



UNCOVERING MISINFORMATION:

Expression, Propaganda, & Human Rights



WHO WE ARE

Woven Teaching is the **human rights education** practice of Woven Foundation. Through a combination of original programming and grantmaking, Woven Teaching advances the foundation's focus on long term change towards a widespread acceptance of basic human rights for all.

Our programmatic work is dedicated to supporting classroom teachers with practical help for ethical and effective instruction. We believe that by weaving human rights education into the curriculum, educators can create socially responsible global citizens.

Woven Teaching envisions a world in which every student's education includes:

- A sense of historical perspective;
- The development of critical thinking skills;
- A feeling of global citizenship;
- The ability to identify bigotry – understanding its negative effects on both individuals and society – and the analytical tools to combat it.

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Do you have feedback on this lesson or want to share how you implemented it in your classroom? We'd love to hear from you!

Please take our short evaluation at surveymonkey.com/r/wt-eval or scan the QR code to the left.

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CONTENT LEVEL

Ages 14-18 (Grades 9-12)

TIME

Four 55 minute lessons

GUIDING QUESTIONS

- How does freedom of expression bolster human rights? How can it endanger them?
- How does mis- and disinformation violate human rights?
- Why is it important to know how to identify misinformation?

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

At the end of these lessons, students will be able to:

- Understand the connection between free expression and human rights
- Express an opinion related to freedom of expression
- Recognize different forms of misinformation as well as misinformation tactics
- Analyze media to identify propaganda techniques

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, we have seen the serious and far-reaching consequences of misinformation and “fake news”. From false claims about the origins of COVID-19 to conspiracy theories promoted by world leaders, misinformation is amplified by the speed and breadth of the internet and social media. It has the ability to change minds, influence opinions, and in extreme cases, has led to violence. Critical analysis and close reading are important skills for our students. Their ability to recognize misinformation and propaganda is necessary for navigating the torrential and constant flow of information.

This set of four lessons provides teachers with resources to educate students about freedom of expression as a basic human right, misinformation, the role of the media, and propaganda. The goal is to provide opportunities for students to learn about misinformation and to develop skills to critically analyze the media that they consume.



FOCUS ON HUMAN RIGHTS

Woven Teaching believes that **human rights education** is essential for students to understand and assert their own rights and to protect the rights of others. As a result, the **Universal Declaration of Human Rights** (UDHR) lies at the core of Woven Teaching’s materials. The document’s 30 articles outline fundamental human rights: basic rights and freedoms which every human being is entitled to, regardless of the person’s race, religion, birthplace, gender, sexual orientation, or other characteristic. Although its articles are not legally binding, the UDHR serves as the moral compass for the international community.

The activities in *Uncovering Misinformation: Expression, Propaganda, & Human Rights* connect directly to several UDHR articles, including:

- **Article 1:** Right to Equality, Dignity, and Respect
- **Article 2:** Freedom from Discrimination
- **Article 18:** Freedom of Thought, Religion, and Belief
- **Article 19:** Freedom of Opinion and Expression
- **Article 29:** Our Duty to Each Other
- **Article 30:** Human Rights Belong to You

CONSIDERATIONS FOR TEACHING ETHICALLY AND EFFECTIVELY

- Center learning on students.
- Complicate thinking and avoid oversimplification by avoiding stereotypes and asking students to be precise with their language.
- Nurture an environment of non-judgment, openness, and understanding.
- Support students to work critically with source material, particularly on the internet. Recommend authoritative sources with factual, archival content.
- Support students in making connections between historical events and contemporary issues, as well as local and international contexts.
- Students may have very different responses to the lesson and the class discussions. Acknowledge that each of us has biases that inform our beliefs and actions; these biases may be implicit or explicit. When differences arise, address them openly and respectfully with your students.
- Remind students of the ground rules for discussion, including:
 - Using “I” statements and speaking from their own experience.
 - Listening actively and respectfully
 - Emphasize personal agency and responsibility.
 - Promote student activism and action.

LESSON 1: DEMOCRACY & EXPRESSION

55 MINUTES

In this lesson, students will form opinions and develop arguments about freedom of expression as a universal human right.

GUIDING QUESTIONS

- What is freedom of expression and why is it an important element in democratic societies?
- What are the connections between rhetoric and action?
- What are the potential dangers of allowing all ideas and opinions to be expressed? Can free expression lead to violence?

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

At the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

- Express an opinion related to limitations on freedom of expression
- Develop an argument about the importance of freedom of expression

MATERIALS

- Google slideshow
- Large sheets of paper
- RAFT Chart

COMMON CORE STANDARDS

Writing

- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.1
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.4

KEY TERMS

- **bigotry:** intolerance or hatred of certain groups of people; prejudice against those that are viewed as different or “other”
- **democratic:** related to a system of government in which political power belongs to the people
- **expression:** the process of making something known
- **hateful:** full of or expressing hate (often in a way that is bigoted or denigrating rather than expressing a dislike)
- **rhetoric:** language intended to persuade
- **speech:** the expression of thoughts and feelings through spoken sounds
- **United Nations (UN):** an international organization formed in 1945 to promote international peace, security, and cooperation

ACTIVITY ONE: NO LIMITS? 25 MINUTES

In this activity, students will engage in silent debate and consider whether limits should be placed on freedom of expression in order to protect human rights.

1. Preparation: With one header on each side of the board (or on separate, large pieces of paper) write “Limits” and “No Limits”.

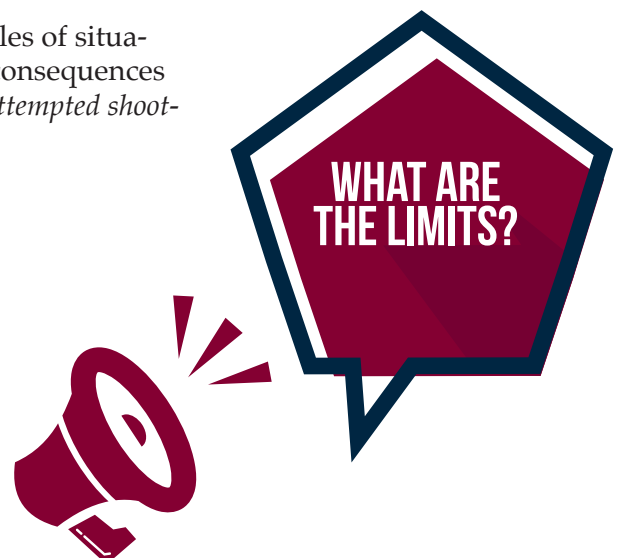
Note: If you have a large number of students, you may wish to create multiple sheets of paper with the same headers.

