LESSON PLAN

Digital Media Literacy for Democracy

This lesson is part of *USE, UNDERSTAND & ENGAGE: A Digital Media Literacy Framework for Canadian Schools*: http://mediasmarts.ca/teacher-resources/digital-literacy-framework.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR: MediaSmarts

LEVEL: Grade 9 to 12

This lesson package is designed to be modular, allowing teachers to choose activities that are most relevant to their students. The recommended sequence is as follows:

Minds On: Spotting Deepfakes (30 minutes): A "minds on" activity that introduces essential concepts of election-related misinformation, helps students retrieve prior knowledge, and shows the relevance of the topic.

One or more of the following, in any order:

- *Your Information Ecosystem* (45 minutes): In this activity, students analyze the quality of their information ecosystem and develop ways that they and the people who rely on them can improve it.

- *Recognizing Election Disinformation* (30 minutes): This activity introduces students to frequently encountered "tropes" of election-related disinformation and provides practice in recognizing them.

- *Digital Ad Targeting* (30-45 minutes): In this activity, students learn about how advertising on social networks is targeted based on users' personal information, and investigate how that is used by political parties and interest groups.

- *Recognizing Polarizing Content* (30-45 minutes): This activity teaches students how to recognize election-related misinformation based on the ways it provokes polarizing emotions.

Conclusion: Investigating Election Disinformation (60 minutes): Students are introduced to different strategies for verifying election-related information, including the idea of turning to a **best single source** (in this case, Elections Canada). They then learn and practice engaging in active citizenship by **responding to election-related disinformation**.

MINDS ON: SPOTTING DEEPFAKES

(30 MINUTES)

Big ideas/Key concepts: Students will demonstrate an understanding that:

1. photos can sometimes be inaccurate or misleading
2. images relating to politics or elections can influence our political views as well as how we vote
3. digital content can be verified by finding and verifying the original source and by checking against sources known to be reliable

Key questions:

- How can we tell if something is a deepfake?
- What's the best way to verify something we see online?
- How might deepfakes or other misleading claims affect elections?

Frequent misconceptions to correct: You can reliably tell if something is a deepfake or not just by examining it closely

Key vocabulary: Deepfake, reverse image search, cheapfake

Preparation and Materials

Prepare to project the slideshow *Spotting Deepfakes*

Note: This slideshow contains an embedded online video. Confirm before projecting it that you are able to play the video with audio on. If you are not, you can skip slide 9 and go through the handout *How to Tell What's True Online* instead: https://mediasmarts.ca/sites/default/files/tip-sheet/tipsheet_break_the_fake.pdf

Procedure

WHAT ARE DEEPFAKES? (5 MINUTES)

Start by asking students if they have heard of "deepfakes" or know what they are. Briefly discuss their understanding of the topic, arriving at a shared definition that includes these key elements:

Deepfakes are...

- Images or videos
- Created with artificial intelligence tools (examples include Midjourney and Dall-E)
- Are presented as being real

Ask students if they have ever seen an image or video that they knew, or thought might be, a deepfake. What made them think that it was?

HOW WORRYING ARE DEEPFAKES? (5 MINUTES)

Now ask students to write a number from 1-4 down on a piece of paper. The number should indicate how worrying they think deepfakes are, with 1 being not at all worrying and 4 being extremely worrying.

- When they have written the number, have them write a sentence that starts with *I chose my number because* ... and give at least one reason why they chose the number.
- Ask every student who chose 1 to hold up their hand. If any did, ask some of them to share why they are not at all worried.
- Ask every student who chose 4 to hold up their hand. If any did, ask some of them to share why they are extremely worried.
- If no students chose either 1 or 4, repeat the process with those who chose 2 and 3.
- If some students chose 1 or 4, ask the remaining students whether what they've heard has changed their opinions: would they now choose 1 or 4 instead of 2 or 3? Why or why not?

SPOTTING DEEPFAKES (15 MINUTES)

Show **slides 1-9 o**f the *Spotting Deepfakes* slideshow. For each slide, ask students whether or not they think it is a deepfake and why. Provide only a few minutes of discussion time for each slide.

- Slides 2-3: This is a real image of Yoandri Hernandez Garrido, a Cuban man who was born with 12 fingers and 12 toes. Extra digits, or polydactyly, occurs in about one out of every 1,000 births.
- Slides 4-5: This photo is a deepfake made with the DALL-E 2 generative AI, based on the prompt "a National Geographic style profile photograph of a cheetah in Africa."

- Slides 6-7: This is a real photo of Mont St. Michel, a walled city in France. It sits on a "tidal island": the land around it is marshy during low tide but flooded at high tide.

- Slides 8-9: The second photo is of Cruise posing with Keith Campbell, his stunt double on the first two "Mission Impossible" movies.

Point out to students that in some cases, such as the cheetah, there was no way to tell definitely that something was a deepfake. As well, some of the things we often look to as evidence that something is a deepfake, such as extra fingers, do sometimes occur in real life. As well, advances in AI mean that those will become less common.

1. Sometimes you can tell something is a deepfake just by looking at it, but often you can't.

2. Sometimes a real photo or video may look fake!

Now show **slide 10** and ask which of these photos students think is real. (Tell them not to give the answer if they have already seen these images.)
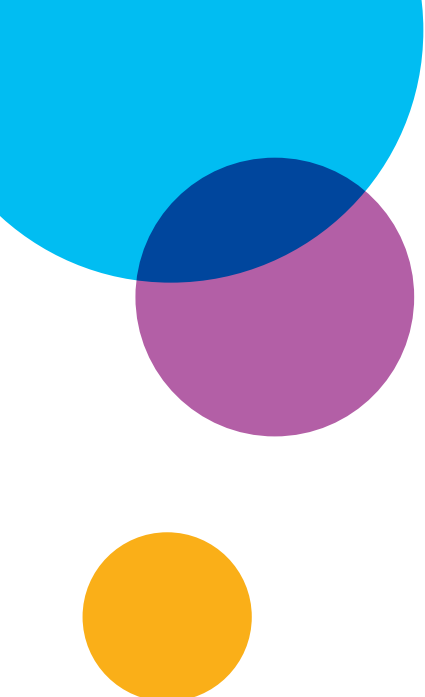
Why might they think the one on the left was real? Why might they think the one on the right was?

Now tell students that deepfakes are a good example of why we shouldn't try to verify what we see online by looking closely at it: unless you're a professional fact-checker, you will probably miss important clues – and think you see clues that aren't there, like Yoandri Garrido's extra fingers.

Show the video *Four Ways to Tell if Something is True Online* (embedded on **slide 11**) then ask students how they might apply those steps to verifying the photo in slide 10. (You may have to allow Powerpoint to access external media for the embedded video to play. If you have difficulty, use this alternate video link: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E-049KTrYBg)

Show **slide 12** and explain that consulting a fact-checker, or using MediaSmarts' fact-checking search engine, shows that this image has been debunked.

Show **slides 13-14** and explain that using a reverse image search for the image on the left will show that it appeared in news outlets that are reliable sources of fashion information, such as Glamour magazine..

Show **slide 15** and explain that doing the same for the image on the right leads to articles telling you it was a deepfake. Before it had been exposed as a deepfake, a reverse image search only led to social network accounts sharing the photo – not to any reliable news sources.

Show **slides 16-17** and explain that searching the News tab on Google for "Rihanna Met Gala 2024" also leads to a story that debunks the image.

Point out to students that this is actually an example of a "cheapfake" – a fake image made *without* using AI – but it was still widely spread and believed.

