

Media Literacy Activities

1. The First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution guarantees free speech. Free speech is the "right to express any opinion in public without censorship or restraint by the government" (*The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language*). Have students debate whether this means the media can create and distribute anything they choose.
2. Create a display as a group project comparing and contrasting tabloid news vs. regional newspapers (e.g. *National Enquirer* vs. the *NY Times*).
3. Watch a TV news program and keep a log on how many minutes consist of "hard news", "soft news", and advertising.
4. Some say the Internet will save our democracy; some say the Internet will be democracy's demise. Have students take a stand on this debate and write a persuasive paragraph to defend their position.
5. Take a field trip to a local newspaper, TV or radio station to learn more about how deadlines, ownership, ratings, etc. impact decisions about what news will be covered or invite a speaker to class to cover this information.
6. Watch for politically correct, emotionally-charged or "loaded" words in the news. Cut them out or write them down and share them with the class.
7. Write two versions of a short news story about something happening at your school. One version should be a fair unbiased report and the other a slanted report. Share with your class and discuss.
8. Watch a "newsmagazine" TV program. Decide if each segment is news that people "need to know" or news that people "want to know".
9. Select a news story. Compare the local, regional, national, and, if possible the international coverage. Are there differences?
10. Read through a newspaper. Justify the placement of a front-page story or select a story you think should have been placed on the front page. Explain your reasons.
11. Watch a local newscast and select a story that interests you. Go to that channel's website to find the story online. Compare and contrast these news sources.
12. Collect and analyze five editorial cartoons. Pick a current issue and create an original editorial cartoon.