

Media Literacy in the Age of AI

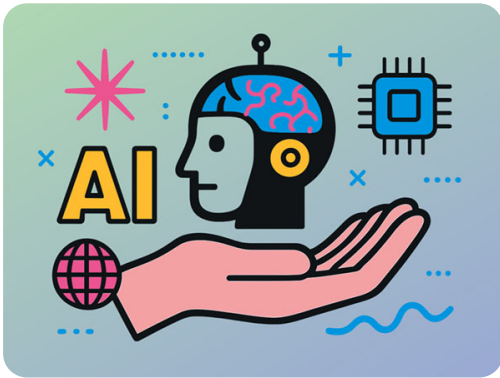
Grade: 6-12

Topic: Media Literacy

Unit: Teaching for Tomorrow



Overview



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In this lesson mini, students will explore how AI and digital tools shape the media they encounter, from content curation to misinformation. They will develop essential critical thinking skills through hands-on analysis of digital content, learning to evaluate source credibility, recognize algorithmic influence, and apply systematic strategies for assessing online information. Students will engage in collaborative discussions about their findings and reflect on their roles as both media consumers and media creators. The experience culminates with students envisioning how learning and media literacy might evolve in the future, empowering them to become more informed, intentional, and responsible digital citizens.

Ideas for Implementation

- **English**
- **Social Studies**
- **Digital citizenship/technology**
- **STEAM programs**
- **Library media**
- **Journalism / media production**
- **Library/information science**

Key Vocabulary & Definitions

- **algorithm** (noun): a set of rules or instructions followed by a computer to perform tasks or make decisions
- **artificial intelligence** (noun): the development of computer systems that can perform tasks requiring humanlike intelligence, such as decision-making or language understanding
- **clickbait** (noun): a sensational or misleading headline designed to attract attention and clicks
- **credibility** (noun): the quality of being trusted and believed in, especially in relation to information sources
- **curation** (noun): the process of selecting, organizing, and presenting content for others to see
- **evaluate** (verb): to examine something carefully and make a judgment about its value or credibility
- **media literacy** (noun): the ability to access, analyze, evaluate, and create media in various forms
- **personalization** (noun): the process of tailoring content or experiences to individual users based on data
- **recommendation system** (noun): a tool or an algorithm that suggests content to users based on their behaviors or preferences

Authentic Learning Extensions

Authentic learning opportunities for exploring the future of education involve real-world experiences and reflective applications that help students meaningfully consider how learning, media, and technology are evolving—and what role AI might play in shaping that future. Here are some examples:

- **Future Classroom Design Challenge:** Students design a possible future learning space based on their Question Pyramid responses (Activity 5). They can create physical models, digital mockups, or annotated sketches that reflect their ideas about various approaches to technology integration, collaboration, and flexible learning. Students should consider multiple possibilities and explain their design choices based on different learner needs and preferences.
- **Learning Futures Interviews:** Students interview educators, technologists, or school staff about how teaching and learning have changed in recent years and what changes might come next. They summarize key takeaways and present a short reflection on various perspectives they encountered, what different possibilities emerged, and what questions arose from the conversations.
- **Learning Stories Exchange:** Students collect and analyze learning stories from people of different generations and backgrounds. They interview family members, community members, or peers about memorable learning experiences from different time periods, asking open-ended questions such as “Describe a time when you learned something important” and “What made that learning experience meaningful to you?” Students then create a collection of these stories and look for patterns, differences, and trends across different eras and contexts. They present their findings by highlighting the variety of ways people have learned throughout history and explore questions about what these stories might suggest about future

possibilities. This activity helps students discover that effective learning has taken many forms across time and cultures, allowing them to consider how this diversity of approaches might inform future educational possibilities.

Activity 1:

Exploring Intelligence in the Digital Age



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MINUTES

By the end of the activity, students will be able to analyze how artificial intelligence influences media consumption and develop strategies for thoughtful engagement with AI-shaped content.

Materials and Resources

MATERIALS

- Whiteboard and display
- Writing utensils

RESOURCES

Britannica School Nonbiological Man: He's Closer Than You Think article (for teacher display)



<https://school.eb.com/levels/high/article/Nonbiological-Man-Hes-Closer-Than-You-Think/630823>

- 🔗 Media Messages and AI handout (one per student)

Implementation

Note: Before starting the activity, remind students that the purpose of this activity is not to decide whether AI is “good” or “bad” but to develop awareness and critical thinking about how AI shapes the media and information we engage with. Encourage

open, curious discussion and emphasize that understanding AI

- ① ~~Begin by telling students that today's activity will involve~~ empower us to be more thoughtfully informed technology users. them to explore how artificial intelligence (AI) might be reshaping ideas about intelligence and to consider how these changes could be influencing the media, messages, and information they encounter every day.

- ② Ask students to consider this question: "What does it mean to be intelligent?" Have students turn and talk with a partner for about 2 minutes, sharing their initial ideas. Encourage them to reflect on whether intelligence involves knowing facts, solving problems, learning quickly, adapting to new situations, or other possibilities.

- ③ After a couple of minutes, bring the class back together and invite a few students to share highlights from their conversations. As they speak, help surface a range of ideas, encouraging students to notice common themes or differences and prompting further thought about how intelligence might involve adapting, making decisions, or responding to new or unpredictable situations.