REFLECTION: HOW MUCH SHOULD WE WORRY ABOUT DEEPFAKES? (5 MINUTES)

Have students go back to the number they chose earlier to indicate how worried they were about deepfakes. Now that they have learned more about them – and in particular, have learned a bit about how they might be used in politics – has that number changed for them? Why or why not?

> This reflection can be done as homework, as a class discussion, or as an exit ticket, depending on your needs and the time available.

YOUR INFORMATION ECOSYSTEM (45 MINUTES)

Big ideas/Key concepts: Students will understand that:

1. We use many sources of information and news
2. Professional news sources gather their own news and have processes to make sure it's accurate
3. Many other news sources share and aggregate news
4. We have control over the health of our information ecosystems

Key questions

- What are the parts of our information ecosystems?
- What makes a healthy information ecosystem?
- How can we improve the quality of our information ecosystems?

Key vocabulary: Satire, news aggregator, ecosystem

Preparation and Materials

Prepare to distribute the following handouts:

1. *Information Audit*
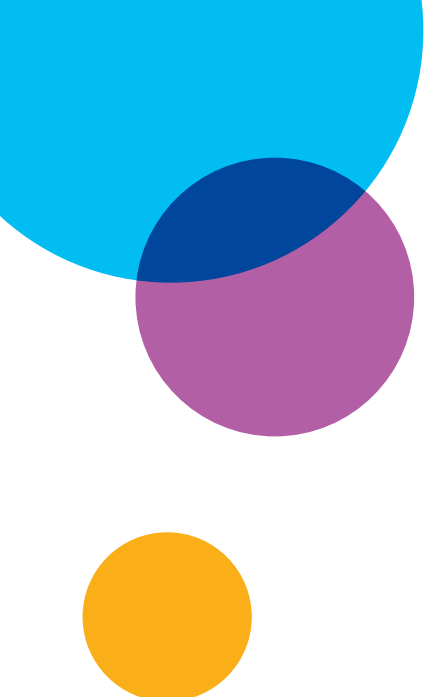2. *Family Information Audit*

Procedure

INFORMATION AUDIT (15 MINUTES)

Start by asking students:

What was the last thing you learned outside of school? Explain that it can be anything they didn't know before: What the weather was going to be, what your family is eating for dinner tonight, what new song all your friends were listening to.

Now ask them to consider: *Where* did you learn it?

Distribute the handout *Information Audit* and explain that we all get information from lots of different places. Go through the information sources across the top of the table:

Professional news: News outlets that do original reporting, have a commitment to accuracy and a process to make sure that what they publish is accurate before they publish it, and publish corrections if they make mistakes. This includes TV news broadcasts, radio news, print sources like newspapers or news magazines, and the websites of any of those. If you're not sure whether something is a professional news outlet, check to see if they have a Wikipedia page. If they do, see what it says about them: Do they have a good track record of publishing accurate news? Once you've used another source, like Wikipedia or a search engine, to find out that they are generally seen as reliable, you can see what they say about their process for providing accurate and objective news: look for something on the site like "News Principles" or "Code of Conduct."

Other news: Outlets that share news but don't do their own reporting, and may not have a process for making sure that what they share is accurate. This includes podcasts, YouTubers, news aggregators like MSN or Yahoo, and satirical news (note that there is a difference between sources like *The Daily Show*, which cover real news with a satirical take, and ones like *The Onion* and *The Beaverton*, which publish totally made-up news.)

Social media: Apps like Instagram, X, Snapchat, etc., as well as messaging apps like WhatsApp, where people might have shared news with you.

In person: Sometimes we get news from other people like friends or family members in person.

Next, go through the different types of news in the left-hand column:

Local news: Things about your community, like school news, street closures, weather, local events, etc.

Political news: News about municipal, provincial/territorial, national or international politics – elections, new laws being considered, things politicians said or did, etc.

Sports/entertainment news: Celebrities, athletes, sports scores, and news about music, movies, video games, etc.

Health/science news: New discoveries, health recommendations, astronomical events like eclipses, etc.

Once you're confident students understand both the news sources and news types, have them write as many examples of news sources they can

think of in each box – for instance, if they read a local news story in their local newspaper, have them write that newspaper's name in the box where "Local News" and "Professional News" cross.

When students have finished the chart, have them fill in the three questions below:

1. If you can, list three things you learned from professional news
2. If you can, list three things you learned from other news sources
3. List three things you learned from social media

YOUR INFORMATION ECOSYSTEM (10 MINUTES)

Now ask:

1. How many were able to list three things they learned from professional news sources?
2. How many were able to list three things from other news sources?
3. How many could have listed more than three things they learned from social media?

Explain that most young Canadians are likely to say they heard about a news story because somebody shared it with them on social media or video sites such as TikTok or YouTube, and feel that news will "find them" if it's important.

Because all of these news sources are connected, we can describe them as being part of an *information ecosystem*. In a physical ecosystem, if there is not enough good air, clean water, and sunlight, plants and animals won't grow; as well, if there is pollution in the air or water, it will find its way into the plants and animals and eventually into us.

Now have students return to their *Information Audit* and ask:

1. Which sources are providing original news to other parts of the ecosystem?
2. Which sources can they be sure aren't "polluted" with inaccurate or misleading information?
3. How much of their total information diet is made up of those types, compared to ones that rely on sharing news other sources collected or don't take steps to avoid being "polluted"?

OTHER ECOSYSTEMS (10 MINUTES)

Next, distribute the handout *Family Information Audit* and have students complete it based on what they know about the information habits of someone in their close or extended family.

When they have finished, ask:

1. How similar or different was theirs to yours?
2. Do you think it is a healthier or less healthy ecosystem? Why?
3. What are some things you could learn from them, or vice versa, to improve your ecosystems?

REFLECTION: HOW CAN WE IMPROVE OUR INFORMATION ECOSYSTEMS? (10 MINUTES)

Have students complete an exit ticket or journal/blog entry reflecting on what they learned today. They should answer one of the following questions:

• What could I do to improve the health of my information ecosystem?
• What challenges might I (or my family members) face in improving my information ecosystem?
• How could I help my family members improve their information ecosystems?

RECOGNIZING ELECTION DISINFORMATION (30 MINUTES)

Learning Outcomes

Big ideas/Key concepts: Students will understand that:

- Our views about politics and elections can be influenced by disinformation
- Disinformation about politics and elections usually falls into recognizable tropes
- Disinformation about politics appeals to us more when it supports things we already believe

Key questions:

- What makes election disinformation believable?
- How might believing different forms of election disinformation affect our participation in democracy?

Key vocabulary: Trope, cliché, claim, absentee ballot, disinformation

Preparation and Materials

Prepare to distribute the following:

- *What Happens Next?*
- *Election Disinformation Tropes*

Review the following teacher backgrounders:

- *What Happens Next?: Teacher's Version*
- *Election Disinformation Tropes: Teacher's Version*

Procedure

INTRODUCING TROPES (10 MINUTES)

Distribute the activity sheet *What Happens Next?* and have students complete it. (If you prefer you can distribute it the previous class and

have students complete it for homework, or do the activity together as a whole-class exercise.)

Have students share their guesses about what happens next in each example.

Ask:

• How easy was it to guess what would happen next?

• Were some easier or harder to guess than others?

• How similar were different people's guesses?

• How many people have seen these things happen in media?

