"?

Suggestion: Complete 4 rounds in total…

- Choose a different topic from each round and repeat the same steps as listed above.
- Complete 4 rounds so you can have discussions about the 4 main types of search results.

Takeaway

Internet search is a tool you can use to find information online. The info can be in the form of text on a website, videos, images, maps and more. The key words you type into a search engine determine what results you get.

Worksheet: Lesson 5

If we were a search engine

Search Topic

Website

Image | Video | Map

Don't Fall for Fake: Lesson 6

Practicing Internet search

Using an Internet connection, students explore using a search engine and practice creating ever more effective search queries.

Goals for students

- ✓ **Navigate** a search engine.
- ✓ **Practice** searching for information about a topic.
- ✓ **Create** search queries.
- ✓ **Change** keywords and notice differences in search results.

Let's talk

Search is a tool that helps you find information on the internet. To use search, you can go to a search engine and type a query—a question or keywords—into the search bar to get info on a topic you want to know more about. Sometimes using keywords works better than just asking a question. That's because, first, **the words you use** in your query and, second, **the order you put them** in are really important. If you just ask a question, it may not have the words and the order that help the search engine turn up the results you're looking for. But—no worries—it's perfectly fine to start with a question if you like.

The important thing is, just start, because lots of times it takes more than one query to get to the information you want. So type your question into the search engine, look at the search results and—if they're not good enough—you can use those results to guide you on how to create a better query and get even closer to what you're looking for.

For example: Let's say I want to start a garden. I want to grow vegetables I can use to cook in my kitchen.

- I have no idea how to do this, so I'm going to do an Internet search to find out how. I go to a search engine and type in the question, "How do I start a garden?"
  Display your computer screen so students can see you searching.
- Ok, let's take a look at these results.
  Review the results with your class. Be sure to point out that there are websites, images, videos and other types of results. Also point out search results that are not relevant to helping you grow a garden for vegetables and spices for cooking.
- I'm noticing that a lot of these results are about all kinds of gardens, but I need information about creating a garden at home, in my own yard. Also, I only want to grow stuff I can eat. I should probably include a keyword about vegetables, right? Ok, let's try searching this: "home garden vegetables".
  Display your computer screen so students can see you searching.
- Take a look at these results. What do you notice?
  Allow the students to share what they notice in the search results.

Both sets of search results gave me information about starting a garden, right? But the first set was about all kinds of gardens. It showed me I had to add a couple of important keywords to my original query to get the search results I needed to learn how to start a garden for cooking (BTW, did you know that's called a "kitchen garden"?).

Continued on the next page →

The more you practice creating search queries, the easier search gets. You can always start with a question, and if you don't get your answer, the search results will give you keywords you can try to get closer to what you need to know. If you want to start with keywords and aren't sure which ones to use, just know that there are no wrong keywords. Just try some! You can always try a different query if you're not seeing the results you were hoping for. Let's try it out…

Activity

Materials needed:

- Worksheet: "Practicing Internet search" (one per student)
- Internet-connected device

1. Create the first search query

Explain to students that they are going to explore using a search engine and practice creating search queries. On the handout, they'll find four different characters, each character thinking (in a thought bubble) about something they want to learn more about. Then have your students…

- Type the original search query (provided on the handout) into the search engine, and explore the search results.
- Record 4–5 search results on their handout.

2. Create their own (second) search query

Have students look again at what the character wants to know (in the thought bubble). Ask students, did the original search results give enough information relevant to this topic?

- Direct students to change the original query to include keywords that will get them more useful search results.
  Hint: Students can look for keywords they found in the first search results or in the character's thought bubble.
- Have them type this second search query into the search engine and explore the search results.
- Have students record 4–5 results on their handout.

3. Discuss

Have students find a partner and ask them to share with their partners how they changed the original search query and the types of results they got from that revised search query. Ask them to share what they discovered in a brief class discussion.

4. Repeat Steps 1–3 for the remaining characters

Takeaway

The more you practice creating search queries, the easier it will get to find the information you are looking for in a search engine.

Worksheet: Lesson 6

Practicing Internet search

I'm looking for a book to read.
I love mysteries! I also enjoy reading books that have imaginary characters that live in the future.
I think my teacher calls that sci-fi.

Original search query

Books about imaginary characters and mystery

Search results

Revised search query

Search results

I want to make a cake for my sister's birthday.
She doesn't like chocolate but loves fruit.
I wonder what kind of cake I can make.

