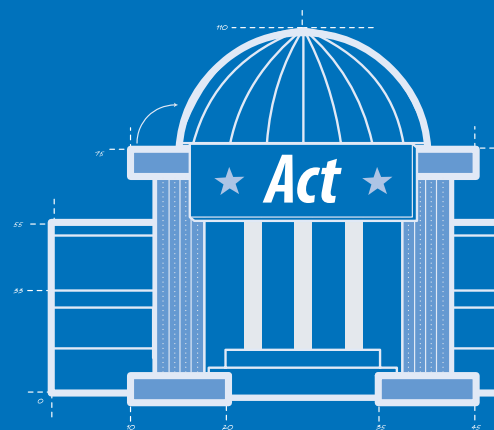
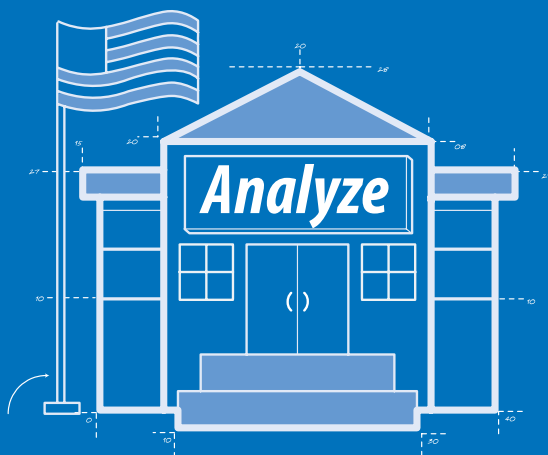
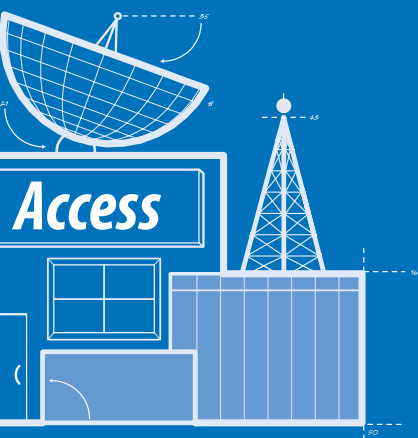




# Access, Analyze, Act:

## A Blueprint for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Civic Engagement

### Curriculum Guide



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# Introduction

## Welcome

Welcome to **Access, Analyze, Act: A Blueprint for 21st Century Civic Engagement**. The Internet has changed the process of civic engagement, making it easier than ever before for everyone to participate in dialogue about the many important issues that affect our nation and its future. If you are looking to learn more about the use of social media, or Web 2.0, tools to promote students' learning and civic engagement, you are at the right place.

An understanding of civic ideals and practices of citizenship is critical to full participation in society and is a central purpose of the social studies, according to the National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS). The National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) asserts that, to thrive in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, people need to:

- Develop proficiency with the tools of technology;
- Build relationships with others to pose and solve problems collaboratively and cross-culturally;
- Design and share information for global communities to meet a variety of purposes;
- Manage, analyze and synthesize multiple streams of simultaneous information;
- Create, critique, analyze and evaluate multimedia texts;
- Attend to the ethical responsibilities required by these complex environments.

This curriculum is designed as a blueprint for educators to discover the power of social media for teaching media and information literacy, critical thinking, communication, collaboration and technology skills while developing students' understanding of the political, social and economic issues facing our country at election time. Whether or not they are of voting age, young people have a stake in and can influence election outcomes. The activities offered here can help them engage in the 2008 election in purposeful and meaningful ways and help them practice important skills that will serve them well beyond the election.

## How to Use This Guide

*Learn about the many new social media tools and other resources that bring the excitement of the 2008 election into the classroom by following these four steps:*

**1 Watch and Learn.** First, watch three video modules on the PBS Teachers Vote 2008 site ([www.pbs.org/teachers/vote2008/blueprint/interactive](http://www.pbs.org/teachers/vote2008/blueprint/interactive)) that showcase how you can integrate social media tools into the teaching and learning process as you help students ACCESS, ANALYZE and ACT. You'll see teachers learning about the use of social media resources developed by the public broadcasting community. And you'll see students learning with and reflecting upon activities in this guide.

**2 Explore and Plan.** Next, investigate the tools yourself by exploring the links on the PBS Teachers Vote 2008 site. All of the featured social media tools are listed in the Resources section of this guide. You'll also find a handy glossary of terms and a list of additional resources for further investigation.

While the lesson plans can be used independently, they have been designed to comprise a comprehensive unit of study. True civic engagement involves all three elements within the blueprint. If you are not able to use all of the lessons and activities, try out at least one activity from each section with your students (please refer to the Suggested Activity Groupings below).

Blogging is a simple but important way for learners to participate in a community of learning and to develop their civic engagement and 21st century skills. Students are encouraged to maintain and update political blogs throughout the lessons. Keep an eye out for the "**BLOG THIS!**" section of each activity. You may use students' blogs to engage with them beyond the classroom and to assess their skill development, content knowledge and participation.

**3 Experiment.** Social media tools are new to everyone—students and teachers alike. When teachers discover the power of social media for learning, they can become advocates within their communities and share what works with others.

Try out the lesson plans, and don't be afraid to let students assist with the technology. They've grown up with the Internet and will find many of the social media tools in this guide quite easy to use.

If you are a technology specialist, a library media specialist or a middle school or high school teacher in Social Studies or Language Arts, you'll find this guide is relevant to your needs. Community college faculty, instructors in lower-division courses at the college level and those who work with learners in non-school settings – especially online learning environments – will also find many resources of interest.

If you work in a school where you can't access some of these social media tools because of filtering software, you can still use this curriculum guide and have students access these tools at home.

**4 Sustain the Momentum.** While the activities and resources in this guide are, for the most part, designed to help students explore civic engagement and the 2008 elections, we hope that you will consider ways you can use these tools beyond the election. Here are some ideas:

- Students can use their blogs to reflect upon their learning in other units; they can expand and/or redesign their blogs to reflect each new unit of study.
- Students can use the You Decide tool to learn about persuasion and perspective and use their skills and content knowledge to debate a wide variety of topics.
- Students can contribute questions on a wide variety of subjects on an ongoing basis to the Ask Your Lawmaker Web site.
- Students can contribute to sites such as Youth Noise and Youth Media Exchange and engage with other young people around issues of common interest.

Each lesson is aligned with three national standards documents:

The National Council for the Social Studies revised curriculum standards for Theme 10: Civic Ideals and Practices

[communities.ncss.org/node/266](https://communities.ncss.org/node/266)

McREL standards for Language Arts

[www.mcrel.org/compendium/SubjectTopics.asp?SubjectID=7](http://www.mcrel.org/compendium/SubjectTopics.asp?SubjectID=7), and

ISTE's National Educational Technology Standards for Students

[www.iste.org/Content/NavigationMenu/NETS/ForStudents/2007Standards/NETS\\_for\\_Students\\_2007.htm](http://www.iste.org/Content/NavigationMenu/NETS/ForStudents/2007Standards/NETS_for_Students_2007.htm)

### **Suggested Activity Groupings**

The combinations below offer potential pathways through the content in this curriculum guide and are designed to provide students with opportunities to ACCESS, ANALYZE and ACT. Feel free to pair the activities in whatever way best fits your curriculum and students.

### **The Candidates & Issues in 2008**

- Lesson 1.1: Students create blogs that they use in subsequent lessons to share and reflect upon their learning;
- Lesson 1.3: Students learn about local, state and/or national issues and representatives and consider how political issues affect their daily lives;
- Lesson 2.4: Students explore a particular issue further using an online devil's advocate activity and additional social media tools;
- Lesson 3.2: Students pose specific questions to their lawmakers about the issue they have studied.

### **The Media & Civic Engagement**

#### **Exploring the Power of Persuasion**

- Lesson 1.1: Students create blogs that they use in subsequent lessons to share and reflect upon their learning;
- Lesson 1.2: Students investigate styles of civic engagement, including their own, with an interactive quiz, reading and discussion;
- Lesson 2.1: Students explore the role that media has played in past elections and how it is shaping the current campaign AND/OR
- Lesson 2.2: Students analyze the sites of current presidential candidates to identify genre and persuasive techniques;
- Read & Discuss 3.1: Students consider the participation gap among young people in the political process and learn why social media plays a role in promoting civic engagement;
- Lesson 3.4: Students create and share advocacy videos reflecting their views and incorporating the genres and persuasive techniques they have studied.

#### **Listening Closely & Talking Back**

- Lesson 1.1: Students create blogs that they use in subsequent lessons to share and reflect upon their learning;
- Lesson 1.2: Students investigate styles of civic engagement, including their own, with an interactive quiz, reading and discussion;
- Lesson 1.3: Students learn about local, state and/or national issues and representatives and consider how political issues affect their daily lives;
- Lesson 2.3: Students explore authority and authenticity in various types of radio programming;
- Lesson 3.3: Students create, record and share audio recordings of original speeches that incorporate what they have learned about creating credible messages.

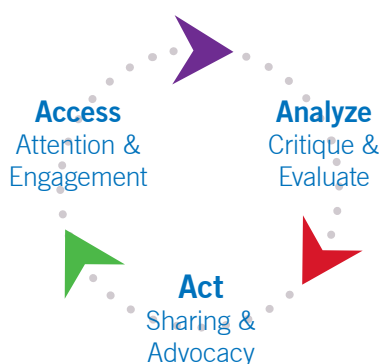
## Media Literacy, Social Media and Civic Engagement

Nearly all of us receive information about political candidates, issues and processes from media sources. Whether we read newspapers, watch TV news, look at videos from the campaign trail or post and comment on the issues we care about using social media tools, we engage with the presidential campaign with and through media. As educators, we must consider how we can help students navigate the sea of media messages about the campaign in order to understand the issues, candidates and political process.

In today's social media landscape, national, state and local campaigns are more influenced by user-generated content (UGC) than ever before. Anyone can post his or her opinions and share information, which may or may not be accurate or true. Anyone can manipulate images, audio and video to create parodies, tributes or candidate-bashing pieces. These forms of expression and communication can be highly influential in shaping our civic and political attitudes and beliefs.

Media literacy is the ability for a person to access, analyze, evaluate and communicate effectively using a variety of forms of communication, including written, oral, visual, electronic and digital. To be media literate means we ask questions about what we see, read, hear and see. It also means that we communicate effectively using a wide range of tools and technologies. According to the National Association for Media Literacy Education ([www.amlainfo.org](http://www.amlainfo.org)), helping students to become media literate depends upon the following core principles.

- Learning requires active inquiry and critical thinking about the messages we receive and create;
- The concept of literacy (i.e., reading and writing) is expanded to include all forms of media and technology;
- The process builds and reinforces skills for learners of all ages. Like print literacy, those skills necessitate integrated, interactive and repeated practice;
- Students develop as informed, reflective and engaged participants for a democratic society;
- Students recognize that media are a part of culture and function as agents of socialization;
- The learning process affirms that people use their individual skills, beliefs and experiences to construct their own meanings from media messages.



This curriculum guide is built upon these six principles, focusing on the power and potential of social media to create a truly democratic society.

There has never been a time in history where students can more closely engage with other people – from across town and from around the globe – about the election process. While students use social media to become more civically engaged as authors of messages, they also can think critically about the media to become more informed citizens. More than ever, students need to be able to consider these new forms of expression and information by asking critical questions about what they watch, see, listen to, read and produce.

Educators know that our understanding of content is constructed through conversations and social interaction with others. Participation in activities that involve the sharing of ideas and perspectives generally results in more meaningful learning. This process is recursive, cycling back in the form of new questions that deepen attention and engagement in a topic, issue or activity. This is what participatory democracy is all about.

Many educators are excited about the use of social media tools, because they can help create learning communities where participants openly share and build upon each other's ideas. Tools such as blogs, wikis, social bookmarking, tagging and video sharing systems help learners participate in conversations with others that deepen their understanding of ideas and help them create new knowledge and develop important skills.

This guide provides activities that give students ACCESS to a wide range of new resources. These activities help students ANALYZE and understand key election issues that face our country and enable them to ACT as engaged citizens using social media. The power of social media is at our students' fingertips, but it is our job to help them use these tools to build the critical thinking, communication, collaboration and technology skills that are essential for civic engagement in the 21st century.

# I. Access

## Overview

These lessons engage and motivate students' interest in the political process and social media. Students begin by creating their own political blogs to share their knowledge and opinions with others and reflect upon their learning. Students take an interactive quiz that measures four styles of political engagement, then read and discuss an article about civic engagement. Students reflect on what they already know about their local, state and/or national representatives and gather information to make connections between politics and daily life.

Here are the key "Access" questions to ask about media messages:

- Who created this message and for what purpose?
- What values and points of view are represented?
- Who is the target audience?
- How might different people interpret this message differently?



## 1.1 Lesson Plan: Welcome to the Blogosphere

### Overview

Students create their own blogs, which they can use throughout the lessons and/or unit – and beyond – to share their views on political issues, candidates and campaigns; post original multimedia content; link to and embed election-related media; develop a network of interested commentators and activists; and reflect upon their learning.

