



CIVICS CLASSROOM CURRICULUM

CITIZENS CLEAN ELECTIONS COMMISSION ★ YOUTH VOTER EDUCATION AND OUTREACH

9th - 12th
GRADE LEVELS

LESSON 2
**RESEARCH AND INFORMATION
LITERACY SKILLS**



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Civics Classroom Curriculum

Research and Information Literacy Skills

 AZCleanElections.gov



| TOPICS  | GRADE LEVEL |
|--|---|
| Fact-checking Credible websites and sources | 9th - 12th |

INTRODUCTION

The Citizens Clean Elections Commission (CCEC), in partnership with expert curriculum writers, presents the Civics Classroom Curriculum lesson series, which covers a variety of relevant topics including democracy, elections, government, and the political party system. This is a part of CCEC's youth voter education and outreach initiative.

These lessons in Civic Education aim to promote an understanding and appreciation of the rights and responsibilities of citizens in a democracy, encourage participation and civil dialogue, and develop civics skills such as critical thinking, researching, and determining fact versus fiction or opinion.

Research shows that lifelong voters cast their first votes early in life. The lesson plans adhere to Arizona's classroom teaching standards and are applicable within more than one subject. The respective subjects are listed in the Integrated State Standards section of this module. The lesson plans were designed with teachers in mind and with utmost admiration for their important work.



LESSON PLAN:

RESEARCH AND INFORMATION LITERACY SKILLS



OVERVIEW

Determining the credibility (unbiased, reliable) of a website and other media is a relevant and vital topic and a critical skill for students (and for us all). This is especially true when it comes to voting and elections. Students see many ads on TV and online about propositions and candidates. What a perfect opportunity to talk about bias. Who is paying for these ads? What is their agenda? How do we tell if what we're looking at is biased, or if it is based on factual (and fact-checked) information? Which websites are legitimate and which have a motive which is designed to influence rather than inform? Where does the money come from to produce the content? Are the authors credible and are they who they say they are? It is important for students to be exposed to and learn to perceive the differences with guidance and practice.

**Important note: On the days before the lesson, ask students to pay attention to at least one and perhaps two political or issue ads on TV or online. Ask them to write down the gist of the ad: who it is for; what their claims are; who or what is being criticized; who produced/paid for the ads; and how they feel about the ads.*

I. Materials needed

Teacher and student access to computers (laptops, computer lab, cell phones, etc.);

II. Do Now/Warm Up

Divide students into small groups and ask them to discuss with their peers the political or issue ads that they have seen on TV or online (that you assigned yesterday). Since some class sizes may be large, it would efficient to take 3-5 minutes to have students discuss with their group before sharing and perhaps ask one member from each group share with the class.



After giving them this time, ask them to share their responses and feelings about the ads. Talk about what students know about candidates, propositions, etc. Where did they learn that? (They will likely say TV/online). Are the ads helpful? Do the ads inform their opinions on whom to vote for? (Why or why not?). Discuss who produces/pays for those ads. Define the terms biased and unbiased. Talk about what the agenda of the ads and sponsors seems to be and the potential biases that might exist.

III. Student-Friendly Objective

After doing some research of their own, students will participate in a closure discussion on the validity of particular websites and sources in order to exhibit their understanding of what makes a credible source versus an unreliable or biased one.

IV. The Why of the Lesson

It's important to vote, but how do you know how to vote on an issue or candidate? Where do you get your information? How do you ensure your vote is based on fact, not fiction? Informed voters are discerning citizens who are able to determine fact versus untruths and opinion, as well as detect unreliable websites and media versus credible sources.

V. Anticipatory Set

Now talk about websites in the same context. Websites look professional and official, but that doesn't mean they aren't biased. Why? Because anyone can design a website, choose a website name and domain name that sound official, and then put anything they want on there. Find and discuss (or perhaps have students in groups search for) some websites that seem biased (have an agenda) or unbiased (are largely impartial). Discuss how you can tell the difference.

Talk about why it is important to not accept everything you read on a website or social media (or anywhere) as truth until you look for possible biases and agendas. Ask for the source. Look for the organization or person who is supporting or paying for the research. Ask yourself, what are they trying to get me to believe? Why?



