Unit 3: Digital Literacy

Content Area: **Social Studies**
Course(s):
Time Period: **Trimester 1**
Length: **4 weeks**
Status: **Published**

Summary

The civics course prompts students to examine the fundamentals of our democratic republic, including institutions, founding documents, essential rights, and civic responsibilities. Students explore how they can become more civically engaged in different capacities and during different phases of their life. Problem-based learning is a hallmark of the course where students are encouraged to explore issues currently affecting the communities they operate in and how they might solve or address them. Students leave the course with greater civic competence needed to be a productive and proud citizen in their local, national, and global communities.

This unit is part of the larger aforementioned course sequence and specifically focuses on Digital Literacy where students will understand that gathering and evaluating knowledge and information from a variety of sources, including global perspectives, fosters creativity and innovative thinking. Nevertheless, while social media companies continue to make efforts to ensure that news stories shared on their platforms are verified and accurate, false information can still be spread online, and it is each citizen's responsibility to accurately source information. By the end of this unit, students will be able to identify and explain how bias is seen in the media, differentiate between credible and non-credible information online, and explain the significance of maintaining a positive digital footprint. Students will engage in their own investigations of media and the dissemination of information to evaluate credibility, utilize critical thinking skills to analyze forms of persuasion in the media, and create original arguments with claims, evidence, and analysis based on their findings throughout this unit.

Revision Date: August 2023

Standards

9.4.8.DC.4: Explain how information shared digitally is public and can be searched, copied, and potentially seen by public audiences.

9.4.8.DC.5: Manage digital identity and practice positive online behavior to avoid inappropriate forms of self-disclosure.

9.4.8.DC.6: Analyze online information to distinguish whether it is helpful or harmful to reputation.

9.4.8.IML.1: Critically curate multiple resources to assess the credibility of sources when searching for

information.

9.4.8.IML.2: Identify specific examples of distortion, exaggeration, or misrepresentation of information.

9.4.8.IML.9: Distinguish between ethical and unethical uses of information and media (e.g., 1.5.8.CR3b, 8.2.8.EC.2).

9.4.8.IML.10: Examine the consequences of the uses of media (e.g., RI.8.7).

9.4.8.IML.11: Predict the personal and community impact of online and social media activities.

9.4.8.IML.13: Identify the impact of the creator on the content, production, and delivery of information (e.g., 8.2.8.ED.1).

9.4.8.IML.14: Analyze the role of media in delivering cultural, political, and other societal messages.

9.4.8.IML.15: Explain ways that individuals may experience the same media message differently.

6.3.8.CivicsPD.3: Construct a claim as to why it is important for democracy that individuals are informed by facts, aware of diverse viewpoints, and willing to take action on public issues.

NJSLSA.R4. Interpret words and phrases as they are used in a text, including determining technical, connotative, and figurative meanings, and analyze how specific word choices shape meaning or tone.

NJSLSA.R6. Assess how point of view or purpose shapes the content and style of a text.

NJSLSA.R7. Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse media and formats, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words.

NJSLSA.R8. Delineate and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, including the validity of the

reasoning as well as the relevance and sufficiency of the evidence.

RH.6-8.1. Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources.

RH.6-8.2. Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of the source distinct from prior knowledge or opinions.

RH.6-8.3. Identify key steps in a text's description of a process related to history/social studies (e.g., how a bill becomes law, how interest rates are raised or lowered).

RH.6-8.4. Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including vocabulary specific to domains related to history/social studies.

RH.6-8.5. Describe how a text presents information (e.g., sequentially, comparatively, causally).

RH.6-8.6. Identify aspects of a text that reveal an author's point of view or purpose (e.g., loaded language, inclusion or avoidance of particular facts).

RH.6-8.8. Distinguish among fact, opinion, and reasoned judgment in a text.

RH.6-8.9. Analyze the relationship between a primary and secondary source on the same topic.

RH.6-8.10. By the end of grade 8, read and comprehend history/social studies texts in the grades 6-8 text complexity band independently and proficiently.