### Key Skills

**NCSS Civic Ideas and Practices Expectations:** Practicing forms of civil, civic discussion and participation consistent with the ideals of citizens in a democratic republic; using a variety of media to report findings from surveys, debates, petitions

**McREL Language Arts Standards:** Write a reflective composition (e.g., uses personal experience as a basis for reflection on some aspect of life, draws abstract comparisons between specific incidents and abstract concepts, maintains a balance between describing incidents and relating them to more general abstract ideas that illustrate personal beliefs, moves from specific examples to generalizations about life)

**ISTE NETS Standards: 2b:** Communication and Collaboration: communicate information and ideas effectively to multiple audiences using a variety of media and formats; **5b:** Digital Citizenship: exhibit a positive attitude towards using technology that supports collaboration, learning and productivity

**Grades** 7–12

**Time Estimate** One to two 45-minute class periods, plus homework

**Required Resources** Computers with Internet access

### Preparation

Consult your school's policy for student publishing online. You may also wish to review resources on monitoring of student blog publishing ([classblogmeister.com](http://classblogmeister.com)) and blog safety ([www.edtechmag.com/k12/issues/january-february-2006/professional-edge.html](http://www.edtechmag.com/k12/issues/january-february-2006/professional-edge.html)). Key issues to consider include parental permission for blogging and whether to make student blogs open to the public or limit the audience to selected users. Opening student blogs to the public carries a greater burden of responsibility for both you as a monitor and your students as authors, but the experience of speaking to and receiving comments from authentic audiences is invaluable for both motivation and critical thinking.

Blogger ([www.blogger.com](http://www.blogger.com)) is one of several ad-free blog sites offering free accounts. You may also consider Edublogs ([edublogs.org](http://edublogs.org)), which was designed with educators in mind. Before introducing this lesson, set up your own blog and post an entry following the steps that your students will follow, as outlined below. Alternatively, you may wish to model setting up a blog for students in class before inviting them to create their own blogs.

Prior to teaching this lesson, bookmark the Web sites used in the lesson on each computer in your classroom, or upload all links to an online bookmarking tool such as del.icio.us ([del.icio.us](http://del.icio.us)). Preview the Web sites used in the lesson to make certain that they are appropriate for your students.

### Procedure

1. **Activate prior knowledge.** Ask students to share what they know about blogging and to name blogs with which they're familiar. Explain that blogging is a form of publishing that allows anyone to share his or her views and experiences with others and receive feedback.
2. **Introduce the lesson.** Tell students that they will be creating political blogs. Have each student think of a title and several web address (URL) ideas. Emphasize the importance of the title and web address – this is how people will find and remember their blogs. Since this will be a political blog, brainstorm related words to help students come up with titles (citizen, civics, voting, election, etc.).
3. **Create an account.** Have students go online and create free accounts. You may want to have students complete a tutorial at the blog hosting site before creating their accounts. Students will need to provide e-mail addresses, passwords and user/display names. [Note: Students can create free, safe e-mail accounts using Gagggle.net ([www.gagggle.net](http://www.gagggle.net)) or Mailinator ([www.mailinator.com](http://www.mailinator.com))]. For safety purposes, you may wish to have students use only their first names when creating their user/display names.

Click on and carefully read "Terms of Service" before clicking the "Accept" box. This is an important habit to encourage. You may also want to budget time for discussing what's contained in this agreement.

Have students enter the titles and URLs they selected and check for availability of the URLs. As students complete this task, send around a paper for them to write their names, blog titles and URLs for your later convenience.

4. **Set permissions.** In this step, you execute the level of control over audience and publishing you have chosen for your students' blogs. Choose who will have author, reader and commenting privileges for the student blogs.
5. **Define a blogger identity.** Have students find the "About" section of their blogs. Discuss what information might be appropriate for students to include in this section and what might be inappropriate. Assign students to complete this section. You may wish to approve their descriptions before having them post them on their blogs.
6. **Add images and other elements.** Perhaps the most dynamic aspect of blogging for students is the opportunity to embed images, video and audio files to express their ideas and tastes. Students should be encouraged to personalize their blogs with embedded content as they begin to explore their political personalities and the types of self-expression facilitated by this technology.

Invite students to choose one or more images from the Internet that express some aspect of their feelings on politics. You may want to briefly discuss Section 107 (the Doctrine of Fair Use) on copyright issues and explain that your students' use of copyrighted images may fall under the "fair use" exemption if their use transforms the purpose of the image. You may also want to review "Copyright and Fair Use in Teaching" at the Center for Social Media ([www.centerforsocialmedia.org/resources/fair\\_use\\_and\\_teaching/](http://www.centerforsocialmedia.org/resources/fair_use_and_teaching/)), which outlines best practices for the application of fair use to media literacy education and online video production.

Many of the social media tools students will explore in subsequent lessons, including the Let's Get Political quiz, Ask Your Lawmaker, the Idea Generators and You Decide, are embeddable. You may wish to have students add these widgets to their blogs before or after completing the related activities.

7. **Add links.** Model how to create links by linking from your own blog to one or more student blogs. Have students add links to classmates' blogs and/or relevant Web sites, as appropriate.
8. **Add tags/labels.** Tagging, or labeling, enables bloggers to organize their content and allows readers to locate specific posts and comments. Although students will not be able to practice tagging until they have created their first entries, you can explain how tagging works and model the use of this functionality on your own blog. You may want to assign a particular tag, or tags, to each assignment in the unit for easy reference.
9. **Create an online learning community.** Engage in a discussion to establish etiquette for commenting on each other's blog entries. Bud the Teacher's wiki ([www.budtheteacher.com/wiki/index.php?title=Main\\_Page](http://www.budtheteacher.com/wiki/index.php?title=Main_Page)) offers sample blogging guidelines created by students and teachers across the country. You may wish to create your own version with students.

### Grouping to Meet the Needs of Diverse Abilities

You may want to group Web-savvy students with beginners to encourage peer-to-peer learning.

Have groups of 2–3 students work together to create one blog, sharing an e-mail address and password for the group. Each student makes a personal entry for each assignment, but all three students post to the same blog.

### Assessment

By reviewing students' blogs, you will be able to assess whether they have acquired the skills to create blogs, post appropriate content, and comment respectfully on others' work. You may also check to see if they can add images, links and tags/labels.

### Extensions

- Use blogs as a venue for student assignments and/or reflections on assignments throughout the unit. Encourage or require commenting on other students' blogs and/or sharing with peers, family and the community beyond the classroom.
- Use blogs as an ongoing assignment venue for students to comment on and connect to news and views related to politics.
- Make a connection with another school and class (from anywhere!) and exchange blog comments regularly.





### Featured Widget/Web Site

Take the **Let's Get Political Quiz** to find out what kind of political personality you have.

## 1.2 Lesson Plan: Let's Get Political

### Overview

Students read about civic engagement and take an interactive quiz that measures their political personalities. They then discuss their quiz results and the different ways that people participate in the process of citizenship. Students reflect on their learning on their blogs.

### Key Skills

**NCSS Civic Ideas and Practices Expectations:** Compare and contrast various the role of citizen in relation to government across various forms of government past and present

### McREL Language Arts Standards:

**Standard 1.11 (Level IV):** Write a reflective composition (e.g., uses personal experience as a basis for reflection on some aspect of life, draws abstract comparisons between specific incidents and abstract concepts, maintains a balance between describing incidents and relating them to more general abstract ideas that illustrate personal beliefs, moves from specific examples to generalizations about life);

**Standard 5:** Use the general skills and strategies of the reading process;

**Standard 8.3 (Level IV):** Uses a variety of strategies to enhance listening comprehension (e.g., focuses attention on message, monitors message for clarity and understanding, asks relevant questions, provides verbal and nonverbal feedback, notes cues such as change of pace or particular words that indicate a new point is about to be made; uses abbreviation system to record information quickly; selects and organizes essential information)

**ISTE NETS Standard: 1c:** Creativity and Innovation: use models and simulations to explore complex systems and issues

**Grades** 7–12

**Time Estimate** One 45-minute class period

**Required Resources** Computers with Internet access

### Preparation

Prior to teaching this lesson, bookmark the Web site used in the lesson on each computer in your classroom, or upload the link to an online bookmarking tool such as del.icio.us ([del.icio.us](http://del.icio.us)). Preview the Web site to make certain that it is appropriate for your students. Make copies of **Worksheet 1.2** for all students.

**Note:** The quiz is a widget, which means that you can embed it on a class Web site or blog. You may wish to do this before class and direct students to access the quiz through your local site. You may also choose to have students embed the widget on their own blogs before or after taking the quiz.

### Procedure

1. **Grab Interest.** Ask: Who takes online quizzes? What do you like and/or dislike about online quizzes? Can you learn about yourself with an online quiz? Why or why not?
2. **Read and discuss.** Distribute **Worksheet 1.2** and ask students to read the first few paragraphs silently, or ask for volunteers to read them aloud. Ask one or more students to define civic engagement in their own words.
3. **Take the quiz.** Direct students to take the online quiz ([www.pbsteachers.org/vote/2008/blueprint/access](http://www.pbsteachers.org/vote/2008/blueprint/access)). Explain that they should print out their results when they are finished.
4. **Discuss.** Hold a large-group discussion using the questions on the handout. (**Note:** Depending on your students, you may want to use small group discussion or partners so that everyone can participate actively.) At the end of the discussion, invite students to summarize some key ideas.
5. **BLOG THIS!** Students create a blog entry based upon their quiz results and class discussion. Students should create a snappy title for this first entry.

Stimulate student reflection with questions. For example:

- What did your quiz results reveal about your style of political engagement? How do you feel about your results?
- How do you feel about politics in general? Where does your attitude come from?
- What are some political facts or events that have made an impression on you? What political issues matter to you?
- Are you happy with how much you know and care about politics? Why or why not?

### Assessment

You may choose to have students write their answers to one or more of the discussion questions related to the quiz. Additionally, you can assess students' first blog entries for understanding and engagement. You might also consider having students complete the quiz at the beginning and end of a unit of study and reflect upon any changes they observe.

## Worksheet 1.2: Let's Get Political

As you travel through life, how engaged are you with political and social issues? In what ways do you get involved? How do you feel when someone mentions the word "politics"? Are you excited? Indifferent? Uncertain?

We all think and act differently when it comes to political and social issues. The way you participate and feel about politics is influenced by your parents, community leaders and institutions, friends, media and personal investment in the issues. Civic engagement involves your feelings about social issues and your participation in making a difference in your community and beyond. Civically engaged people consider themselves to be part of the social fabric, believe they can make a difference and see every person as inherently valuable. The way you feel now is probably different than a couple years ago, and it will likely change as you get older.

Take the Let's Get Political quiz, print your results and use them to answer the questions below.

### For Discussion

1. Do the results of this quiz accurately reflect your civic engagement?  
Why or why not?  
What would you call your style of political engagement?
2. Oftentimes we think of being civically engaged in terms of voting on issues and for candidates. But civic engagement involves more than voting.  
What are other ways to get civically engaged?  
In what ways are you engaged (or would you like to be)?
3. Skeptics would rather not be civically engaged. What reasons do people in a democracy have for not participating?  
What would have to change to get people more involved?  
What would have to change to get you more involved?
4. Some people think that our nation should strive for every individual to be an Activist. Others believe that it's actually undesirable to have a nation of Activists. What's your opinion?  
How do Skeptics, Spectators, and Explorers contribute to a democracy?

## 1.3 Lesson Plan: Connecting Politics to Everyday Life

### Overview

Students compare people's knowledge of celebrities to their knowledge of politicians, learn about their local, state and national representatives, and recognize important links between political issues and their everyday lives. They then gather information about the views of their Congressional representative(s) as they relate to political issues that affect them.

### Key Skills

**NCSS Civic Ideas and Practices Expectations:** Identify, seek, describe, and evaluate multiple points of view surrounding issues—noting the strengths, weaknesses, and consequences associated with holding each position.

**McREL Language Arts Standards:** Understand the use of stereotypes and biases in visual media (e.g., distorted representations of society; imagery and stereotyping in advertising; elements of stereotypes such as physical characteristics, manner of speech, beliefs and attitudes; use prewriting strategies to plan written work (e.g., use graphic organizers, story maps, and webs; group related ideas; take notes; brainstorm ideas; organize information according to type and purpose of writing)

**ISTE NETS Standards:** **4a:** Critical Thinking, Problem Solving, and Decision Making: identify and define authentic problems and significant questions for investigation; **3a:** Research and Information Fluency: plan strategies to guide inquiry; **3b:** Research and Information Fluency: locate, organize, analyze, evaluate, synthesize, and ethically use information from a variety of sources and media.

### Grades

9–12

### Time Estimate

Two or three 45-minute class periods, plus homework

### Required Resources

Computers with Internet access

### Preparation

Prior to teaching this lesson, bookmark all of the Web sites used in the lesson on each computer in your classroom, or upload all links to an online bookmarking tool such as [del.icio.us](http://del.icio.us) ([del.icio.us](http://del.icio.us)). Preview all of the Web sites and videos used in the lesson to make certain that they are appropriate for your students. Make copies of **Worksheet 1.3** for all students.