2. Begin by explaining that freedom of opinion and expression are critical components of democracy. Ask for examples of what this looks like (e.g. a free press, freedom to participate in political protests, etc.) Talk about the tension between freedom of expression and a democracy’s responsibility to protect its citizens, particularly those whose voices are often marginalized.

- What are some of the negative consequences of allowing for freedom of expression?
Possible answers: Misinformation and propaganda are unchecked, racist or dehumanizing language.
- Is this dangerous or acceptable in a democracy?
- Hateful and bigoted words can lead to hateful and bigoted actions. What are some of the possible consequences of letting bigoted rhetoric go unchecked?
Possible answers: Discrimination and, in some cases, violence.
- Who decides what is hateful or what expression should be limited?
Possible answers: Government, media, social media platforms?
- What might be some of the negative consequences of the above groups deciding what expression to limit?

Freedom of expression is codified as essential to human rights. All people have the right to think, believe, and say whatever they want, and everyone has a right to share information. (Students will learn more about this in Lesson 2.)

3. Using the Google slideshow, share a few examples of situations where speech has had violent or extreme consequences (e.g. Rohingya genocide in Myanmar, “Pizzagate” attempted shooting, Twitter ban in Nigeria)



4. Post the following prompt on the board. Explain to students that they will be considering the balance between allowing freedom of expression and protecting individuals and communities. Ask students to write a brief response that will be shared with the class:

Do you believe that there should be limits to freedom of speech/expression in order to protect human rights? Why or why not? What are some examples of expression that could lead to harm or violence?

5. After 5 minutes, ask students to move from their seats and silently summarizing their response on the corresponding sheets, *Limits* or *No Limits*. After they have added their comments on the side of the debate that they agree with, they should review the board / sheet of the opposing side and respond to comments from their classmates. Students should continue going back and forth to respond to classmates' comments for 10 minutes. Circulate as students are doing this to answer questions and clarify.
6. After 10 minutes or after all students have written their own response and responded to at least one classmate's response, ask students to take their seats and review responses as a class. *Were there common themes? Did anyone change their mind over the course of the debate? What are some examples of speech that is protected but also problematic and even, hateful?*

ACTIVITY TWO: ARGUING FOR EXPRESSION 25 MINUTES

Using the **RAFT writing strategy**, students will make an argument about freedom of expression.

1. Ask each student to write an argument about freedom of expression, choosing one option from each column of the **RAFT chart** on the following page to guide their assignment.
2. Set aside a class period (or as much time as needed) for students to present their writing to the class. After each presentation, allow time for students to share something they learned from their classmate's presentation or to ask question



TEACHING TIP

How this assignment is completed is up to the educator. It can be done in class or can be given as homework.

You may wish to assign a certain amount of online research so that students can study their topics in-depth and create better-informed essays. If you decide to include online research, be sure to remind students about the importance of assessing the veracity of online content.

RAFT CHART

ROLE <i>(Could also be Audience)</i>	AUDIENCE <i>(Could also be Role)</i>	FORMAT
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self • Student • Journalist • Member of a small religious community • Lawyer • Activist • Leader of your country • Person whose human rights have been violated • Delegate to the United Nations • Artist 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents or guardians • Friends • Classmates • Community members • Government employees • People living in another country • School officials • Elected officials (politicians) • The United Nations • Readers of a newspaper 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Letter • Speech • Presentation with visual aids • Social media campaign (e.g. Twitter thread or Instagram posts) • Short video • Petition • Journal entry • Comic • Song • Poem • News article
<h2>TOPIC</h2>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why is freedom of expression an important element of democratic societies? • What are some of the potential harmful or dangerous consequences of allowing all opinions and ideas to be expressed? • What would a society look like if everyone was allowed to express their opinions and beliefs? • What are some of the reasons that this issue, freedom of expression, is important to you? What are some of the personal beliefs or experiences that shape your opinion? 		

PROJECT RUBRIC

	4 – EXCEEDS	3 – MEETS	2 – PARTIALLY MEETS	1 – DOES NOT MEET
CONTENT & IDEAS	Project is clearly focused and includes many relevant details.	Project is focused and includes some details.	Project is somewhat focused but includes few details.	Project is off-topic or unfocused. Writer demonstrates little understanding of the assignment.
ORGANIZATION	Project includes an interesting hook/ strong introduction. Information is presented in a logical order. Strong transitions and closing.	Project uses the chosen format correctly. Writing is coherent and includes a beginning, middle, and end.	Writing is loosely organized, but could be structured in a more effective manner.	Writing is disorganized and underdeveloped.
VOICE & POINT OF VIEW	Author has a strong voice and a clear point of view. The project is engaging and tailored to the audience.	Author develops a voice and expresses a point of view. The project is tailored to a specific audience.	Author’s point of view is vague. Project is not tailored to a specific audience.	Author has not developed a point of view. Project is not tailored to a specific audience.
SENTENCE STRUCTURE, GRAMMAR, & MECHANICS	All sentences are well constructed and have varied structure and length. The author (a) makes few errors in grammar, mechanics, and spelling; OR (b) shows immense improvement over their last writing submission.	Most sentences are well constructed and have varied structure and length. The author makes a few errors in grammar, mechanics, and/or spelling, but they do not interfere with understanding; OR (b) shows improvement in mechanics over their last writing submission.	Most sentences are well constructed, but they have a similar structure and/or length. (a) The author makes several errors in grammar, mechanics, and/or spelling that interfere with understanding; OR (b) the author’s writing has not improved mechanically since their last writing submission.	Sentences sound awkward or are difficult to understand. The author makes numerous errors in grammar, mechanics, and/or spelling that interfere with understanding.
COMMENTS				

ACTIVITY THREE: FINAL THOUGHTS *5 MINUTES*

1. Conclude this lesson with a brief discussion. Ask students to reflect on their own opinions and biases. Remind students that all people have biases and prejudices, as we are all shaped by the world around us. Where did they learn these values?
2. Post the following questions and ask students to share their answers to one of the questions.
 - a. What is one thing that you learned today?
 - b. What is one thing from today's lesson you would like to learn more about?
 - c. Do you feel like freedom of expression is an important right for everyone to have? Why or why not?