- ④ Invite students to reflect on this question: "Can something follow instructions perfectly but still not be intelligent?" Give them a moment to consider. There's no right or wrong answer, just an opportunity to think deeply.

- ⑤ Offer a relatable scenario to help ground their thinking. Say:

Imagine using a GPS app that keeps telling you to turn left, even though the road is closed. Is it thinking about your situation and your need to get somewhere? Or is it simply following programmed instructions?

- ⑥ Invite volunteers to share their thoughts. Then ask the class whether this example aligns with how they

previously defined intelligence. Encourage students to

- ⑦ ~~Display the NonBiological Man: He's Closer Than You Think~~ **article**, and tell students they will be reading the text to explore various perspectives on how technology, intelligence, and humanity are changing. Distribute the **Media Messages and AI handout** to students to help guide their thinking throughout the reading. Consider providing students with printed copies of the article if the full article is not easily viewable on a single screen.
- ⑧ Read selected portions of the article aloud, or invite volunteers to read, pausing at three key points: (a) after the description of accelerating technological change (first paragraph), (b) after the introduction of brain-cloud connections (second and third paragraphs), and (c) after the discussion of backing up the mind (fourth paragraph). At each pause, have students work with a partner to respond to a short writing prompt on their handout. Encourage them to reflect on the article's ideas and consider how the possibilities described might influence the way people interact with information and media today.
- ⑨ After the reading is complete, invite students to work with a partner or in small groups to discuss the key ideas they recorded. Ask them to first review what the article presents about potential futures involving intelligence, technology, and the human experience. Then guide them to apply those ideas to the present day by discussing these questions:

- *How does today's media consumption already reflect some of the changes described in the article?*
- *In what ways is AI already shaping the information we interact with daily?*

As you observe student discussions, be prepared to suggest examples if students seem stuck: personalized feeds,

recommendations, trending topics, targeted ads, or autogenerated content.

- ⑩ Bring the class back together. Ask volunteers to share one or two ideas from their group discussions about how today's media might already reflect some of the changes discussed in the article. As students share, write two simple headings on the board:

- AI Influences on Media
- Potential Impacts on How We Think

Begin listing student examples under each category. These headings will help organize the conversation and make key insights visible. Once a few ideas are listed under each heading, guide a brief interactive brainstorm by asking the following questions:

- *How is AI influencing the choices we make about the media we consume?* (Remind students that this is related to the second discussion question they were to explore with their partners or small groups.)
- *How might these AI-driven choices affect what information we trust, which perspectives we're exposed to, or what beliefs we form?*

- ⑪ Encourage students to connect the article's ideas about intelligence, identity, and technology to familiar media experiences such as personalized content on social media, music apps, or search engines. Emphasize that part of being media literate today means asking thoughtful questions about how AI systems shape what information we are presented with and why.

- ⑫ Have students complete the Final Reflection section of the Media Messages and AI handout. Ask them to reflect on how the article expanded their thinking and to identify one

personal strategy they can use to remain thoughtful and aware when engaging with AI-shaped media.

- ⑬ Transition to a “Media Messages Lightning Round” in which each student shares one quick insight from their handout, either something the article helped them realize or a strategy they recommend for navigating AI-influenced content. Encourage concise, energetic responses. As students share, record a few standout phrases or strategies on the board to highlight collective insights.
- ⑭ To wrap up the activity, review what the class shared during the lightning round. Emphasize that AI is increasingly shaping the media we engage with and that developing strong media literacy skills helps us stay thoughtful, informed, and in control. Remind students that these skills include questioning sources, recognizing bias, identifying AI-generated content, and reflecting on why certain content appears in their feeds. Encourage students to continue exploring these questions as technology continues to evolve, noting that understanding how technology influences media is an essential part of becoming a critical consumer and creator of information in today’s world.

Differentiation and Variations

Language Support: To support students who benefit from additional language support, provide a vocabulary list with key terms from the activity (such as *artificial intelligence* and *personalized content*) along with simple definitions and visual examples. Consider pairing these students with supportive partners during discussions and offering additional processing time during reflection activities. Encourage students to use their home languages when brainstorming ideas before translating them into English for sharing.

Visual Scaffolds: Offer a simple visual timeline or flowchart summarizing the article's major technological ideas, such as accelerating change, brain-cloud connections, and mind backup. This allows multilingual learners to anchor abstract concepts in concrete visuals, supporting comprehension and retention as they engage in higher-level analysis.

Guided Discussion Support: Provide sentence starters or key questions (e.g., "One change I noticed was ____" and "AI could influence media by ____") to students during pair or group discussions. This helps students who may struggle with open-ended tasks by offering structure, allowing them to participate more confidently and clearly express their thinking.

Analyzing AI in Media: Invite students to dig deeper by selecting one specific approved AI-driven platform, analyzing how it influences user behavior, and what potential ethical or cognitive implications might arise. For example, a student might examine how a content-recommendation system learns from user interactions to shape what content appears more frequently. This promotes deeper understanding by encouraging students to apply abstract ideas from the article to real-world systems they interact with daily.

Collaborative Teaching

One Teaching, One Assisting: For collaborative teaching and learning environments, this learning activity is well suited to a One Teaching, One Assisting strategy. In this model, one teacher leads the activity while the other circulates, assisting individual students as needed. This ensures that when students encounter difficulties, they receive immediate help in the form of personalized support and answers to their questions. By addressing students' unique needs and keeping them on track, this approach enhances individual learning experiences and fosters a supportive classroom

environment. Studies indicate that immediate feedback and individualized attention can significantly enhance student understanding and retention of material.

