



UNIT 3

THE MEDIA



A. What is Critical Media Literacy

This lesson opens with a fun activity to understand conspiracy theories. The lesson then explores what critical media literacy is, why is it important, and how it relates to global citizenship education.

Learning Outcomes: 2.6, 4.2, 4.4

Time: 45-60 mins

Materials needed: PowerPoint Critical Media Literacy and PDF Being Media Savvy (from Facts Matter with permission), both available on the Politics and Society subject page on our [website](#).

1. Conspiracy Kitchen (10mins)

Try out the [Conspiracy Kitchen](#) with your learners; an online tool from Kent University which demonstrates how easy it is to come up with a conspiracy theory and how quickly it can spread.

“The Conspiracy Kitchen assembles the ingredients of a random ‘protagonist’, ‘action’ and ‘motive’, producing a unique fake scenario that mirrors some of the conspiracy theories that emerge day-to-day across the world” (from the website).

- Follow-up questions: what does this tool demonstrate? What does it make you think about? Is it connected to any other topics, issues or subjects you have been studying?
- Emphasise the ease of creating conspiracy theories or false information. Discuss the suggestion on the website *“to share their ‘conspiracy theory’ directly on Twitter (now X)”*; focus on the implications of this and discourage learners from following the suggestion.
- Display [slide 2](#): Conspiracy Theories. This slide provides details of a News Literacy Project Report from 2024 which explored American teen information attitudes, habits and skills.
- Display [slide 3](#), go through the questions to explore learners’ experiences of conspiracies and relate these to the News Literacy Report. Take a show of hands for questions 1 and 2 and compare to the results of the 2024 report. Discuss questions 3 -5 as a whole class, allowing some time for paired discussion at the end.
- Ask the class, ‘what can we do to avoid falling for conspiracy theories?’

Allow 1 minute to respond on a scrap of paper. Learners then throw their paper (snowballs) at one another or into a basket. When all the snowballs have been thrown, individual learners, or the teacher, picks a snowball and reads the response. Short discussion follows.

2. What is Critical Media Literacy: Brainstorm (10 mins)

- Use a whole-class mind map to record thinking on critical media literacy (media literacy or news literacy). Encourage learners to consider each of the 3 words individually and together as a concept. Questions to the whole class:
 - o What does the word critical/media/literate mean?
 - o What does it mean to be media literate?
 - o What aspects does it entail?
- Display [slide 4](#): Being media literate. Read the slide together and give learners 2-3 minutes to individually come up with their own statement to add to the end of the slide, a statement on what being media literate means.
- Watch a video from the News Literacy Project: [Creating a Future Founded on Facts](#) (stop at 1.05mins). After the 1 minute video, learners may wish to amend or add to their statements. Individual learners can share their statements with the class; these can be recorded on a new slide.

3. Why is Critical Media Literacy Important: Think-Pair-Share (15mins)

- In pairs, learners come up with at least 3 reasons why being media literate is so important in today's complex and globalised world. Display [slide 5](#) prompts for the discussion.
 - Pairs join another pair, share their responses, collaborate and come up with at least 3 agreed reasons.
 - Display [slide 6](#) "6 reasons why becoming media savvy and reading the world are essential today". Alternatively access the PDF available in the supporting materials folder for Unit 3, print off and distribute the slide/page to each group.
 - Give learners time to read and consider the 6 points from Facts Matter. Ask groups to identify how their own responses are the same as and different from the reasons given in Facts Matter. Allow learners time to amend their group answers.
 - Compile a class list. Ask for a 'unique' reason from each group. Add to the class list until groups have no more unique responses to share.
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4. Photo Collage (10mins)

Caution is advised here before advancing to this activity. The content may be upsetting or triggering for some learners. We advise you to consider and prepare the material in advance and consult our GCE [Activities Resource](#) pages 5 and 6, which provides tips and further resources on 'Creating Safe(r) and Inclusive Classrooms'.

- Display [slide 7](#), provide the class with no background context and ask for responses to the photo collage. Pose questions for reflection:
 - o What do you think these images are about?
 - o Be aware of your emotional response.
 - o Apply media literacy skills of critically analysing, evaluating and stepping back, what are these images saying?
 - o Can you relate to these images in any way?
- Explain to the class that these images are part of a campaign called '56 Black Men'. Display [slide 8](#) which provides background details on the project. Go to the [BBC article](#) and scroll down to read some of the real stories from the men involved in the project. If time allows, you may also wish to explore [slide 9](#) which introduces a similar project called 'Bristol Mandem', there is also a [BBC article](#) with photos to stimulate thinking and discussion.
- Conclude this section with a short feel-good video from Denmark [All That We Share](#) (3mins).

5. Global Citizenship Education and Media Literacy (10mins)

Depending on your class and lessons previously covered, you may need to spend some additional time exploring the 5 [WWGS Guiding Principles for GCE](#), see for example Unit 1 part A, What is GCE?

- Display [slide 10](#) the WWGS Guiding Principles for GCE; focus the discussion on how these Principles can guide us in becoming media literate global citizens.

For example, by keeping the Principle Unlearning & Reconstructing front and foremost, we are reminded to challenge mainstream views, identify bias and stereotypes, seek wider perspectives and explore multiple truths.

Or by *Acting in Solidarity* with others, we are more likely to be accepting, tolerant and not jump to extremist positions.

- Print off or write the 5 Guiding Principles on posters/flipchart paper and display around the room. Include the question “How can the WWGS Guiding Principles for GCE guide us to be media literate citizens?” Learners respond by adding comments, questions or reflections, with post-its or markers, to the 5 Guiding Principles.