LESSON 2: INFORMATION, EXPRESSION, & HUMAN RIGHTS

55 MINUTES

In this lesson, students will consider the importance of the rights to freedom of thought, opinion, and expression. They will also debate whether or not it is important to limit these rights.

GUIDING QUESTIONS

- What rights do all humans have in regards to freedom of opinion and expression?
- What is the First Amendment in the U.S. Constitution?

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

At the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

- Describe the origins and content of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights
- Explain the limitations of freedom of expression in the United States

MATERIALS

- [Google slideshow](#) (optional)
- Videos:
 - » [“What are the universal human rights?”](#) (4:47)
 - » [“The First Amendment Explained”](#) (2:50)
- Student Handouts
 - » UDHR – Student Version [[Handout 2A](#)]
 - » Key Terms [[Handout 2B](#)]
 - » What are Human Rights? [[Handout 2C](#)]
 - » Supreme Court Graphic Organizer [[Handout 2D](#)]
 - » U.S. Supreme Court Cases [[Handout 2E](#)]

COMMON CORE STANDARDS

Speaking & Listening

- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-10.1

Reading

- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.9-10.1

PREPARATION BEFORE THE LESSON:

Briefly explain that the Universal Declaration of Human Rights is a United Nations document outlining 30 rights that all people should have. For homework, instruct students to read the Universal Declaration of Human Rights ([Handout 2A](#), pg. 16), marking any articles they find interesting or surprising. Students should come to class with a few thoughts or questions about the articles.

ACTIVITY ONE: WHAT ARE HUMAN RIGHTS? 20 MINUTES

In this activity, students will learn about the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, an aspirational document that serves as the moral compass of the international community.

- A. Distribute the key terms sheet for this lesson ([Handout 2B, pg. 17](#)). Ask students to break into pairs and write down the definitions for the words related to the UDHR. After 5 minutes, bring the class back together to briefly review and clarify key terms and answer any questions students have about the UDHR.

KEY TERMS

Universal Declaration of Human Rights

- **conscience:** a person's ethics and values; a person's inner thoughts or feelings that distinguish between right and wrong
- **inalienable:** unable to be revoked or taken away
- **indivisible:** unable to be separated
- **interdependent:** dependent on each other
- **universal:** applicable to all people

First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution

- **defamation:** the act of harming someone's reputation
- **ideology:** a set of beliefs or a system of ideas
- **incitement:** the act of encouraging violent or illegal activity
- **obscenity:** the state or quality of being extremely offensive
- **true threats:** statements meant to intimidate someone into believing that they will be seriously harmed

- B. Ask students to write a short response to the following prompt:

A right is a moral or legal entitlement to have something or act in a certain way. Why is it important for people to have rights? What are two rights that you think every human should have, and why?

Note: These rights do not have to already be included in the UDHR.

After 5 minutes, ask a few students to share their ideas with the class. Record their answers on the board.

- C. Before watching the video below, explain that human rights are rights which all people have, without exception, just for being human. They are inalienable, indivisible, interdependent, and universal.
- D. Watch "[What are the universal human rights?](#)" (4:47).*



TEACHING TIP

If your classroom is not equipped with technology or you are implementing this lesson in a distance learning plan with limited technology, students can read "What are Human Rights?" ([Handout 2C](#)) in place of viewing the short film.

- E. Ask students to review Articles 18, 19, and 30 from the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (see [pg. 16](#)), then discuss the following questions as a class:
- Do you think that people should have the right to believe and say whatever they want? Who decides what thoughts or ideas are off-limits?
 - Given these rights to freedom of thought and expression, do you believe that social media platforms have the right to censor what people post?
 - What happens when one person's right to expression conflicts with the rights of someone else in the community? Can you think of an example of this?
Example: Someone makes violent threats against a certain group of people (a person's freedom of expression potentially violates members of the groups' right to safety)

UDHR ARTICLE 18

Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change [their] religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest [their] religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance.

UDHR ARTICLE 19

Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.

UDHR ARTICLE 30

Nothing in this Declaration may be interpreted as implying for any State, group or person any right to engage in any activity or to perform any act aimed at the destruction of any of the rights and freedoms set forth herein.

ACTIVITY TWO: FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION IN THE UNITED STATES *30 MINUTES*

In this activity, students will consider the limitations of the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution.

- A. On the same Key Terms sheet as the previous activity ([Handout 2B, pg. 17](#)), ask students to break into pairs and write down the definitions for the words related to the First Amendment. After 5-10 minutes, bring the class back together to briefly review and clarify key terms.
- B. Explain that in the United States, laws are dictated by the U.S. Constitution and not the UDHR. The First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution establishes the right of freedom of expression and speech in the United States. The First Amendment states that:

Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.

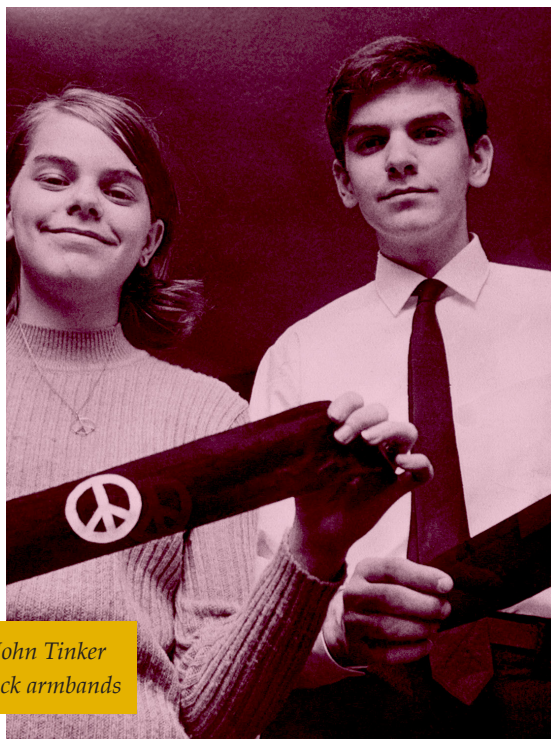
- C. Ask students to spend 2 minutes paraphrasing the First Amendment in plain language. For example, what actions and activities are protected by the First Amendment? Who or what does the First Amendment protect Americans against? What types of speech are not protected by the Amendment? Why are these forms of speech (defamation, obscenity, threats) not protected?