- **Opening Reflection and Discussion:** The lead teacher introduces the activity and facilitates the class discussion around the question “What does it mean to be intelligent?” The assisting teacher circulates, listening in on partner conversations and offering clarifying prompts to help students express nuanced ideas.
- **Concept Exploration:** The lead teacher guides the discussion as the class considers the GPS scenario and the question “Can something follow instructions perfectly but still not be intelligent?” The assisting teacher supports students who need help connecting the abstract question to their own definitions of intelligence.
- **Reading and Analysis:** The lead teacher reads or facilitates the reading of the “Nonbiological Man: He’s Closer Than You Think” article, pausing at the three key points for partner work. The assisting teacher supports individual students with difficult vocabulary, checks for understanding, and helps them complete their handout responses during each pause.
- **Small-Group Discussion:** The lead teacher guides students in discussing how the article’s ideas connect to present-day media consumption and AI influence. The assisting teacher moves between groups to support quieter students, offer scaffolding questions when groups seem stuck (such as suggesting examples like personalized feeds or targeted ads), and help students make connections between the article’s concepts and familiar media experiences.
- **Class Discussion and Individual Reflection:** The lead teacher facilitates the sharing of group insights and guides the brainstorm using the “AI Influences on Media” and “Potential Impacts on How We Think” headings. During individual reflection time, the assisting teacher helps

students articulate their thoughts on the handout and develop personal strategies for engaging thoughtfully with AI-shaped media.

- **Lightning Round and Wrap-Up:** The lead teacher leads the class in a lightning round in which each student shares a key insight or personal strategy. The assisting teacher helps students prepare their ideas, encouraging concise phrasing and supporting those who may feel hesitant to speak.

Activity 2:

How Content Is Curated



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MINUTES

By the end of the activity, students will be able to identify factors that influence online content delivery, analyze patterns in their digital media experiences, and develop questions about how information systems work.

Materials and Resources

MATERIALS

- Whiteboard and display
- Writing utensils

RESOURCES

- 🔗 Content Curation Concept Map handout (one per student and one for teacher display)

Implementation

- ① Begin by telling students they will explore how information appears in their digital experiences. For example, ask students which platforms they use most often for information, entertainment, or connection with others. As students share, record all responses on the board without commentary. Once you have collected responses, ask students what they notice about the class list and invite observations.

- ② Ask students to recall a recent experience using any digital platform from the list. Have them turn and talk with a partner about what they noticed regarding the content that appeared. To support discussion, pose open-ended questions such as the following:
 - *What did you observe about how content was arranged?*
 - *Did you notice any patterns?*
 - *What questions does this raise for you?*
- ③ After partner discussions, invite volunteers to share observations. Ask the class what they think might be worth investigating further based on shared observations.
- ④ Listen to student responses, and then ask what they think might be happening in the background when they use these platforms. Allow students to share theories about how content might be selected or ordered. Ask follow-up questions such as the following:
 - *What makes you think that?*
 - *What evidence have you observed?*

Introduce the term *algorithm* only if students don't mention it, and ask them what they think this word might mean in this context.

- ⑤ Display the **Content Curation Concept Map handout** for students to view. Create a visual concept map on the board with the words *content curation* in the center.
- ⑥ Ask students what they think the term *content curation* means, and record their definitions. Continue to record student suggestions for what should connect to content

curation on the map. As they suggest ideas such as *personalization*, *trending topics*, or *sponsored content*, ask them to explain why they think these ideas connect to content curation. When mapping, ask students to describe the relationships they observe between different elements instead of providing explanations yourself.

- ⑦ After modeling, give each student a Content Curation Concept Map handout. Ask them to work independently to create their own concept map starting with *content curation* at the center, using their personal digital experiences as evidence. Alternatively, they may complete the fill-in-the-blank version on the handout. Encourage them to include specific examples from their own experiences, such as particular social media feeds, recommended videos, suggested articles, or targeted advertisements they have encountered. Ask them to consider what other factors might influence the information they see and add those to their maps. Remind students to base their maps on actual observations and experiences.
- ⑧ As students work, circulate and ask questions such as "What made you connect these ideas?" and "What evidence do you have for this relationship?"
- ⑨ Ask students to share patterns they discovered in their individual concept maps. Listen as students identify major forces (which they should note in a response to the reflection prompt on the handout). On the board, write only what students mention. Ask probing questions such as the following:
 - *Based on your maps, which forces do you think have the most influence?*
 - *What evidence supports that?*
 - *Which forces did you find hardest to detect?*

- *What does that suggest to you?*

- ⑩ Create a simple list or flowchart based entirely on student observations about which factors they believe are most influential. Ask students what conclusions they can draw from this information about how their online experiences are shaped.
- ⑪ Ask students to reflect on their learning by considering this question: "Based on today's investigation, what is one insight you gained or one question you still have about how information reaches you online?" Go around the room having each student share an insight or question in one sentence or less. If someone shares something similar to a previous response, ask them to build on it or offer a different perspective. Ask the class what they think they might do differently now that they have this understanding, without suggesting specific strategies yourself.

