LESSON PLAN

Wacky Media Songs: Community Engagement

This lesson is part of USE, UNDERSTAND & ENGAGE: A digital media literacy framework for Canadian schools. http://mediasmarts.ca/teacher-resources/digital-literacy-framework

LEVEL: Grade K to 3

DURATION: 10-15 minutes per activity

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Overview

This lesson series contains discussion topics and extension activities for teachers to integrate the TVOKids Original series *Wacky Media Songs*. This lesson focuses on students' ability to influence positive social norms in online spaces and to speak out as active, engaged citizens.

Learning outcomes

Students will:

- Understand that media are constructions that present partial and imperfect reflections of reality
- Understand that media have social and political implications
- Distinguish between fact and opinion and between reliable and unreliable sources
- Understand that interactions through digital media can have a real impact
- Consider the ways that their actions affect their communities and people around them

Preparation and materials

- Review the following *Wacky Media Songs* videos and prepare to show students the ones you wish to discuss:
    - The Algorithm Knows!
    - End It Now!
    - Fake News!
    - Like Don't Like!
    - Fact Versus Opinion Showdown!
    - Frame It!
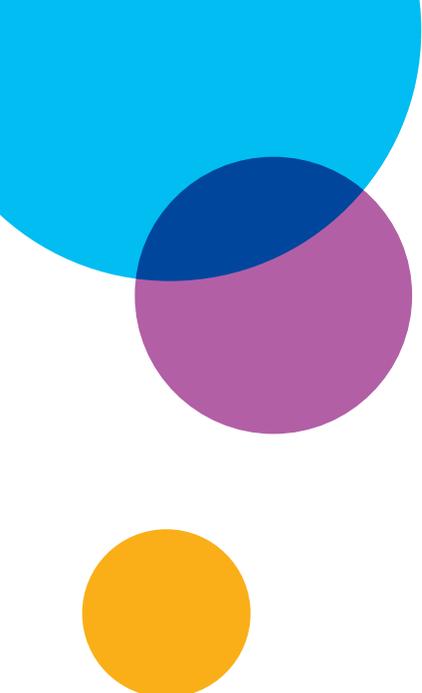
Procedure

Each of the videos in this lesson has discussion prompts for before and after viewing the lesson. Some also have extension activities to follow the lesson.

After reviewing the videos, choose which ones you feel will be most interesting and relevant to your students.

THE ALGORITHM KNOWS!

How does the Internet know that Ava loves puppies and why does it show her all kinds of stuff about puppies? Because the algorithm knows! An algorithm is like an online formula that collects information about us based on what we search for and what videos we watch. Mystery solved!

Before the video, ask: Do you know the word "algorithm"? What do you think it means?

After the video, ask: What are some apps or websites that you use that use algorithms? (YouTube uses an algorithm to recommend what to watch next; Google uses one to decide what search results and ads to show you.)

Why do they use algorithms to decide what to show you? (It lets them target you with ads and other content you're more likely to respond to.)

What might be bad about only seeing the things the algorithm recommends to you?

END IT NOW!

Bullying in real life or online is always wrong! If it happens to you or a friend, it's important to speak up and tell someone you trust about it. That's how we can help end cyberbullying once and for all!

Before the video, ask: Have you ever seen anyone being mean to someone online? What happened? Do you think it hurts when it happens to someone?

After the video, ask: What can you do if someone is mean to you online? (Tell a parent, guardian or teacher.)

What can you do if you see someone being mean to someone else? (Contact them privately to tell them you think what's happening isn't okay, and ask if there's anything you can do to help. You can also tell a parent, a guardian, or a teacher.)

FAKE NEWS!

Fake news can look like it's real, but sometimes it's just someone trying to trick you. How can you tell the difference? Ava's got hot tips on how to spot fake news!

Before the video, ask: What's the difference between news and other media?

After the video, ask: What are some of the things Ava suggests doing to find out if a news story is reliable? (Find out where it came from and if they're a reliable source of news.)

What are some places reliable news comes from? (Print newspapers, TV news broadcasts, websites of reputable news organizations.)

Extension Activity: Pick a topic or a question that students are interested in. Use the tipsheet How to Search the Internet Effectively to find some good sources. Once you have some sources that you know are reliable, you can even make your own custom search engine!

You can also use this custom search engine to search twenty reliable, kid-friendly sites: bit.ly/kids-search

Remember that we're more likely to trust things we want to believe, and we'll try harder to debunk things we don't want to think are true. Encourage students to ask three questions before they investigate anything:

•   What do I already know or believe about this?

•   Why do I want to believe or disprove it?

•   What would make me change my mind?

For more tips on finding out if a source is reliable, see this short MediaSmarts video.

LIKE DON'T LIKE!

When we like something, kind of automatically without giving something else a chance, it's called bias. We all have biases and so does the media. Ava's song explores the ways that bias affects us all.

Before the video, ask: Do you know the word "bias"? What do you think it means to be biased?
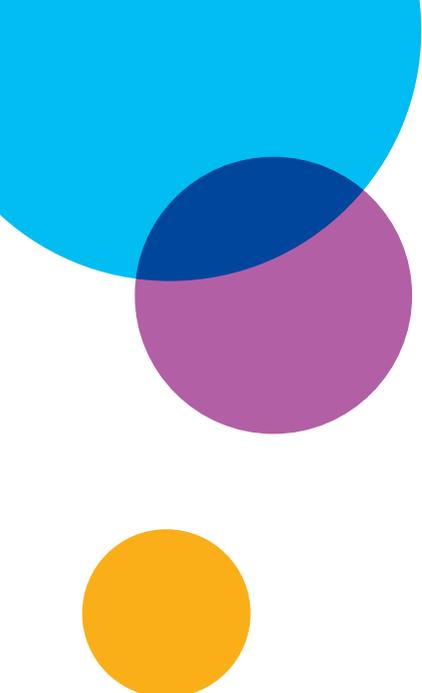
After the video, ask: Everyone has biases for and against things (like cats and dogs in the video). What are some of your biases? How does it help us to know our own biases?

Extension Activity: Take a look together at some of students' favourite cartoons that feature animals. Are there some that are usually bad guys? Are there some that are usually good guys? Are there some kinds of animals that never appear at all? (That's a kind of bias too!)

FACT VERSUS OPINION SHOWDOWN!

Get ready to play the Fact or Opinion game with Ava! There's a big difference between a fact and an opinion. Knowing how to tell them apart is super important. And that's a fact!

Before the video, ask: What do you think a "fact" is? How is it different from an opinion?

After the video, ask: Can something be a fact and still be wrong? (A fact is something that can be proven – but not all facts are proven to be true. "The moon is made of cheese" is a fact statement, but it's not a true fact.) How do we know which opinions are more convincing? (You can never totally prove an opinion is true, but you can use facts to show that one opinion is more convincing than another.)

FRAME IT!

Frames aren't just for pictures! When we tell a story, we choose what parts to keep in and what parts to leave out. What we keep is "in the frame". Every type of media has a kind of invisible frame, too! Get in the frame with Ava!

Before the video, ask: What kinds of choices do you think people make when they make media, like filming a movie?

After the video, ask: What's the difference between looking out a window and seeing something framed in media?

How can the media frame sometimes be misleading?

Extension Activity: Watch the video *House Hippo 2.0*. How does it use the media frame to make the hippo look real?

You can also watch the video *Basic Puppeteering Using A Monitor* to see how important the media frame is in making puppets look real. If you have any puppets, you and your students can use your phone to "frame" a puppet video!