(Using the backgrounder *What Happens Next? Teacher's version* as a prompt if there are any that nobody was able to guess.)
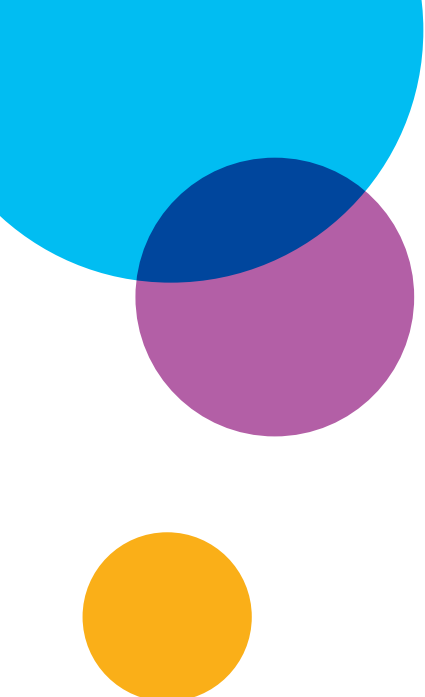
Now ask students if they know what these are examples of. If the term is not named by any students, explain that they are examples of *tropes*. Explain that tropes are sort of like "building blocks" of storytelling: events, characters, setting elements, and other things that are often used by media makers.

Ask students if they can give other examples of common *tropes*. Explain that while tropes can become annoying *clichés* if they are overused or used in uncreative ways, they can also be powerful tools for media makers. That's because they fit our sense of how stories and the world work (or *should* work) and also because they can mix the pleasure of the familiar (a trope we recognize) with the new (a new twist on it.)

TROPES IN ELECTION DISINFORMATION (20 MINUTES)

Now explain that researchers have found that while *mis- and disinformation* about elections and politics may appear as many different *claims*, these claims are usually examples of a small number of *tropes*.

> If students are unfamiliar with the terms, explain that misinformation is false or misleading information that the person sharing it believes is true, while it's disinformation if the person sharing it knows it is untrue. However, people often believe that something is "basically" true even if they know the specific example they're sharing is untrue, so the distinction is not always that meaningful. In this lesson we use the term "disinformation" to mean both.

Distribute the activity sheet *Election Disinformation Tropes* and go through the definitions and examples with the class. You can either give students time to answer the questions on a separate page or document or use them as prompts for class discussion. Use the *Teacher's Version* to make sure students understand the definitions and examples.

> Point out to students that the provinces and federal government *do* have specific rules about how to fill out ballots, how to submit absentee ballots, and so on, so not all "make your vote count" messages are wrong. It's important, though, to verify them before you share or act on them.

Have students turn the activity sheet over and match the different claims to the tropes they are examples of. (Depending on time, you can have them do this individually or in pairs/groups.) Have students share their choices (Use the *Teacher's Version* as a reference.)

DIGITAL AD TARGETING (30-45 MINUTES)

Learning Outcomes

Big ideas/Key concepts: Students will understand that:

- Political advertisements are crafted and designed to communicate specific and targeted messages
- Organizations use personal information to target and influence our political opinions and ideologies
- Targeted advertisements rely on networks to discriminate between who sees specific messages

Key questions:

- How do political parties and interest groups target voters on social media?
- How might I be targeted by election or political ads?

Key vocabulary: Targeted advertising, micro-targeting

Preparation and Materials

Prepare to distribute the following handouts:

- *Issues Explained: Political Advertising Video Response*
- *Targeted Political Advertising Scavenger Hunt*

Ensure that you can access and show the video *Issues Explained: Political Advertising*

   https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-hwWXzCkhxI

Ensure that students can access the *Meta Ad Library Report* for Canada https://www.facebook.com/ads/library/report/?source=onboarding

Procedure

INTRODUCING TARGETED ADVERTISING (10 MINUTES)

Start by asking students:

Have you ever seen an ad from a political party online, or an ad about any kind of political issue?

Do you think you see more or fewer ads like that than other people?

How do you think social networks and video sites decide whether or not to show you election ads, and which ones?

Distribute the activity sheet *Issues Explained: Political Advertising* and have students complete it while watching the https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-hwWXzCkhxI news clip by CPAC.

When students have finished, discuss the questions briefly using the *Teacher's Version* to ensure that students have the correct answers.

SITUATING TARGETED ADS IN CANADIAN POLITICS (15 MINUTES)

Now explain that in 2018, the federal government passed a new law that requires all online platforms that sell political advertising space to keep a public registry of all political advertisements displayed on their platform. (This was C-75, *An Act to amend the Canada Elections Act.*) This means that Canadians can see all political ads and who paid for them, even if they were not the ad's intended target.

Have students open the Meta Ad Library Report webpage and explain that since Meta owns both Facebook and Instagram, their detailed Ad Library is a great resource for answering important questions like "Who is spending how much money to connect with voters in Canada?" and "How might I be targeted by election or political ads?"

(If you wish, you can do this demonstration yourself on a digital projector or whiteboard.)

Direct students to select "Canada" from the dropdown menu on the top left.

Now direct students to select the "Last day" option (the first tab under the "spending tracker" header), and scroll down to "Spending by location."

Ask: Where does your province or territory fall on the list of ad spending compared to other provinces/territories?

Have students click on the name of their province or territory to see a list of the top advertisers in the province. (It will appear on the right margin of the page.)

Ask: How many are political parties or candidates? How many are not political parties, but seem to be related to political issues?

Now have students click on the listing for political party or candidate, or one related to a political issue. This will bring them to a page where they can see all of the ads that they are currently running,

Have students scroll through the page to see the different ads, then select one by clicking "See Summary Details."

Ask:

- Who paid for this ad?
- How many times was this ad on a screen?
- Who (gender, age, province) saw this ad? Who didn't?

TARGETED POLITICAL AD SCAVENGER HUNT (15 MINUTES)

Distribute the activity sheet *Targeted Political Advertising Scavenger Hunt.*

Explain that students are going to take part in a digital scavenger hunt, searching Meta's Ad Library for clues in order to answer the questions on the activity sheet.

Ask students to explore the tables displayed on the Meta Ad Library Report webpage and:

- compare spending over the last week, the last month, and the last three months
- note where your province or territory falls on the list of ad spending by location
- identify what happens when they click an advertiser or location/ province.

(You may choose to assign this as homework.)

REFLECTION: HOW DOES AD TARGETING AFFECT US? (5 MINUTES)

Have students complete an exit ticket or journal/blog entry reflecting on what they learned today. Students can answer one of the following questions:

- Are you surprised by who is spending money to target voters in your province? Why or why not?
- How does digital ad targeting impact your understanding of political advertising?
- How might political ads on social media influence public opinion?

RECOGNIZING POLARIZING CONTENT (30-45 MINUTES)

Big ideas/Key concepts: Students will understand that:

- Thinking in absolutes contributes to polarization
- Polarization pushes us to more extreme views by appealing to or offending our values
- Political groups, advertisers, and tech platforms may benefit from polarization

Key questions:

- Why does polarization make it harder to discuss important issues?
- How do appeals to our values polarize us?
- How can we deal with polarizing content when we encounter it?

Key vocabulary: Absolute, polarization, value, hyperbole, othering, dehumanization

Preparation and Materials

Prepare to project or distribute the following:

- *Only a Sith Thinks in Absolutes*
- *Hyperbole*
- *False Comparison*
- *Othering and Dehumanization*

Prepare to distribute the handout *Value and Feeling Grid*

Prepare to project the video *Empathy and Community* or distribute the tip sheet of the same title

Procedure

DEALING IN ABSOLUTES (10 MINUTES)

Start by projecting or distributing the handout *Only a Sith Thinks in Absolutes*. Ask students if they are familiar with the quote (from the movie

Star Wars: Revenge of the Sith) and what the "Sith" are. (Allow students to explain this to any that do not know. If no students know, explain that in the "Star Wars" movies the Sith are an evil group who oppose the good Jedi. Darth Vader is the most famous Sith.)