Activity

- A. Say, Now let's find out how to differentiate a credible website from an unreliable one. First, let's go to the Citizens Clean Elections Commission website (azcleanelections.gov).
- B. What's the first thing you notice about the website that might give you more confidence that it is unbiased? (It is a .gov website. Explain.)
- C. Explore the CCEC website. What seems to be the mission of the website?
- D. Share one thing you found on the website that is interesting to you.
- E. Google or search Wikipedia for information on the Citizens Clean Elections Commission? Do you see any evidence of bias, either on the website or in your research?
- F. Divide students into groups (of 3-5 depending on your circumstances).?
- G. Ask each group to pick a topic that interests them, for example, global warming, voting rights (e.g., vote by mail), immigration, health care, public education, clean energy, etc. If they cannot think of a topic, have them search "current issues" on the web. This is a good exercise to explore what other people think are pressing problems.
- H. Then ask each group to find an article on the web that provides information on their topic.
- I. Answer the following: Who wrote the article? What is the source of the article? Can you determine who funded the site? Google or search Wikipedia for information. Determine if it a biased or unbiased website.

Closure

Discussion: What do you need to look for when searching for sources on the internet for a project? What do you need to think about when you read an article or post on social media? What do you need to think about when you see a political ad on TV? What did you learn from this lesson?

Optional Closure: Assign an exit ticket using these questions or those of your choosing. Read the exit tickets and select the best comments to use as a review and lesson starter tomorrow.



Homework

Assign a research project that requires three sources that students must validate. Students could write an essay or make a presentation to the class on their topic.

Or: Choose a political ad from TV or online. Is it a positive ad or negative? Is it about policy (support of public education) or personality (credentials, experience)? Write a political ad for a candidate of your choice. Present it to your class.



INTEGRATED STATE STANDARDS

Choose from the following standards for your lesson

SOCIAL STUDIES/CIVICS

HS.SP3.1 Develop and frame questions about issues and events in the discipline and determine the types of sources that will be helpful in answering these questions.

HS.SP3.2 Gather relevant information from multiple sources representing a wide range of views while using origin, authority, structure, context, and corroborative value of the source to guide the selection.

HS.C1.3 Explain and use deliberative processes implemented in various civic and political institutions.

HS.C2.1 Explain the importance of individual participation in civic and political institutions.

HS.C3.3 Analyze the impact of political parties, interest groups, elections, and the media on political institutions.

ELA

9-10 and 11-12 SL1

Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

- a.** Come to discussions prepared having read and researched material under study; explicitly draw on that preparation by referring to evidence.
- b.** Work with peers to set rules for collegial discussions and decision-making (e.g., informal consensus, taking votes on key issues, and presentation of alternate views), clear goals and deadlines, and individual roles as needed.
- c.** Propel conversations by posing and responding to questions that relate the current discussion to broader themes or larger ideas; actively incorporate others into the discussion; and clarify, verify, or challenge ideas and conclusions.
- d.** Respond thoughtfully to diverse perspectives, summarize points of agreement and disagreement, and, when warranted, qualify or justify their own views and understanding and make new connections based on the evidence and reasoning presented.



9-10.SL.2 Integrate multiple sources of information presented in diverse media and formats, evaluating the credibility and accuracy of each source.

9-10.W.8 Gather relevant information from multiple authoritative print and digital sources, using advanced searches effectively; assess the usefulness of each source in answering the research question; integrate information into the text selectively to maintain the flow of ideas, avoiding plagiarism and following a standard format for citation.

11-12.RI.7 Integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in different media or formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively) as well as in print in order to address a question or solve a problem.

11-12.W.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.

TECHNOLOGY

Creativity and Innovation

PO 1. Analyze, evaluate, and synthesize information to generate new ideas, processes, or products.

Research and Information Literacy

PO 2. Evaluate diverse information sources.

PO 3. Evaluate information identifying facts, opinions, bias, inaccurate and misleading information by analyzing multiple sources.

Digital Citizenship

PO 5. Analyze and compare how web advertising influences consumer choices.

PO 6. Advocate and exhibit legal and ethical behavior when using technology.

Digital Leadership

PO 1. Exhibit digital citizenship by consistently leading by example and advocating social and civic responsibility to others.