Unit 3: Social Media and Participatory Culture & Podcasting and Documentary

Content Area: **English Language Arts**
Course(s):
Time Period: **Marking Period 2**
Length: **3-5 Weeks**
Status: **Published**

Brief Summary of Unit

Students will explore the dynamic world of social media and participatory culture, examining how these platforms have transformed the way people create, share, and consume content. They will analyze the role of social media in fostering community, amplifying voices, and influencing public discourse. The unit will also introduce students to podcasting and documentary filmmaking as powerful tools for storytelling and advocacy. Through hands-on projects, students will learn to produce engaging podcasts and documentaries, developing skills in research, scripting, recording, editing, and distribution. By the end of the unit, students will understand the impact of participatory culture and be equipped to create meaningful media that contributes to public conversations.

Interdisciplinary Connections and Career Readiness: This unit is designed to be part of a developmental progression across grade levels and make interdisciplinary connections across content areas including physical and social sciences, technology, career readiness, cultural awareness, and global citizenship. During this course, students are provided with opportunities to develop skills that pertain to a variety of careers. When completing this course, students can make informed choices and pursue electives that further their study and contribute toward the formation of career interest.

Revision: July 2024

Standards

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.

9.4.2.DC.3	Explain how to be safe online and follow safe practices when using the internet (e.g., 8.1.2.NI.3, 8.1.2.NI.4).
9.4.2.TL.7	Describe the benefits of collaborating with others to complete digital tasks or develop digital artifacts (e.g., W.2.6., 8.2.2.ED.2).
LA.W.11-12.4	Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience. (Grade-specific expectations for writing types are defined in standards 1–3 above.)
LA.W.11-12.7	Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects to answer a question (including

	a self-generated question) or solve a problem; narrow or broaden the inquiry when appropriate; synthesize multiple sources on the subject, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.
LA.W.11-12.8	Gather relevant information from multiple authoritative print and digital sources, using advanced searches effectively; assess the strengths and limitations of each source in terms of the task, purpose, and audience; integrate information into the text selectively to maintain the flow of ideas, avoiding plagiarism and overreliance on any one source and following a standard format for citation. (MLA or APA Style Manuals).
LA.SL.11-12.5	Make strategic use of digital media (e.g., textual, graphical, audio, visual, and interactive elements) in presentations to enhance understanding of findings, reasoning, and evidence and to add interest.
LA.11-12.CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.RL.6	Assess how point of view or purpose shapes the content and style of a text.
LA.11-12.CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.RL.7	Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse media and formats, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words.
CRP.K-12.CRP7	Employ valid and reliable research strategies.
CRP.K-12.CRP8	Utilize critical thinking to make sense of problems and persevere in solving them.
CRP.K-12.CRP11	Use technology to enhance productivity.
TECH.8.1.12	Educational Technology: All students will use digital tools to access, manage, evaluate, and synthesize information in order to solve problems individually and collaborate and to create and communicate knowledge.
TECH.8.1.12.F.1	Evaluate the strengths and limitations of emerging technologies and their impact on educational, career, personal and or social needs.

Essential Questions

- ● How can podcasting and documentary filmmaking be utilized to tell compelling stories, advocate for social change, and engage audiences?
- ● How has social media transformed the ways individuals and communities participate in and influence public discourse?
- ● What are the ethical considerations and potential consequences of participatory culture in terms of privacy, misinformation, and digital identity?
- ● What are the key elements of effective storytelling in podcasts and documentaries, and how can creators ensure their content is both informative and engaging?

Essential Understandings

- ● Effective storytelling in podcasting and documentary filmmaking relies on clear structure, compelling narratives, and engaging content that resonates with audiences and conveys the intended message or theme.
- ● Participatory culture on social media presents ethical challenges, including concerns about privacy, the spread of misinformation, and the management of digital identities, which require thoughtful consideration and responsible practices.
- ● Podcasts and documentaries are powerful tools for creating impact and engaging audiences, offering opportunities for in-depth exploration of topics, advocacy, and fostering a deeper understanding of complex issues.
- ● Social media has fundamentally changed how individuals and communities communicate, share

information, and influence public opinion, fostering greater participation and interaction in digital spaces.

Students Will Know

- ● how social media platforms have reshaped communication, community engagement, and public discourse, and how they contribute to participatory culture.
- ● the ethical challenges associated with social media and participatory culture, including issues related to privacy, misinformation, and digital identity management.
- ● the fundamental techniques and best practices for creating and producing podcasts, including scripting, recording, editing, and publishing.
- ● the key elements of documentary filmmaking, including research, storytelling, and editing, and how to use these techniques to produce engaging and informative documentary content.

Students Will Be Skilled At

- ● Analyzing features and advantages/disadvantages of a variety of digital tools.
- ● Identifying and analyzing key and unique features of various social media platforms.
- ● Navigating the use of social media platforms such as X, TikTok, Instagram, and more.
- ● Creating and managing engaging content for social media platforms, effectively using these tools to participate in and influence public discourse.
- ● Creating compelling documentaries, utilizing techniques in research, storytelling, filming, and editing to produce informative and engaging visual content.
- ● Producing high-quality podcasts, including tasks such as scripting, recording, editing, and publishing audio content to effectively communicate their message.