With that knowledge, do students think that the quote is suggesting that it is good or bad to think in absolutes? (Because the Sith are evil, if thinking in absolutes is something they do, then by implication it is bad.)

Now write the following three statements on the board, or read them to students, explaining that they are examples of *absolute* statements:

- "Star Wars" is the best movie ever.
- Chicken soup is the best soup.
- Lime is the worst popsicle flavour.

Now write or read the following statements which are *not* examples of absolutes:

- I love the "Star Wars" movies.
- Whenever I am sick I like to eat chicken soup.
- Lime is my least favourite popsicle flavour.

Ask students: What is the difference between the examples (the first list) and the non-examples (the second list)?

Prompting questions:

- What is the difference between saying something is "the best" and "I love" something?
- What is the difference between something being the "worst" and being my "least favourite"?
- How do sentences like these sound different when they use "I" or "my"?

Now ask: Now that we know what is meant by an absolute, why might it be bad to think in terms of absolutes?

Prompting questions:

- What might be some drawbacks of being sure you know what is "best" or "worst"?

- What if people have different ideas about what is "best"?
- Is it harder or easier to have a discussion about a topic if people think in absolutes?

(Point out to students that there may be absolute answers in questions of fact: Jupiter is the biggest planet in the solar system, a hundred degrees is the boiling point of water, and so on. The difference is that these are all things that can be measured, tested, and verified.)

WHAT IS POLARIZATION? (5 MINUTES)

Explain to students that when something pushes us to think in absolutes, we say that it is polarizing. Just like the Earth has two poles on opposite ends, polarizing content pushes us to more extreme views: that there is a right answer on my side and the wrong answer on somebody else's side. It mostly does this by appealing to our feelings and our values.

Explain to students that a feeling can be anything our body is telling us. We can feel hurt when we scrape our knee or when someone says something that disturbs us. We can feel scared when we see or read something that looks like a threat. Feelings are like a compass. They guide our thoughts and actions according to what we value.

A value is how we orient ourselves according to things we think are important. We are more likely to agree with something that matches our values, or that tells us that we are living up to our values. We are more likely to disagree with or reject something that offends our values, or makes us feel we're not living up to them. For example, if you value honesty, you will react strongly to something that suggests someone else is being dishonest.

METHODS OF POLARIZATION (20 MINUTES)

Now distribute the *Value and Feeling Grid* and go through the list of values in the left column. Explain that these are values that have been identified as being held by many Canadians.

Now project or distribute the handout *Hyperbole*. Ask students the following questions, and have them use the *Value and Feeling Grid* to record their answers:

- Do you know this word? What do you think it means?

- How is this headline an example of *hyperbole*?

- How can hyperbole be polarizing?

- Which values does this example *appeal* to? Which values does it *offend*?

Ensure that students understand that *hyperbole* means extreme exaggeration.

In the context of polarization, we use hyperbole to make a situation seem much bigger, much worse or much more important than it is. Words like "unprecedented" (having never happened before) or "political firestorm" make us feel like this is an article about "the worst thing ever".

Have students write "Firestorm" at the top of the second column, next to "Safety," and write "Hyperbole" in the third column. Explain that this example offends the value of *safety* by using a frightening image (a "firestorm.")
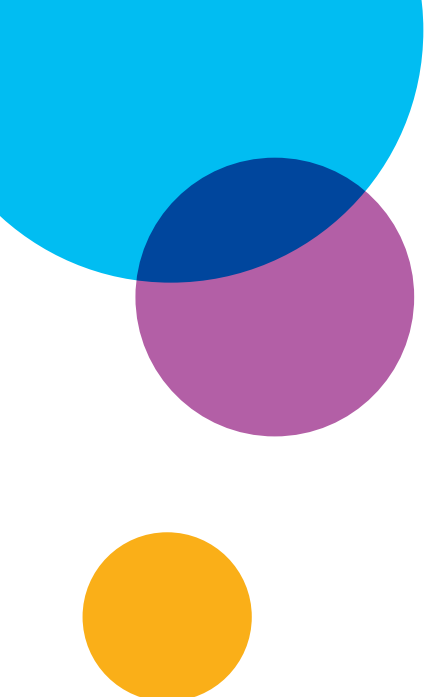
Now ask students if the example offends or appeals to any of the other values listed here. Explain that it offends the value of *freedom* by describing the emergency measures as "unprecedented" and "an enormous gamble," and have them fill in "Unprecedented" and "Hyperbole" in the two columns to the right of "Freedom."

Next project or distribute *False Comparison* and explain that this is when two things being compared are obviously different. When someone uses this to polarize audiences, they will compare something to another thing that people already have strong feelings about. Here, Toronto mayor Olivia Chow is being compared to the devil.

Ask students: Is this a fair analogy? Which of our values might this appeal to? Which might be offended? Have students fill out the appropriate entries on the *Value and Feeling Grid* on their own.

Now project or distribute *Othering and Dehumanization*. Explain that this is when a claim or image tries to make a person or a group of people seem like they are fundamentally different from you, sometimes to the point of making them seem as though they're not even human.

Ask students: Which values does Trump's statement appeal to? Which does it offend?

Point out that the same thing might appeal to and offend different people, depending on their values and beliefs. For example, the last example is likely to polarize people in two ways:

- People who feel more strongly about safety may agree with it, and feel more negatively about immigrants as a result.
- People who feel more strongly about *tolerance* or *inclusion* will probably disagree with it, and feel more negatively about Trump as a result.
- Both groups will probably feel more negatively about each other as a result!

Optional:

If students have completed the *Recognizing Election Disinformation* activity, you can point out that the tropes they studied are examples of polarizing content because they encourage you to distrust other groups.

If students have completed the *Digital Ad Targeting* activity, ask them which of the ads they studied contained *polarizing* content.

Reassure the students that it is okay to have different feelings as a result of viewing and discussing the examples.

Explain that when we feel "hot" emotions like fear or anger, we are more likely to act without thinking.

When we are online, this means we are more likely to *engage* with what we're seeing: to comment, follow links and share stories, memes or videos.

Ask students: Why would that be good for the people producing this content? Why would that be good for social networks and video sites?

Prompting questions:

Are you less likely to change how you vote if you've been polarized to one position or the other?

- Have you ever seen something being advertised that appealed to people who hold a certain political belief? How do those people benefit from polarization?
- Have you ever seen a TV show, a podcast, a newspaper or another media source that appealed to people who hold a certain political belief? How do those benefit from polarization?

- Social networks and video sites make money when you watch ads. The longer you're there, the more ads you see. How could polarization make you stay on those sites or apps?

REFLECTION: HOW CAN WE KEEP FROM BEING POLARIZED?

Now show students the MediaSmarts video *Empathy and Community* or distribute the tip sheet and go through it with the class.

Have students complete an exit ticket or journal/blog entry reflecting on the following question: How can I apply these tips to seeing polarizing content online?

INVESTIGATING ELECTION DISINFORMATION (60 MINUTES)

Learning Outcomes

Big ideas/Key concepts: Students will understand that:

- There is sometimes a single best source for specific information
- The best source for information on the electoral process is the relevant electoral authority

Key questions:

- What methods work best for verifying information about provincial elections in B.C.?
- How can we correct disinformation if we see other people sharing it?