6. Exit Ticket

Ask learners to complete an ‘exit ticket’ before leaving the room. This can be done anonymously on a scrap of paper, it can form part of a reflective journal or it can be done in a circle as an oral round robin.

Learners respond to the prompt: Why is media literacy important to me?

Explore More

- [Facts Matter](#): A Guide to Building Critical Media Literacy in Today’s World. From 80:20, this resource has worksheets, PowerPoint slides, and easy to follow lesson plans.
- WebWise/OIDE (2022) [Connected - An Introduction to Digital Media Literacy for Junior Cycle](#). These lessons, which contain background information, videos and more, can be adapted for Senior Cycle.
- [Facing Ferguson: News Literacy in a Digital Age](#)
11 lessons from Facing History and Ourselves. The lessons aim to ‘help learners become informed and effective civic participants in today’s digital landscape. This unit is designed to develop learners’ critical thinking, news literacy, civic engagement, and social-emotional skills and competencies’.

B. Trust in the Media

Based on data from the Digital News Report from the Reuters Institute and University of Oxford, this lesson examines trust in the media. The second part of the lesson looks at news media bias and explores three different positions on the human contribution to climate change using a fishbowl strategy to debate and discuss different stances.

Learning Outcomes: 2.6, 4.2, 4.3, 4.4

Time: 45-60 minutes

Materials needed: Whiteboard and internet access. PowerPoint Trust in the Media available in the [Unit 3 folder](#).

2-3 copies of [slides 5, 6 and 7](#) printed with key findings cut into individual strips. [Slide 12](#), printed once, 3 stances cut into individual strips and distributed to groups.

1. Snowball (5mins)

Ask learners to use words, phrases, sentences or pictures to respond to the prompt 'trust in the media'. They have 1 minute to respond on a scrap of paper. Learners then throw their paper (snowballs) at one another or into a basket. When all the snowballs have been thrown, the teacher or individual learners pick a snowball and read the response. Short discussion follows.

2. Digital News Report 2025 (20-30mins)

The Digital News report from the Reuters Institute and University of Oxford is a comprehensive study of news consumption worldwide. It contains country data as well as global and regional trends.

The website hosts a wealth of information including annual reports, executive summaries, country data and a 'Watch, Listen and Teach' section.

- Display [slide 2](#) - the Digital News Report 2025
- Quiz: display [slide 3](#) which is a multiple choice quiz based on the key findings of the Digital News Report 2025. The task for learners is to guess or predict the reported percentage (of people sampled across the 48 countries) for 5 key findings. There is an option to do a class poll (show of hands) on the same questions.
 1. Percentage who 'trust most of the news most of the time'. *Report findings: 40%; Ireland 51%*
 2. Percentage who depend on social media and video networks as the main source of news. *Report findings: 44% of 18-24s and 38% for 25-34s.*
 3. Percentage who are 'concerned about their ability to tell what is true from what is false when it comes to news online'. *Report findings: 58%*
 4. What are the sources of false or misleading information? *Report findings: online influencers and personalities (47%), and national politicians (47%). Facebook (49%) and TikTok (48%) are the networks seen as creating the biggest threat.*
 5. Percentage who used an AI chatbot or interface for a source of news this week. *Report findings: 7% overall but much higher with under-25s at 15%.*
- Display [slide 4](#) - Report Findings and discuss as a class. Seek reactions - *are you surprised, how do the findings compare to your predictions, to the class percentage? What do the findings indicate about Ireland compared to other countries?*

- **Each One Teach One:**

Print off [slides 5, 6 and 7](#), nine Key Findings from the Digital News Report (Note- the key findings presented here are only a section of the overall findings, there are additional findings in a bulleted list available in the [Executive Summary](#). Depending on your class size you may need 2 or 3 copies of each slide).

Cut the key findings into strips and distribute 1 to each learner. Learners read their strip/key finding, then circulate the room sharing their finding (in their own words) with as many other learners as possible (each learner teaches one finding).

Bring the class back together for a debrief and go through the key findings by asking 'taught' learners to summarise what they learned.

- Display [slide 8](#) Conclusions and read as a class.
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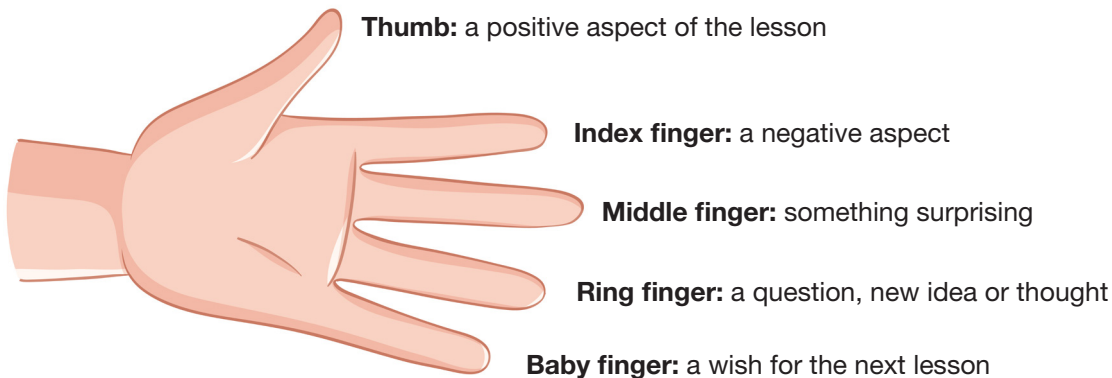
3. Bias in the Media (20mins)

Depending on your class and the topics covered, some of the activities suggested below might not be appropriate or relevant, select those most suitable for your class. If you wish to explore bias more comprehensively before carrying out this activity, explore the suggested resources below.

