

# Media Literacy Guide

A guide on how to read and interpret news stories

Grade Level: 9-12      Lesson time: 20 minutes



## Overview

In today's media-driven world—through television, online platforms, or social media—the ability to access, analyze, and critically evaluate information is essential for a healthy democracy. Informed citizens are better equipped to participate in decision-making, hold power accountable, and contribute to public discourse, ensuring a more transparent, just, and connected society. Media literacy empowers students to create, reflect, and take action, using the power of information and communication to make a meaningful impact.

## How do I practice media literacy?

- **When you read any information, the first thing to ask yourself and look into is, where is the article from and is the content trustworthy?**
  - In order to do this, look at who the author/writer is and see if you recognize the news medium. Is it important to distinguish if it is on a platform or a news source, and if it is on a platform, to find out the source of the information.
    - Platform: a distributor of news (i.e. Facebook, Instagram, etc.)
    - News Source: Originator of news
- **Next, determine what type of story you are reading.**
  - Figuring out the type of story will help you distinguish if it is direct information, opinion, or something else. This gives you more information on how to digest the information.

## Types of Stories

- **Breaking News / Briefs:**
  - This is news of the moment – and really important to check sources on.
- **News Story:**
  - These are reports on anything from city council meetings to stories on education issues to environmental policy.
- **Profile:**
  - These stories are deep dives into understanding a key member of the community.
- **Community, Entertainment and Events Information:**
  - This news source serves as a connector in the community, sharing details about arts, entertainment calendars, and community and non-profit events.
- **Investigative Reporting:**
  - These are stories that help expose community problems, with extensive reporting and use of data mining techniques, which sometimes involves uncovering information that powerful forces want hidden.

## Types of Stories cont'd.

- **Opinion / Op-Ed / Community Voices:**
  - Articles that express personal views, often written by outside contributors like community members or experts. These are distinct from news reporting.
- **Editorials:**
  - Opinion pieces written by a publication's editorial board, representing the newspaper's official stance on an issue.
- **Columns:**
  - A type of story where the writer covers news, but with a strong personal voice and perspective.
- **Question & Answer (Q&A):**
  - Stories featuring on-the-record interviews with public figures or interesting individuals, presented in a question-and-answer format with a brief introduction.
- **Series:**
  - These are a group of stories under the same theme, event, or topic.
- **Promoted Content / Advertising:**
  - Stories created by the advertising team and paid for commercially. They should be clearly marked to distinguish them from news content.

## Additional terms to help interpret news and information:

### **Beats:**

These are areas assigned to a reporter for regular coverage, area of reporting or news coverage, including: Environment, Health, Sports, Education, Housing & Development, Arts & Culture, Food & Dining, and Politics & Government.

### **Source:**

A person, record, document, or event that provides the information for a story.

### **News Outlet:**

Publications that uphold editorial standards for accuracy, objectivity, and professionalism. They provide in-depth, fact-checked reporting, which can be published in print or online.

- Examples: Lookout Eugene-Springfield, The Daily Emerald, The Oregonian, The Register-Guard, New York Times, and the Washington Post.