Original search query

No chocolate cake with fruit

Search results

Revised search query

Search results

Continued on the next page →

Original search query

Video game jobs

Search results

Revised search query

Search results

I love playing video games.
I wonder what it would be like if I grew up
and worked for a video gaming company.
It would be so cool if that was my job someday!

Original search query

What do I need to fish?

Search results

Revised search query

Search results

My cousin invited me to go fishing.
I have never fished before so I don't know
what kind of equipment I need to bring with me.

Unit 04: Be Internet Kind

It's Cool to Be Kind

Learning and practicing the power of online kindness

Media literacy lesson overview

Lesson 5 **How words can change the whole picture** Grades **2-6**

Themes

The digital world creates new challenges and opportunities for social interaction, for kids and all the rest of us. Social cues can be harder to read online, constant connecting can bring both comfort and anxiety, and anonymity can fuel crushes and compliments as well as harm to ourselves and others.

It's complicated, but we know that the Internet can amplify kindness as well as negativity. Learning to express kindness and empathy—and how to respond to negativity and harassment—is essential for building healthy relationships and reducing bullying, depression, academic struggles and other problems.

Research shows that, rather than simply telling kids not to be negative online, two kinds of teaching can help address the underlying causes of negative behaviors: social-emotional learning and bullying prevention. These activities don't replace evidence-based programs; they lay a great foundation, encouraging students to interact positively and deal with negativity from the start.

Goals for students

- ✓ **Define** what being positive means and looks like, online **and** offline.
- ✓ **Lead** with positivity in online communications.
- ✓ **Identify** situations in which a trusted adult should be consulted.

Standards addressed

ISTE Standards for Educators: 1a, 1c, 2c, 3a, 3b, 3c, 4b, 5a, 5b, 6a, 6b, 6d, 7a
ISTE Standards for Students 2016: 1c, 2b, 3d, 4d, 7a, 7b, 7c
AASL Learning Standards: I.a.1, I.a.2, I.b.1, I.b.2, I.b.3, I.c.1, I.c.2, I.c.3, I.d.3, I.d.4, II.a.1, II.a.2, II.b.1, II.b.2, II.b.3, II.c.1, II.c.2, II.d.1, II.d.2, II.d.3, III.a.1, III.a.2, III.a.3, III.b.1, III.b.2, III.c.1, III.c.2, III.d.1, III.d.2, IV.b.2, IV.b.3, IV.d.2, V.a.2, V.a.3, V.c.1, V.c.3, V.d.1, V.d.2, V.d.3, VI.a.1, VI.a.2, VI.d.1, VI.d.3

It's Cool to Be Kind
Vocabulary

Lesson 5

Bullying: Purposefully mean behavior that is usually repeated. The person being targeted often has a hard time defending him or herself.

Cyberbullying: Bullying that happens online or through using digital devices

Harassment: A more general term than bullying that can take many forms—pestering, annoying, intimidating, humiliating, etc.—and can happen online too

ML SEL 2-6

How words can change the whole picture

Media literacy background for teachers: *This lesson lays a foundation for elementary grade students by asking them to grapple with simple captions about individual people. In developmentally appropriate ways, this lesson covers these media literacy concepts and questions:*

1. *Knowing that all media are "constructed"—made by people who make choices about what to include and how to present it.*
2. *Routinely asking "Who made this and why?"*
3. *Routinely reflecting on the media we create by asking: "How might this message affect others?"*

Goals for students

- ✓ **Learn** that we make meaning from the **combination** of pictures and words.
- ✓ **Understand** how a caption can change what we think a picture is communicating.
- ✓ **Begin to see** the power of your words, especially when combined with pictures you post.
- ✓ **Understand** how to be a responsible media maker.
- ✓ **Develop the habit** of asking, "Who posted this and why?"

Let's talk

How can *words* change a picture?!

Pictures combined with words are a powerful way to communicate. Imagine a news photo of a house on fire. One caption says "Family loses house but everyone gets out safely, including the dog." That would be sad, and maybe a little scary, right? But what if the caption said, "Firefighters set empty house on fire so they could practice using new firefighting tools." You're still looking at a house on fire, but you have a very different idea about what's happening. You might even feel safe instead of scared.

Activity

Materials needed:

• See following page

Divide the class into small groups. Without revealing to students that you're handing out two different versions, give half the groups the handout with the positive caption and the other half the one with the negative caption.

1. Pictures + words

Take a look at the image. With your group, describe the person in the picture. What sort of person do you think they are? Do you think you'd like to spend time with them or be their teammate? Why or why not?

The evidence will quickly reveal that groups were looking at pictures with different captions. Have each group hold up their picture so the others can see the difference.