Explain that these are very complicated issues and that the court system in the U.S. continues to grapple with what types of expression are allowed and what types are limited. The First Amendment is about protecting the speaker/author from government interference. Also, just because speech might be protected under the First Amendment does not mean that it is without consequence. (As the video below will explain, an employee might be fired for writing insulting things about their boss, for example.)

- D. Watch “[The First Amendment Explained](#)” (2:50) and check for understanding.
- E. Distribute one Supreme Court graphic organizer ([Handout 2D, pg. 20](#)) and U.S. Supreme Court Cases handout ([Handout 2E, pg. 21](#)) to each student. Explain that the class will be examining real (simplified) cases from the U.S. Supreme Court related to students’ freedom of expression. All of the cases pertain to limiting expression in public schools. Because public schools are funded and led by government officials, they are classified as government institutions.

Note: Case studies are also available as via [Google Docs](#).

- F. As a class, read Case #1 and complete the graphic organizer together. When finished, invite students to find two other classmates and complete their graphic organizers as a team with the remaining case studies.
- G. When all students have completed their organizers, bring the class together and reveal the Court’s decision in each case. Allow a few minutes for student reflection and questions.
- *Did any cases stump students?*
 - *Do they disagree with any of the rulings? If yes, why?*
 - *Should the State get to decide what is obscene, hateful, or off-limits? If not the State, then who?*



Mary Beth and John Tinker holding their black armbands

FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION IN THE UNITED STATES – ANSWER KEY

Case #1: West Virginia State Board of Education v. Barnette (1943)

The Supreme Court made a 6-3 decision in favor of the Barnett children. Their refusal to salute or recite the Pledge of Allegiance is protected under the First Amendment. Schools cannot force students to share an opinion on any topic.

Case #2: Tinker v. Des Moines Independent Community School District (1969)

The Supreme Court made a 7-2 decision in favor of the students. According to the court, their symbolic protest (wearing of armbands) is protected under the First Amendment. The court found that this type of protest is protected because it does not “substantially interfere” with school operations.

Case #3: Hazelwood School District v. Kuhlmeier (1988)

The Supreme Court made a 5-3 decision in favor of the school district. According to the court, the refusal to print the articles is not a violation of the First Amendment. The court found that schools are not required to promote all types of student speech, and schools retain the right to sponsor speech that is “inconsistent with the shared values of a civilized order.”

Case #4: Morse v. Frederick (2007)

The Supreme Court made a 5-4 decision in favor of the principal and school district. According to the court, the school did not violate Frederick’s First Amendment rights. The court found that although students have some right to free speech at school, schools may prohibit students from displaying messages promoting illegal drug use.

ACTIVITY THREE: FINAL THOUGHTS 5 MINUTES

Conclude this lesson with a brief discussion about Holocaust denial, an example highlighting the tension between protecting free speech and expression while also protecting all people. Ask students to reflect on the following prompt:

The Holocaust was the state-sponsored murder of six million Jews and five million others by Nazi Germany and its allies during World War II. Today, speech that denies the Holocaust or demonstrates support for Nazism is illegal in more than 20 European countries.

Do you agree that governments should be allowed to ban speech and expression that promotes bigotry or a hateful ideology? Why or why not? What about the United States? Do you think Holocaust denial should be prohibited?

UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS

STUDENT VERSION

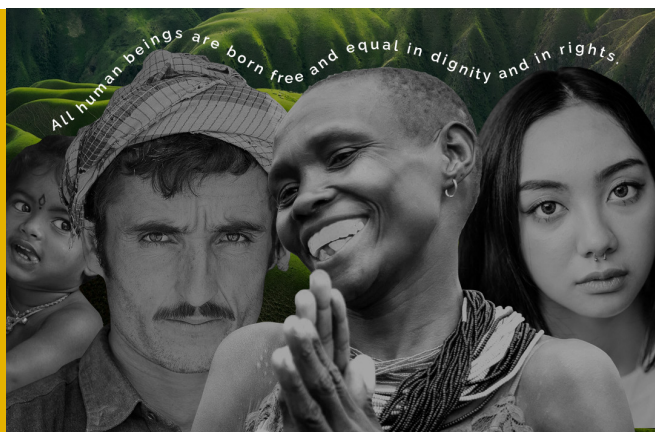
1 All human beings are born equal in dignity and in rights.	2 These rights belong to everyone . You should never be discriminated against.	3 You have the right to life, liberty, and safety .
4 No one can hold you in slavery .	5 No one can torture you or treat you in a cruel or degrading way.	6 Everyone has rights , no matter where they are.
7 Laws should be applied the same way for everyone.	8 You have the right to seek legal help if your rights are not respected.	9 You cannot be imprisoned or thrown out of a country without a good reason.
10 You have the right to a public trial .	11 You should be presumed innocent until proven guilty .	12 You have a right to privacy . No one can enter your home, read your mail, or bother you without good reason.
13 You have the right to move and travel within your country and internationally.	14 You have the right to seek protection from another country (asylum) if your country treats you poorly.	15 You have the right to be a citizen of a country (have a nationality).
16 Every adult has the right to get married and have a family .	17 You have the right to own property .	18 You have the right to practice any religion .
19 You have the right to express your opinion .	20 You have the right to gather with others and protest publicly .	21 You have the right to participate in the government of your country (e.g. vote).
22 You have the right to have your basic needs met (e.g. through social security programs).	23 You have the right to work, to receive equal pay for equal work, and to join a union .	24 You have the right to rest from work.
25 You have the right to an adequate standard of living , including housing, food, and medical care.	26 You have the right to an education .	27 No one can stop you from participating in your community's cultural life .
28 Everyone must respect the social order that allows these rights to exist.	29 Everyone must respect the rights of others .	30 No one can take any of the rights in this declaration away from you.

UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS

conscience	
inalienable	
indivisible	
interdependent	
universal	

FIRST AMENDMENT TO THE U.S. CONSTITUTION

defamation	
ideology	
incitement	
obscenity	
true threats	



WHAT ARE HUMAN RIGHTS?

WHAT IS A RIGHT?

A right is an entitlement to do something or to be protected from something. Rights are different than privileges, which are special benefits granted to a specific person or group of people.

WHAT ARE HUMAN RIGHTS?

Human rights are basic rights and freedoms which every single human being is entitled to, regardless of their race, religion, birthplace, gender, sexual orientation, or other characteristic. This means that they are universal – rights apply to everyone. Human rights are also inalienable, meaning that they cannot be taken away.

THE UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS

Throughout history, different cultures have developed ideas about justice and human rights, but it was not until 1948 that these ideas were adopted by the international community.

In the wake of World War II and the Holocaust, the international community struggled to figure out how it could prevent such atrocities from happening again. At the end of the war, a new organization, the United Nations, gathered experts from around the world to draft a document outlining the basic human rights.

Adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1948, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) contains 30 articles. Its core principle is that all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. The document contains positive freedoms (the freedom to do something, such as the freedom to get married) and negative freedoms (the right to be free from something, such as the right to be free from slavery or servitude). The document contains both civil/political rights and social, economic, and cultural rights.

CIVIL & POLITICAL

Civil and political rights restrict the government from interfering with an individual or their freedom. Examples:

- Freedom of speech
- Right to a fair trial

SOCIAL, ECONOMIC, CULTURAL

Social, economic, and cultural rights require the government to provide support or protections. Examples:

- Right to education
- Right to medical care



The UDHR does not claim that one type of right is more important than the other. Instead, it says that all rights are interdependent and that one type of right cannot exist without the other.

CRITICISM OF THE UDHR

Since 1948, people around the world have continuously used the Universal Declaration of Human Rights as a tool to create a more equitable and peaceful world; however, the UDHR has also been the subject of a great deal of criticism. Some critiques include:

- Although it laid the foundation for modern human rights law, the UDHR itself is not legally binding. Human rights laws do exist, but they are extremely difficult to enforce and do not always prevent human rights abuses. While the United Nations monitors and investigates human rights abuses, it cannot force a government to change its policies.
- The document was written under the leadership of the United States at the beginning of the Cold War. As a result, critics argue that it is biased toward Western values and ignores cultural differences that exist between societies.
- The UDHR privileges the rights of the individual over collectives such as tribes, communities, or religious groups. This focus on the individual is in and of itself a reflection of Western values. By definition, genocide is the mass killing of people with certain characteristics or identities, so by not focusing on group rights, critics argue that the UDHR does not help to prevent this type of violence in the future.

Even with these limitations, the UDHR was an important step in outlining the rights of each person around the globe. It was the first document of its kind and continues to guide international law and values. At its core is the belief in the inherent dignity of each individual and the prevention of discrimination.

The UDHR has been translated into 500 languages and in 1999 became the most translated document in history.

Case	Year	Form of Expression <i>(Speech, symbol, etc.)</i>	How did the school try to limit the student expression?	How do you think the U.S. Supreme Court should have ruled?
West Virginia State Board of Education v. Barnette				
Tinker v. Des Moines Independent Community School District				
Hazelwood School District v. Kuhlmeier				
Morse v. Frederick				

Case # 1: West Virginia State Board of Education v. Barnette (1943)*

In 1942, the West Virginia Board of Education adopted a regulation that required all students to salute the American flag and recite the Pledge of Allegiance (a brief political declaration that students recite daily to express their allegiance to the flag and the U.S. Government).

Jehovah's Witnesses are forbidden from saluting or pledging allegiance to symbols. After the 1942 resolution was passed, Marie and Gathie Barnett, two students who were Jehovah's Witnesses, were expelled from their school for refusing to salute and recite the pledge. Their parents also faced prosecution for "juvenile delinquency," meaning that they could be punished because their children were not attending school.

The Barnett family brought a case against the West Virginia Board of Education, arguing that the First Amendment protects students from being forced to salute the flag or say the Pledge of Allegiance in public schools.

**Note: The family's last name was cited incorrectly in court documents. Although official documents use the name "Barnette," the correct spelling of the family's name is "Barnett."*

Case # 2: Tinker v. Des Moines Independent Community School District (1969)

In 1965, five students in Des Moines, Iowa—including four members of the Tinker family—decided to wear black armbands to school to protest against the war in Vietnam. School administrators learned about the students' plan ahead of time and announced that students who wore an armband to school would be asked to remove it. If any student refused, they would be suspended.

The students decided to defy the administration and wore armbands to school. Three of them were suspended. The Tinker family brought a case against the Des Moines Independent School District arguing that the students' expression (wearing an armband) did not disrupt school activities and should be allowed.

Case # 3: Hazelwood School District v. Kuhlmeier (1988)

In 1983, the principal of Hazelwood East High School in Missouri refused to publish two articles in *The Spectrum*, a student newspaper that was published as part of a journalism class. The articles in question were about teen pregnancy and divorce. The principal removed the two stories without telling students about his decision; the students found out their stories had been removed after the paper had already been delivered to readers.

The editor of *The Spectrum* and the two reporters brought a case against the school district, arguing that their First Amendment rights had been violated when their school principal refused to publish their articles.

Case # 4: Morse v. Frederick (2007)

In 2002, the students of Juneau-Douglas High School in Alaska were allowed to leave class to watch the Olympic torch relay as it passed by the school. This torch relay was being covered by members of the local press. As the torch passed by and TV cameras were rolling, Joseph Frederick, a student, displayed a banner across the street from the school. The banner read, "Bong Hits 4 Jesus." Frederick was suspended. The school claimed that his banner violated the school's anti-drug policy.

Frederick brought a case against the principal of the school and the school board, stating that they violated his rights to free speech.

LESSON 3: MISINFORMATION AND THE MEDIA

55 MINUTES

In this session, students will practice reading critically and learn to identify types of misinformation.