Differentiation and Variations

Language Support: To support students who benefit from additional language support, provide a vocabulary list with key terms from the activity (such as *algorithm*, *content curation*, *personalization*, and *digital platform*) along with simple definitions and visual examples. Consider pairing these students with supportive partners during discussions and offering additional processing time during concept mapping and reflection activities. Provide sentence frames such as "I notice that __," "This connects to __ because __," and "One pattern I see is __" to help students articulate their observations. Encourage students to use their home languages when brainstorming ideas before translating them into English for sharing.

Visual and Multimodal Learning: Incorporate visual elements such as platform logos, screenshots of actual feeds, and diagram examples as supported by your school/district to support students who process information more effectively through visual means. When students create their concept maps, encourage them to use drawings, symbols, or color-coding alongside text to represent their ideas and connections. This approach helps students who learn best through visual processing to access and organize complex information about digital media systems.

Multilingual Learner Integration: During partner discussions and concept mapping, encourage students to use their home languages when brainstorming or thinking through ideas before they translate key concepts into English for sharing. Provide sentence starters such as "I notice that ____" and "This connects to ____" to help students articulate their observations during class discussions. This support allows students to think deeply in their strongest language while building academic English vocabulary around media literacy concepts.

Advanced Critical Thinking: As students develop their concept maps, invite them to investigate deeper questions such as how content curation might differ across global platforms and how emerging technologies could change these systems. Students can also analyze how the same algorithm might affect different communities or demographics in various ways, adding layers of complexity to their analysis. This extension challenges advanced learners to apply their understanding to broader societal implications and future scenarios.

Collaborative Teaching

One Teaching, One Assisting: For collaborative teaching and learning environments, this learning activity is well suited to a One Teaching, One Assisting strategy. In this model, one teacher leads

the activity while the other circulates, assisting individual students as needed. This ensures that when students encounter difficulties, they receive immediate help in the form of personalized support and answers to their questions. By addressing students' unique needs and keeping them on track, this approach enhances individual learning experiences and fosters a supportive classroom environment. Studies indicate that immediate feedback and individualized attention can significantly enhance student understanding and retention of material.

- **Activity Launch and Observation Sharing:** The lead teacher introduces the activity and invites students to share which digital platforms they use most often. As students respond, the assisting teacher circulates, listening for patterns, commonalities, or misconceptions, and asks clarifying questions to deepen the discussion.
- **Partner Discussion and Class Reflection:** The lead teacher prompts students to reflect on their own digital use and leads a discussion using open-ended questions. The assisting teacher moves through the room to support partners who may need help articulating their ideas, drawing connections, or identifying examples from their personal experiences.
- **Exploring Hidden Systems:** The lead teacher leads the discussion about what might be happening "behind the scenes," introducing the term *algorithm* as needed. The assisting teacher helps students in connecting this idea to their earlier responses and may offer concrete examples or rephrased questions to support comprehension.
- **Concept Map Modeling:** The lead teacher models the creation of a concept map on the board, inviting student input. The assisting teacher helps individual students follow along and scaffolds understanding for those struggling to link ideas, reinforcing that there are no "wrong" connections, just patterns to explore.

- **Independent Mapping:** As students work independently on their Content Curation Concept Map handouts, the lead teacher maintains a visible example on the board. The assisting teacher circulates, asking personalized questions such as “What digital experience led you to include this?” and “Does this connection reflect a pattern or a single event?” to prompt deeper insight and keep students engaged.
- **Group Synthesis and Flowchart Creation:** The lead teacher facilitates a whole-class reflection, listing student observations on the board. The assisting teacher supports quieter students in speaking up and helps validate connections that might initially seem unclear. Together, they co-construct a student-driven flowchart or list of digital influence forces.
- **Final Reflection:** The lead teacher invites students to share one insight or question. The assisting teacher helps students prepare their sentence-length responses and encourages them to build on peers’ contributions. This helps ensure a rich, reflective closing in which every student contributes.

Activity 3:

How AI Shapes What You See



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MINUTES

By the end of the activity, students will be able to identify digital tools for investigating media claims, analyze how these tools influence their understanding of information, and evaluate the role technology plays in shaping online content consumption.

Materials and Resources

MATERIALS

- Devices such as Chromebooks or tablets (one per group)
- School- or district-approved evaluation tool
- Teacher-approved AI writing assistant
- Whiteboard and display
- Writing utensils

RESOURCES

- 🔗 Evaluating Evidence graphic organizer (one per group)

Implementation

① Tell students that today's activity will explore how digital tools, including AI, influence the content we encounter online. Explain that apps, search engines, and social media platforms help us find and create information while also determining what appears in our feeds and search results. Let students know they'll practice using these tools more critically by evaluating the content they encounter and learning how to make informed decisions about what to trust or share. Ask students these questions:

- *What's the last thing you searched or saw online that surprised you?*
- *What factors might determine whether that content appeared in your results?*

② Ask students to think about the digital tools they use in their daily lives. Tools such as grammar checkers, search engines, AI assistants, video platforms, and design apps often rely on AI to support the tasks of researching, writing, creating, and more. Depending on how they're used, these tools can either deepen understanding or simply speed up the process. Have students share one tool they've used for schoolwork or content creation and describe what it helped them accomplish.