### Procedure

- Grab interest:** Do you know your representatives? Begin by showing Niaz Mosharraf's short film "America for Dummies," available at Media That Matters ([www.mediathatmattersfest.org/8/index.php?id=10](http://www.mediathatmattersfest.org/8/index.php?id=10)). (Note: Teachers should preview the video to make sure that it is currently available and accessible in your classroom.) Discuss: How does the filmmaker portray teenagers in the film? From your point of view, what is accurate and inaccurate?
- Replicate the experiment shown in the film.** Show students pictures of two celebrities (Paris Hilton, Tiger Woods, etc.) and two of your political representatives (state, local or national). Keep track of which pictures students recognize most often. Use this opportunity to introduce students to their local political leaders and some of their stances on current issues. Information about most local leaders can be found by entering your zip code at Vote Smart ([www.votesmart.org](http://www.votesmart.org)).
- Connect politics to daily life.** Pass out Worksheet 1.3, which connects issues in students' daily lives to political questions. You might want to have students read aloud the various paragraphs on political issues in daily life. After reading, have students pair with partners and discuss: Which activity on this list is most important to you in your daily life? Why? Which activities are least important to you? Why?
- Preview the research and writing activity.** Use the rubric below, which identifies the components of the project.
- Explore Vote Smart.** Show students the introductory video at Vote Smart ([votesmart.org/video.php](http://votesmart.org/video.php)), a Web site that provides balanced information about elected public officials in a project that involves thousands of citizens, conservative and liberal alike, working together. Demonstrate how to search the Vote Smart site by entering your zip code in the Find Your Representative section. Click on one of your members of Congress. Show students that they can learn about the representative's voting record, issue positions, interest group ratings and campaign finances and review speeches and public statements.
- Introduce the Idea Generators and Get My Vote.** Show students American Public Media's Idea Generators ([americanpublicmedia.org/publicradio/engage08](http://americanpublicmedia.org/publicradio/engage08)) and NPR's Get My Vote site ([www.npr.org/getmyvote](http://www.npr.org/getmyvote)). Explain that these sites contain user-generated content related to the elections. Show students how to search the sites to locate commentaries and ideas related to specific election issues.
- Homework: Gather and organize information.** Have students work in pairs to find information online about what politicians and citizens think about one of the issues on the worksheet, or an issue in the 2008 election that is of particular interest to them. You may wish to assign students specific issues and representatives to ensure coverage of key information. Ask each student to take notes from the Web sites they use and gather 5–7 key facts and ideas. They can investigate:
  - Politicians' views.** Using Vote Smart, students can research local, state, and national representatives to see where they stand on the issues that affect their lives. Students can use the Search box on the site to find information about specific issues. They can click on the "How members voted" link on the right-hand side of the results page to see how their representative voted.
  - Citizens' views.** While students are still in pairs, have them visit American Public Media's Idea Generators, where they can explore key research on issues, then share and comment on potential solutions. At this Web site, students can post their own ideas, vote on the feasibility of others' ideas, and see what others think of their proposals. Students can also search the text, audio, and video portions of Get My Vote to explore the views of fellow citizens.
- BLOG THIS!** Ask students to blog about what they learned about their issue and representative(s). Alternative: Have students compose letters to their representative(s) explaining why a particular issue is important to them and what they would like to see done about it. They can send these letters to their representatives and post them on their blogs.

### Assessment

Students should be encouraged to read and respond to each other's blogs. Their in-class and online participation as well as their blog posts can be used to assess their understanding and engagement.



### Featured Widget/Web Sites

Idea Generators

Get My Vote

### Worksheet 1.3 Connecting Politics to Everyday Life

Instructions: Working with a partner, share ideas about one of the topics below, or an Election '08 issues that is of particular interest. Then use the Internet to find out where your local, state or national representative and fellow citizens stand on the issue. Explore Project Vote Smart ([www.votesmart.org/index.htm](http://www.votesmart.org/index.htm)), Get My Vote ([www.npr.org/getmyvote](http://www.npr.org/getmyvote)), and/or the Idea Generators ([americanpublicmedia.publicradio.org/engage08](http://americanpublicmedia.publicradio.org/engage08)). Compose a short written response to share your opinions and document what you learned. If applicable, post it to your blog.

Activity	Issue
<b>Eat Breakfast</b>	Nutritional Labeling. Do you know how many calories you ate this morning? Under existing law, most pre-packaged foods must be labeled to disclose nutritional facts. Some people want restaurants to disclose nutritional information such as calories, fat, protein, carbohydrates, etc. for restaurant foods as well. Do you think this is a good idea? Why or why not? Do you want to know how many calories are in your breakfast sandwich?
<b>Walk/Drive to School</b>	Driving Laws for Teenage Drivers. Did you know that driving laws are different in every state? Did you know that in some states it is legal to talk on a cell phone and drive at the same time; in some states it is illegal; and in some states it is legal for adults but not for teenagers? What do you think is fair? Because teenagers are involved in deadly accidents more than any other group, many driving laws focus on teens. Each state has different Drivers' Ed requirements, and some states have curfews for teen drivers and limits on how many passengers they can have in the car. Do you think these laws are a good idea? Do you think teen driving laws should be different in each state, or should they be the same across the country? What are the laws in your state?
<b>Math Class</b>	Testing. No Child Left Behind is the primary way in which the government measures the success of public schools. When students perform badly on standardized tests, their schools are punished. Some people think that the emphasis on testing is taking away from students' learning, but other people argue that standardized testing is the only way to ensure quality and equity in education. What do you think?
<b>World Languages Class</b>	National language and bilingual education. Some people believe that English should be the official national language of the United States. Others believe that our nation is founded on the energy of immigrants who should be able to maintain their original language as they participate in civic and cultural life. Some people want to end bilingual education programs that let new immigrants learn in their native language while studying American English. Would you support a law that cut programs in bilingual education or one that made English the national language? Why or why not?
<b>Music/Art/ Physical Education Classes</b>	Funding for music, art, and physical education. What would your life be like without music, art or exercise? Many public schools are cutting back on music, art and physical education programs due to lack of funds. Some people argue that we need to increase government funding for music and art programs. Other people think that music, art and physical education are not as important as traditional academic classes. How would you prioritize music, art, and P.E.? Would you support requiring these classes?
<b>Technology Class</b>	Internet Filtering. Have you ever tried to research something on the Internet at school and found your access was blocked? This is because most schools and libraries use Internet filtering to prevent inappropriate images from appearing on school computers. Some people think this is necessary because it prevents kids from being distracted by non-educational materials or from receiving inappropriate information or contact. Other people think kids need the freedom to access information on the Internet and that there are other ways to prevent kids from using inappropriate Web sites at school. Does your school use Internet blocking software? Is this a good thing or a bad thing?
<b>Health Class</b>	Abstinence Education. Where should kids learn about sex? Some people think that schools should tell kids not to have sex until marriage and leave it at that. Other people think that schools should provide students with information about sexually transmitted diseases and safe sex options. What do you think?
<b>Lunch</b>	Free/Reduced Lunch. Have you ever been hungry but not had money to buy lunch? There are lots of kids who don't have enough money to buy lunch at school, and the government helps them through the National School Lunch Program. This program provides subsidies to schools so that schools can offer free and reduced lunch programs. As food prices rise, school lunch programs are getting harder to sustain – and some lawmakers recommend eliminating free and reduced lunch. What's your take?
<b>Job</b>	Minimum Wage. What can you buy with \$6.55? The current Federal Minimum Wage is \$6.55 per hour (effective July 24, 2008). It will rise to \$7.25 per hour on July 24, 2009. Some people think this is not enough money to live on. Other people think businesses will not be able to afford to pay this much money to all of their employees. What do you think is a fair minimum wage?
<b>Play Video Games</b>	Video game ratings. Do you know what "M" and "AO" stand for on your video games? They mean "Mature" and "Adults Only." Some people want to make it illegal for kids under 17 to buy M rated or AO rated video games. Others prefer not to have laws limiting who can buy games. What's your take? Should access to violent or anti-social video games be regulated?
<b>Watch TV</b>	Cable regulation. Are your parents complaining about the high prices on the cable bill? This is a major concern for the Federal Communications Commission. Right now cable is sold in bundled packages under a tiered pricing system. Some people want to change this so people can pick channels a la carte and only pay for the ones they actually watch. Which do you think is a better system? What are the advantages and disadvantages of each?
<b>Eat Dinner</b>	Food Safety. Have you heard of E. coli, Salmonella and Mad Cow Disease? These are all potentially deadly consequences from eating food that has not been handled properly. Some people think the government should monitor food safety more closely. Other people think that more food safety regulations will unfairly hurt the people who grow food. What do you think?

## II. Analyze

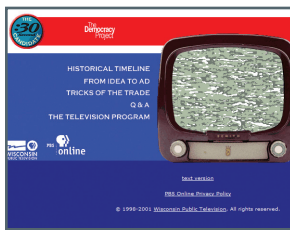
### Overview

These lessons engage students in critique and evaluation of various types of media messages using key concepts of media literacy. Students learn about the role of media in political campaigns throughout American history. Students identify genres and persuasive techniques in political discourse and assess the credibility of media messages. Students consider the pros and cons associated with key issues in the 2008 Election campaign using social media tools.

Here are the Key “Analyze” questions to ask about media messages:

- How are language, image and sound used to grab attention and shape meaning?
- What kinds of persuasive appeals are used?
- What is left out – or omitted – from the message?





**Featured Web Site**  
:30 Second Candidate

## 2.1 Lesson Plan: Changing Media, Changing Campaigns

### Overview

Students explore how media technologies have played a role in presidential campaigns throughout history. After assessing the timeline illustrating the history of media in presidential campaigns on the :30 Second Candidate Web site ([www.pbs.org/30secondcandidate](http://www.pbs.org/30secondcandidate)), students research how media has been used in the 2000, 2004 and 2008 elections. They determine key events to be placed into a timeline. Compiling information, photos, and videos of media use during those campaign years, students create a timeline of the changing media technologies used in these elections using Xtimeline ([www.xtimeline.com](http://www.xtimeline.com)) or a similar Web 2.0 timeline tool. If you like, students can create a timeline using more traditional means (Word, PowerPoint, paper) as an alternative.

### Key Skills

**NCSS Civic Ideas and Practices Expectations:** Make decisions and solve problems as they locate, research, analyze, organize, synthesize, evaluate, and apply information about selected civic issues (past and present) in key primary and secondary sources

**McREL Language Arts Standards:** Understand the complex web of influences that media exert on society as a whole (e.g., shaping various governmental, social, and cultural norms; influence on the democratic process; influence on beliefs, lifestyles, and understanding of relationships and culture; examining how the role of media and technology shape viewers' perceptions of reality)

**ISTE NETS Standards:** **1c:** Creativity and Innovation: use models and simulations to explore complex systems and issues; **4c:** Critical Thinking, Problem Solving, and Decision Making: collect and analyze data to identify solutions and/or make informed decisions; **1b:** Creativity and Innovation: create original works as a means of personal or group expression

**Grades** 7–12

**Time Estimate** Four 45-minute periods, or two periods with homework

**Required Resources** Computers with Internet access

### Preparation

Prior to teaching this lesson, bookmark all of the Web sites used in the lesson on each computer in your classroom, or upload all links to an online bookmarking tool such as del.icio.us ([del.icio.us](http://del.icio.us)). Preview all of the Web sites used in the lesson to make certain that they are appropriate for your students. Make copies of Worksheet 2.1 for all students.

Visit Xtimeline.com ([www.xtimeline.com](http://www.xtimeline.com))—or a similar tool—and sign up for a free account. You can sign up for one account and username that the entire class uses, or each student can create an account and be listed as an “editor” on your timeline. Create a timeline for the class to work on titled “New Media in Presidential Campaigns.”

### Procedure

- 1. Activate prior knowledge.** Invite students to share their earliest memories of U.S. presidential campaigns. Discuss: What do you remember about campaigns from the past? What media sources (e.g., newspapers, magazines, Web sites, TV programs) did you and your families use to find out about the candidates and issues?
- 2. Introduce the lesson.** Explain that students will be examining how the role of media technologies can influence presidential campaigns. Ask them to think about how media technologies have evolved throughout history, from print, to photographs, to film and radio, television, cell phones and the Internet. They should consider how media might influence: (1) how politicians communicate with the public; (2) how people get information; (3) how journalists tell stories about campaigns, candidates and issues; and (4) how the public can communicate with and about the candidates.
- 3. Learn about key moments in previous presidential campaigns.** Divide students into groups of 3–5. Hand out **Worksheet 2.1**. Ask students to visit the historical timeline on the :30 Second Candidate site ([www.pbs.org/30secondcandidate/timeline](http://www.pbs.org/30secondcandidate/timeline)) and answer questions on the worksheet. Discuss the answers in class, focusing on how media has influenced the campaigns. Note to students that this timeline ends at 1998, and foreshadow that they will be asked to extend the timeline up to the present day.
- 4. Gather information for an updated timeline.** Assign each group to research either the 2000, 2004 or 2008 presidential campaign. Explain to students they will be creating a timeline featuring key historical moments and uses of media in those campaigns. In groups, students conduct research online to explore what media technologies were available during their assigned time periods – and how such media were used in those presidential campaigns. First, students should find out the basics of the campaign (who the candidates were, what the race was like, the outcome of the campaign, etc.). They should then focus on how media was used in those campaigns. Students should collect photos and video clips to illustrate their findings—and keep track of where they find all of their information.  
Encourage students to discuss the following questions in their small groups.  
(Alternatively, you can have them write down their answers and use these as an assessment tool.)  
**Discuss:** What were the popular forms of media for these campaigns? What were advertisements like, and how/where did people receive them? How did people receive news about the campaign? How did people communicate with each other about the candidates? How did people communicate with the candidates?
- 5. Create an online timeline.** Students pinpoint at least 5 key historical moments (by year, or by date, if possible) that demonstrate the use of media in these campaigns and create a short paragraph for each to enter into the XTimeline. Students can embed photos and videos within the timeline, but XTimeline requests that they cite the source of these photos and videos. (Depending on timeframe, this work can be assigned as homework.)