- Ask learners what media bias is? Give them 3 minutes to discuss with a partner.
- Display [slide 9](#) News Media Bias and read it with the class. Display [slide 10](#) and go through the discussion questions with the class.
- Use the links below to explore News Media Bias ratings with the class, or allow learners time online to discover these sites and tools themselves:
 - o The Media Bias Chart, explore the interactive chart at [Ad Fontes Media](#)
 - o [All Sides](#): there are a range of tools and resources to explore on this website, for example the media bias chart (see [slide 13](#)), fact checker chart and influencer bias chart. These tools allow users to understand where media sources and fact checkers lie on a scale ranging from 'left through centre to right' and aim to demonstrate that while a publication can be accurate it can still be biased.
- All Stances: explore multiple stances on an issue, using evidence and balanced information (from [All Stances](#))
 - o Select an issue or 'query' from the sidebar menu, for instance [How should news and online media operate under a democracy?](#) (2025) or [How much do humans contribute to climate change](#) (2024).
 - o Divide the class into groups (some queries have 10 stances, others 3, choose the number of stances to explore based on your class size and learners' experience with the issue).
 - o All Stances has 3 stances on the human contribution to climate change, the core arguments are available on [slide 12](#) (these can be printed, cut out and distributed to each group).
 - o Divide the class into 3 groups and allow them 5 minutes to read the core argument and discuss their stance. Explain that, for the purpose of debate, groups need to argue their given stance and not their real position on the issue.
 - o If time allows, groups can explore their stance more deeply by reading the full arguments on each stance. This can be accessed online or printed off and distributed to each group.
 - o Debate the stances using a Fishbowl method; 1 person from each stance is in the fishbowl making arguments. Other group members can join the debate by 'tapping in'. See [WWGS Activities Resource](#) for more on Fishbowl.
 - o Reflect with the class on the learning from this activity, for example What does this exercise tell us about news media bias? What does it show us as consumers of media?

4. Closure: Hand Reflection

Learners draw an outline of their hand on a piece of paper and use each finger to reflect on the lesson. Allow learners to share their 'hands' with a partner and ask them to place the 'hands' in a box as they leave to inform teacher planning.



Explore More: Media Bias

- [Checkology 'Understanding Bias'](#) - create a free account to access videos, resources, quizzes and more.
- [Facts Matter](#): Session 4 'What's in the News' covers bias (pg.29) including an activity which gets learners to add bias to an existing news story.
- BBC Bitesize: [Balance and bias in the media](#)
- Video (3.14mins) [The Blur between Facts and Opinions in the Media](#) from GCF Global.
- All Sides has a topics section covering '[story of the week](#)' and '[perspectives](#)' or blogs on recent topics, for instance [Keeping Kids Safe Online?: Understanding the Debate Over AI Age Verification](#) (2026) or [Free Speech: When Our Divisions Get Even Deeper](#) (2025) and much more. It also has an educational section, [AllSides for Schools](#).

Additional Activities: Digital News Report

- Look at the country data, use the data to do a profile on a country of choice; pick two countries and compare the findings on trust and mis/disinformation across the two.
- Examine the most recent Key Findings, pick 3 to explore in more detail.
- The website hosts previous reports dating back to 2012. Create a timeline to demonstrate how trust in the media, or other key findings, have changed in Ireland.

C. False Information

This lesson delves into false information. A K-W-L technique is used to guide learners through what they know, what they want to know and what they have learned. Videos, quizzes, and games are used to build understanding.

Learning Outcomes: 2.6, 4.2, 4.3, 4.4

Time: 45-60mins (depending on prior learning and time needed for research).

Materials needed: PowerPoint False Information and the student information sheet False Information available in the supporting materials folder for [Unit 3](#) (6 pages).

1. Two Truths One Lie

Give the class 3 minutes to think of 2 truths and 1 lie about themselves, the teacher can join in too. Emphasise that the objective is to deceive each other or to trick each other with false information. For example: I speak 5 languages / I play the trumpet / I visited Arás an Úchtarán and met Catherine Connolly.

Sitting in a circle, learners read out their 3 'facts' in whatever order they like and the rest of the class must guess which 'fact' is a lie.

Show the News Literacy Project short video [2 Truths and AI](#), learners identify the AI generated image.

2. KWL: False Information

The K-W-L technique works well here to explore if learners are misinformed about how much they know about misinformation!

The time needed for this activity will depend on prior learning in critical media literacy in this subject and beyond.

Throughout this activity encourage learners to focus on the challenges of false information, how this is intensified in a globalised world and the challenges it poses for global citizenship.

Note for Educators

False information v Fake news

"Experts now recommend avoiding the term 'fake news', or at least limit its use, as the term 'fake news' is closely associated with politics, and this association can unhelpfully narrow the focus of the issue. The term 'false information' is preferable as it can refer to a diverse range of misinformation and disinformation covering topics such as health, environmental and economics across all platforms and genres, while 'fake news' is more narrowly understood as political news stories".