③ Lead a discussion about what each tool helped students accomplish. Ask, "How did the tool support your work?" Allow students to compare their experiences and identify patterns in how different tools function. Ask them to consider how their chosen tools allow them to do the following:

- **Evaluate:** options that help check accuracy, investigate sources, or verify content
- **Create:** applications that support writing, design, or content development

- **Analyze:** resources that break down media to help users understand structure, tone, or bias

④ Write the following prompt on the board:

- Investigate the claim: "Digital manipulation tools are changing how people create and share images online."

Explain that students will work in pairs to explore this claim by using three different types of digital tools—one to evaluate content, one to create media, and one to analyze information. Before the activity, select appropriate tools based on your school's or district's approved technology list. Ask students to share their prior experience with similar tools and discuss how different tools might provide different types of information.

⑤ Distribute the **Evaluating Evidence graphic organizer** to each pair. Explain that they'll use it to track how different tools help them investigate the claim. For each tool, students should record the evidence they find, where it came from, how credible the source appears to be, and how the evidence supports—or challenges—the claim. Briefly walk students through each section of the organizer before they begin. Emphasize that they'll use it to evaluate not just the content but the quality and reliability of the information each tool surfaces.

⑥ Have students access their digital devices and begin exploring the claim using the three selected tools: one for evaluating content, one for creating media, and one for analyzing information. Encourage students to notice how each tool presents information differently and what types of sources each tool prioritizes.

⑦ Have students complete a final reflection with their partner using their Evaluating Evidence graphic organizer. Ask pairs to examine how each of the three tools they used influenced the evidence they discovered and the

conclusions they reached. Have them discuss the advantages and limitations of each tool and consider how digital tools can shape what people encounter, understand, and share online.

- ⑧ Challenge students to apply their evaluation skills in a research activity. Display a claim on the board that requires investigation. In 10 minutes, each pair must use a school- or district-approved evaluation tool to investigate the claim. Their goal is to determine the accuracy of the claim. To submit an answer, pairs must provide a clear conclusion along with credible evidence and explain how their chosen tool helped them evaluate the claim.

Possible claims:

- AI tools are being used to create realistic artwork.
- Social media algorithms determine which posts users see first.
- Digital editing software can alter photographs in seconds.
- Online platforms use data to personalize content recommendations.

At the end of the activity, have students discuss which claims seemed more straightforward to verify and what made certain claims easier or harder to investigate.

- ⑨ Have students experiment with content creation tools. Each pair will select a teacher-approved AI writing assistant and use it to write two headlines about the same topic:
 - One designed to grab attention using clickbait techniques
 - One that is clear, accurate, and neutral

Students may choose a science discovery, a technological innovation, or a school-related topic. If needed, they can ask the AI tool for topic suggestions.

- ⑩ Once both headlines are written, each pair should submit them anonymously on a separate sheet with no labels. Then, using the same AI tool, students will analyze how the headlines were constructed. Have students examine how tone, structure, and word choice might influence a reader's interpretation.

Sample headlines for discussion:

- New Study Reveals Surprising Benefits of Reading
- Scientists Discover Unexpected Effects of Daily Reading Habits
- Students Report Higher Test Scores with New Study Method

- ⑪ Revisit the headlines created in the previous step. Read each pair of headlines aloud to the class without revealing which approach was used for each. After each set, ask students to identify which headline uses emotional language and which is neutral, and have them explain their reasoning. Then have the original pair reveal their approach and briefly share how they created each version.
- ⑫ Wrap up the discussion by asking students to reflect on how language choices can influence understanding and decision-making. Emphasize the key insight: even small changes in wording, especially when generated or assisted by AI, can significantly affect how people interpret information and what they choose to share.

Differentiation and Variations

Language Support: For students who benefit from additional language support, encourage them to think and brainstorm in their home languages before translating key insights into English. Support language development by providing sentence frames such as “The evidence shows ___” and “This source is reliable because ___” to help students articulate credibility judgments and content analysis. This allows students to engage critically with digital content while building academic vocabulary around media evaluation and AI-influenced content.

Advanced Critical Thinking: Invite advanced learners to explore how AI and media tools can shape different experiences online. Ask questions such as “Could two people get different results for the same search? Why?” and “What kinds of headlines get the most attention—and who benefits from that?” Students can also examine how a false or misleading claim might spread faster on one platform than another. This extension encourages students to think critically about how digital tools influence what people see and believe.

Multiple Expression Pathways: Allow students to share what they’ve learned in different ways. Instead of just speaking, they can create a visual showing clickbait versus clear headlines, write a short reflection, or demonstrate how a headline might influence someone’s reaction. This gives all students a way to show understanding, no matter how they prefer to communicate.

Collaborative Teaching

One Teaching, One Observing: For collaborative teaching and learning environments, this learning activity is well suited to a One Teaching, One Observing strategy. In this model, one teacher provides direct instruction to the entire class while the other

observes student behavior and engagement to gather evidence of learning. This approach allows for detailed observation and assessment, helping identify students who need additional support or intervention. By focusing on student responses and participation, the observing teacher can ensure that the learning needs of all students are addressed and met in the activity.

Research shows that targeted observation can lead to more effective intervention strategies, improving student performance.