Key vocabulary: Site operator, ballot tabulator, advance voting, future voter.

Preparation and Materials

Prepare to show the following videos:

- *Correcting Disinformation* https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J4JAe7WDHgo

Prepare to distribute the handout *Investigating Election Disinformation Claims*

Procedure

BEST SOURCES (10 MINUTES)

Start by asking students how they would get answers to the following questions:

- Will it rain tomorrow?
- When is the next bus coming? (skip this one if there are no buses in your community)

- How much does a Big Mac cost?

- What are you having for dinner tonight?

Point out that in each case there is a best source of information: Environment Canada for the weather, the local transit authority for the bus, McDonald's for the Big Mac, and whoever is making your dinner.

Explain that a "best" source is one that has expertise or authority on the topic and an interest in getting you accurate information. They are not always 100% right, because things sometimes change before they have a chance to update their information, but they give you the most accurate information they can and update when they get better information.

Ask students to brainstorm other examples of topics where there might be one or a small number of "best" and write examples on a blackboard, chart paper or digital whiteboard. In each case, ask students why this should be considered a "best" source, and only list it if there is consensus that this is correct.

Now explain that if you know there is a "best" source on a topic, going straight there can be more efficient than using the steps learned in the *Spotting Deepfakes* activity.

INVESTIGATING ELECTION DISINFORMATION CLAIMS (20 MINUTES)

Now ask: What would be the "best" source to find out if a claim that we've seen about a provincial election or the voting process is true?

Prompting questions:

- How could we find out if the voting place we had planned to go to was closed?

- How could we tell if the source that shared that information was reliable?

- What might be the best source of information about a federal general election or by-election?

Distribute the activity sheet *Investigating Election Disinformation Claims* and divide the class into pairs or groups. Have them use computers or personal devices to research the claims using the two techniques: browsing or searching within the site, and using the "site:" operator on Google.

When students have finished, go through the claims with the whole class and check student answers using Investigating *Election Disinformation Claims: Teacher Version*.

If students completed the *Recognizing Election Disinformation* activity, ask them to identify which trope the three false claims are examples of:

- Ballot tabulators can be hacked through Wi-Fi: *The Other Side Cheats*
- You can vote by text: *Make Your Vote Count*
- Absentee voting is less secure than in-person voting: *The System is Rigged*

Have students correct any incorrect answers in their activity sheets.

RESULTS AND REFLECTION (15 MINUTES)

Have each group share their findings.

Have the class discuss:

- Which approach (searching within the website or using the "site" operator) seemed to get better results?
- Were some claims easier to research with one approach or the other?
- How would you identify a subject where there is likely to be one best source, such as provincial elections?
- What would be the best source on provincial elections?

RESPONDING TO MISINFORMATION (15 MINUTES)

Tell students that while they won't be able to vote until they're 18 there is an important thing they can do to make politics and elections better: respond to mis- or dis-information when they see it.

Show students the video *Correcting Disinformation* https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J4JAe7WDHgo and then distribute the handout Correcting Disinformation. Go through the list of false claims they debunked earlier and ask students which correction strategy they think would be most effective for each. (This can be done as an exit ticket or a journal/blog entry, as there is no definitive right answer.)
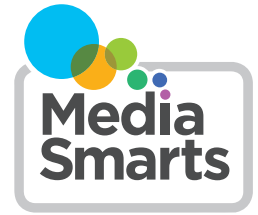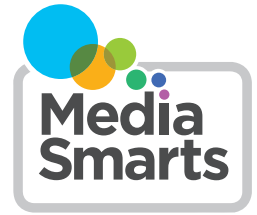
DIGITAL MEDIA LITERACY FOR DEMOCRACY

What happens next?

Imagine that you see the following things happen in a movie, TV show, video game, et cetera. Write down what you think is going to happen next.

- Someone says "I absolutely, positively will never do" something. The scene then cuts to…

- A person has just finished paying for the car of their dreams when their friend asks for a ride. Then…

- Someone is told something by a teacher or parent, and replies "When will I ever need to know this?" Later on…

- A worker in a supermarket has just finished setting up an elaborate display. Just then…

- Two young people hate each other when they first meet. But later…

- After escaping from a dangerous situation, a person says "At least there weren't any snakes." Later on…

- At the end of a very difficult video game level, you find an apparently useless item. It later turns out…

- An orphan grows up in a small town, not believing their parents were anything special. They later discover that…

- Two people have a conversation that could easily be misunderstood if anyone overhead it. Later, it turns out…

- A person's (dead or missing) parent left them something that seems unimportant, like an old book. They later learn that…

How easy was it to guess what would happen next? Were some easier to guess than others?

DIGITAL MEDIA LITERACY FOR DEMOCRACY

Information Audit

Pick one day in the past week that was a fairly typical one for you in terms of your news and information habits. Using the table below, record all the places you learned different types of news. (Don't limit yourself to English-language sources.)
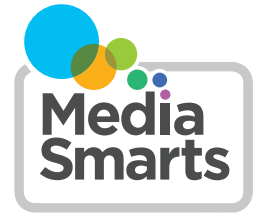
	Professional News (TV, radio, print, online news with a good track record and a process for accurate and objective reporting)	Other News (podcasts, blogs, satirical news, YouTubers, news aggregators)	Social Media (social media apps, texting and messaging)	In Person
Local News	e.g. My local newspaper			
Political News		e.g. A political podcast		
Sports/ Entertainment News			e.g. Memes about the new Star Wars movie	
Health/Science News				e.g. My friend said there was an earthquake

If you can, list three things you learned from professional news:

List three things you learned from social media:

If you can, list three things you learned from other news sources:

DIGITAL MEDIA LITERACY FOR DEMOCRACY

Family Information Audit

Think of someone in your close or extended family. (Siblings, parents, grandparents, aunts/uncles, cousins, etc.) What do you know about where they get their news? (Don't limit yourself to English-language sources.)

|	**Professional News** (TV, radio, print, online news with a good track record and a process for accurate and objective reporting)	**Other News** (podcasts, blogs, satirical news, YouTubers, news aggregators)	**Social Media** (social media apps, texting and messaging)	**In Person**
Local News				
Political News				
Sports/ Entertainment News				
Health/Science News				

How similar or different is their information ecosystem to yours?

What are some things you could learn from them, or vice versa, to improve your ecosystems?

Is it healthier or less healthy than yours? Why?

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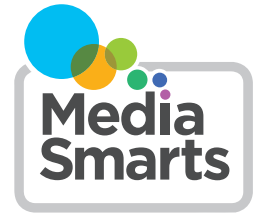
Election Disinformation Tropes

Here are three of the most common *tropes* of election disinformation that researchers have found online.

THE OTHER SIDE CHEATS

People who spread disinformation about elections and politics often claim that their opponents are cheating in some way.

Here's a specific *claim* that's an example: "Check the voter registration records for the election that Party A won. How many of those people were eligible to vote?"

- Why might people respond to this *trope*?
- Why might people believe this *claim*?
- What harm could this trope do if people believe it?

THE SYSTEM IS RIGGED

These claims suggest that the whole electoral system is rigged in favour of one party (or against a particular party.)

Here's a specific *claim* that's an example: "I heard they found a bunch of ballots with Candidate X's name already filled in."

- Why might people respond to this *trope*?
- Why might people believe this *claim*?
- What harm could this trope do if people believe it?