Finally, briefly discuss: What does this show about the power of words to shape our ideas?

2. Still not sure?

Take a look at some more examples (see **How words can change a picture**)…

Continued on the next page →

Materials needed:

- Pictures of teachers and staff from your school going through their daily routines. For 2–3 weeks prior to the activity, you'll want to gather a few digital photos, or assign the students to gather them without revealing the pictures' role in this activity (always with the subjects' permission, of course).

  If that isn't possible, you could gather age-appropriate pictures from magazines or news sources.
- **Optional:** At least one picture of every student in the class
- Handout: "Sports images"
- Handout: "How words can change a picture"

Think about what it would feel like to get or see a message that included one of the pictures with the negative caption. Seeing or hearing negative messages doesn't only hurt the person in the picture. It can make other people who see the picture uncomfortable too.

When you get the message or photo, what do you do? You always have a choice. You can…

- Choose not to share the picture with anyone else, or…
- Tell the sender that you would rather not get messages that are meant to hurt someone, or…
- Support the person in the picture by letting them know that you know it isn't true, or…
- All the above.

You could also send a positive message. Not an answer—just your own positive message. Seeing or hearing positive messages supports the person in the picture and can make others feel good and want to post their own positive messages.

3. Someone at our school

Teacher selects random photo from shuffled set of school staff photos.

Practice creating different kinds of captions. First make up some captions that would make the person in the photo feel happy or proud. How many different captions can you think up?

Now let's talk about funny captions. Is there a difference between writing what's funny to you and what might be funny to the person in the photo? Is there a difference between a joke that's kind and funny to **everyone**, and a joke that makes fun of someone and is only "funny" to a few people?

Write some captions that are examples of what we discussed, then let's all pick a caption for each photo that's both funny and kind—not hurtful to the person in the photo.

Keep practicing using pictures of other people at our school. Did you get any new ideas about kind things to say by looking at the captions that your classmates wrote?

4. Class collage

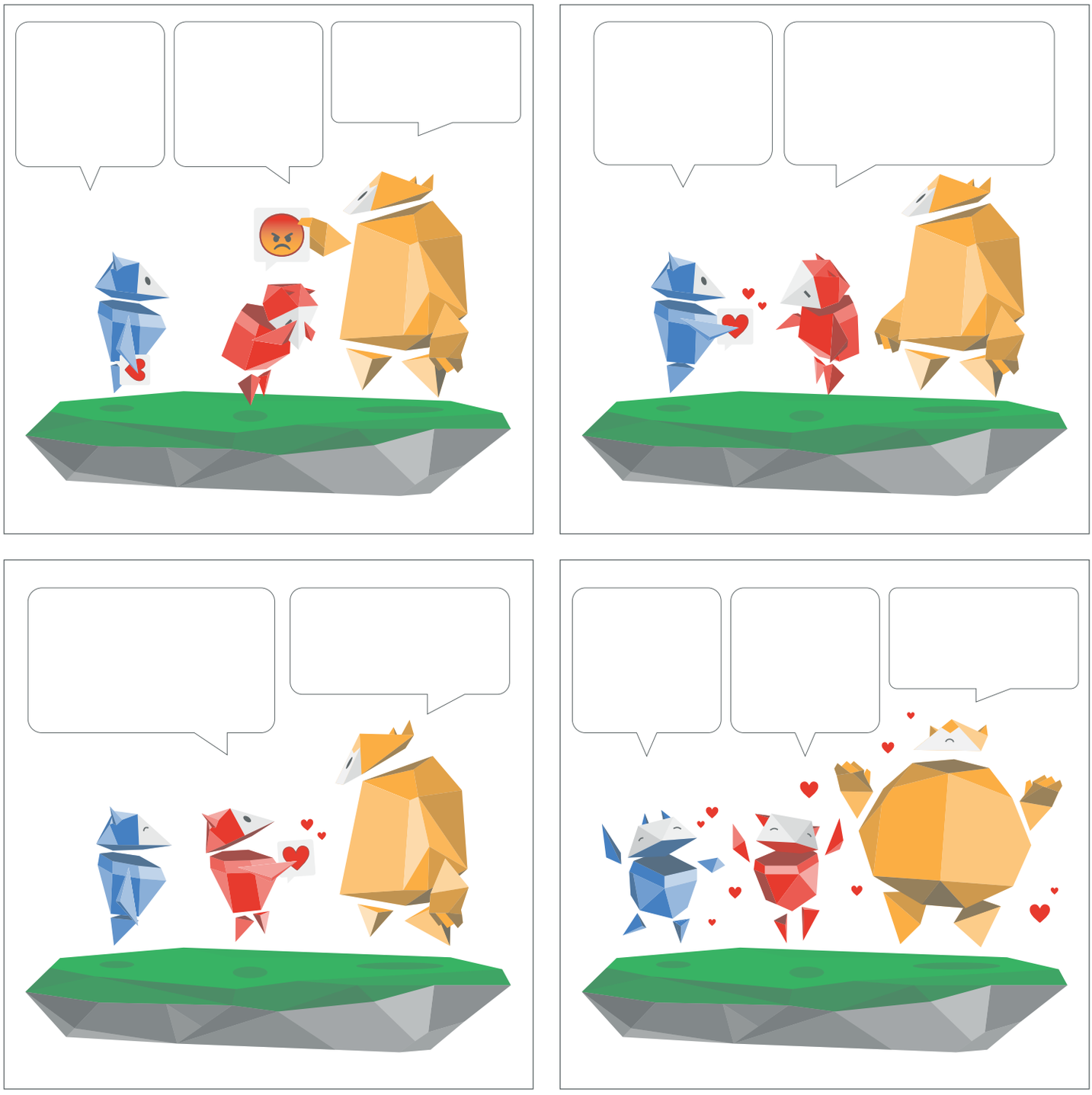
Create a collage of pictures of every person in your class, each with a kind caption written on it.