GUIDING QUESTIONS

- Why is identifying and countering misinformation important?
- What is an individual's role in the spread of misinformation?
- What are some clues that a news story or a social media post might contain misinformation?

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

At the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

- Identify five types of misinformation
- Analyze news and social media critically
- Verify information and news

MATERIALS

- [Google slideshow](#) (optional)
- Student Handouts
 - » [Bigfoot?! \[Handout 3A\]](#)
 - » [Tweeting Disinformation \[Handout 3B\]](#)

COMMON CORE STANDARDS

Writing

- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.4
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.9

Reading

- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.9-10.6

ACTIVITY ONE: WHAT'S MY ROLE? 10 MINUTES

In this activity, students will consider their own role in the spread of mis- and disinformation.

A. Begin by sharing the following definitions from the [News Literacy Project](#) with the class:

misinformation: information that is misleading, erroneous or false. Misinformation is generally shared — and sometimes created — by people who are unaware that it's inaccurate. This is the best term to use when the intent of the creator or sharer is unknown.

disinformation: a subset of misinformation that is deliberately created or shared with the intention to misinform and mislead others, usually to achieve a desired ideological, political or financial result

B. Ask students to spend 5 minutes reflecting on any of the following questions and writing in their journals:

1. Have you ever unknowingly shared misinformation and later found out it was not true? If so, did you do anything to correct the misinformation?
2. What steps can you take to find out if something you see online is true?
3. What role does the average person have in stopping the spread of misinformation?
4. How does the spread of mis- and disinformation violate human rights?

C. After 5 minutes, come back together and ask for a few volunteers to share their reflections.



ACTIVITY TWO: TYPES OF MISINFORMATION 35 MINUTES

In this activity, students will learn to tell the difference between different types of misinformation.

1. As a class, review the definitions of the five types of misinformation (see below). Keep definitions on display for the duration of the activity.
2. Distribute one copy of both the Bigfoot?! ([Handout 3A, pg. 26](#)) and the Tweeting Disinformation handouts ([Handout 3B, pg. 28](#)) to each student.

Note: Handouts are also available via [Google Docs](#).

3. Instruct students to find a partner. Each pair should work together to complete the Bigfoot handout.
4. After 15 minutes have passed or students have completed the Bigfoot handout, review briefly as a class and check for understanding.
5. Working individually, ask students to choose a topic and create a disinformation tweet campaign on the Tweeting Disinformation handout. Remind students that the content of all campaigns must be respectful. To prevent students from creating campaigns which are disrespectful or bigoted, you may wish to suggest some fairly neutral topics. For example:
 - A celebrity endorses a presidential candidate
 - Scientist discovers the secret to eternal life
 - Mt. Rushmore tagged (spraypainted) with giant smiley face
 - Major grocery store chain sells cheese made from gorilla milk
6. During the next class session or in an online forum (e.g. Google Classroom), ask students to share their campaigns with the class. Students should comment on other students' campaigns, offering feedback or adding questions.

FIVE TYPES OF MISINFORMATION

1. **fabrication:** content which is entirely false
2. **false context:** content (such as a photo or quote) which is placed in a new, false context
3. **imposter content:** content which leads people to believe—falsely—that it comes from a well-known person, brand, or other source
4. **manipulated content:** content that has been altered in an effort to deceive
5. **satire:** the use of humor or exaggeration to make fun of something, particularly politics or society

TYPES OF MISINFORMATION (BIGFOOT?!) – ANSWER KEY

7-Eleven: We spoke with our employees. We checked the cameras. The rumors are true! Bigfoot’s favorite convenience store is 7-11.	imposter content
The Onion: Bigfoot’s favorite snacks are blue raspberry Slurpees, children says local man with known history of hallucinations	satire
Devin Brown: I KNEW HE WAS REAL! Bigfoot print found in woods leading to 7-11	false context
No Lies, All Truth News: BREAKING! Local man meets, shakes hands with Bigfoot in local convenience store	fabrication
Taylor Marsh: y’all say this isn’t real but there’s evidence stop believing what big government tells you bigfoot is real #IKnowWhatISaw #Bigfoot #OpenUrEyes	manipulated content

ACTIVITY THREE: FINAL THOUGHTS 5 MINUTES

Conclude this lesson with a brief discussion. Share the following questions and ask students to share one of their answers:

- What is one thing you enjoyed about today’s lesson?
- After this lesson, do you feel more equipped to spot misinformation in the news or on social media? Why or why not?
- What is one question you have after today’s lesson?

BIGFOOT?!

Bigfoot, also known as Sasquatch, is an ape-like creature said to roam the woods of North America. Each of the tweets below about a Bigfoot sighting at a 7-Eleven contains a type of misinformation. Match each tweet to the type of misinformation and provide evidence to back up your claim.

Types of misinformation:

fabrication

false context

imposter content

manipulated content

satire



This is an example of _____

I know this because:



This is an example of _____

I know this because:



This is an example of _____

I know this because:



This is an example of _____

I know this because:



This is an example of _____

I know this because:

TWEETING DISINFORMATION

Create a Twitter campaign using each of the following types of misinformation. Tweets should be no more than 280 characters (40-70 words).

fabrication	
false context	
imposter content	
manipulated content	
satire	

LESSON 4: DECODING PROPAGANDA

55 MINUTES

In this lesson, students will learn about propaganda and common propaganda techniques.

GUIDING QUESTIONS

- What is propaganda?
- How is propaganda used to persuade?

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

At the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

- Explain the purpose of propaganda
- Analyze visual media for propaganda techniques

MATERIALS

- [Google slideshow](#) (optional)
- [Propaganda images](#) (printed or digital)
- Student Handouts
 - » [Propaganda Techniques \[Handout 4A\]](#)
 - » [Decoding Propaganda \[Handout 4B\]](#)

COMMON CORE STANDARDS

Speaking & Listening

- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-10.1
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-10.4

Reading

- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.9-10.1

ACTIVITY ONE: WHAT IS PROPAGANDA? 20 MINUTES

In this activity, students will define 'propaganda' and learn about various propaganda techniques.