- **Activity Launch:** Teacher A introduces the learning goal of exploring how digital tools, including AI, shape online content consumption. Teacher B observes student responses to initial prompts, noting engagement levels and identifying students who may need extra framing or examples.
- **Tool Use and Investigation:** Teacher A guides students through selecting and using tools to evaluate the claim, distributing the Evaluating Evidence graphic organizer. While students work in pairs, Teacher B circulates and observes how students use the organizer, interact with tools, and make credibility judgments.
- **Reflection and Discussion:** Teacher A facilitates the class discussion on findings and patterns. Teacher B listens for misconceptions or moments of strong reasoning, noting which students grasp the concept of credible evidence and which may benefit from additional support or modeling.
- **Practice and Application:** During the research challenge and headline-creation activity, Teacher A leads the tasks. Teacher B watches how students apply their evaluation skills, tracking use of evidence, teamwork, and ability to analyze content critically.

- **Wrap-Up:** Teacher A reads anonymous headline pairs for class analysis. Teacher B observes student responses and reasoning, noting which students demonstrate confident media analysis and which may need support interpreting tone, structure, or language choices.

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Activity 4: Using Digital Tools Responsibly



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MINUTES

By the end of the activity, students will be able to identify and apply digital content evaluation strategies, examine how digital tools influence information perception, and create criteria for responsible digital-tool use.

Materials and Resources

MATERIALS

- Whiteboard or display
- Writing utensils

RESOURCES

- 🔗 Britannica Keep It Real strategies (for teacher display)
- 🔗 Learn It! Use It! exit ticket (one per student)
- 🔗 Work the Strategy handout (one per group)

Implementation

Note: Before beginning the activity, explain that today's activity focuses on developing critical thinking skills in our digital world. Clarify that this exploration is about understanding how digital technology can influence what we see, believe, and share rather

than promoting or criticizing specific tools. Emphasize that the goal is to become more informed and careful users of information.

- ① Begin by asking students what they think “using digital tools responsibly” means. Record their responses on the board without judgment. Then explain that during today’s activity they will explore this concept by examining how digital tools such as apps, search engines, AI-powered features, and other technologies that help us find, create, or interact with information can be used in ways that are ethical, informed, and intentional.
- ② Ask students this question: “How do these tools play a role in how we learn, communicate, and understand the world?” Allow students to explore their ideas before explaining that using these tools responsibly means not just knowing what they do but also learning how to stay in control of how we engage with them. Let students know they’ll be discovering strategies to help them think critically, evaluate information, and make informed decisions whenever they use digital tools in school or in everyday life.
- ③ To explore what responsible use of digital tools looks like in practice, present students with a scenario to analyze. Say: “You’re scrolling through social media and come across a post that catches your attention. The person in the image is a well-known celebrity. There’s a quote on the post that seems to be attributed to the celebrity. The quote says, ‘Technology is harmful. It’s time to speak out.’ The post looks polished, with professional formatting and design elements. People are commenting, sharing, and discussing it. But later you find out the quote was generated by AI, as was the image. The celebrity didn’t say anything about technology, good or bad.” Ask students to examine this scenario and consider the following questions:

- *What would make someone believe the post is real?*
- *Would you have paused to question it?*
- *How do you decide what to trust when something looks convincing and spreads quickly?*

- ④ After students share their observations, ask them what they noticed about how digital tools can affect our perception of information. Guide them through questioning to help them recognize that digital tools make it easy to create and share content that looks real even when it isn't, while also making it harder to pause, question, or verify the content being presented. Ask students what they think being responsible with digital tools might require.
- ⑤ Display the **Keep It Real strategies** for the class, and explain that these are five strategies students can use to evaluate digital content so that they can use digital tools responsibly. Call on volunteers to read the strategies aloud. Pause briefly after each one to ask the class what they think it means and how it might be useful. After introducing the first strategy, ask students how they might apply it to evaluate content they encounter online. Keep the conversation grounded and practical to help students connect the strategy to their everyday media experiences.
- ⑥ Divide the class into five groups and assign each one a different strategy from the Keep It Real framework. Keep the strategies projected so that students can reference all five strategies throughout the activity. Distribute a **Work the Strategy handout** to each group, and instruct students to begin by writing down their assigned strategy and explaining what it means in their own words.

- ⑦ Once each group has completed the handout, direct the groups to apply their assigned strategy to the scenario presented in step 3. Students may use the handout as a discussion guide. For example, a group focused on source reliability might consider whether the quote includes any credible attribution, and a group assigned to verifying images might discuss how the visual design of the post affects trust. Instruct students to respond to the prompts, using their strategy to determine how someone could be misled or stay in control when encountering content like this.
- ⑧ Invite one representative from each group to briefly share their findings. As groups present, continue to project the Keep It Real strategies to help the class follow along. Encourage students to observe how each strategy can be applied to different aspects of the same example. Pause after each presentation to ask what connections students notice between the strategies.
- ⑨ Distribute one **Learn It! Use It! exit ticket** to each student and ask them to complete it independently. They should write in complete sentences and include specific examples from the activity to show what they learned and how they plan to apply it. After writing, have students pair up or form small groups to share their responses and add any new insights from their peers using a different-colored pen or pencil. Remind students that reflecting on learning helps them to strengthen their understanding and builds habits for applying these skills in real life.