From webwise.ie

K: I Know

- Learners individually brainstorm words, terms, phrases, or facts relating to false information. This is recorded on the K column.
- Facilitate time for sharing and discussion; encourage pairs of learners to share what they know with each other and ask each other questions such as:
 - o What made you think of that?
 - o Where did you hear/see/learn that?
 - o Is this based on fact or opinion?
 - o Can the source(s) of this information be trusted or validated?
- Display [slide 2](#), discuss it as a whole class, allow learners time to add to their K-W-L sheet.
- If the terms ‘misinformation, dis-information or mal-information’ have not emerged from the learners, discuss ‘what I know’ about these terms and what challenges they pose for the media; add to the K-W-L sheets.
- Watch the video ‘[How to understand misinformation, disinformation and mal-information](#)’ from Shout Out UK Video (2.52mins).
 - o Before the video, ask learners to take notes as they watch and be ready to write a description of each of the three terms.
 - o After the video, ask learners to share their descriptions with a partner and to work together to identify a recent example of each type of false information. During pair work, display [slide 3](#) which has the definitions of each of the 3 terms from Shout Out UK.
 - o Display [slide 4](#) which has 7 types of mis and dis information from [First Draft News “Understanding Information Disorder”](#).
 - o Add to the K-W-L sheet.
- To help learners become aware of what they know and what they don’t know, facilitate time for them to engage with some of these games and quizzes:
 - o [St Clair College](#):
Discover a curated collection of games, quizzes, and activities from a wide range of researchers, organisations, and respected academic and media institutions. These interactive resources are designed to help you build critical thinking skills, recognise misinformation, and become a more informed media consumer. For instance, Spot the Troll is a quiz where you examine images of real social media content and decide whether they are legitimate or from an internet troll. The Cranky Uncle is designed to be a fun game to build resilience against science.
 - o [Collection of Kahoots](#) where learners can strengthen critical media literacy skills. Created by Kahoot in collaboration with the World Health Organisation to help learners develop media literacy skills and to navigate misinformation.
 - o [Fakey](#): a game which aims to teach media literacy and study how people interact with misinformation. In this fun game, players decide whether to like, share or fact check a story.
 - o The Guardian: [News Wise Quiz 2022](#): identify whether headlines and photos are real or fake!

W: I Want to Know?

- Ask learners to individually record questions, concerns or issues they would like to know more about relating to false information. Remind them that 'what I want to know' will need to be researched, explored and verified; reiterate that the answers to the W column become the L column.
- Depending on your class, their questions and their prior knowledge provide appropriate links and resources to support their research. The student fact sheet 'False Information' includes some background information as well as links to videos, websites, Ted Talks, podcasts and more (ideally this is to be shared digitally so that learners can click on the links to websites/videos etc).
- Encourage learners to include the question 'how to detect/spot false information?' [Slides 5-8](#) present some strategies, steps and things to remember when spotting mis/dis-information and fact checking. These slides can be printed and distributed to learners, or the points can be discussed as a class.
- Display [slide 9](#). Watch the TikTok video on Meta's decision to end fact checking and discuss the questions on the slide. Extension exercise: display [slide 10](#) and discuss with the class how or if the end of fact-checking by Meta is reflected in the Digital News Report.

L: I Learned

- Prior to completing the L column and to determine how much learners know and if they need to do more research, have them complete this quiz: The University of Cambridge Misinformation [Susceptibility Test](#), 20 true or false questions which aim to determine how resilient users are to misinformation. Learners add to the L column based on their learning.
- Encourage learners to consider whether they have any remaining questions. Discuss and answer these collaboratively or identify what is needed to answer remaining questions.
- Watch the [What is False Information \(Fake News\)?](#) (4.20mins) animated video from Webwise. This video covers most of the aspects explored in this lesson and can be used to add final comments to the L column or as a closing summary.
- As they watch, ask learners to prepare 3 questions to put to a partner. The questions can then be swapped in pairs and answered collaboratively.

3. Reflection

Display [slides 11 and 12](#) which have three points to stimulate reflection.

- A quote from 'On Lying and Politics', a 1971 book by Hannah Arendt (1906-1975). Arendt was a German and American historian and philosopher and one of most influential political theorists of the twentieth century.
- A research finding from the 2019 study "Misinformation and Morality: Encountering Fake-News Headlines Makes Them Seem Less Unethical to Publish and Share".
- Findings from the 2025 Digital News Report.

Ask learners to consider their reactions to these quotes, and the entire lesson, by using a 3-2-1 strategy:

3 new or interesting thoughts

2 challenging points

1 question

Explore More: Media Bias

- This video from Global Action Plan (GAP) is a 26 minute lesson ready to use in the classroom, it includes questions, time to discuss, and short activities.
[Can you believe it? Disinformation Misinformation + What's real anymore?](#) "In an age of fake news, AI and conspiracy theories, this talk helps learners navigate information chaos, understand how climate disinformation spreads, and develop tools to assess credibility and build media resilience".
- [News Literacy Project](#): Dig Deeper- What is misinformation? A lesson with slides and PDFs to assist teaching the topic misinformation. The website hosts an extensive range of resources, you may need to sign up (for free) to gain full access.
- [Cop30 seeks to tackle the 'information crisis' on climate issues](#): Fighting disinformation and conspiracy theories appear on summit's agenda for the first time (Irish Times Nov 2025).
- [The Misinformation We're Missing: Why Real Videos Can Be More Dangerous Than Fake Ones.](#) A short read from Storyful Nov 2025.

D: Filter Bubbles & Echo Chambers

This lesson has two parts. Part 1 explores what online filter bubbles are, how they isolate users and what this means for global citizenship and democracy. Part 2 is about echo chambers, how to recognise, avoid and escape echo chambers. Learners are challenged to consider what their own online echo chambers might look like. Ideas are suggested for a case study on discourses in the media as well as some additional activities including discursive essay questions.