WHST.6-8.1. Write arguments focused on discipline-specific content.

A. Introduce claim(s) about a topic or issue, acknowledge and distinguish the claim(s) from alternate or opposing claims, and organize the reasons and evidence logically.

B. Support claim(s) with logical reasoning and relevant, accurate data and evidence that demonstrate an understanding of the topic or text, using credible sources.

C. Use words, phrases, and clauses to create cohesion and clarify the relationships among claim(s),

counterclaims, reasons, and evidence.

D. Establish and maintain a formal/academic style, approach, and form.

E. Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the argument presented.

WHST.6-8.2. Write informative/explanatory texts, including the narration of historical events, scientific procedures/ experiments, or technical processes.

A. Introduce a topic and organize ideas, concepts, and information using text structures (e.g. definition, classification, comparison/contrast, cause/effect, etc.) and text features (e.g. headings, graphics, and multimedia) when useful to aiding comprehension.

B. Develop the topic with relevant, well-chosen facts, definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples.

C. Use appropriate and varied transitions to create cohesion and clarify the relationships among ideas and concepts.

D. Use precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to inform about or explain the topic.

E. Establish and maintain a formal/academic style, approach, and form.

F. Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the information or explanation presented.

WHST.6-8.4. Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, voice, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

WHST.6-8.5. With some guidance and support from peers and adults, develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach, focusing on how well purpose and audience have been addressed.

WHST.6-8.6. Use technology, including the Internet, to produce and publish writing and present the relationships between information and ideas clearly and efficiently.

WHST.6-8.7. Conduct short research projects to answer a question (including a self-generated question), drawing on several sources and generating additional related, focused questions that allow for multiple avenues of exploration.

WHST.6-8.8. Gather relevant information from multiple print and digital sources, using search terms effectively; assess the credibility and accuracy of each source; and quote or paraphrase the data and

conclusions of others while avoiding plagiarism and following a standard format for citation.

WHST.6-8.9. Draw evidence from informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

WHST.6-8.10. Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, metacognition/self correction, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of discipline-specific tasks, purposes, and audiences.

This unit challenges students to locate, evaluate, and use information effectively. Information literacy includes, but is not limited to digital, visual, media, textual, and technological literacy. Lessons may include the research process and how information is created and produced; critical thinking and using information resources; research methods, including the difference between primary and secondary sources; the difference between facts, points of view, and opinions, accessing peer-reviewed print and digital library resources; the economic, legal, social, and ethical issues surrounding the use of information.

This unit is aligned to the English Language Development (ELD) standards for kindergarten through grade 12 since multilingual learners develop content and language concurrently, with academic content in a classroom where the language of instruction is English. As a result, language learning and language as a means for learning academic content are interchangeable. The following ELD standards are relevant for this unit and course of study:

- Standard 1: Language for Social and Instructional Purposes: English language learners communicate for social and instructional purposes within the school setting.
- Standard 5: Language for Social Studies: English language learners communicate information, ideas and concepts necessary for academic success in the content area of Social Studies.

The standards in this unit reflect a developmental progression across grade levels and make interdisciplinary connections across content areas including the humanities, technology, career readiness, cultural awareness, and global citizenship.

Essential Questions and Enduring Understandings

Essential Questions:

- How can sources of information be evaluated for accuracy and relevance when considering the use of information?
- To what extent can the media be harmful to democracy?

- Where can one find reliable information about a public policy issue, government projects, or political perspectives?

Enduring Understandings:

- Gathering and evaluating knowledge and information from a variety of sources, including global perspectives, fosters creativity and innovative thinking.
- While social media companies continue to make efforts to ensure that news stories shared on their platform are verified and accurate, false information can still be spread online, and it is the responsibility of citizens to accurately source and evaluate information.