MAKE YOUR VOTE COUNT

These claims present themselves as making it easier for you to vote, or helping you make sure that your vote is counted. These may sometimes really be meant to help, but if they're not accurate they can do real harm.

Here's a specific *claim* that's an example: "Did you know that you can vote by text? Just send the candidate's last name to 555-202-4895."

- Why might people respond to this *trope*?
- Why might people believe this *claim*?
- What harm could this trope do if people believe it?

Now match the specific claims below to the tropes they are examples of.

CLAIM:

"A bunch of ballots with Candidate X's name marked were found in a ditch."

"The power is out at our voting place. You'll have to go to a different one."

"This photo clearly shows that Candidate Y had an earpiece on during the debate, so that people could help with their answers."

"Make sure to pay off all your parking tickets before the election. They won't let you vote if you have any that are unpaid."

"Party A went to a retirement home and had all the people there fill out absentee votes for Candidate Y."

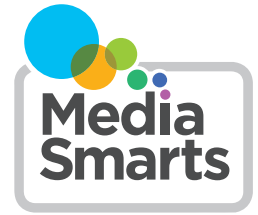"Election officials will give you a red marker if you're voting for Party A, so they know not to count your ballot."

TROPE:

The other side cheats

The system is rigged

Make your vote count

DIGITAL MEDIA LITERACY FOR DEMOCRACY

Issues Explained: Political Advertising: Video Response

Instructions: Before you begin watching the CPAC segment on targeted advertising, take a moment to review the questions below. As you watch the video, keep these questions in mind and jot down your thoughts.

1. What are some of the categories in which political advertisers can target people?

3. Which social networks have chosen not to allow targeted political ads? Which ones have?

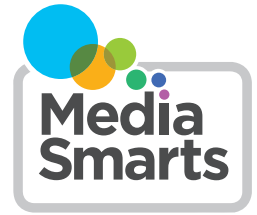2. What do websites have to disclose about targeted political ads?

DIGITAL MEDIA LITERACY FOR DEMOCRACY

Targeted Political Advertising Scavenger Hunt

Instructions: Please access Meta's Ad Library Report by clicking here. PLEASE NOTE: Political advertisers on social media platforms are required to disclose who paid for the ad. On the "Spending by advertiser" table, the "Page name" is the name of the Facebook page associated with the advertisement. The "Disclaimer" column lists the organization that paid for the advertisement.

Scroll down to the "Advertising data by date range" section and select the "Last 7 Days" option (the second tab under the heading). Then scroll down to "Spending by location" and select your province/territory.

Next, answer the following questions:

1. Which organization spent the most on political advertisements in the last seven days? How much have they spent on the ads they have published?

2. How much are advertisers spending to reach voters in your province? Who are the top three spenders in your province?

Please choose two of the organizations listed in Meta's Ad Library Report and access their Ad Library page (this can be done by clicking the Page name).

3. Who are political organizations in Canada targeting with specific messaging? Choose two ads, one by each of the organizations you selected. When you have chosen your ad, click "See summary/ad details" and compare the following data.

Who paid for the ad: Ad description:	Who paid for the ad: Ad description:
How much was spent on this ad?	How much was spent on this ad?
# of impressions (how many times was this ad shown?)	# of impressions (how many times was this ad shown?)
Most targeted locations in Canada: 1. 2.	Most targeted locations in Canada: 1. 2.
Which age group saw the ad most: Age: % of audience:	Most targeted age group(s): Age: % of audience:
Which gender saw the ad most: Gender: %:	Which gender saw the ad most: Gender: %:
Based on the information above, what inferences can you make about the ad's target audience? Who is left out of this conversation?	Based on the information above, what inferences can you make about the ad's target audience? Who is left out of this conversation?

Compare your results. What similarities and differences do you observe in their messaging and targeting strategies? Consider the tone. Are they positive, negative, or neutral? How might the tone impact public perception?	Compare your results. What similarities and differences do you observe in their messaging and targeting strategies? Consider the tone. Are they positive, negative, or neutral? How might the tone impact public perception?

4. Consider the top spenders, in your province or nationwide, listed in the Meta Ad Library Report and identify an organization that is not a political party. What political ad is this organization running? Why might they be interested in publishing political ads?
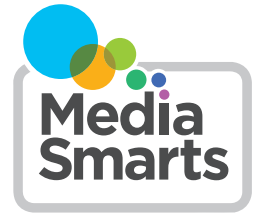
DIGITAL MEDIA LITERACY FOR DEMOCRACY

Value and Feeling Gride

VALUE	POST OR HEADLINE	METHOD
Safety		
Equality		
Kindness		
Tolerance		
Compassion		
Freedom		
Inclusion		
Family		
Care for environment		

DIGITAL MEDIA LITERACY FOR DEMOCRACY

Only a Sith Thinks in Absolutes

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Hyperbole

CANADA

Canada invokes unprecedented emergency measures — and triggers a political firestorm

The embattled Prime Minister Justin Trudeau has taken an enormous gamble to remove the truckers' protests, and his legacy is on the line.

Supporters of the truckers against vaccine mandates implemented by Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau hold up Canadian flags as they gather near Parliament Hill on Feb. 5, 2022, in Ottawa, Canada. | Minas Panagiotakis/Getty Images

DIGITAL MEDIA LITERACY FOR DEMOCRACY

False Comparison

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Othering and Dehumanization

Trump: Immigrant gangs 'animals, not people'

US President Donald Trump has said immigrant gang members are "not people" but "animals".

He was responding during a White House event to a point made by a California sheriff about the MS-13 gang, which was started in the 1980s by immigrants from Central America.

16 May 2018

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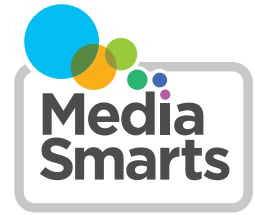
Investigating Election Disinformation Claims

- -

INSTRUCTIONS

For this activity, you will research claims about provincial elections and voting procedures.

You will do your research either by browsing or searching within the Elections Canada website, or searching it with Google. To search within a single website from Google, add "site:" and then the part of the web address *after* "http" or "https", like this:

🔍   **"voting" site:elections.ca**   ✕ | 🎤   📷

Do not put a space between "site:" and the web address.

Mark here whether you are browsing or searching inside the site, or whether you are searching it from Google:

Now find out whether these claims are true or not:

1. If a voter can't go to a voting place to vote in person, then they can't vote in the federal election.   T / F

   How do you know?

2. Ballot tabulators can be hacked through Wi-Fi.   T / F

   How do you know?

3. Every federal general election and by-election is independently audited.   T / F

   How do you know?

4. You can vote by text.   T / F

   How do you know?

5. You can register to vote before you are 18.   T / F

    How do you know?

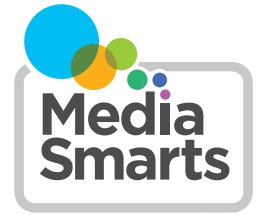6. You can vote at any voting place.   T / F

    How do you know?

7. Voting by mail is less secure than in-person voting.   T / F

    How do you know?

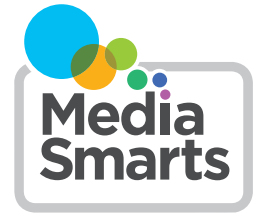# DIGITAL MEDIA LITERACY FOR DEMOCRACY

What happens next? (Teacher's Version)

Imagine that you see the following things happen in a movie, TV show, video game, et cetera. Write down what you think is going to happen next.