Learning Outcomes: 2.6, 2.7, 4.4.

Time: 45-60mins for each part, with options for additional activities.

Materials needed: PowerPoint Filter Bubbles (for part 1) and PowerPoint Echo Chambers (for part 2), both available on the Politics and Society page of our [website](#). Access to the internet, ideally for each learner or pairs of learners.

Part 1: Filter Bubbles

1. Warm-up Activity (5-10 mins)

- Display [slide 2](#): and ask the class what they think Dr Lisa Strohmman is talking about (Dr Lisa Strohmman founder of Digital Citizen Academy and an advocate for mental health and how it relates to our digital lives). Allow learners to read the quote, discuss in pairs briefly and as a class, then guess as to what the quote is about.
- Reveal to the class that Dr Lisa Strohmman was talking about filter bubbles. Ask if anyone knows what a filter bubble is and invite descriptions from the class.
- Display [slide 3 and 4](#) which gives some detail on what filter bubbles are.

Further Information for Educators

[Slide 3](#) refers to algorithms; if the class needs more detail on algorithms and how they relate to filter bubbles, you can explore:

- [BBC Bitesize](#) 'How algorithms and filter bubbles decide what we see on social media'.
- Video (or part of it) from the Wall Street Journal '[How TikTok's Algorithm Figures You Out](#)' (13.02mins).
- [Facts Matter](#): Session 5 'How it's made', covers how algorithms work, particularly on Facebook (p.32).
- Provide a definition of an algorithm from Oxford Languages- Google search "*a data-tracking system in which an individual's internet search history and browsing habits are used to present them with similar or related material on social media or other platforms*".

2. Search Engine Activity: Why is....? (20mins)

Note for Educators - internet access is required for this activity, if possible, learners pair up and access an iPad, laptop or phone; alternatively, the activity can be done as a whole class with the teacher using the whiteboard to demonstrate the internet searches.

- Begin by asking the class to predict what dropdowns would appear in a search engine (e.g. Google or Bing) if you typed in 'Why is Ireland....'. In other words what are the 3 most likely answers that will appear, learners jot down their predictions. Use [slide 5](#) to illustrate this.
- In pairs, learners (or the teacher on the whiteboard) type in 'Why is Ireland...' on their chosen search engine. If time allows, use 2 different search engines (as search results may differ), for example DuckDuckGo, Brave Search or Microsoft Edge. Jot down the top 3 results, as depicted in [slide 6](#).
- In their pairs, learners compare the actual search results with their own predictions. Or the whole class compares individual predictions with the actual results carried out by the teacher on the whiteboard. In pairs, or as a whole class, discuss the questions on [slide 7](#).
- Learners find a new partner and repeat the process of guessing, searching and comparing for a country from the Global South e.g. 'Why is Somalia ...?'. **Caution for Educators: Make sure to choose a country not associated with any learners in the class. Learners record the answers.**
- In pairs (or as a whole class) compare the top 3 search results from Ireland with the top 3 from the Global South Country.
- Next gather the search results for the Global South country, options:
 - o Each pair shares a search result without repeating those already given. The teacher compiles the results digitally by creating a word cloud online or a mind map on the whiteboard.
 - o Learners write their 3 search results on post-its and group the same results on the wall or window.
- Based on the results, discuss:
 - o What is the most popular word? What is your reaction to this finding- surprised, disturbed, reassured or what?
 - o What words are missing that you had predicted/expected/wanted to see?
 - o What picture do these results paint of the country?
 - o How could this lead to stereotyping?
 - o How could this search engine filtering process lead to an echo chamber, both online and offline?
(Answers could include reinforcing existing views, repeating the words online, confirmation bias, stereotyping, simplistic thinking, polarisation, racism etc.)
 - o What are the potential consequences for our understanding of, empathy for and solidarity with, other global citizens? For a sense of common humanity and Global Citizenship? For democracy?

3. How Filter Bubbles Isolate You: Think-Pair-Share

This activity is a Think-Pair-Share based on a short video on Filter Bubbles.

- **Think** - Display [slide 8](#) -Video Questions for learners to answer individually
- Watch the video '[How filter bubbles isolate you](#)' (2:38 mins). Pause the video at 1.20 mins to allow learners time to jot down some responses, then play until the end.
- **Pair** - Learners find a pair.
- Display [slide 9](#), which has answers to the video questions. Encourage learners to add more to the answers, to look to their own learning and experiences. Suggested answers are provided in green below.
 - o Question 1: *additional answers not in video-we overestimate the prevalence of our perspective; our empathy for others decreases; it inhibits authentic dialogue and true change. For more see the short article '[Are you in a social media bubble?](#)' From Better by Today.*
 - o Question 2: *Remind learners of the WWGS Guiding Principles for GCE, in particular, Unlearning and Reconstructing and Finding Root Causes, and discuss how these can contribute to dealing with filter bubbles?*
- **Share** - Pairs join another pair and share answers to the questions. Ask them to come up with a list of 5 tips to break free from filter bubbles. Keep these lists for the next lesson on echo chambers.

4. Refection

Display the quotes on [slide 10 and 11](#) from Eli Pariser, the internet activist who coined the term ‘filter bubble’.

Ask the class to read it, think about it, and imagine what content might get edited out of their own social media and news feeds. This question may be challenging and/or emotional for some learners, for this reason, learners may wish to respond by journaling their response, by privately and silently responding in their own thoughts, or through an exit ticket. Alternatively, the quote could spark an interesting discussion if learners feel safe and comfortable sharing.