Differentiation and Variations

Language Support: For students who benefit from additional language support, encourage them to use their home languages when brainstorming or thinking through ideas, then translate key

concepts into English for sharing. Provide sentence starters such as “This strategy helps me ____” and “I notice that this content ____” to help students articulate their observations during presentations. This support allows students to think deeply in their strongest language while building academic English vocabulary around digital-literacy concepts.

Advanced Critical Thinking: As students develop their understanding of evaluation strategies, invite them to investigate deeper questions such, as how different demographic groups might be targeted by misleading content and how emerging AI technologies could make detection more challenging. Students can also analyze how the same misleading post might spread differently across various platforms or communities, adding layers of complexity to their analysis. This extension challenges advanced learners to apply their understanding to broader societal implications and future digital landscapes.

Multiple Expression Pathways: During group presentations and exit ticket reflections, offer multiple ways for students to share their insights beyond verbal responses. Students can create visual representations of their strategy, write their ideas on cards to be read aloud, or use role-play scenarios to demonstrate their understanding of responsible use of digital tools. This flexibility ensures that all students can demonstrate their learning regardless of their preferred communication style or comfort with public speaking.

Collaborative Teaching

Team Teaching: For collaborative teaching and learning environments, this learning activity is well suited to a Team Teaching strategy. In this model, sometimes referred to as “tag team teaching,” both teachers deliver instruction together, often alternating or integrating their teaching styles seamlessly. This collaborative approach provides students with multiple

perspectives and teaching styles, enriching their learning experience. By modeling effective teamwork and communication, this approach demonstrates how different viewpoints can enhance understanding and create a dynamic and interactive classroom environment. Evidence indicates that team teaching can enhance student engagement and provide a richer, more diverse educational experience.

- **Activity Introduction:** Teacher A introduces the concept of using digital tools responsibly while Teacher B captures student responses on the board and adds clarifying questions or real-life examples. Together, they frame the purpose of the activity, modeling curiosity and critical thinking from the start.
- **Scenario Analysis:** Teacher A presents the scenario of the social media post. Teacher B poses reflective questions to the class. Both teachers engage in light back-and-forth commentary to model how to question and evaluate online content. They encourage students to examine how digital tools can affect trust and perception.
- **Strategy Walk-Through:** Teacher A begins walking through the Keep It Real strategies, calling on students to read each one aloud. Teacher B builds on the explanations, offering classroom or real-world examples to illustrate how each strategy might be applied. Both teachers pause for discussion after each strategy, using different approaches to support varied learners.
- **Small-Group Strategy Work:** Teachers circulate together and divide responsibilities: Teacher A checks on understanding of the strategy definitions. Teacher B supports groups in applying the strategy to the scenario presented earlier. Both teachers provide real-time feedback, prompt deeper thinking, and help students draw connections between strategies.
- **Group Presentations:** Teacher A facilitates group presentations while Teacher B helps synthesize class

discussion by recording key takeaways, asking follow-up questions, and connecting strategies across presentations. Together, they highlight how each strategy reveals different dimensions of the same problem.

- **Exit Ticket Reflection:** Teachers co-facilitate the reflection process. Teacher A explains the Learn It! Use It! exit ticket while Teacher B models a sample response. As students write and later share in pairs or groups, both teachers circulate to support thoughtful reflection and highlight strong connections made during the activity.

Activity 5: Future-Proofing Education



>40
MINUTES

By the end of the activity, students will be able to analyze their own learning experiences, generate thoughtful questions about how education might evolve, and evaluate multiple perspectives on the roles of media and technology in shaping future learning environments.

Materials and Resources

MATERIALS

- Whiteboard and display
- Writing utensils

RESOURCES

- 🔗 3-2-1 Reflection exit ticket (one per student)
- 🔗 Question Pyramid graphic organizer (one per student and one for teacher display)

Implementation

Note: Begin by letting students know they'll be exploring different possibilities for how learning might change in the future. Explain that various schools around the world are experimenting with new approaches to education, from technology integration to alternative learning spaces. The goal is to think critically about

how different factors might shape education and what that could mean for learners.

- ① Tell students that during today's activity they will explore what it means to be prepared for the future and how learning plays a role in that process. Ask them to close their eyes and picture a time when they felt engaged while learning—whether reading, watching, building, asking questions, or solving a problem. After a moment of quiet reflection, have them open their eyes and hold on to that image as they begin thinking about the future of learning.
- ② Write the word *future* on the board, and ask students what comes to mind when they think about the future of learning. Distribute a copy of the **Question Pyramid graphic organizer** to each student. Ask them to write "The Future of Learning" in the Topic section of the handout. Then, in the Reflection section, have them write the first three words that come to mind when they think of the future of learning. Let students know they'll use these ideas to guide their thinking as they work through the rest of the pyramid. Ask for a few examples from volunteers to show the range of possible responses, such as words that might reflect tools, environments, or feelings.
- ③ Before students write anything else, display a copy of the Question Pyramid for the class to view. Walk through each section together, beginning at the bottom. Ask students to examine each section and share what they think it's asking them to consider, starting with these questions:
 - **Why:** What motivations, needs, or goals are driving the future of learning?
 - **How:** What methods, tools, or systems might shape how learning happens?

Let students know they'll begin by completing just these two sections. Encourage them to use their earlier reflections and

think openly—there are no “right” answers. Once students understand both sections, have them work independently.