For students who have trouble finding information, you may wish to recommend the following online resources:

- Bill Moyers Journal: Politics 2.0  
[www.pbs.org/moyers/journal/12072007/profile.html](http://www.pbs.org/moyers/journal/12072007/profile.html)  
This article explains the importance of social media in the 2008 election.

- techPresident  
[www.techpresident.com](http://www.techpresident.com)  
This blog focuses on how 2008 election candidates are using the web.
  - The Living Room Candidate  
[www.techpresident.com](http://www.techpresident.com)  
This site offers collections of commercials from presidential campaigns throughout history, including 2000 and 2004.
  - TNS Media Intelligence's CMAG research newsletters (see left side of page)  
[politicsontv.com/news.asp](http://politicsontv.com/news.asp)  
This site provides information about media trends in campaigns, including 2004–2008.
  - George Washington University: Campaign Communications 2004  
[www.gwu.edu/~action/2004/comms04.html](http://www.gwu.edu/~action/2004/comms04.html)  
This site offers information focusing on the role of media in the 2004 election.
  - C-SPAN Classroom: Campaigns & Elections Index  
[www.c-span.org/classroom/govt/campaigns.asp](http://www.c-span.org/classroom/govt/campaigns.asp)  
This site offers presidential campaign information, including video clips.
- 6. Share and discuss.** Have students present their timelines and share the key historical moments they chose to include. Discuss similarities and differences among the campaigns.
  - 7. BLOG THIS!** Have students embed links to their timelines on their blogs. Have students post comments on their own blogs in which they **(1)** identify and explain three important aspects of the media's influence on the presidential election they studied and **(2)** hypothesize about the role of media in the 2012 presidential campaign.

### Assessment

Use students' performance answering questions on Worksheet 2.1 as an indicator that they can successfully read and navigate a Web site to find information about political campaigns of the past. You may also use the rubric below as a form of self-evaluation or as a means to offer feedback on students' work on the historical timeline project.

Criteria	Score
I have pinpointed at least 5 historical moments by date/year that demonstrate the role of media in the campaign process.	
I have selected appropriate photos and/or videos to embed in my timeline.	
I have identified the sources of information and images I used in creating the timeline.	
I have written a brief but accurate description of each event.	
I have completed a final blog entry reflecting what I learned.	

### Extension

XTimeline allows users to add comments below the timeline. Have students comment on each other's timelines on the XTimeline site.

## Worksheet 2.1 The Role of Media in Presidential Campaigns

**Instructions:** How have media technologies influenced presidential campaigns throughout history? Explore the timeline on *The :30 Second Candidate* ([www.pbs.org/30secondcandidate/timeline](http://www.pbs.org/30secondcandidate/timeline)) and answer the following questions. For each question, be sure to note the year.

1. Who was the first president to appear on television?  
What was his usual medium of addressing the public, and why might his publicists have preferred this medium for him?
2. Explain the significance of the “Eisenhower Answers America” campaign.  
Who is Rosser Reeves, and how did he play a part in this campaign? How did it change the use of television in presidential campaigns?
3. How was television used in the Nixon–Kennedy presidential campaign?  
What were the implications?
4. Who was the famous “Daisy” ad created for, and why?  
What was its impact?
5. Who appeared in ads wearing a work shirt on his farm?  
What was the purpose of appearing as an outsider?
6. Who bought blocks of network television time to address voters, and what was the result?
7. What is the purpose of photo “morphing” of candidates?  
When did it become popular?
8. Explain how Bill Clinton used ads to compare his agenda to Bob Dole’s position.



## 2.2 Lesson Plan: Identifying Genres & Persuasion in Political Discourse

### Overview

Students learn about six different genres. Students find examples of these genres within the 2008 presidential campaign Web sites and explain how different parts of the sites represent different genres. Students identify how persuasive appeals are used within each genre. Finally, students write a blog entry that captures the key ideas they learned.

### Key Skills

**NCSS Civic Ideas and Practices Expectations:** Identify, seek, describe, and evaluate multiple points of view surrounding issues – noting the strengths, weaknesses, and the consequences associated with holding each position

**McREL Language Arts Standards:** Understand the use of stereotypes and biases in visual media (e.g., distorted representations of society; imagery and stereotyping in advertising; elements of stereotypes such as physical characteristics, manner of speech, beliefs and attitudes; use prewriting strategies to plan written work (e.g., use graphic organizers, story maps, and webs; group related ideas; take notes; brainstorm ideas; organize information according to type and purpose of writing)

**ISTE NETS Standards :** **4a:** Critical Thinking, Problem Solving, and Decision Making: identify and define authentic problems and significant questions for investigation; **3a:** Research and Information Fluency: plan strategies to guide inquiry; **3b:** Research and Information Fluency: locate, organize, analyze, evaluate, synthesize, and ethically use information from a variety of sources and media.

**Grades** 7–12

**Time Estimate** One to two 45-minute periods, or one period plus homework

**Required Resources** Computers with Internet access

### Preparation

Prior to teaching this lesson, bookmark all of the Web sites used in the lesson on each computer in your classroom, or upload all links to an online bookmarking tool such as del.icio.us ([del.icio.us](http://del.icio.us)). Preview all of the Web sites used in the lesson to make certain that they are appropriate for your students. Make copies of **Worksheet 2.2** for all students.

### Procedure

1. **Introduction:** Where do we get information? Have a short class discussion about how we receive media messages about the presidential campaigns and candidates. **Ask:**
  - Where do you get news about the presidential campaign?
  - What are other ways you might receive messages about the campaign?
  - How do your parents get information and news about the campaign?
2. **Make sense of political genres.** Pass out **Worksheet 2.2**, and go over the six different genres. Ask students to provide examples of television shows or specific content for each genre.
3. **Understand persuasive appeals.** Explain that the following persuasive appeals are based on Aristotle's three forms of rhetoric – the art of speaking and writing effectively. This definition is broadened to include media texts as rhetorical messages. In order to be an effective message-maker, one must understand these three forms and how they make messages more persuasive.
4. **Compare and contrast.** In pairs, have students visit the 2008 presidential candidates' Web sites ([www.johnmccain.com](http://www.johnmccain.com) and [www.barackobama.com](http://www.barackobama.com)). Ask students to complete Worksheet 2.2 by finding examples of each of the different genres, explaining why each example fits within that genre and identifying the persuasive appeals used.
5. **Share and discuss.** In small groups or as a whole class, have students share and discuss their findings. **Discuss:**
  - Which genres were represented on the candidates' sites? Which ones were missing? Why do you think this is the case?
  - Did certain messages fit more than one genre? Provide specific examples from the sites. What are the benefits of a message fitting more than one genre? What are the drawbacks?
  - What are some of the patterns in the stylistic techniques of each genre? Do some genres use certain techniques more or less than others?
  - What are some of the patterns in the persuasive appeals of each genre? Do some genres rely on certain types of appeals more than others?
  - What percentage of each type of persuasive appeal do you believe falls into each genre?
6. **BLOG THIS!** At the end of class or for homework, ask students to share their best examples of various genres on their blogs by linking to or embedding each example and explaining how persuasive appeals are used. Then, ask students to respond to each other's posts.

### Assessment

Use students' performance answering questions on Worksheet 2.2 and their blog posts as indicators that they can successfully read and navigate a Web site to find information and understand the various genres and persuasive techniques. Students' responses to other's postings can be used to assess their collaboration and communication skills.

## Worksheet 2.2 Identifying Genre & Persuasion in Political Discourse

**Instructions:** Visit each presidential candidate's Web site— [www.johnmccain.com](http://www.johnmccain.com) and [www.barackobama.com](http://www.barackobama.com)—and explore the sections of the site. Look for examples of each of the six genres, then identify the persuasive appeals used. On a separate sheet, make a chart like the one below to describe the examples you find at each Web site and then explain the patterns that you find on your political blog.

Presidential candidates use a wide range of media genres in their political discourse. A genre is a category of media message that often follows certain stylistic techniques. Different types of political messages use different persuasive appeals.

There are six genres of political discourse in the media:

- **News:** Event-driven stories that answer the 5 W's (who, what, when, where, and why)
- **Advertisement:** Promotions for people, products, services or ideas
- **Opinion:** Reactions and interpretations
- **Advocacy:** Proposals for action that promote a particular point of view or course of action
- **Entertainment:** Stories focused on pleasure, fun and amusement
- **Research:** Evidence, information or fact-focused studies, polls, and statistics

There are three **persuasive appeals** that come from Aristotle's classical rhetoric:

- **Ethos:** Appeals to authority. This type of appeal is focused on the credibility, authority, authenticity, trustworthiness, and character of the speaker.
- **Pathos:** Appeals to emotion. This type of appeal focuses on techniques that generate strong emotions and feelings among the audience.
- **Logos:** Appeals to logic. This type of appeal focuses on information, facts, figures and claims that support the message.

Presidential Candidate	Find Examples of Each Genre	Identify the Persuasive Appeal
John McCain's Web site	News:  Advertisement:  Opinion:  Advocacy:  Entertainment:  Research:	
Barack Obama's Web site	News:  Advertisement:  Opinion:  Advocacy:  Entertainment:  Research:	



**Featured Web Site**  
Public Radio Exchange

## 2.3 Lesson Plan: Listening in on the Election Process

### Overview

Students learn about the political process by exploring various formats of radio programming from PRX, the Public Radio Exchange. They evaluate the authority and authenticity of election-related programming. Finally, they compose a blog entry about what they have learned. (Note: This lesson works well as a precursor to lesson 3.3.)

### Key Skills

**NCSS Civic Ideas and Practices Expectations:** Identify assumptions, misconceptions, and bias in sources, evidence, and arguments used in presenting issues and positions; articulate an informed personal position on a civic issue based on reasoned arguments resulting from consulting multiple sources

**McREL Language Arts Standards:** use a variety of strategies to enhance listening comprehension (e.g., focusing attention on message; monitoring message for clarity and understanding; asking relevant questions; noting cues such as change of pace or particular words that indicate a new point) recognize how format shapes message content; recognize how message credibility is shaped by perceptions of authority and authenticity; make notes while listening; use precise and descriptive language to summarize, clarify and enhance ideas

**ISTE NETS Standards: 4c:** Critical Thinking, Problem Solving, and Decision Making: collect and analyze data to identify solutions and/or make informed decisions; **1b:** Creativity and Innovation: create original works as a means of personal or group expression.

### Grades

7–12

### Time Estimate

Two 45-minute class periods, plus homework

### Required Resources

Computers with Internet access

### Preparation

Prior to teaching this lesson, create an account at the Public Radio Exchange Web site ([www.prx.org/membership](http://www.prx.org/membership)) and bookmark all of the Web sites used in the lesson on each computer in your classroom, or upload all links to an online bookmarking tool such as del.icio.us (del.icio.us). Preview the Web sites used in the lesson to make certain that they are appropriate for your students. Make copies of **Worksheet 2.3** for all students (3 copies per student).

### Procedure

- Grab interest.** Ask: Can people who are in jail vote in an election? Explain that students will be listening to some eighteen-year-old inmates at the Long Creek Youth Development Center in South Portland, Maine who voted for the first time in 2004. This type of radio program is called “vox-pop,” which is short for “vox populi” or “voice of the people.” This format of radio program features short interviews from average citizens.  
Listen to “Voting Behind Bars” at PRX ([www.prx.org/pieces/2460](http://www.prx.org/pieces/2460)). Discuss: Should prisoners be allowed to vote? Why or why not? How did the first-person perspective of the radio piece affect your opinion? Were there other aspects of the radio piece that helped to shape your view?
- Judging credibility:** What’s authentic and authoritative? Explain to students that in deciding what to believe, people often judge the credibility of media messages without much awareness. Introduce students to the concepts of authenticity and authority as two dimensions of credibility. Authenticity is about being genuine, honest and “real.” Authority means commanding expertise and credibility on a topic. People’s judgments of authority and authenticity depend on their life experience and exposure to various kinds of media.
- Audio as a medium.** Audio is a powerful medium, but many students are unfamiliar with it. Ask: How many of you regularly listen to the radio to access news and information? What are the advantages and disadvantages of this medium relative to others (e.g., video, print)?
- Introduce students to PRX.** Explain that anyone can listen to thousands of radio pieces available on the PRX Web site by creating a free account. Demonstrate the search tool (under “all search options”) on the PRX Web site by typing “election” and then looking at the list under “format.” Show students how to select audio stories by keyword, format and tone on the Search page ([www.prx.org/search](http://www.prx.org/search)).
- Explore radio formats.** Discuss: Which of the various names for format (first-person, interview, feature, diary) are familiar? Which categories are unfamiliar? Explain the characteristics of any unfamiliar categories.
- Understand the power of tone.** Tone is the author’s attitude toward his or her subject and/or the reader or listener. Review the list of adjectives, or tags, that identify the tone of the audio pieces at PRX.org. Discuss: How might tone affect our perceptions of authority and authenticity? Why do you think these concepts are important to radio producers?
- Listen for learning: Practice.** Pass out copies of **Worksheet 2.3** (3 copies per student). Tell students that you are going to play a radio piece and they are expected to listen. Explain that afterward they will write a short summary and identify how the piece communicates authenticity and/or authority. You may want to use the following audio piece for practice.