Takeaway

Captions can change what we think—and feel—about a picture and the messages we think we're getting. It's good to think or pause before posting pictures with captions, to consider how the whole thing might make others feel. And before accepting pictures and captions that others post, ask, "Who posted this and why?"

Extension

Try this experiment. Distribute a short comic strip in which all the words have been deleted. Then have every student, working individually, fill in the thought/conversation bubbles to tell the story they see. Compare the results. Did everyone see the same story or write the same words? Why not? What does the experiment show about how we use words to provide context or understand what a picture's "saying"?



Handout: Lesson 5

Sports images

Awesome!

Show Off!

Awesome!

Show Off!

Handout: Lesson 5

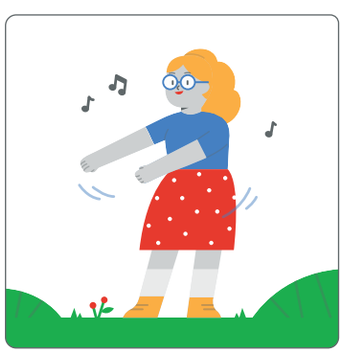
How words can change a picture

Original artwork wins first place.

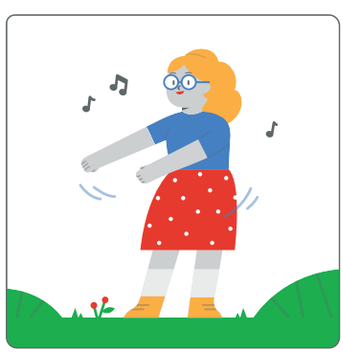
Hot Mess.

I discovered a new species in the world!

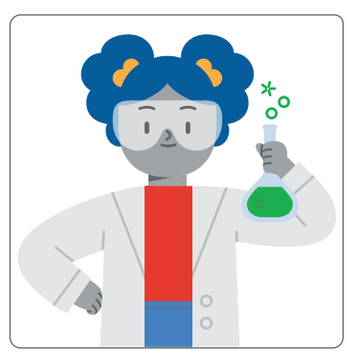
Mmm Dinner!



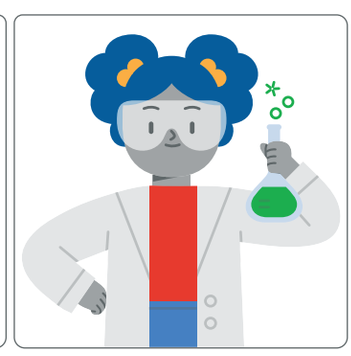
Nailed it!



Awkward - not even close!



Youngest scientist in the world!

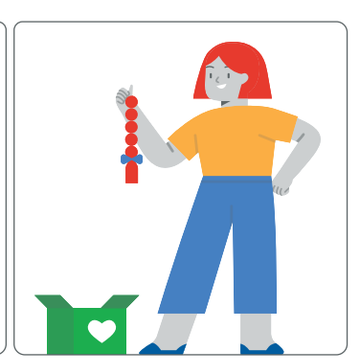


Nerding out. #lame

Finally, my own phone!

Got my mom's lame old phone. :/

Grew my hair out and donated it to a cancer patient. <3



WORST. HAIRCUT. EVER!