Part 2: Echo Chambers

1. Icebreaker: Filter bubble or echo chamber?

Display [slide 2](#) (access PowerPoint Echo Chambers).

Answers:

Q1: A is a filter bubble, B an echo chamber.

Q2: A filter bubble.

Q3: A – search engines filter results.

2. Visualisation: In a real echo chamber

- Ask learners to imagine they are in a real, physical (not online) echo chamber.
- Learners draw or write the shape, size, colour of the walls; ask them to focus on one belief/thought they have about sport/TV/Christmas (something general, non-political). Tell them to imagine that voices are echoing their own thoughts– what are they saying? Are they loud or quiet, high or low?
- Learners continue to draw or write, adding their emotional responses to the echo chamber (e.g. safe, smart, claustrophobic, suspicious etc.)

3. Online Echo Chambers

- Watch the video [Filter Bubbles and Echo Chambers](#) (stop at 1.36mins, the rest of the video is about the 2016 US Presidential election).
- In pairs, give learners 3 minutes to come up with a short definition of a filter bubble and an echo chamber.
- Display [slide 3](#), which has suggested definitions. [Slide 4](#) is a more comprehensive definition of an echo chamber and [slide 5](#) presents ‘what happens in an echo chamber’.

Conscience Alley

The aim here is that the conscience alley is an opportunity to mimic an online echo chamber. For more on this strategy see the resource and video [here](#).

- Have learners form 2 rows facing each other, so they are like an alley. Select one learner at a time to walk down the alley as the rest of the class speaks or whispers opinions or viewpoints at them. The learners’ opinions spoken are meant to be an ‘echo’ to the statements read out by the teacher. Remind the class that in an echo chamber, here the conscience alley, there are no dissenting voices.

- Ensure that the statements used in the ‘alley’ are respectful and sensitive to all learners. Suggested statements:
 - o Pineapple should never be put on pizza
 - o Dogs are the best pets
 - o Ireland is the best country in the world for the ‘craic’
 - o Photos confirm UFO landing in the Phoenix Park last night
 - o Homework has been proven to be of no educational benefit

Discussion

Ask learners to reflect on how it felt to be the subject of a ‘bombardment’ of similar opinions. Ask them to imagine if the topic in the ‘alley’ was more controversial, for instance, ‘climate change doesn’t exist’, ‘Ireland is full’ or ‘Israel is guilty of war crimes’.

Photo Collage

Display [slide 6](#) and ask the class what happens when your echo chamber looks like this? Ask learners to think about what statements or words they might hear in echo chambers with images similar to those in the slide. Do the same for [slide 7](#).

Consequence Wheel

Use a Consequence Wheel as a tool to help learners identify how their own beliefs or values may operate in an echo chamber. For more on a Consequence Wheel activity, see the [WWGS Activities Resource](#).

- Choose a topic to explore with your learners, this can be fun and light or more challenging. Suggested topics; Eurovision, Russia-Ukraine War, Israel-Palestinian conflict, health care, education, the media, the senior cycle, Taylor Swift etc.
- Learners sketch a consequence wheel similar to [slide 8](#); they write the topic in the centre and add what they identify as connections and consequences of connections. Allow 3-5mins for this.
- Now tell learners to close their thinking into an echo chamber by drawing a circle around their consequence wheel. What happens to their connections and ideas? How will their ideas multiply, what values, narratives will come back (ideas, beliefs, narratives bounce off the closed circle and come back in, reinforcing the existing connections)? Ask learners to represent this with arrows and more bubbles in their wheels.
- If learners are happy to share, allow time for learners to circulate the room, looking at and discussing each other’s consequence wheel/echo chamber.

4. How to avoid or escape echo chambers

- Play the video [What is an Echo Chamber](#) from GCF Global (2.17mins), also on [slide 9](#).

Based on the video, ask learners to jot down:

- a) questions which help you recognise if you are in an echo chamber

Answers (also on [slide 10](#))

- o Do they tend to only give one perspective on an issue?
- o Is that viewpoint mainly supported by rumour or incomplete evidence?
- o Are facts ignored whenever they go against that viewpoint?

- b) tips to avoid echo chambers

Answers (also on [slide 10](#))

- o Make a habit of checking multiple news sources to ensure you are getting complete, objective information.
- o Interact with people of different perspectives, and take care to discuss new ideas with facts, patience, and respect.
- o Remember just because you want something to be true, that doesn’t make it fact.
- Refer learners back to the think-pair-share activity on limiting filter bubbles; have learners get into the same pairs and come up with their own list of tips to avoid echo chambers.
- Display [slides 11 and 12](#) which are a collection of tips from various sources. Edit, add to or amend this slide to incorporate responses from the groups.

5. Walking Debate

The Ted Talk from Eli Pariser [Beware of Filter Bubbles](#) (9.04mins) from 2011 summarises the issues covered in these 2 lessons (filter bubbles and echo chambers). Eli Pariser highlights the threat that filter bubbles pose to democracy and civil liberties, the video provides an excellent stimulus for further discussion on this topic.

To begin a discussion, or as an alternative to watching the entire video, display [slides 13 and 14](#), which are quotes from Eli's opening and closing speech.

Have a walking debate on some of the issues raised by Eli Pariser, see [WWGS Activities Resource](#) for more details on a walking debate.