- Someone says "I absolutely, positively will never do" something. The scene then cuts to **them doing it.**

- A person has just finished paying for the car of their dreams when their friend asks for a ride. Then **their friend wrecks the car.**

- Someone is told something by a teacher or parent, and replies "When will I ever need to know this?" Later on, **they find themselves in a situation where they need to know it.**

- A worker in a supermarket has just finished setting up an elaborate display. Just then **someone knocks it over.**

- Two young people hate each other when they first met. But later, **they fall in love.**

- After escaping from a dangerous situation, a person says "At least there weren't any snakes." Later on, **they encounter snakes.**

- At the end of a very difficult video game level, you find an apparently useless item. It later turns out **to be the thing you need to do something important (like beating the final boss or unlocking the final level.)**

- An orphan grows up in a small town, not believing their parents were anything special. They later discover that **their parents were special in some way (royalty, aliens, et cetera.)**

- Two people have a conversation that could easily be misunderstood if anyone overhead it. Later, it turns out **someone overheard and misunderstood it.**

- A person's (dead or missing) parent left them something that seems unimportant, like an old book. They later learn that **it contains important information about what happened to them.**

How easy was it to guess what would happen next? Were some easier to guess than others?

DIGITAL MEDIA LITERACY FOR DEMOCRACY

Election Disinformation Tropes (Teacher's Version)

THE OTHER SIDE CHEATS

Claim: "Check the voter registration records for the election that Party A won. How many of those people were eligible to vote?"

Why might people respond to this trope?

Nobody likes to lose! It makes us feel better if we think the other side beat us unfairly.

What harm could this trope do if people believe it?

If we think the other side is cheating, it gives us an excuse to cheat too.

THE SYSTEM IS RIGGED

Claim: "I heard they found a bunch of ballots with Candidate X's name already filled in."

Why might people respond to this trope?

People often feel like the system is rigged against them (even if their side won.) As well, if the system is rigged by the other side, it makes them seem more villainous and you more victimized.

What harm could this trope do if people believe it?

If we believe that the system is rigged, we're less likely to participate in politics in ways like voting.

MAKE YOUR VOTE COUNT

These claims present themselves as making it easier for you to vote, or helping you make sure that your vote is counted. These may sometimes really be meant to help, but if they're not accurate they can do real harm.

Here's a specific *claim* that's an example: "Did you know that you can vote by text? Just send the candidate's last name to 555-202-4895."

Why might people respond to this trope?

Voting is important, but you do need to make time for it. We want to make sure our vote counts but the idea that we could do it from home or work is appealing. While there are many ways to vote in a provincial election, it can be hard for some people to find the time.

What harm could this trope do if people believe it?

If the information is meant to mislead you – like this example – it could mean your vote doesn't count. But even if it's innocent, saying that you need to take extra steps to make sure your vote counts could make voting seem like too much work. (Research has even found that people are less likely to vote if news articles include photos of long line-ups at voting places!)

TROPE/CLAIM MATCHES:

The Other Side Cheats:

"This photo clearly shows that Candidate Y had an earpiece on during the debate, so that people could help with their answers."

"Party A went to a retirement home and had all the people there fill out absentee votes for Candidate Y."

The System is Rigged:

"A bunch of ballots with Candidate X's name marked were found in a ditch."

> *(This is an example of this trope because it could only have been done* after *votes were cast.)*
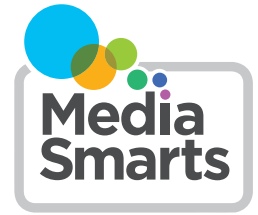
"Election officials will give you a red marker if you're voting for Party A, so they know not to count your ballot."

Make Your Vote Count:

"The power is out at our voting place. You'll have to go to a different one."

"Make sure to pay off all your parking tickets before the election. They won't let you vote if you have any that are unpaid."
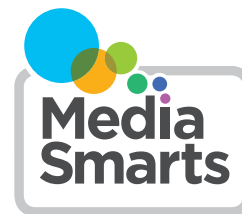
DIGITAL MEDIA LITERACY FOR DEMOCRACY

Issue explained: Political advertising: Video Response (Teacher's Version)

Instructions: Before you begin watching the CPAC segment on targeted advertising, take a moment to review the questions below. As you watch the video, keep these questions in mind and jot down your thoughts.

1. What are some of the categories in which political advertisers can target people?

   • Age, gender, political views, interests

2. What do websites have to disclose about targeted political ads?

   • A list of politically motivated ads linked to candidates, samples of the ads, and what ads they are running

3. Which social networks have chosen not to allow targeted political ads? Which ones have?

   • Google is not running ads that feature a political party or its leader. Facebook and Twitter (now X) do allow targeted political ads.

DIGITAL MEDIA LITERACY FOR DEMOCRACY

Targeted Political Advertising Scavenger Hunt (Teacher's Version)

Instructions: Please access Meta's Ad Library Report by clicking here. PLEASE NOTE: Political advertisers on social media platforms are required to disclose who paid for the ad. On the "Spending by advertiser" table, the "Page name" is the name of the Facebook page associated with the advertisement. The "Disclaimer" column lists the organization that paid for the advertisement.

Scroll down to the "Advertising data by date range" section and select the "Last 7 Days" option (the second tab under the heading). Then scroll down to "Spending by location" and select your province or territory.

Next, answer the following questions:

1. Which organization spent the most on political advertisements in the last seven days? How much have they spent on the ads they have published?

   Answers will vary according to when this lesson is taught. Answers can be found by using the "Spending by advertiser" table. Ensure data is sorted by "Amount spent" in order to best answer this question.

2. How much are advertisers spending to reach voters in your province? Who are the top three spenders in your province?

   Answers will vary according to when this lesson is taught. How much advertisers are spending can be found under the "Spending by location" table. The top three spenders can be found by clicking on the province.

Please choose two of the organizations listed in Meta's Ad Library Report and access their Ad Library page (this can be done by clicking the Page name).

3. Who are political organizations in Canada targeting with specific messaging? Choose two ads, one by each of the organizations you selected. When you have chosen your ad, click "See summary/ad details" and compare the following data.

   Answers will vary depending on which organizations and advertisements students choose. Answers can be found by choosing an advertisement, clicking "See summary details' or "See ad details" (Depending on the advertisement), and scrolling down. This example uses this ad.

Who paid for the ad: *Quality Canadian Milk* Ad description: *Makes a pop culture reference to the newly released Dune 2 movie, claiming if a character had had milk, staying hydrated would not have been difficult.*	Who paid for the ad: Ad description:

| How much was spent on this ad?	How much was spent on this ad?
$500-$599 CAD (at time of publication – it may be higher when students do the activity)	
# of impressions (how many times was this ad shown?)	# of impressions (how many times was this ad shown?)
250-300K (at time of publication – it may be higher when students do the activity)	
Most targeted locations in Canada:	Most targeted locations in Canada:
1. *Ontario (34%)*	1.
2. *Quebec (22%)*	2.
Which age group saw the ad most: Age: 25-34 % of audience: 54%	Most targeted age group(s): Age: % of audience:
Which gender saw the ad most: Gender: Men %: 70%	Which gender saw the ad most: Gender: %:
Based on the information above, what inferences can you make about the ad's target audience? Who is left out of this conversation? *Men 18-34 were likely specifically targeted. Women 18-34 were targeted much less (29% compared to 70%) and all genders 35+ are left out. 77% of the targeted audience are in 4 provinces (Ontario, Quebec, BC, and Alberta)*	Based on the information above, what inferences can you make about the ad's target audience? Who is left out of this conversation?