- A. Begin by asking students to respond to the following question in their journals: "What is propaganda?"
- B. After 1 minute, ask a few volunteers to share their ideas. Then, share the definition of propaganda: *Propaganda is information, ideas, or opinions spread with the purpose of influencing beliefs, attitudes, or actions.*
- C. Explain that propaganda can be either used for positive or negative purposes, but its aim is always to influence. There are many different propaganda techniques and they will examine a few of them today.
- D. Using Google Slides, briefly review the descriptions of propaganda techniques.
- E. Distribute the Propaganda Techniques worksheet ([Handout 4A, pg. 33](#)). Instruct students to match each propaganda technique to its definition. Time permitting, students should also add an example of this type of propaganda.

Note: Handout is also available digitally via [Google Docs](#).

- F. Review answers as a class.

PROPAGANDA TECHNIQUES

- **emotional appeal:** stirring emotion to persuade the audience to do something (e.g. a politician claims that crime increases when immigrants move into a neighborhood)
- **euphemism:** a mild word or phrase to avoid saying something unpleasant or offensive (e.g. "passed away" instead of "died," "correctional facility" instead of "prison," etc.)
- **extrapolation:** making predictions about the future based on very little evidence in the present (e.g. "If Washington outlaws AR-15s, soon the government will take away all of our guns.")
- **name-calling:** connecting a person or idea to something widely considered to be negative (e.g. treehugger, racist, etc.)
- **simplification:** presenting a simple answer of a complex question (e.g. myth that COVID-19 was created in a lab)
- **testimonial:** a widely respected person claiming that something is good or bad (e.g. a top athlete in a footwear advertisement)

ACTIVITY TWO: DECODING PROPAGANDA 25 MINUTES

In this activity, students will examine real images (advertisements, election posters, etc.) to identify what propaganda technique(s) are used.

- A. Distribute one Decoding Propaganda handout ([Handout 4B, pg. 34](#)) to each student. Divide students into six groups and ask each group to gather at a different spot in the room.



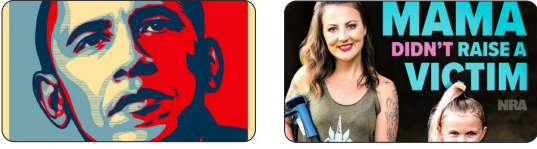



Note: Handout is also available digitally via [Google Docs](#).

- B. Distribute one set of propaganda examples ([pg. 35](#)) to each group.
- C. Explain that students will have 2 minutes to examine two examples of propaganda and decide which technique is used in both. They should write the technique used on the Decoding Propaganda handout, as well as any evidence to support their conclusion. After 2 minutes, each group will pass their examples to another group and the process repeats.

Note: While some pieces of propaganda may use more than one technique, there is one technique that is present in both pieces of each set.

- D. When groups have reviewed each propaganda set, come together and debrief as a class. *How easy or difficult was it to identify the propaganda techniques used? Where else have you seen these techniques used? Do you see these techniques on social media?*

DECODING PROPAGANDA – ANSWER KEY

Image Set 1	<p>extrapolation</p> 	Image Set 4	<p>simplification</p> 
Image Set 2	<p>emotional appeal</p> 	Image Set 5	<p>euphemism</p> 
Image Set 3	<p>testimonial</p> 	Image Set 6	<p>name-calling</p> 

DECODING PROPAGANDA: IMAGE SET 1



Cover of a comic book designed to teach Americans about “the subversive nature of Communist infiltration”

Source: Catholic Catechetical Guild Educational Society, 1947



Political advertisement by anti-Communist super PAC

Source: Stand Against Communism PAC, date unknown

DECODING PROPAGANDA: IMAGE SET 2



Street poster of then-presidential candidate Barack Obama

Source: Shepard Fairey / OBEY, 2008



Mother's Day tweet by the National Rifle Association

Source: National Rifle Association, 2021

DECODING PROPAGANDA: IMAGE SET 3



Ad for Flat Tummy Tea by Kim Kardashian

Source: Kim Kardashian on Instagram, 2019



Cigarette advertisement featuring Ronald Reagan

Source: Chesterfield Cigarette, 1948

DECODING PROPAGANDA: IMAGE SET 4



Person wearing a “Make America Great Again” hat at a rally for then-presidential candidate Donald Trump

Source: Keith Bedford / *The Boston Globe*, 2016



Awareness campaign about electricity usage

Source: National Resources Defense Council, 2007

DECODING PROPAGANDA: IMAGE SET 5



Brand spankin' new-ish.

After rigorous inspections only the most pristine vehicles are chosen. That's why we offer a warranty for up to 6 years or 100,000 miles.* In fact, a Certified Pre-Owned BMW looks so good and performs so well it's hard to believe it's pre-owned. But it is, we swear. bmwusa.com/cpo

Certified by BMW Trained Technicians / BMW Warranty / BMW Leasing and Financing / BMW Roadside Assistance†

*Protection Plan provides coverage for two years or 50,000 miles (whichever comes first) from the date of the expiration of the 4-year/50,000-mile BMW New Vehicle Limited Warranty. †Roadside Assistance provides coverage for two years (unlimited miles) from the date of the expiration of the 4-year/unlimited-mile New Vehicle Roadside Assistance Plan. See participating BMW center for details and vehicle availability. For more information, call 1-800-334-4BMW or visit bmwusa.com. ©2007 BMW of North America, LLC. The BMW name and logo are registered trademarks.

Certified Pre-Owned
BMW
bmwusa.com/cpo
1-800-334-4BMW



The Ultimate
Driving Machine

Certified Pre-Owned
by BMW

Pre-Owned. We Swear.