- The internet connects us all together
- The internet is a positive force for global citizenship and democracy
- The internet leaves us isolated in a 'web of one'
- Algorithms do a good job of ethical gatekeeping for online information
- The issues raised by Eli in 2011 remain unchanged today

Case Study: Far Right Agitators and Social Media

Exploring issues relating to the far-right may trigger emotional reactions for some learners, so it is important to be sensitive and create a safe and inclusive space when exploring these topics. Be aware and take account of your learners' social contexts, understand your own biases and existing narratives, prepare accurate, up to date and factual information, and ground discussion in a human rights framework (e.g. UDHR).

Consult the [WWGS Activities Resource](#) which has a section dedicated to 'Creating Safe and Inclusive Classrooms'.

Explore the [Hope and Courage Collective](#), who work with communities to 'strengthen democracy and build collective resilience in the face of rising far-right hate and disinformation'. Their website has some useful resources, for example [Greater Than Fear: A Community based response to tackling hate and extremism](#) or the [Media Bridging Guide](#). The website also publishes responses to current events such as '[The Online Playbook Behind the Violence in Citywest](#)', a report which exposes how far right agitators used social media to incite and monetise the violence in Citywest, Dublin in 2025. "The unrest was organised, not spontaneous, fuelled by disinformation, livestreams, and international amplification".

Suggested Activities:

- Find evidence of an 'us versus them mentality' in one or more of the articles below.
- The contrasting narratives of *Ireland is Full* and *Ireland for All* characterise this issue. Find text and photo evidence of each narrative.
- Consider what some Key Thinkers, such as Edward Said or Samuel Huntington, would argue in relation to the rise of polarisation and extremism in the 21st century. Relate their arguments to the rise of social media. Access the PDST Booklet on Key Thinkers, [available here](#) or the NCCA supports on Big Thinkers [here](#).

Examples of relevant news articles

- Irish Times 2025: '[Absolute violence and worse is the only thing that should happen](#)': How social media drove the Citywest riots'.
- Irish Times 2025: '[Attack on migrant centre in Dublin 8 but quieter Citywest protest: Incident at Basin Lane involved young children shouting 'get them out' with efforts to set property on fire](#)'.
- BBC 2024: '[The real story of the news website accused of fuelling riots](#)'
- Irish Times 2024: '[We don't need death threats against politicians to see how social media is harming democracy](#)'.
- The Journal 2024: '[The disinfluencers: How over 150 anonymous 'Irish' accounts are swamping X with extreme views](#)'.
- The Irish Examiner, 2022: "[Ireland's far-right pushes its 'invasion' propaganda](#)."

Additional Activities: Echo Mood Board

Learners create a printed or digital echo chamber mood board. On it they include examples of online content from well known sites, for instance:

- Youtube - music taste, humour, celebrities
- Instagram - influencers
- Netflix - American soaps or documentaries
- Type of advertisements in your feed
- What sport news do you get?
- What types of current affair feeds do you get?
- Authors, podcasts, bloggers etc
- Political parties

Once complete, the echo mood boards could be displayed so that all learners could see the tastes and opinions of their peers and how they align with their own echo mood board. If possible, compare how learners' mood boards compare to that of the teacher, staff, other year groups, siblings, parents, grandparents, others- bring in as many diverse echo chambers as possible. Completing part of this activity at home, or informally may allow learners to interact with more diverse echo chambers.

Key Thinkers

Learners can explore the themes covered in these 2 lessons (filter bubbles and echo chambers) in relation to key thinkers Noam Chomsky, Karl Marx, Robert Nozick or other relevant thinkers which learners have studied.

Noam Chomsky

In Powers and Prospects (1996) Chomsky states:

"The responsibility of the writer as a moral agent is to try bring the truth about matters of human significance to an audience that can do something about them".

In Manufacturing Consent (1988) Chomsky and Edward Herman explain:

"It is our view that, among their other functions, the media serve and propagandize on behalf of, the powerful societal interests that control and finance them."

Karl Marx

The Marxist perspective on the media is that it is controlled by the elites, their capitalist interests and is therefore biased and unrepresentative. Relating to this is the critique of the dominant presence of advertising in the media and its role in creating consumers for the perpetuation of a capitalist system.

Robert Nozick on the other hand may argue for a libertarian media which should publish what it wants and it is up to the population to decide how to consume it.

Discursive Essay Questions

- a. In the online space, with active algorithms, discuss who holds the responsibility to 'bring the truth about matters of human significance' to the users? In what ways (if any) is that responsibility informed by ethical standards of journalism?
- b. How and in what ways do filter bubbles serve what Marx calls the 'elites', or the 'powerful societal interests that control and finance the media' as Chomsky refers to them.
- c. With the rise of online influencers and personalities as news sources, as reported by Reuters in the [Digital New Report](#), discuss whether citizens are more controlled by or more free from the capitalist control that Marx refers to?
- d. In a similar vein, discuss how filter bubbles serve to both control and free the individual from capitalist aims.

E: (Citizen) Journalism

In this lesson learners explore what citizen journalism is and how it relates to human rights. They look specifically at Witness: The Human Rights Channel and the Right to Record Movement. There is an optional research task on the Right to Record and how it relates to human rights instruments. The lesson also includes a mini video action plan where learners use a Witness template to help them plan and create a video on a social justice or human rights issue. Additional activities to explore free speech and the freedom of expression are offered at the end of this lesson.

Learning Outcomes: 2.6, 2.7, 3.2, 3.3.

Time: 45 - 60mins, with options for additional activities.

Materials needed: PowerPoint (Citizen) Journalism, available on the Politics and Society page of our [website](#). Access to the internet, ideally for each learner or pairs of learners.