#### Latina Voting Power ([www.prx.org/pieces/25211](http://www.prx.org/pieces/25211))

Check to see that students can summarize the practice piece and make sure they can identify the format and tone and understand the concepts of authenticity and authority. Discuss: What is the piece about? Describe the format and tone of this piece. What factors in the audio piece contribute to your judgments about authenticity and authority?

- Compare and contrast.** At the end of class or for homework, ask students to choose two pieces about the 2008 elections from the PRX database, making sure that they cover roughly the same topic(s) but differ in format and/or tone. (Note: You may wish to ensure coverage of key issues and candidates by providing a list of topics for students to pick from or assigning topics). Students review the two pieces, taking notes about the main ideas and the factors that contribute to the authenticity and authority of each, using Worksheet 2.3 as a guide.
- BLOG THIS!** Students use their notes to compose a post in which they compare and contrast the two audio pieces and assess the tone, format, authenticity and authority of each.

### Assessment

Use students’ final blogs to assess their grasp of content as well as technology, communication and collaboration skills.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Class: \_\_\_\_\_

## Worksheet 2.3 Listening in on the Election Process

**Instructions:** Listen to a radio piece at the Public Radio Exchange Web site ([www.prx.org](http://www.prx.org)). Write a brief summary in 1–2 sentences. Then listen to it again, noting how the piece achieves its authenticity and/or authority.

**Title:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Author:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Format:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Tone:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Summarize** the story's main idea in 1–2 sentences:

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Consider whether the piece seems authentic and is authoritative. What makes it seem real? What makes it seem believable? Describe specific ways that the content, format, and/or tone of the message helps add authenticity and authority.

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Information that is  
authentic seems **real**,  
**honest** and **genuine**.

Information that is  
authoritative seems  
**credible** & **trustworthy**.

## 2.4 Lesson Plan: Debate with the Devil's Advocate

### Overview

Students use the You Decide Web site to shape their ideas about key issues in the 2008 election. Students explore the *You Decide* Web site, figuring out how people interpret issues differently, identifying persuasive techniques, and determining what knowledge is missing. In the process, they build critical thinking skills and background knowledge about the issues.

### Key Skills

**NCSS Civic Ideas and Practices Expectations:** Identify, seek, describe, and evaluate multiple points of view surrounding issues – noting the strengths, weaknesses, and the consequences associated with holding each position; articulate an informed personal position on a civic issue based on reasoned arguments resulting from consulting multiple sources

**McREL Language Arts Standards:** summarize and paraphrase information from texts with complex, implicit hierarchic, including the relationships among the concepts and details; recognizing argument and persuasion techniques.

**ISTE NETS Standard: 2a:** Communication and Collaboration: interact, collaborate, and publish with peers, experts, or others employing a variety of digital environments and media

### Grades

10–12

### Time Estimate

Two 45-minute classes, plus homework

### Required Resources

Computers with Internet access

### Preparation

Prior to teaching this lesson, bookmark the You Decide Web site ([www.kqed.org/wyoudecide](http://www.kqed.org/wyoudecide)) and any additional sites on each computer in your classroom, or upload all links to an online bookmarking tool such as del.icio.us ([del.icio.us](http://del.icio.us)). Preview the Web sites to make certain that they are appropriate for your students. Make copies of **Worksheet 2.4** for all students.

### Procedure

1. **Introduce a key 2008 political issue.** Choose one of the political issues from You Decide (health care, the “oil crisis,” income tax, the “war on terror,” or immigration). Introduce the issue by discussing what students already know and why the issue is considered important. Alternatively, you can share a short video or audio piece on the issue. [Note: You can search professional pieces of video on your issue from the Online NewsHour with Jim Lehrer ([www.pbs.org/newshour](http://www.pbs.org/newshour)) or use the user-generated pieces about the issue from Ballot Vox ([ballotvox.prx.org](http://ballotvox.prx.org)).] The key is to hook students into thinking about why the issue matters.
2. **Solicit personal connections to the issue.** Encourage students to imagine how and why different people might care deeply—and differently—about the issue. Ask them to explain how they personally feel about the issue and examine where their feelings and beliefs come from.
3. **BLOG THIS!** Why care? For homework, students write a few paragraphs about the issue answering the question “Why care?”
4. **Preview the assignment:** Debating with the devil’s advocate. Distribute Worksheet 2.4 and have students work in pairs at computers. Have students visit the *You Decide* Web site and click on the issue you previewed earlier, or choose a different issue. Ask students to read the initial question and record their own positions on the issue at the top of the worksheet.

Explain that each time students choose “Yes” or “No,” the You Decide site will present an alternative viewpoint that might change their minds. There are five rounds. In each round, one student will be the “reader” and the other is the “decider.” The decider determines whether to maintain the previous position or choose a new one. Students swap roles at the end of each round.

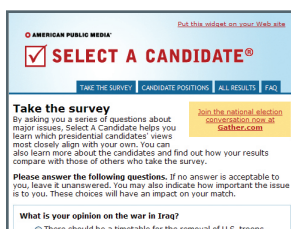
5. **Partners make decisions on the issue and judge the persuasiveness of the information.** Before each decision, the “reader” will quietly read the selection aloud to the “decider.” After the reading is finished, both students consider which ideas are most convincing and make notes about key points on Worksheet 2.4. They discuss the topic and identify how the points they noted use various persuasive techniques. [Note: Students may record persuasive techniques on the graphic organizer (logos, ethos, pathos, etc), following the model used in Lesson 2.2.] Then the “decider” chooses “Yes” or “No” and the activity moves to the next round. Students record their choices for each round.
6. **Has your position changed?** At the end of the class period, lead a discussion about how students’ views and positions may have changed. Do students feel differently about certain issues? Do they feel more engaged?
7. **BLOG THIS!** For homework, have students write and post an opinion piece using some of the points they noted in class. Students should be assigned to visit and comment on 1–2 other students’ blogs.

### Assessment

Use Worksheet 2.4 and students’ blog posts to assess their knowledge of the issues and communication, collaboration and technology skills.

### Extensions

- Hold a class debate about one or more of the issues students explored on *You Decide*.
- The Idea Generators at American Public Media’s Engage 08 site ([americanpublicmedia.publicradio.org/engage08](http://americanpublicmedia.publicradio.org/engage08)) offer rich background texts and links to dig deeper into issues (e.g., health care, the American dream, the U.S. economy). After exploring the Idea Generators, students can browse solutions proposed by other users and vote to rank their feasibility. Students can also put their new knowledge in action by posting their own ideas.
- Have students search candidates’ sites to learn about their positions on the issues and see what points they use to support their views. Students can warm up by taking the Select a Candidate quiz ([americanpublicmedia.publicradio.org/engage08/selectacandidate](http://americanpublicmedia.publicradio.org/engage08/selectacandidate)), which matches students’ views with those of the candidates.
- Have students research how this issue matters to individuals and groups in your local area.



### Featured Widgets/Web Sites

*You Decide*

*Idea Generators*

*Select a Candidate*

Name:

Date:

Class:

**Worksheet 2.4 You Decide**[www.kqed.org/w/youdecide](http://www.kqed.org/w/youdecide)**Issue question**

Initial Position: Yes or No (Circle One).

<b>Readings</b>	<b>Effective points</b> What supported/changed/shaped your view?	<b>Ineffective Points</b> What seemed weak in supporting or challenging your view?	<b>Persuasion Techniques</b> List techniques and Mark + or – for effective or ineffective
<b>Round 1 Decision:</b> Yes   No			
<b>Round 2 Decision:</b> Yes   No			
<b>Round 3 Decision:</b> Yes   No			
<b>Round 4 Decision:</b> Yes   No			
<b>Round 5 Decision:</b> Yes   No			

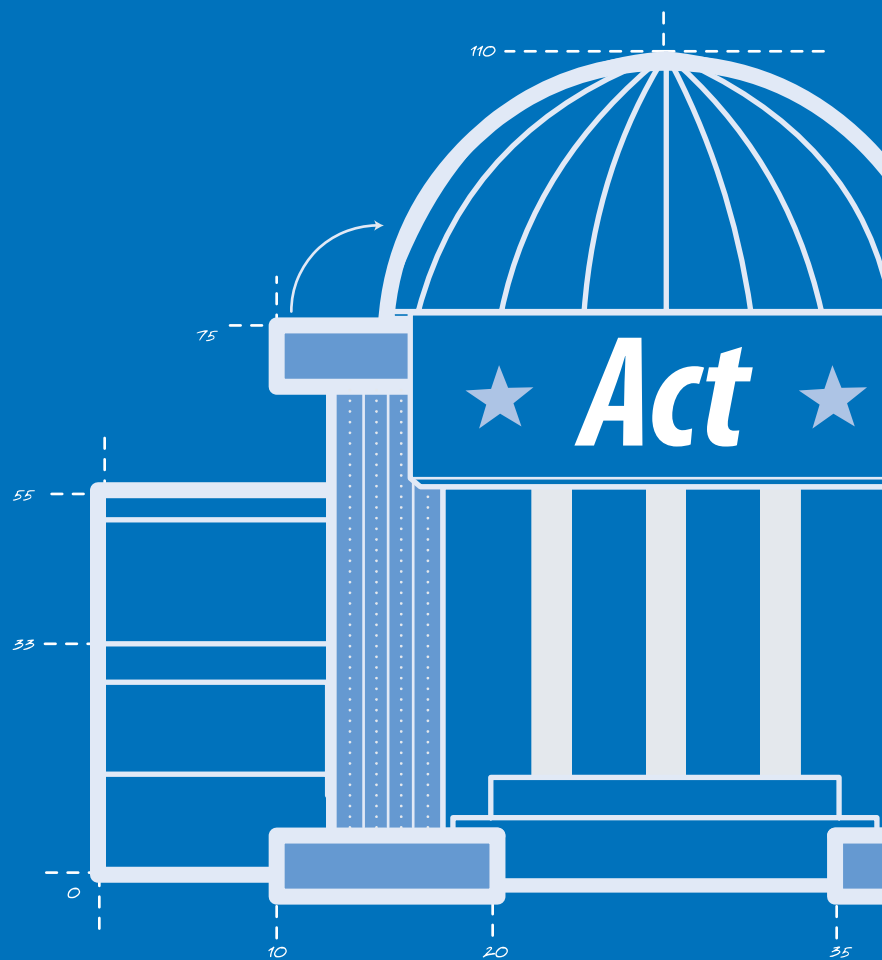
# III. Act

## Overview

Students explore the ways in which they can take action on political and social issues using social media tools. Students learn about the power of effective questioning practices by analyzing questions posed to politicians and posing their own questions. Students also make their voices heard by creating and recording extemporaneous speeches about current political issues and sharing them on their blogs and social media sites. Students design, create and share advocacy videos that reflect the conventions of a specific genre.

Here are the key “Act” questions:

- What kinds of media messages encourage people to think critically and communicate with others about political issues?
- How do political messages affect people’s actions in the real world?
- What are the best and most responsible ways to use persuasion in the political process?
- How can you use media to make a difference in society?



### 3.1 Read & Discuss: Linking Youth, Politics and Social Media

#### Overview

Students read about the participation gap among young people in the political process and learn about the role that social media can play in promoting civic engagement.