Evidence/Performance Tasks

Developmental progression across years in both reading and writing is evidenced by multiple benchmark assessment screeners, administered two times per year. Follow up diagnostic assessments are used to target skill remediation. Student proficiency allows for additional or alternative assessment based on demonstration or absence of skill.

Students demonstrate differentiated proficiency through both formative and summative assessments in the classroom. Based on individual student readiness and performance, assessments can be implemented as formative and/or summative.

The performance tasks listed below are examples of the types of assessments teachers may use in the classroom and the data collected by the district to track student progress.

Formative:

- Teacher Observations

- Accountable Talk, Socratic Seminars/Fish Bowls
- Analysis of multimodal text sets
- Analysis of critical commentary, literary criticism
- Writers Notebook (quick writes/drafts/prewrites), emphasizing author's craft
- Close reading analysis of text using evidence as substantiation
- Conferences: Individual and small group, accompanying conference notes
- Reflective exercises and assessments
- Oral Reading and Interpretation
- Peer and self-evaluations of learning
- Entrance and Exit Tickets
- Open-Ended Responses in Journal
- Textual Analysis Reading Responses
- Dialectical Journal
- Rhetorical Precis
- SOAPSTone Analysis

Summative, including Alternative Assessments:

- On-demand Writing Assessments, timed and untimed
- Researched Presentations
- Performance Assessments
- Project-based Learning
- Problem-based Learning
- Personalized Learning
- Visual Literacy Prompts
- Digital Portfolios
- Online Discussion Forums
- Analytical and Expository Essay

Benchmark:

- Benchmark reading and writing assessments, scored using rubrics, district-created and standards-aligned; based on NJSLA, reported twice per year
- Engage in text set analysis using visual literacy and close reading analysis strategies to compose a claim and use evidence as support
- Grade-level Standards-based Rubrics
- Common Lit Reading Benchmark Assessments, three times per year (grades 9-11)
- Advanced Placement tests (grades 11-12)
- NJGPA (grade 11)
- PSAT (grades 10-11)
- SAT (grades 11-12)
- Final Exam
- IXL

- Create a presentation to teach peers about features, advantages/disadvantages, notable users, audience, instructions for use, and strategies for effective communication using the social media platform. Must involve at least two forms of media such as visual, audio, textual.

- ● Research and compile information gathered about social media platform of choice
- ● Students will produce their own nonfiction audio stories

Learning Plan

Instructional time will be dedicated to whole class text instruction, collaborative learning, and independent and personalized learning. The intent is for student-readers to have clear modelling through whole-class instruction. These strategies are practiced in a group setting of peers and through independent practice monitored through teacher conferencing with students. An emphasis will be based on the transfer of skills instruction, teaching the reader, not merely the content of the text. The text complexity and rigor of reading will be appropriate for grade 9-12; materials selection for whole-class and literature circles will be from the book list approved by the Board of Education. Classrooms will house rich and diverse independent reading libraries of both contemporary and canonical works.

The reading of text during this class targets not only comprehension, but also analysis. Students may read both long-and short-form, exceprted and full-length, print and electronic, fiction and nonfiction texts. Study will include the analysis of visual texts including film clips, art, infographic, maps, charts, graphs, cartoons, graphic novel. Technique and terminology specific to a genre of reading is examined. Research tasks are embedded throughout the year and a minimum of one task is completed during each unit. Vocabulary instruction will be chosen from the reading material.

Students write in all modes of rhetoric including narration/description, argument/persuasion, and exposition. Various forms of writing including digital writing are emphasized as well. Grammar instruction is embedded in writing instruction through mini-lessons, holding students accountable for skills taught and practiced; modelling is done through mentor texts, both published and student-crafted. Teachers focus on process in addition to product with an emphasis on synthesizing texts with nuanced understanding; teacher-created multi-modal text sets will be used as materials. High-and low-stakes, timed and untimed pieces are all important.

Students will be taught how to speak and listen in addition to being assessed on these skills.

Students will look at various social media platforms and critically analyze them. They will understand their mechanics, influence, and impact on information dissemination and society. They will delve into what makes content successful on social media, the phenomenon of fake news, and the rise of paid subscriptions

i. Platform Analysis: Students will study different social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, TikTok, and LinkedIn. They will examine each platform's unique features, algorithms, and user demographics to understand how content is curated and distributed. This analysis will help students grasp the strategies behind effective social media presence and engagement.

ii. Successful Content: The course will cover what works on social media, exploring trends, viral content, and effective communication techniques. Students will learn about the role of hashtags, multimedia content, timing, and audience interaction in boosting visibility and engagement.

They will create their own content as part of practical assignments, applying these principles to real-world scenarios.

iii. Fake News: A significant portion of the course will be dedicated to understanding fake news—its origins, how it spreads, and its impact on public opinion and democracy. Students will learn to identify fake news and misinformation through critical thinking and fact-checking techniques. They will explore case studies of notable fake news incidents and discuss the ethical responsibilities of both content creators and consumers.

iv. Paid Subscriptions: They will also examine the growing trend of paid subscriptions and the business models behind them. Students will analyze platforms like Patreon and Substack, and understand how content creators monetize their work and build sustainable careers. They will discuss the implications of this model for content accessibility, quality, and the traditional advertising-based revenue systems.