1. Introduction (5 mins)

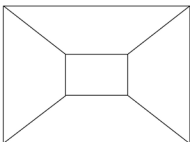
Sentence starter, 'Journalism is....'. Add a ball toss to make it more active.

Display [slide 2](#) and ask the class to guess the word that is blanked out in the definition from Britannica.

2. What is Citizen Journalism

Watch the short video on citizen journalism, and as they watch ask learners to jot down some pros and cons of citizen journalism.

Video (1min) [Differentiating Citizen Journalism And Professional Journalism](#) CNN's Lila King defines citizen journalism.



Placemat Activity

- Provide learners with the article "[The Rise of Citizen Journalism: Empowering Voices in the Digital Age](#) 2023, from the Medium.com. This is a 2 minute read with 5 bullet points exploring citizen journalism.
- The aim is for groups of 4 to identify the following from the article:
 - a) The benefits of citizen journalism
 - b) The challenges
 - c) The impacts
 - d) Any questions which arise
- Write each of the 4 questions on the 4 sections of the place mat. Learners respond to each of the 4 questions in turn as the placemat is moved around the group.
- Each group concludes with a sentence or statement describing citizen journalism. Keep these for later in the lesson.

3. Citizen Journalism in Action

Witness

- Check in with your learners to see if anyone has come across [Witness: The Human Rights Channel](#).
- Display slide 3, background to WITNESS. Explore the About Us page, watch the video (5.35mins). Alternatively watch one or both of these videos from Witness related to citizen journalism:
 - “[Welcome to WITNESS Human Rights Channel: The Source for Citizen Video](#)” (1.35mins)
 - [Witness: Video for Human Rights Change](#) (3.40mins)
- Video Discussion: Concentric Circles
Use a concentric circles method to discuss the questions on [slide 4](#). To find out more about a concentric circles activity, see the [WWGS Activities Resource](#).
- For more on citizen journalism, explore [Storyful](#) a ‘social news’ agency which offers professional services verifying the authenticity of videos recorded by citizen journalists and human rights activists and charging larger news agencies for their services.

4. Right to Record Movement

- Display (or print and distribute) [slide 5](#), the case of Rodney King. Allow learners time to read about the case, there is additional information in the slide notes if learners are curious about the outcome of the case.
- Display [slide 6 and 7](#), Dounya Zayer’s story and the right to record movement. The slides are taken from a blog here on [Witness](#) about Dounya’s case.
Learners can answer these questions (available in [slide 8](#)) in pairs orally or individually as a written exercise.
 - In what ways is Dounya’s case similar and different from the Rodney King police brutality case?
 - How does citizen journalism promote the principles of solidarity and human rights?
 - How has citizen journalism brought about change?
 - Think about these questions and return to the placemats from earlier in the lesson, add to, amend or change your responses based on new learning.
- Fishbowl Discussion, see the [WWGS Activities Resource](#) for instructions. Discussion question: Should the media, in all its forms, be free to publish what it deems to be relevant or important?
 - Allow learners a few minutes to develop their arguments individually in advance of the Fishbowl.
 - Encourage learners to draw on themes in this unit and Key Thinkers they have studied in making their arguments.

Research Task: The Right to Record

In 2016 The United Nations Human Rights Council published a Report which promotes and protects human rights in the context of peaceful protests, this included a reference to monitor and record events.

- See the UN Summary Report [here](#)
The Report presents 10 overarching Principles which apply to assemblies that “express a common position, grievance, aspiration or identity and that diverge from mainstream positions or challenge established political, social, cultural or economic interests”.
- Watch the Witness Video on the ‘[Right to Record: Protest. Resist. Exist. Explainer](#)’ (8.43mins). Watch up to 3.50mins which explains the Right to Record, the UN Resolution and challenges posed in different contexts. Be aware that the video begins with scenes of human rights abuses which some learners may find difficult.
- Read the Witness [information article](#) on the Right to Record which explains the UN Resolution how it has evolved and what is next for the Right to Record.

Activity

- o Provide learners with access to a copy of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) and ask them to identify human rights which relate to the media.
- o Focus on UDHR and Article 19 in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1966). How do these rights relate to the Right to Record? Do they support one another? How do these rights support the promotion of justice and democracy?

5. Mini Video Action Plan

This could be used as part of planning for a GCE learner action or it could inspire your learners to take action. It could also link in with Politics and Society Topic 3: Effectively Contributing to Communities.

Access the [template from Witness](#) which supports learners to plan a video to document a social justice or human rights issue.

Prompts include:

- What social justice or human rights issue do you plan to document?
- What change in practice, policy or law do you seek with this video? Be as clear and concrete as possible.
- What is the story that the video will tell? Try to condense it down to a single sentence or two.
- Who will tell the story?
- What are the potential ethical challenges?

7. Closure

Freeze frame - ask learners to imagine they are filming a story as it unfolds in for example Gaza, the Ukraine, or at a climate justice protest. Create a freeze frame with a partner.

Additional Activities

- Explore the UNESCO resource '[Freedom of Expression Toolkit](#)', in particular the Case Study lesson on the imaginary country Zangara (p.65). The lesson is based on case study dilemmas on the Freedom of Expression.
- Find out when the UN's World Press Freedom Day is this year. See their [website](#) for updates on the current theme for the celebration of the freedom of expression.
- [10 Myths about Free Speech](#): Sorting Facts from Fiction (2022). This resource from [developmenteducation.ie](#) explores 10 myths about the limits of freedom of expression, social media and the free press in an increasingly digital and connected world. The resource includes a short quiz to test learners' knowledge about free speech.

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