Used car advertisement

Source: BMW, 2007



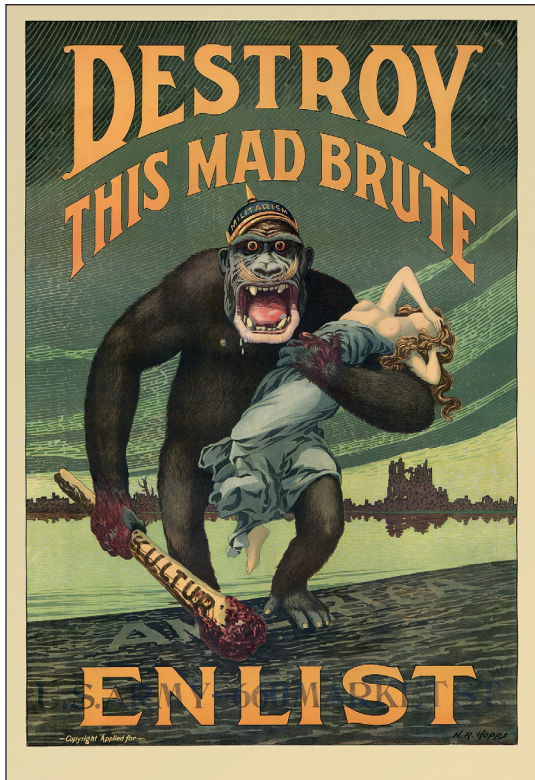
NO BLOOD SHOULD HOLD US BACK

LIVE FEARLESS 

Advertisement for
menstrual products

Source: Bodyform,
2016

DECODING PROPAGANDA: IMAGE SET 6



World War I-era poster urging men to enlist for the army

Source: U.S. Army, 1917



Anti-smoking campaign poster

Source: Chennai Plastic Surgery, 2022

ACTIVITY THREE: FINAL THOUGHTS *5 MINUTES*

Conclude this lesson with a brief discussion. Share the following questions and ask students to share one of their answers:

- What is one thing that you learned today?
- How often do you see these propaganda techniques used on social media?
- How confident do you feel in your ability to spot propaganda and why?

EXTENSION ACTIVITY

Students will conduct research about a propaganda technique that was not included in this lesson and share their findings with their peers.

- A. Instruct students to pick one of the propaganda techniques below.
- B. Ask students to research the propaganda technique and create a poster with:
 1. An explanation of the technique
 2. Two examples of the technique in real world materials (e.g. advertisements, memes, etc.). Examples may be historical or contemporary.
- C. Present findings and posters to the class and/or display in the classroom.

PROPAGANDA TECHNIQUES

appeal to authority
artificial dichotomy
bandwagon

card-stacking
cherry picking
demonization

glittering generalization
plain folks
transfer

PROPAGANDA TECHNIQUES DEFINED

- **appeal to authority:** invoking a “higher authority” as evidence that claim is true or trustworthy (e.g. a famous athlete claims that they eat a certain cereal for breakfast)
- **artificial dichotomy:** convincing an audience that there are only two choices and no middle ground (e.g. a politician that if you are not “with us” you are “with the terrorists”)
- **bandwagon:** convincing an audience that “everyone is doing it” so they should too (e.g. an advertisement claims that a product is “America’s favorite”)
- **card-stacking:** highlighting only the positive aspects of something and ignoring the negative aspects (e.g. an movie trailer that includes only positive comments from reviewers)
- **cherry picking:** using only select data or evidence to support a claim, but omitting data/evidence that does not support their claim (e.g. a pharmaceutical company claims that their medicine cures an illness, but fails to disclose that the illness was cured in only a small percentage of patients)
- **demonization:** depicting someone or something as bad or evil (e.g. a news anchor states that people immigrate to the U.S. to “steal jobs”)
- **glittering generalization:** employing vague words or phrases to evoke positive feelings in the intended audience (e.g. a politician uses words like “democracy,” “patriotism,” and or “hope”)
- **plain folks:** attempting to convince an audience that the writer or speaker is a “regular person” or “like the common man” (e.g. a wealthy political candidate says that they are the voice of the middle class)
- **transfer:** transferring positive or negative qualities of one thing onto another in order to make the second thing more acceptable or to discredit it (e.g. an advertisement featuring a dentist saying that they trust a certain brand of toothpaste)

PROPAGANDA TECHNIQUES

Match the propaganda technique to its definition. If time permits, add an example of each type of propaganda.

Techniques:

emotional appeal euphemism extrapolation name-calling simplification testimonial

TECHNIQUE	DEFINITION
	presenting a simple answer of a complex question
	Example:
	a mild word or phrase to avoid saying something unpleasant or offensive
	Example:
	a widely respected person claiming that something is good or bad
	Example:
	making predictions about the future based on very little evidence in the present
	Example:
	stirring emotion to persuade the audience to do something
	Example:
	connecting a person or idea to something widely considered to be negative
	Example:

DECODING PROPAGANDA

You will have 2 minutes to examine each set of images and decide which propaganda technique is used in both. On the chart below, write the propaganda technique, as well as any evidence to support your conclusion. Repeat with each set of images.

Note: While some pieces of propaganda may use more than one technique, there is one technique that is present in both images of each set.

Techniques:

emotional appeal euphemism extrapolation name-calling simplification testimonial

	TECHNIQUE	EVIDENCE
IMAGE SET 1		
IMAGE SET 2		
IMAGE SET 3		
IMAGE SET 4		
IMAGE SET 5		
IMAGE SET 6		

RESOURCES

Building Resilience & Confronting Risk: A Parents & Caregivers Guide to Online Youth Radicalization – Educators’ Supplement

Southern Poverty Law Center

splcenter.org/peril-educators

A comprehensive guide to preventing youth online radicalization from Southern Poverty Law Center and the Polarization and Extremism Research and Innovation Lab

Checkology

News Literacy Project

get.checkology.org

A free e-learning platform for teaching learners how to identify misinformation and develop critical thinking skills

Conspiracy Chart

Abbie Richards, Design by Pieter-Jan Brouwers

conspiracychart.com

An interactive chart detailing conspiracies along a spectrum from “grounded in reality” to “the antisemitic point of no return”

Fact Finder: Your Foolproof Guide to Media Literacy

Newseum

newseumed.org/fact-finder-guide

A collection of resources for teaching about bias and reporting

Mini Media Literacy Library

iCivics

icivics.org/curriculum/media-literacy-library

A collection of mini lessons that combine civic content with media literacy

News and Media Literacy Collection

PBS Learning Media

pbslearningmedia.org/collection/newsandmedialiteracy/t/fake-news

A collection of resources for teaching about misinformation, disinformation, and fake news

Universal Declaration of Human Rights

United Nations

un.org/en/about-us/universal-declaration-of-human-rights

This webpage contains the full text version of the UDHR, an illustrated version, and links to pages about the history and drafters of the declaration.