Objectives

Students will know:

- Terms, concepts and individuals (including, but not limited to): Digital literacy, digital footprint, bias, civic engagement, credible, fact checking, civic responsibility.
- All sources contain bias to some extent.
- The rise in social media has impacted the way public opinion is shaped.
- Civic engagement requires sourcing information and determining the extent to which there is bias.
- In the 21st century, it is important to maintain a positive digital footprint.
- Information posted online can be very difficult to remove, if it can be removed.
- It is important to fact check sources.
- Bias is not innately positive or negative, but reflective of the author's point of view.
- Bias can impact the way information is understood and shared.
- How media is used by individuals, groups, and organizations for varying purposes.
- The consequences (possibly unintended) of using different forms of media.

Students will be skilled at:

- Understanding the term bias and being able to identify bias in multiple sources.
- Explaining how bias can impact the delivery of news stories.

- Analyzing the role of media in delivering cultural, political, and other societal messages.
- Analyzing multiple resources to assess the credibility of sources when searching for information.
- Analyzing online information to distinguish whether it is helpful or harmful to understanding.
- Using information from a variety of sources, contexts, disciplines, and cultures for a specific purpose.
- Identifying the impact of the creator on the content, production, and delivery of information.
- Assessing their digital footprint and the impact it can have on future endeavors.
- Explaining the impact of new technology, such as artificial intelligence, on the dissemination of information.
- Assessing current actions and attempts to remove non-credible information online by social media platforms and the government.

Learning Plan

This unit includes, but is not limited to, the following learning strategies:

News Outlets investigation: Students will examine three major news outlets (CNN, MSNBC, FOX) focusing on the same event for all three. Students will examine how each news outlet outlines the event. Students will assess what is highlighted, how individuals or groups are portrayed, and investigate the author of each article to understand their bias. Students will then compare and contrast findings, reflecting on how bias impacted each report.

Confirmation and Other Biases: Using a modified version, of Facing History and Ourselves's "Confirmation and Other Biases," students will define explicit, implicit, and confirmation bias, and examine why people sometimes maintain their beliefs in the face of contradictory information.

Media Bias Scavenger Hunt: Students will be presented with a list of the different ways in which media bias persists with definitions and examples. After examining the list, students will examine news articles or headlines to attempt to find as many different forms of media bias. Students will make a claim, supported by evidence and analysis, as to how the news articles or headlines they find fit into the different forms of media bias.

Impact of Social Media Analysis: Students will read an article on how the rise in social media platforms has led to increased spread of false information. Students will assess the ways in which social media has impacted youths' understanding of current events and identify how this has become an issue. Students will brainstorm

advice for young people on the internet to address the issues they find.

Role of Media: Students will examine the types and roles of the media by taking on the role of newsmaker and agenda setter. Students will read a background article about the different roles of media and the impact they have on people. Students will then participate in a matching activity where they have to match the story to the different newspaper agendas. Finally, students will create their own newspaper agendas where they will list their intentions, issues, and then promote them in their own newspapers.

NewsFeed Defenders (game): Students will join a fictional social media site focused on news and information and learn elements of high-quality journalism and markers of deceptive posts. Students will make sure their website is reporting factual news based on the guidelines of the game.

Breaking News!: Students will define breaking news and understand why individuals and news outlets want to be first to report a story by highlighting and annotating a text. Students will then analyze breaking news alerts to identify clues of false or incomplete information. Finally, students will reflect on the consequences of reacting right away to breaking news alerts.

Rights and Responsibilities as a Digital Citizen: Students will identify the rights and responsibilities of digital citizens. Students will analyze multiple sources about their rights and responsibilities on the internet and complete a graphic organizer with two columns (Rights - how is my safety guaranteed by law or policy? and Responsibilities - what must I do to ensure my safety and the safety of others online?) Students will then answer the question “to what extent is online tracking beneficial?”

ChatGPT Investigation: Students will first read an article about the impact of ChatGPT to society and to news, highlighting both its successes and setbacks. Then, students will address the question, “To what extent do ChatGPT and similar AI programs harm the creation and spread of information?” Students will support their claim with evidence and original analysis.