Compare your results. What similarities and differences do you observe in their messaging and targeting strategies? *N/A for this example.* Consider the tone. Are they positive, negative, or neutral? How might the tone impact public perception? *Pop culture reference may be relatable to Canadian population. Quality Canadian Milk clearly believe this is more relevant to younger audiences.*	Compare your results. What similarities and differences do you observe in their messaging and targeting strategies? Consider the tone. Are they positive, negative, or neutral? How might the tone impact public perception?

4. Consider the top spenders, in your province or nationwide, listed in the Meta Ad Library Report and identify an organization that is not a political party. What political ad is this organization running? Why might they be interested in publishing political ads?

Answers will vary according to when this lesson is taught. Answer can be found using the Meta Ad Library Report by examining the Page names under "Spending by advertiser" or by clicking a province under "Spending by location."

Clicking onto the "Quality Canadian Milk" Facebook page, and then to the website listed in the About section reveals that this is another name for the Dairy Farmers of Canada, a non-profit group funded and run by Canadian dairy farmers. Dairy is a supply managed sector in Canada, with government-controlled production, pricing, and import.

DIGITAL MEDIA LITERACY FOR DEMOCRACY
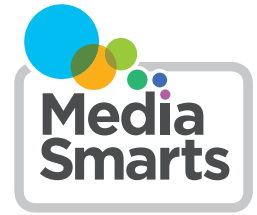
Investigating Election Disinformation Claims (Teacher's Version)

1. If a voter can't go to a voting place to vote in person, then they can't vote in the federal election.

False

How do you know? If a voter cannot vote in person on the day of the election, they can vote by mail or at an advance poll. https://www.elections.ca/content.aspx?section=vot&dir=vote&document=index&lang=e

2. Ballot tabulators can be hacked through Wi-Fi.

False

How do you know? Elections Canada does not use tabulators or ballot-counting machines. All ballots are counted by hand. https://www.elections.ca/content.aspx?section=vot&dir=int/cou&document=index&lang=e

3. Every federal general election and by-election is independently audited.

True

How do you know? Under the *Canada Elections Act*, an independent audit must be performed for each federal general election and by-election. https://www.elections.ca/content.aspx?section=res&dir=dis&document=index&lang=e#3 https://elections.bc.ca/2024-provincial-election/register-to-vote/

4. You can vote by text.

False

How do you know? Voting by text is not one of the options listed at https://www.elections.ca/content.aspx?section=vot&dir=vote&document=index&lang=e and a search for "vote by text" does not return any results.

5. You can register to vote before you are 18.

True

How do you know? If you are between 14 and 17 you can be added to the Register of Future Electors. This means you will be automatically registered to vote when you turn 18. https://www.elections.ca/content.aspx?section=vot&dir=faq&document=faqfut&lang=e

6. You can vote at any voting place.

False

How do you know? You can vote on election day or on an advance polling day at your assigned polling station, at any Elections Canada office (until the Tuesday before election day) and by mail if you've received a special ballot. https://www.elections.ca/content.aspx?section=vot&dir=vote&document=index&lang=e

7. Voting by mail is less secure than in-person voting

False

How do you know? Special ballots, which are used when voting by mail or at an Elections Canada office, include an inner and an outer envelope. The inner envelope only contains the ballot and the outer envelope contains the voter information. The outer envelope is checked and verified before the inner ballot is opened. https://www.elections.ca/content.aspx?section=res&dir=dis&document=index&lang=e#3

DIGITAL MEDIA LITERACY FOR DEMOCRACY

Glossary

Absentee ballot: a ballot that is required to be placed in a certification envelope prior to depositing in the ballot box. For instance, ballots collected by mobile teams, some mail-in ballots and ballots from some absentee opportunities at voting places. Also known as special ballots at the federal level.

Advance voting: in-person voting that is done at an advance voting opportunity before Final Voting Day. Not all advance voting places are open every day of the advance voting period

Ballot tabulator: a machine used to count paper ballots. Tabulators also tell election officials if a ballot cannot be read, so voters have the chance to correct it immediately

Cheapfake: a fake image made *without* using AI, such as with photo-editing software or just by changing the context (e.g. claiming that a photo of the mess left behind a rock concert is actually from an environmental protest)

Claim: something that people assert is true. An example of a claim in the context of elections is "I heard they found a bunch of ballots with Candidate X's name already filled in"

Cliché: a *trope* (see below) that has become annoying because it has been overused or used in unimaginative ways

Deepfake: an image or video created with artificial intelligence tools that is presented as being real

Dehumanization: an example of othering (see below) that is extreme to the point of making the othered group seem as though they're not even human

Disinformation/misinformation: misinformation is false or misleading information that the person sharing it believes is true, while it's disinformation if the person sharing it knows it is untrue

Ecosystem: a complex system where the different parts affect and influence one another. Our *information ecosystem* includes all of the different sources of information we use, including online and offline media, friends, family, et cetera

Hyperbole: extreme exaggeration

Micro-targeting: aiming ads at very specific groups (for instance, women in British Columbia ages 18-24)

News aggregator: a platform such as MSN or Yahoo that does not report original news but reprints news stories from other sources

Othering: when a claim or image tries to make a person or a group of people seem like they are fundamentally different from you

Polarization: the process of pushing people to more extreme views

Reverse image search: a method of finding the other places an image has appeared, using tools like Google or Tineye

Satire: something that makes a social or political point through humour. There are two kids of *satirical news*: outlets such as *The Daily Show*, which cover real news with a satirical take, and ones like *The Onion* and *The Beaverton*, which publish totally made-up news

Site operator: a tool for using a search engine to

search within a specific site. To do this, add the word "site:" and then the web address to the search, e.g. "advance voting site:elections.ca" (note the colon and no space between "site" and the web address)
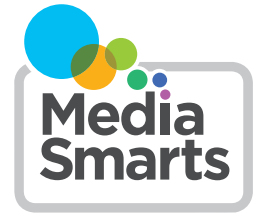
Targeted advertising: advertising that is displayed or delivered based on users' personal information

Trope: the "building blocks" of storytelling: events, characters, setting elements, and other things that are often used by media makers. "Couple who hate each other and then fall in love" is an example of a trope, as is "the villain's secluded lair"

Value: how we orient ourselves according to things we think are important. Examples of values include honesty, security, and kindness

DIGITAL MEDIA LITERACY FOR DEMOCRACY

Related MediaSmarts Resources

Complicated Conversations in the Classroom: This guide prepares teachers to tackle potentially controversial or polarizing topics in the classroom, with an emphasis on creating a safe space for engaged discussion and debate.

Break the Fake: This resource package, which includes a workshop, lessons, tip sheets, videos, and other materials, teaches four quick and easy steps for verifying information online.

Reality Check: Authentication and Citizenship: In this resource package, which includes a lesson, a video, and an online game, students consider the ways in which misinformation can have an impact on history and politics.

Digital Skills for Democracy: In this lesson, students explore a series of scenarios designed to teach five strategies for verifying information: find the original, verify the source, check other information, read factchecking articles, and turn to places you trust.

Watching the Elections: In this lesson, students compare American and Canadian elections to other mass media events and then watch one or both debates with an eye to analyzing them as media constructs.

Suffragettes and Iron Ladies: This lesson considers how the media portrays women in politics.

Speak Up! Your guide to changing the world, online and off: This guide shows students the ways they can use social networks to make your voice heard and make a difference.