#### Key Skills

**NCSS Civic Ideas and Practices Expectations:** Practice forms of civil, civic discussion and participation consistent with the ideals of citizens in a democratic republic

**McREL Language Arts Standards:** use prior knowledge and experience to understand and respond to new information; use new information to adjust and extend personal knowledge base; draw conclusions and make inferences based on explicit and implicit information in texts; differentiate between fact and opinion in informational texts

**ISTE NETS Standard: 3c:** Research and Information Fluency: evaluate and select information sources and digital tools based on the appropriateness to specific tasks

#### Grades

7–12

#### Time Estimate

One 45-minute period

#### Preparation

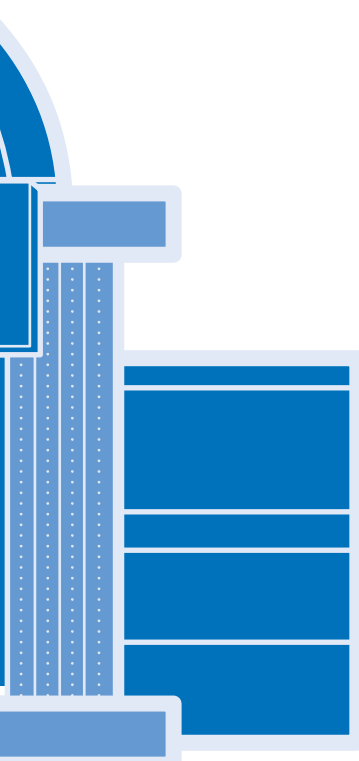
Make copies of Worksheet 3.1 for all students

#### Procedure

- 1. Grab interest.** Ask students to close their eyes and put their heads on their desks for a confidential survey. Ask them to raise their hands if the answer to the following question is “Yes”: Are you 100% confident that you will vote when you turn 18? Make an informal count. Then ask students to guess what percentage of students in the class raised their hands. Introduce the reading, which looks at the participation gap between college-students and non-college students aged 18 to 25.
- 2. Read.** Depending on your students’ ability, you may want to preview unfamiliar vocabulary.  
**Disparity:** A lack of equality and similarity, especially in a way that is not fair.  
**Dissect:** To cut open or to examine something in detail.  
**Turnout:** The number of people who are present at an event, especially those who go to the polls to vote during an election.
- 3. Discuss.** After students have finished reading, hold a large-group discussion using the questions at the end of the reading. Depending on your students, you may want to use small group discussion or partners so that everyone can participate actively. Invite each group to summarize some key ideas at the conclusion.
- 4. BLOG THIS!** For homework, ask students to reflect upon the reading and discussion in an entry on their blogs. In addition or as an alternative, you may wish to have students write an extended response to one or more of the discussion questions.

#### Assessment

Review students’ blog entries to ensure that they have understood and processed the key ideas from the reading and discussion and to assess their communication, collaboration and technology skills.





## Worksheet 3.1 Linking Youth, Politics and Social Media

**True or False:** Young people don't get involved in politics. Here are the facts:

- In the 2000 presidential election, while 70% of adults over 25 voted, only 42% of youth 18–24 voted.
- 18–24 year-olds now represent 13% of the population but only 8% of the vote.
- High school graduates vote at nearly twice the rate of high school dropouts, and college graduates vote at three times the rate of high school dropouts.
- The voter turnout rate for 18 to 25-year-olds is consistently 21–49% lower than adults for all elections in all states, and it has been this way since the voting age was lowered to 18 in 1972.

Young people are often seen by older generations as not caring about politics. However, the 2008 election may be different. The Center for Information and Civic Learning & Engagement (CIRCLE) found that in the 2008 primary election, there was a record turnout of 6.5 million young voters (under age 30). The youth voter turnout rate almost doubled from 9% in 2000 to 17% in 2008. Some states saw triple or quadruple increases in youth voters. Results showed that college students are very concerned about political issues and want their leaders to be positive, address real problems and call on Americans to be constructively involved.

### The Participation Gap

There are big gaps in youth voting that need to be examined. It turns out that, while one out of every four college students voted in the 2008 Super Tuesday states, only about one in 14 out-of-college young people voted. According to Time magazine, this disparity in voter turnout has persisted since 1976, with only minor improvements in 2000 and 2004.

There are 13 million 18- to 25-year-olds who have never been enrolled in college in America. So far, only about three million of them voted in the primaries. Many non-college youths come disproportionately from lower-income backgrounds and from African American and Latino communities. These are the communities that stand to gain the most from more political power and resources. What are some solutions to encourage ALL young people to participate in the political process?

### Social Media: A Tool for Civic Engagement

One solution is using social media. Political involvement for today's young people is different than it was for their parents' and grandparents' generations. Being politically engaged means taking action: going to a rally, protesting, or joining a union. Today's youth can also get informed and involved through social media. The Internet and social media tools offer information and opportunities for communication about key political and civic issues. These resources allow youth to connect with others and often provide ideas for taking action, such as gathering petitions, contacting politicians, raising money, organizing high-profile demonstrations, or volunteering. Many of today's youth identify themselves as political bloggers; they have signed online petitions, written e-mails and/or posted comments advocating their positions.

Social media allows young people to easily connect with like-minded people interested in the same political issues and learn from people with differing opinions. Yet, we must be careful not to mistake online conversation for full political engagement. The ultimate goal in making social change is to move from conversation to collaboration and action.

### For Discussion

1. Are there ways that teens can get other young adults interested in social issues? Which techniques would likely be most effective?  
Which issues do you think young people are likely to care most about? Why?
2. Some people say that all social change results in large part from the energy and idealism of young people. Others say that young people's involvement in social change is mostly superficial and that youth are easily manipulated into high-visibility actions that may not contribute much towards genuine social change. Which do you believe to be true?
3. Some people hold the belief that in order to make real social change, you must try to persuade and change other people. Others believe you cannot really change other people; rather, they believe that "if you change yourself, you change the world." Still others believe that politics must involve competition and victory over others. Which view do you believe in, and why?



**Featured Widget/Web Site**  
Ask Your Lawmaker

## 3.2 Lesson Plan: Asking Questions That Make a Difference

### Overview

Students learn to think like journalists whose purpose is to ask good questions. Students use the Ask Your Lawmaker Web site ([www.askyourlawmaker.com](http://www.askyourlawmaker.com)) to learn about effective and ineffective questioning. They examine different types of questions, identify examples of these types, and then rewrite ineffective questions to be more direct and effective. Finally, they submit original questions on the Ask Your Lawmaker site.

### Key Skills

**NCCS Civic Ideas and Practices Expectations:** Practice forms of civil, civic participation consistent with the ideals of citizens in a democratic republic  
**McREL Language Arts Standards:** use prior knowledge and experience to understand and respond to new information; use new information to adjust and extend personal knowledge base; draw conclusions and make inferences based on explicit and implicit information in texts; differentiate between fact and opinion in informational texts politicians.

**ISTE NETS Standard: 3c:** Research and Information Fluency: evaluate and select information sources and digital tools based on the appropriateness to specific tasks

### Grades

7–12

### Time Estimate

One to two 45-minute periods, or one period plus homework

### Required Resources

Computers with Internet access

### Preparation

Prior to teaching this lesson, bookmark all of the Web sites used in the lesson on each computer in your classroom, or upload all links to an online bookmarking tool such as del.icio.us ([del.icio.us](http://del.icio.us)). Preview all of the Web sites used in the lesson to make certain that they are appropriate for your students. Make copies of Worksheet 3.2 for all students.

### Procedure

- 1. Grab interest.** Ask: What is a trick question? Find out what students know about trick questions. Explain that a trick question makes you believe you should answer it in one way, when the question you are really meant to answer is hidden within it. The classic example is: "When did you stop beating your dog?" See if students are familiar with other kinds of trick questions.
- 2. Discuss the importance of asking good questions to politicians.** Skeptical citizens often point out that politicians only answer the questions they wish they were asked in order to stay "on-message." However, when a journalist poses a good question, a politician's response often speaks volumes, whether it addresses the question directly or not. Journalists who understand how to craft good questions are also prepared to pose substantive follow-up questions to learn as much as possible about the issues or people under investigation.

Talk with the class about how being an engaged citizen involves asking questions to lawmakers about where they stand on issues. Explain that we often do not think that how we ask a question may influence the type of response we get. There are many different ways to ask a question. You can be indirect or direct, dance around the issue or lead someone to answer in a particular way. When it comes to asking politicians questions, you want to be sure that you ask something that elicits a direct and complete answer.

- 3. Review types of questions.** Hand out and review copies of Worksheet 3.2. Explain that students will be visiting Ask Your Lawmaker ([www.askyourlawmaker.com](http://www.askyourlawmaker.com)), a Web site where people can pose questions to specific members of Congress. Visitors to the site can vote on the questions that they like most. Capitol News Connection journalists pose the best and most popular questions to legislators and post the responses on the site.

As a class, review the definitions for different types of questions on the worksheet. Provide the following examples to clarify the meaning of each question type:

**A. Multi-barreled Question example:** "Why do you think Americans and your constituents prefer our two-party system over a legislature with multiple parties as in many other nations around the world?" ([www.askyourlawmaker.com/questions/why-do-you-think-americans-and-your-constituents-prefer-our-two-party-system-over-legislat](http://www.askyourlawmaker.com/questions/why-do-you-think-americans-and-your-constituents-prefer-our-two-party-system-over-legislat))

This question is multi-barreled because each part asks two different things.

**B. Leading Question example:** "Do you agree that our liberties are being lost due to a predilection for secrecy, excessive police power and for withholding information to avoid embarrassment or exposure of malfeasance or incompetence?" ([www.askyourlawmaker.com/search/node#keys=polic%20power](http://www.askyourlawmaker.com/search/node#keys=polic%20power))

This question is leading because it starts out with "Do you agree that..."

**C. Hypothetical Question example:** "Would McCain try to reinstitute the draft if there are not enough volunteers for Iraq? Is military victory in Iraq that important to U.S. security?"

([www.askyourlawmaker.com/questions/would-mccain-try-reinstitute-draft-if-there-are-not-enough-volunteers-iraq%3F-military-victo](http://www.askyourlawmaker.com/questions/would-mccain-try-reinstitute-draft-if-there-are-not-enough-volunteers-iraq%3F-military-victo))

This question is hypothetical because it hinges on a what-if scenario that is not a current reality.

**D. Closed Question example:** "Do you think a border fence is the answer to our immigration problems?"

([www.askyourlawmaker.com/questions/do-you-think-border-fence-answer-our-immigration-problems%3F](http://www.askyourlawmaker.com/questions/do-you-think-border-fence-answer-our-immigration-problems%3F))

This question is closed because the answer is either "Yes" or "No" and does not provoke expansion on the issue.

**E. Direct and Open example:** "What do you think of the Patent Reform Act of 2007 and why is it not moving through Congress?"

([www.askyourlawmaker.com/questions/do-you-think-our-patent-system-needs-reform%3F-what-do-you-think-patent-reform-act-2007-and-](http://www.askyourlawmaker.com/questions/do-you-think-our-patent-system-needs-reform%3F-what-do-you-think-patent-reform-act-2007-and-))

Although it includes two questions, this phrasing is open and direct because it asks about the specific issue of Patent Reform Act of 2007 and invites the interview subject to elaborate on what s/he thinks about this Act and why it is not moving through Congress.

4. **Student partner teams search for question examples.** Once they have an understanding of the different types of questions, pair up students and have them visit the Ask Your Lawmaker Web site. Students should find one example of each type of question and record it on their worksheets.
5. **Discuss findings together.** Bring students back together to discuss what they found, asking them to explain why they identified questions as these specific types. You can expand this discussion to talk about the kinds of issues they noticed being addressed in the questions.
6. **Students rewrite questions to be more open and direct.** Ask students to rewrite the examples they found of multi-barreled, leading, hypothetical and closed questions so that they are more direct and open. Ask them to see if they can rewrite the one direct and open question they found to be even more direct and clear.
7. **Discuss.** Ask: Can ineffective questions be effective? Discuss some of the situations where multi-barreled, leading, hypothetical, and closed questions can be useful depending on one's purpose and goals. In what types of situations or contexts is it useful to use a leading question, for instance? What about a closed question?
8. **BLOG THIS!** Students create and post a list of 5-10 questions that they would like to ask one or both of the presidential candidates. Each student reads at least two other students' posts and comments on the best question(s).
9. **Post original questions on Ask Your Lawmaker.** After reviewing peer feedback, students select a question to post on the Ask Your Lawmaker Web site. They can check back intermittently to see how many votes their question gets and ultimately to see if it gets answered. (**Note:** Users must be 18 years-old or have the consent of a parent or guardian to post content on the *Ask Your Lawmaker* site. You may post questions for students in your own name or ask parents/guardians to grant permission for their students to post. The individual who posts the questions will need to register on the site.)

### Assessment

Use students' responses on Worksheet 3.2 to assess their ability to differentiate types of questions and their understanding of what constitutes an effective question. Use their blog posts and submissions on Ask Your Lawmaker to assess their ability to navigate a Web site, their communication and collaboration skills, and their understanding of the rights and responsibilities of digital citizenship.

### Extension

Watch a Debate. As a class or for homework, ask students to critique a recent televised debate or interview with a politician or presidential candidate. With knowledge of the five types of questions, students watch a video or read the transcript to analyze the effectiveness of the questions asked by the interviewer(s) or moderator(s) and consider how/whether the politician answered the questions. You may wish to use the democratic presidential debate between Hillary Clinton and Barack Obama hosted on ABC by Charlie Gibson and George Stephanopoulos on April 16, 2008, for which the hosts were sharply criticized ([abcnews.go.com/Politics/DemocraticDebate](http://abcnews.go.com/Politics/DemocraticDebate)). Another option is to watch one or both of the All-American Presidential Forums on PBS hosted by Tavis Smiley ([www.pbs.org/kcet/tavissmiley/special/forums](http://www.pbs.org/kcet/tavissmiley/special/forums)).

### Worksheet 3.2 Asking Questions That Make a Difference

**Instructions:** Read the definitions of the types of questions below. Browse through questions on [AskYourLawmaker.org](http://AskYourLawmaker.org) and find examples of each of the following types (be sure to include the URL, or link, for each sample question). Then, improve the questions by rewriting them to be more open and direct.