- ④ Before continuing, give students a moment to reflect on what they’ve written in the Why and How sections of their Question Pyramid. Ask them to turn to a partner and share one idea from each section. Encourage them to ask follow-up questions such as these:

- What made you think of that?
- Do you think that’s already starting to happen?
- What are your thoughts on that possibility? Why?

After a few minutes of discussion, invite volunteers to share something interesting they heard or a new idea they had during the conversation. This step helps students process their thinking and consider different perspectives before moving on.

- ⑤ Direct students to the remaining sections of the Question Pyramid: Who, What, When, and Where. These questions help ground their earlier ideas in more specific details. Ask students to review each prompt and share what they think it’s asking:

- **Who:** Who will be involved in future learning?
- **What:** What will be taught, valued, or prioritized?
- **When:** When will learning happen and on what kind of schedule?
- **Where:** Where might learning take place (in person, online, in new environments)?

Give students time to complete these sections independently, using their earlier responses and partner conversations as a

foundation. Encourage them to think creatively and consider multiple possibilities.

- ⑥ Once students have completed all sections of their Question Pyramid graphic organizers, give them time to process and discuss their ideas. Ask students to form small groups of three or four and take turns sharing one response from any part of their pyramid. Encourage them to listen actively and respond with questions such as these:
- What part of that interests you most, and why?
 - Does that connect with anything you wrote?
 - Can you think of an example that supports or challenges that idea?

After discussion, ask each group to share one idea or insight that emerged during their conversation.

- ⑦ To wrap up, invite students to complete the **3-2-1 Reflection exit ticket**. Let them know that this step is a chance to pull together their thinking and reflect on what they've explored. Encourage students to refer back to their Question Pyramid responses and class discussions as they complete the following:
- Three new things I learned about the future of learning
 - Two connections I can make to other ideas, experiences, or topics
 - One question I have about how learning might continue to change

This final step helps students consolidate key ideas and leave with a clear sense of what they've learned and where their thinking might go next.

Differentiation and Variations

Language Support: For students who benefit from additional language support, encourage them to use their home languages when brainstorming ideas about the future of learning before translating key concepts into English when sharing with the class. Provide sentence starters such as “In the future, learning might ___” and “I think education will change because ___” to support oral language development and academic vocabulary. This approach allows students to build on their linguistic strengths while developing confidence in expressing complex ideas in English.

Advanced Critical Thinking: Invite advanced learners to deepen their responses by exploring questions such as “How might emerging technologies affect educational equity?” and “How could cultural values shape different visions of future learning?” Students may also analyze how current trends—such as personalized learning, AI integration, or virtual classrooms—could lead to specific long-term outcomes. These prompts challenge students to connect their ideas to larger social, ethical, and global contexts.

Multiple Expression Pathways: During group discussions and final share-outs, offer flexible options for students to express their thinking. Instead of speaking aloud, students might create a visual timeline of educational change, write and submit their ideas anonymously, or participate in short role-plays that represent their vision of future learning. These varied formats ensure all students can engage meaningfully, regardless of their preferred communication style or comfort with public speaking.

Collaborative Teaching

One Teaching, One Assisting: For collaborative teaching and learning environments, this learning activity is well suited to a One Teaching, One Assisting strategy. In this model, one teacher leads the activity while the other circulates, assisting individual students as needed. This ensures that when students encounter difficulties, they receive immediate help in the form of personalized support and answers to their questions. By addressing students' unique needs and keeping them on track, this approach enhances individual learning experiences and fosters a supportive classroom environment. Studies indicate that immediate feedback and individualized attention can significantly enhance student understanding and retention of material.

- **Guided Visualization and Initial Reflection:** The lead teacher leads the opening visualization and whole-group prompt, guiding students to reflect on past learning experiences and what they imagine for the future. As students write their three words in the Reflection section of the Question Pyramid graphic organizer, the assisting teacher quietly supports those who may need help getting started or thinking concretely.
- **Exploring the Question Pyramid:** The lead teacher walks students through the other sections of the graphic organizer from the bottom up, beginning with the Why and How sections. The assisting teacher checks for understanding and helps students grasp what kind of thinking belongs in each section—especially those two abstract prompts.
- **Independent Completion of Why, How:** While students work independently on the Why and How sections, the lead teacher reminds the class that open-ended thinking is encouraged. The assisting teacher moves around the room to assist students who are stuck, offering scaffolding questions such as “Why might learning need to change?”

and “What’s something new about how you’ve learned recently?”

- **Partner Share on Why, How:** The lead teacher facilitates partner discussions, prompting students to share ideas from the bottom of their pyramids. The assisting teacher visits pairs to encourage deeper responses, suggest follow-up questions, and support language learners or quieter students in contributing.
- **Completing the Rest of the Pyramid:** As students shift to the Who, What, When, and Where sections, the lead teacher gives brief reminders about each. The assisting teacher helps clarify task expectations for students who may mix up categories or need examples to get started.
- **Small-Group Discussions:** The lead teacher prompts students to form small groups and share any ideas from their pyramids. The assisting teacher ensures that all students are participating, helps clarify misconceptions, and supports meaningful connection-making within groups.
- **3-2-1 Reflection Exit Ticket:** The lead teacher introduces the 3-2-1 Reflection exit ticket. As students reflect, the assisting teacher checks in with anyone who’s struggling to recall their ideas or form connections. During group sharing, the assisting teacher helps prompt examples and supports students in articulating final takeaways.