Students will learn the basics of the production, writing, and journalistic process required to use audio as a nonfiction storytelling language.

i. Introduction to Audio Storytelling: Students will begin by exploring the unique elements of audio as a storytelling medium. They will learn about the history and evolution of audio journalism, including radio, podcasts, and other digital formats.

ii. Production Basics: The course will cover the technical aspects of audio production. Students will become familiar with recording equipment, sound editing software, and techniques for capturing high-quality audio. They will practice using microphones, audio recorders, and editing tools to produce clear and engaging sound.

iii. Writing for Audio: Writing scripts for audio is distinct from other forms of journalism. Students will learn how to craft scripts that are conversational, engaging, and suitable for audio delivery. They will practice writing introductions, transitions, and conclusions that help guide the listener through the story.

iv. Interviewing Techniques: Conducting effective interviews is a key component of audio storytelling. Students will learn how to prepare for and conduct interviews, focusing on asking open-ended questions, active listening, and capturing authentic voices and emotions.

v. Story Structure: Understanding how to structure a compelling audio story is crucial. Students will study different narrative structures, such as linear and non-linear storytelling, and learn how to build tension and maintain listener interest. They will analyze examples of successful audio stories to identify key elements of engaging narratives.

vi. Editing and Sound Design: Editing is a vital part of the audio storytelling process. Students will learn how to edit their recordings to create a seamless and polished final product. They will explore the use of sound effects, music, and ambient sounds to enhance their stories and create a rich auditory experience.

Final Project: As a culminating project, students will produce their own nonfiction audio stories. They will go through the entire process from idea generation and research to recording, editing, and final production. This project will allow students to apply their skills and demonstrate their understanding of audio storytelling.

- In informal cooperative learning groups, develop a set of criteria for analyzing a social media platforms
- Understand the responsible use of digital media by examining social media platforms; analyze and apply proper netiquette and safety; understand the social dangers inherent to these sites; inform internet protocol and exercise safety practices for savvy surfing.

Materials

The materials used in this course integrate a variety of leveled instructional, enrichment, 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.

Teachers must refer to the district-approved Core Book List while selecting whole-class or small-group leveled resources.

- Students will access a range of social media platforms including, but not limited to, Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat.
- How to Write Short: Word Craft for Fast Times by Roy Peter Clark

Suggested Strategies for Accommodation and Modification

Content specific accommodations and modifications as well as Career Ready Practices are listed here for all students, including: Special Education, English Language Learners, At Risk of School Failure, Gifted and Talented, Students with 504.

Possible accommodations include:

- Accessing speech-to-text function on computer.
- Using visual presentations of all materials to include organizers, charts.
- Allowing students to set individual goals for writing/reading.
- Offering graphic organizaers, note-taking models, strategies for summarizing, and questioning techniques.
- Offering oral assessments.
- Supplying study guide questions and access to class notes.
- Working in partnerships.
- Giving responses in a form (verbal or written) that is easier for the student.
- Using additional time to compete a task or project.
- Scaffolding by chunking material and texts.
- Individualizingreading choices based on ability and level .
- Providing frequent breaks.

- Using an alarm to help with time management.
- Assessing individually or in small groups.
- Marking text with a highlighter or other manipulative such as a post-it.
- Receiving help coordinating assignments.
- Modifying the length and quantity of assignments to fit individual.
- Differentiating roles in discussion groups.
- Using digital technology, eBooks, audio version of printed text.
- Createing alternate assignments or homework.
- Providing distinct steps in a process; elminate unnecessary steps, as needed.
- Using art, music, and film to convey alternate interpretation of literature and assessment.
- Managing executive function by scaffolding process and amending deadlines.
- Clarifying key terms and definitions at the beginning of the unit to create a shared vocabulary for analysis and evaluation.

Particular to this unit:

- Using multi-modal forms of representation of ideas, including text, video and images.
- Fostering collaborative learning through the use of strategic grouping.
- Optimizing individual choice in terms of the choice of social media platform to research, as well as mode of representation.
- Guiding students in goal-setting and executive function by setting timelines for completion of various stages, including research, writing, project creation, and presentation.
- Promoting autonomy, engagement, and ownership by creating personalized rubrics.
- Fostering collaborative learning through the use peer evaluation and feedback.
- Providing low-stakes opportunities to learn new technology tools before applying knowledge in an assessment context.
- Providing opportunities for self-regulation by including reflective self-evaluation.
- Modeling navigation, critical analysis, and evaluation of a platform as a class using a common vocabulary.
- Providing low-stakes, game-based opportunities to navigate a digital tool prior to independent practice.
- Promoting engagement by using gamification as a method of learning an unfamiliar social media platform.
- Addressing various learning styles by incorporating multimodal communication methods in presentation.

Adhere to all modifications and accommodations as prescribed in IEP and 504 plan