**Multi-barreled question:** Asks more than one question about the same topic, but each question may ask something slightly different.

Original Question:

Source:

Your Rewrite:

**Leading question:** Leads the person answering to agree with the person asking the question or think a certain way about the issue. May include phrases such as “Don’t you agree . . .” or “Isn’t it true that . . .”

Original Question:

Source:

Your Rewrite:

**Hypothetical question:** Offers a “what if” scenario or story that asks someone to speculate.

Original Question:

Source:

Your Rewrite:

**Closed question:** Only allows for a “Yes” or “No” answer and does not provoke elaboration. Closed questions are not helpful in encouraging someone to provide a thorough answer.

Original Question:

Source:

Your Rewrite:

**Direct and Open question:** Addresses a specific issue and gets to the core of what you want to know. Being open means inviting the addressee to elaborate and expand.

Original Question:

Source:

Your Rewrite:



**Featured Web Site**  
Get My Vote

### 3.3 Lesson Plan: Express Your View in a Vlog or Podcast

#### Overview

Students choose a campaign issue and develop a persuasive extemporaneous speech that they record as an audio or video file and post to their blogs and/or NPR's Get My Vote site ([www.npr.org/getmyvote](http://www.npr.org/getmyvote)).

#### Key Skills

**NCSS Civic Ideas and Practices Expectations:** Articulate an informed personal position on a civic issue based on reasoned arguments resulting from consulting multiple sources; share policy positions in such forms as position statements, editorials, or political cartoons

**McREL Language Arts Standards:** Make an oral presentation (e.g., using notes and outlines; using organizational pattern that includes preview, introduction, body, transitions, conclusion; maintaining a clear point of view; using evidence and arguments to support opinions; uses visual media); use appropriate verbal and nonverbal techniques for oral presentations (e.g., inflection/modulation of voice, tempo, word choice, grammar, feeling, expression, tone, volume, enunciation, physical gestures, body movement, eye contact, posture); use production elements that contribute to the effectiveness of a visual medium

**ISTE NETS Standards:** 2d: Communication and Collaboration: contribute to project teams to produce original works or solve problems; 3c: Research and Information Fluency: evaluate and select information sources and digital tools based on the appropriateness to specific tasks; 5b: Digital Citizenship: exhibit a positive attitude toward using technology that supports collaboration, learning, and productivity

#### Grades

7–12

#### Time Estimate

Two 45-minute class periods, plus homework

#### Required Resources

Video recording devices (video camera, web cam, video phone, etc.) and/or digital sound recording devices (computer with microphone), computers with Internet access

#### Preparation

Prior to teaching this lesson, bookmark all of the Web sites used in the lesson on each computer in your classroom, or upload all links to an online bookmarking tool such as del.icio.us ([del.icio.us](http://del.icio.us)). Preview all of the Web sites and video clips used in the lesson to make certain that they are appropriate for your students. Make copies of Worksheet 3.3 for all students.

#### Procedure

1. **Grab interest.** Play “The Government Promises Too Much”

([getmyvote.npr.org/kickapps/\\_The-Government-Promises-Too-Much/VIDEO/159145/18920.html](http://getmyvote.npr.org/kickapps/_The-Government-Promises-Too-Much/VIDEO/159145/18920.html)) on Get My Vote.

**Discuss:** What are the strengths and weaknesses of this speech?

Explain that an extemporaneous speech is a short talk on a topic of public interest. It is planned and organized in advance but not written out word-for-word like a manuscript speech. Through extemporaneous speeches, people illustrate how political topics are part of their everyday conversation with regular folks—it's not just information and conversation for experts and civics students. The direct, conversational style mimics interpersonal communication and does not use sophisticated editing techniques.

This is the most common type of video blog (or vlog) and is very common in audio posts as well. Vlog entries usually feature the blogger speaking directly to the camera about his or her views or experience in a direct, often conversational tone. Audio posts tend to use a similar conversational and spontaneous tone are generally recorded in a continuous take.

Political vlogs and podcasts most often express views in order to persuade viewers with so-called “plain talk” about issues. This style of speech has become an important, popular form of civic engagement online. Students will benefit from producing their own extemporaneous speeches, as they deepen their understanding of how this authentic simulation of interpersonal speech communicates powerfully, but differently, from the highly produced and edited pieces of other genres they analyzed in previous lessons.

2. **Evaluate speeches.** Handout **Worksheet 3.3** and discuss the evaluation criteria with students. Then view “The Government Promises Too Much” again. Have students give a score for the speech and ask them to justify their reasoning. You may wish to compare how extemporaneous speeches by ordinary people differ from speeches by politicians or experts. Students will likely pick up on how pauses and uncut, poorly produced video lend an air of credibility to amateur work. Online, authenticity may be as important as authority, which is the standard for mass media messages.

**Suggestion:** Be open to adding or adjusting items on the rubric according to student discussion. You could also try constructing the rubric itself during the discussion of student ideas about what is effective and convincing.

3. **Research and develop talking points.** Explain to students that creating an effective persuasive argument often involves anticipating and refuting counter-arguments. Tell students that as they craft their argument, they should look for ways that opponents might seek to undercut it and find effective ways to argue against opponents' claims. You may wish to use the sample video as an example and have students brainstorm and share possible counter-arguments. Then, as a class, you can discuss effective ways of addressing these counter-arguments.

Students should begin to gather information and prepare notes for their original speeches. If students have not previously researched election-related issues, you will need to allot time for them to do so. If they have completed lesson 2.3 or 2.4, they may use their notes to supplement their research. Since an extemporaneous speech is planned and organized but not written out word-for-word, talking points are key for maintaining students' focus. In brief phrases, students prepare ideas for their hook, thesis, introduction, supporting statements and concluding thoughts. Require students to include key facts that they have learned to support their view on an issue. Students should also consider using persuasive appeals (see Lesson 2.2). Speeches should be 2–3 minutes long.

4. **Perform and record speeches.** In pairs, allow students to rehearse their speeches once or twice with their partners (but remember, extemporaneous speeches can't sound too planned!). Students should be mindful of their pace, cadence, tone, clarity, emotion, and eye contact. For vlogs, the speaker should look at the camera as though looking another person in the eye. Finally, students record their speeches as audio or video files.

For video, remind students to make mindful choices about backdrop, lighting, focus and distance—most vlog entries are medium to close-up shots in a spontaneous setting. Likewise, students recording audio should think about the background noise and consider mentioning the setting in their speeches—it adds to an audio post’s authenticity when the speaker identifies herself or himself and the location. To manage time constraints, you may want to limit students to two or three takes.

5. **Upload to the Internet.** The final steps involve getting your students’ speeches from the video or audio recording devices into computers and then up onto the Internet. First, import audio and/or video to a computer and save the files in a compressed format that can be uploaded to student blogs. File types that work with most blogs are: AVI, MPEG, QuickTime, Real, and Windows Media. For audio files, m-peg or MP3 formats are easiest to transfer. Once they’re imported, students can easily upload their videos and audio files to their blogs. They can submit their videos to Get My Vote by following the directions on the site ([www.npr.org/getmyvote/sharestory.html](http://www.npr.org/getmyvote/sharestory.html)). (**Note:** Individuals must be 18 years of age to post to Get My Vote. Therefore, you may need to post your students’ work for them. You might consider having students vote on the best video or videos and submitting their favorites.)
6. **BLOG THIS!** Once students have uploaded their vlogs and/or audio posts to their blogs, encourage them to comment on each others’ posts. Invite them to respond to these questions: **(1)** How do their classmates’ audio/vlogs illustrate unique personalities and points of view? **(2)** Which vloggers/podcasters have shared particularly powerful evidence and reasoning?

### Assessment

Utilize the rubric below, or one you design with your students, to assess students’ speeches. Use their blog posts and/or their submissions on the Get My Vote site to assess their communication, collaboration, and technology skills as well as their understanding of the rights and responsibilities of digital citizenship.

Name:

Date:

Class:

**Worksheet 3.3 Take a Stand****Rubric**

Assessing an Extemporaneous Speech

**Student Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

For each item, score 0 to 5 points,

0=missing

1=very weak/ineffective

2=slightly effective

3=effective/satisfactory

4=strong/very effective

5=outstanding/utterly persuasive

Organization	Content	Speech Delivery	Technical—Video/Audio
Hook	relevant	pace/cadence	shot focus
Thesis	expresses clear opinion	tone	shot distance
Introduction	uses evidence for support	clarity	shot angle/movement
Support	shows knowledge of issue	eye contact	shot composition
Conclusion	information is credible	emotion	sound clarity
Subtotal =	Subtotal =	Subtotal =	Subtotal =

**Total\_/100**

### 3.4 Lesson Plan: Create an Advocacy Video

#### Overview

Student teams up to choose a political issue and design a short persuasive video that demonstrates their knowledge and position regarding the issue and urges viewers to take action. When completed, they post the video to a social media site, such as Youth Noise ([www.youthnoise.com](http://www.youthnoise.com)) or Youth Media Exchange ([ymex.org/members/join](http://ymex.org/members/join)), as well as their blogs.

#### Key Skills

**NCSS Civic Ideas and Practices Expectations:** Articulate an informed personal position on a civic issue based on reasoned arguments resulting from consulting multiple sources; share policy positions in such forms as position statements, editorials, or political cartoons

**McREL Language Arts Standards:** Make an oral presentation (e.g., using notes and outlines; using organizational pattern that includes preview, introduction, body, transitions, conclusion; maintaining a clear point of view; using evidence and arguments to support opinions; uses visual media); use appropriate verbal and nonverbal techniques for oral presentations (e.g., inflection/modulation of voice, tempo, word choice, grammar, feeling, expression, tone, volume, enunciation, physical gestures, body movement, eye contact, posture); use production elements that contribute to the effectiveness of a visual medium

**ISTE NETS Standard: 2b:** Communication and Collaboration: communicate information and ideas effectively to multiple audiences using a variety of media and formats

**Grades** 9–12

**Time Estimate** Two to three 45-minute class periods, plus homework

**Required Resources** Video recording devices (video camera, web cam, video phone, etc.), computers with Internet access, video editing software

**Prerequisites** (optional)

Students should have explored their positions on issues with You Decide ([www.kqed.org/w/youdecide](http://www.kqed.org/w/youdecide)) (see Lesson 2.4), analyzed persuasive techniques in advocacy messages (see Lesson 2.2), and/or assessed credibility in media messages (see Lesson 2.3).

#### Preparation

Prior to teaching this lesson, bookmark all of the Web sites used in the lesson on each computer in your classroom, or upload all links to an online bookmarking tool such as del.icio.us ([del.icio.us](http://del.icio.us)). Preview all of the Web sites and videos used in the lesson to make certain that they are appropriate for your students.

#### Procedure

**1. What is an advocacy video?** As a class, read about and look at examples of advocacy videos. Explain that the purpose of an advocacy piece is to:

- Educate—viewers about an issue or problem
- Motivate—viewers to be concerned about the issue
- Persuade—viewers to adopt a particular position
- Unite—people to take collective action
- Urge—people to do something about the issue or problem

To explore advocacy videos, read the Benton Foundation's case studies ([www.benton.org/publibrary/practice/features/advideocase3.html](http://www.benton.org/publibrary/practice/features/advideocase3.html)) about the effectiveness of advocacy video in creating real change. Then view these examples of advocacy videos:

- Forests: A Greenpeace video about the negative effects of deforestation. ([www.greenpeace.org/usa/campaigns/forests](http://www.greenpeace.org/usa/campaigns/forests))
- Love the 1 You're With: A three-minute film advocating upgrading, rather than replacing, computers to help the environment. ([www.lovethe1yourewith.com](http://www.lovethe1yourewith.com))
- Stop the Clash of Civilizations: A video that advocates for Middle East peace talks and promotes tolerance of cultural views. ([ymex.org/video/view.html?ID=160](http://ymex.org/video/view.html?ID=160))

After viewing each one, ask students to identify: 1) the issue or problem; 2) the producer's stance on the issue or problem; and 3) how the producer uses persuasive techniques to encourage viewers to take action.

**2. Brainstorm and plan.** Ask students to brainstorm in small groups about political and social issues about which they are passionate. Ask them to agree on one issue on which to take a stand. Tell students that they will be creating an advocacy video about their issue and that their goal is to persuade viewers to assume a particular point of view and take action. Before moving on, be sure students have clearly identified their issue and what their advocacy stance is. If students have not already explored positions on campaign issues in depth, you will need to allot time for them to do so.

**3. Plan and storyboard.** Students use creative brainstorming to plan out the main points of their video. Students should start thinking about what striking images, video footage, audio clips or live action they can include to make their message persuasive. Students then create a storyboard of the main points of their message on a large sheet of paper.

#### Example

Storyboard: Group 1

Topic: Dependence on oil

Position: Americans need to become less dependent on oil; consumers need better options for cleaner cars.



### Storyboard

Introduction	Scene 1	Scene 2	Scene 3	Scene 4	Conclusion
Exhaust fumes, traffic, gridlock	Problem: America's reliance on oil	Problem: Price of oil increasing	Problem: Damage to environment	Solution: Consumers need more options for less oil-dependent vehicles	Predict the future: What will happen if we go on like this? We need transportation. We need options. Join STCD – Striving Towards Cleaner Driving.