Your Digital Footprint: Students will examine how their digital footprint may impact aspects of their lives in the future, such as college admissions and prospective employers. Students will then reflect on their own social media practices and set realistic goals on how they can improve their own digital footprint and protect themselves online.

Note: Other strategies to address the learning objectives may include, but are not limited to direct instruction, primary and secondary source analysis (including annotations, critique, questioning and close reading strategies), self and peer review, think-pair-share activities, creating visual representations, debates, film analysis, Socratic seminars, small group discussions, simulations, mapping activities, jigsaw activities, gallery walks, web quests, and/or inquiry or problem based learning projects.

Assessment

When taking a Social Studies course, students demonstrate differentiated proficiency according to their ability to answer the essential questions through formative and summative assessments. Many of the performance tasks below can be implemented as formative and/or summative assessments. As teachers strive for students to demonstrate proficiency, they will need to create additional or alternative assessments based on demonstration or absence of skill.

Formative Assessments:

- Do Nows
- Exit Slips
- Highlighting and annotating articles.
- Comparative Analysis of News Outlets
- Media Bias Research
- Social Media Analysis
- Newspaper Agenda Project
- Breaking News Reflection
- Rights and Responsibilities of a Digital Citizen Reflection

Summative Assessments:

- Digital Literacy Infographic Project: Students will create an infographic that reflects what they believe are the key takeaways on digital literacy that others should keep in mind when online. Students will supplement their infographic with credible evidence to support their messaging, as well as examples of what to avoid doing online. They will then write a brief response explaining their purpose for choosing certain topics and ideas in their infographic.

Benchmark Assessments:

- Analytical Writing:
    - To what extent is online tracking beneficial?
    - To what extent is it citizens' responsibility to determine the credibility of online information?
    - To what extent is it the government's responsibility to monitor the media's output of

information?

Alternative Assessments:

- Civics Concepts Curation Project - Throughout the course, students can select key artifacts from various forms of media to highlight key historical concepts as related to the unit. For each artifact, they must compose a narrative explaining how the curated piece reflects the assigned concept.

Materials

The design of this course allows for the integration of a variety of instructional, supplemental, and intervention materials that support student learners at all levels in the school and home environments. Associated web content and media sources are infused into the unit as applicable and available In addition to the materials below, the following link connects to district approved textbooks and resources utilized in this course: Core Book List.

The following are approved resources that teachers can include to further unit related objectives:

- Media Bias Chart
- Fact Checking Bias Chart
- How to Spot Different Kinds of Media Bias- AllSides.com
- Role of Media - iCivics
- Propaganda/media bias - iCivics
- NewsFeed Defenders (game) - iCivics
- Breaking News Lesson Plan - commonsense.org
- Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act - ed.gov
- Children's Internet Protection Act - fcc.gov
- Student Handbook (cyber safety section)
- How to Protect Online Privacy Video - pbs.org
- Amazon’s Alexa Could Be Listening - Newsela
- Media and Digital Literacy - Newsela (grades 6,7,8)
- The Chatbot Is Speaking- Scholastic
- Can You Trust What You See On TikTok?

- Dear Students, What You Post Can Wreck Your Life (Newsela Article)

Any additional resources that are not included in this list will be presented to and reviewed by the supervisor before being included in lesson plans. This ensures resources are reviewed and vetted for relevance and appropriateness prior to implementation.

Suggested Strategies for Modification

This link includes content specific accommodations and modifications for all populations:

https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1Pp6EJOCsFz5o4-opzsXpQDQoa6aClW-bkRGPDRHXVrk/edit?usp=sharing

These additional strategies are helpful when learning Social Studies content and skills:

- Highlighter for close reading and annotation strategies
- Bolded terms in directions
- Reading texts aloud for students to assist in comprehension and analysis
- Providing opportunities for text-to-speech for written responses.
- Use visual presentations of all materials including graphic organizers for writing.