4. **Script.** Once students have created their plan and you have approved it, they should script the video according to their storyboard. A typical script includes a column for the written/spoken text and a column for visual shots. Example:

SCRIPT	VISUALS
VOICEOVER: "Americans are getting fed up with our options for driving. A majority of our citizens rely on cars, but we can't keep spinning our wheels."	Crowded rush hour traffic Close-up of frustrated driver

5. **Gather media footage and shoot live action.** You can provide students with more information on how to create a video by having them visit the Youth Noise site ([www.youthnoise.com/page.php?page\\_id=6074](http://www.youthnoise.com/page.php?page_id=6074)). Students can gather media about their issue by visiting the Web sites of news sources, advocacy organizations and the presidential candidates. If students are using found footage, they should be encouraged to cite their sources correctly. If students are shooting live action footage, they should produce that footage during this step. (Note: Be sure all students play a role in the process. It may be beneficial to assign students to different roles, e.g. director, actor, cameraperson, soundperson).
6. **Compile and edit.** Using editing software such as iMovie or FinalCutPro, students edit the clips to create a cohesive video. If students need different ways to put together their video, check out the options listed in "50 Web 2.0 Ways to Tell a Story" ([cogdogroo.wikispaces.com/50+Ways](http://cogdogroo.wikispaces.com/50+Ways)).
7. **Screen the final videos.** Once students have edited the final version of their videos, screen them all in class. Be sure students introduce their video, and have classmates respond to the persuasive techniques the producers used.
8. **Upload final videos.** Finally, students upload their videos on Youth Noise ([www.youthnoise.com](http://www.youthnoise.com)), Youth Media Exchange ([ymex.org/members/join](http://ymex.org/members/join)), or another social media site. The class can periodically return to the sites where they post their videos to check on comments and/or ratings from viewers. Students should also upload their videos to their blogs.
9. **BLOG THIS!** Students can view and comment on other students' videos, including their stance on the issue and the effectiveness of the persuasive techniques used. Were students inspired to take action? Why or why not?

### Assessment

Students should present a portfolio of documents that demonstrate their research and planning process. Some of these documents might include:

- Topic Research
- Video Planning—created effective storyboard and script
- Live Action—effective production skills (camera, lighting, sound)
- Video Editing—compilation of clips and editing shown in video
- Content: Used persuasive and effective language, still images, video, and live action to present a clear advocacy position
- Group collaboration and participation

Use students' blog posts and/or their submissions on youth media sites to assess their communication, collaboration skills, and technology skills as well as their understanding of the rights and responsibilities of digital citizenship.

# Resources

## Recommended Public Broadcasting Web Sites

### American Experience: The Presidents

[www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/presidents/2008](http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/presidents/2008)

Explore election and campaign themes through guiding questions that help you navigate American Experience video clips featuring issues in past presidential campaigns. Watching these engaging historical video clips helps provide context for understanding current campaigns.

### Ask Your Lawmaker

[www.askyourlawmaker.org](http://www.askyourlawmaker.org)

Pose questions to specific Congressmembers and vote on other users' questions. Capitol News Connection journalists will track down the lawmakers, pose the most popular and best questions, and post the answers on the site as audio files. Students can actively contribute to the political discourse through their questions and votes while they learn about effective questions and tagging.

### BallotVox

[ballotvox.prx.org](http://ballotvox.prx.org) main site

[www.flickr.com/photos/23736174@N06/favorites](http://www.flickr.com/photos/23736174@N06/favorites) photo archive

[ballotvox.vodpod.com](http://ballotvox.vodpod.com) video archive

[del.icio.us/ballotvox](http://del.icio.us/ballotvox) tags and links to various resources

Explore political views through popular blog posts, videos, pictures, and podcasts created and submitted by regular people—user-generated content about the candidates and issues based on local perspectives. Via e-mail, students can submit links to media they find or create to BallotVox moderators, who decide which submissions to post.

### Budget Hero

[americanpublicmedia.publicradio.org/engage08/budgethero](http://americanpublicmedia.publicradio.org/engage08/budgethero)

Play this fun, animated game to see how fiscal decisions we make today might affect our personal and national future. Control spending in defense, education, health care, the environment and other areas. Read about the pros and cons of your decisions.

### NOW: Burning Questions

[www.pbs.org/now/election-2008/index.html](http://www.pbs.org/now/election-2008/index.html)

Explore a rich collection of video, articles and links that students can use to study particular election-related issues. "Burning Questions" asks critical questions such as "Is the electoral college system fair?" and provides answers along with links to NOW clips and election resources across the Web.

### Campaign Audio

[campaignaudio.prx.org](http://campaignaudio.prx.org)

Use the curated multimedia resources on this site to research candidates and issues. The radio pieces, supporting articles, and links provide resources for public radio or student news producers.

### Get My Vote

[www.npr.org/getmyvote](http://www.npr.org/getmyvote)

Explore and post audio, video and/or text commentaries regarding personal political convictions and what it takes for candidates to earn users' votes. Users can rate, review and discuss submissions. Moderators and users monitor content for appropriateness. National Public Radio shows will utilize the commentaries. This offers a great opportunity for students to make their voices heard.

### Idea Generators: Health Care, The Economy and The American Dream

[americanpublicmedia.publicradio.org/engage08](http://americanpublicmedia.publicradio.org/engage08)

Explore key research on issues, then share and comment on ideas for solutions posted by fellow users, which are displayed in map and category formats. Within the Idea Generator for each issue, post your own ideas, vote on the feasibility of others' ideas, and see what others think of yours.

### ITVS Classroom's Vote Democracy!

[www.pbs.org/independentlens/classroom/itvscommunityclassroom.html](http://www.pbs.org/independentlens/classroom/itvscommunityclassroom.html)

The films "Please Vote for Me" and "Iron Ladies of Liberia" offer thought-provoking perspectives on the changing nature of democracy across the globe. The educator guide and video modules help students explore topics such as international democracy, women in leadership roles, and media literacy.

### NewsHour/NPR Election Map & You Predict Game

[www.pbs.org/newshour/vote2008](http://www.pbs.org/newshour/vote2008)

See election results, voter polls and links to state-by-state news items as your pointer hovers over different areas of the map. Students can easily connect to local issues and stats. The "You Predict" button allows users to change the map to predict winners as they assign states' electoral votes.

### Public Radio Exchange

[www.prx.org](http://www.prx.org)

PRX is a database of audio pieces on a wide range of topics created by the public media community. This Web site enables listeners to access diverse, high-quality programming.

### Select a Candidate Quiz

[americanpublicmedia.publicradio.org/engage08/selectacandidate](http://americanpublicmedia.publicradio.org/engage08/selectacandidate)

Take the matchmaker quiz and see which candidates are most aligned with your views and opinions on political issues.

### **Vote By Issue Quiz**

[www.votebyissue.org/election2008](http://www.votebyissue.org/election2008)

Take this matchmaker quiz, based upon direct quotes from candidates, to predict how your views will line up with their views on specific issues in the election. Then, see how your predictions match up with the actual candidates.

### **You Decide**

[www.kqed.org/w/youdecide](http://www.kqed.org/w/youdecide)

Vote “Yes” or “No” on issue-based questions—regarding immigration, health care, taxes, and more—to begin this devil’s advocate game. Then, reconsider your answer through a few rounds of short readings presenting opposing views. Finally, see how your informed opinion compares to other users’.

## **Other Recommended Web Sites**

### **Social Media**

#### **Blogging Safely**

[www.edtechmag.com/k12/issues/january-february-2006/professional-edge.html](http://www.edtechmag.com/k12/issues/january-february-2006/professional-edge.html)

This brief article gives eight key suggestions for safe blogging.

#### **Creating Your Own Media**

[www.ourmedia.org/learning-center](http://www.ourmedia.org/learning-center)

This page offers a variety of accessible resources for users to get started creating and sharing video, audio, text and multimedia content on the web.

### **Civic Engagement & Elections**

#### **Declare Yourself**

[www.declareyourself.org](http://www.declareyourself.org)

Declare Yourself is a national non-partisan, non-profit campaign to empower and encourage every eligible 18-year-old in America to register and vote in the presidential primaries and 2008 presidential election. This is an online campaign resource designed to energize and empower young voters.

#### **Fact Check**

[factcheck.org](http://factcheck.org)

Fact Check is a non-partisan, non-profit consumer advocate for voters that aims to reduce the level of deception and confusion in U.S. politics. The site monitors the accuracy of what is said by major U.S. political players in the form of TV ads, debates, speeches, interviews and news releases.

#### **Fact Check Ed**

[factchecked.org](http://factchecked.org)

This site introduces principles of rhetoric through creative lessons on reasoning, argument, evaluating evidence and determining the difference between facts, beliefs and values.

#### **Media That Matters**

[www.mediathatmattersfest.org](http://www.mediathatmattersfest.org)

The Media That Matters Film Festival is a showcase for short films on the most important topics of the day. These films from communities around the world engage diverse audiences and inspire them to take action.

#### **You Choose**

[www.youtube.com/youchoose](http://www.youtube.com/youchoose)

You Choose is a You Tube channel that includes video clips from political speeches, news and user-generated videos about the campaign and issues.

#### **National Mock Election**

[nationalmockelection.org/game](http://nationalmockelection.org/game)

Play the game “The Road to the Capitol,” which simulates a presidential candidate’s campaign from start to finish.

#### **Politifact**

[politifact.org/truth-o-meter](http://politifact.org/truth-o-meter)

This Web site rates politicians’ statements from “True” To “Pants on Fire” and keeps track of who misquoted politicians and how. There is also a guide to Internet sources that is divided into categories for Government, Policy and Advocacy.

#### **Redistricting Game**

[www.redistrictinggame.org](http://www.redistrictinggame.org)

A fun game about gerrymandering that makes an important and complicated concept accessible to students. This site helps students understand exactly how their votes count. It includes links for activism and provides information about how gerrymandering works in your own state.

#### **Youth Noise**

[youthnoise.org](http://youthnoise.org)

Youth Noise is an online community for youth social and political activism, with opportunities to learn, share ideas and take action.

#### **Youth Media Exchange**

[ymex.org/members/join](http://ymex.org/members/join)

This site allows youth to upload videos and other media related to global issues. Users can react to uploaded media with ratings and comments and can also post media as a response.

## Glossary

### Blog

A Web site that features regular, dated entries (as in a journal) using text, graphics, video and/or audio posted by an individual or small group of authors. Blogs come in countless varieties, including news journalism, personal journals and musings on topical themes. Blogs can be used to help connect students to class themes, communicate with each other and the teacher and make course content relevant beyond the classroom.

### Mashup

A media product that combines and/or manipulates video, audio, text, images and/or designs from two or more sources to create a new work. For example, a political mashup video might combine news footage of candidate speeches with a pop song and some other video to create new commentary. Analyzing and creating mashups are good ways to heighten students' ability to recognize how media messages are constructed for different audiences and for different purposes.

### Podcast

A podcast is a digital media file, usually audio or video, that can be played on a computer or portable media players (MP3 players, mobile phones). Podcasts are often made available regularly for periodic distribution through subscriptions. Students who make podcasts for school projects can share their work using portable devices and post it to their blog, school Web site, or other Web site.

### RSS

RSS (Real Simple Syndication) is a way to feed Web sites that publish frequently (such as blogs, news, podcasts) into one's computer, Web site, or portable media player (MP3 player, mobile phone). RSS makes it possible for people to keep up with their favorite web sites in an automated manner that's easier than checking them manually. An RSS document, which is called a "feed," "web feed," or "channel," contains either a summary of content from an associated Web site or the full text.

### Social media

Social media integrate technology, social interaction and the construction of shared meanings and experiences from many different users. Social media users create content, share various perspectives, swap favorites, tell stories and make comments using words, pictures, video and audio. Unlike traditional media that use technologies as conduits to deliver meanings and experiences, social media focus on people's interactions with each other and with media texts as shared experiences. Social media also provide many students with venues for asserting and developing their identities, tastes and values through their media messages and interactions.

### Social networking sites

A social networking site allows users to join communities of people who share interests and activities, or to explore the interests and activities of others. Most sites allow users to create profiles or self-description pages, which often include pictures, video, music, text and a variety of design elements. Some educators encourage students to build profiles that include academic interests, achievements, representations and discussions, and help students connect with groups interested in course content.

### Tag

A tag is a keyword that attaches to a text or media file on a Web site, which can be used to organize and find. Many Web sites feature a list of tags or a "tag cloud" that shows all of the keywords used to organize the content.

### User-generated Content

User-generated content (UGC) refers to text, audio, video and applications created by users who post their work to Internet sites produced by others.

### Vlog

A vlog is a "video blog," which often involves an individual speaking directly into a camera.

### Web 2.0

Web 2.0 refers to Internet sites and applications that facilitate creativity, interaction, collaboration, participation and data-sharing between users and producers (as opposed to Web sites that simply display information). Web 2.0 emphasizes community by incorporating wikis, social networking, tagging, RSS, and other tools.

### Widget

A widget is any tool or piece of code that can be embedded within a web page. It allows a user to display content from someone else's Web site on his or her site.



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