



Maggie's Civics Corner

Lesson 34 – Media Literacy

Maggie Says...

Nowadays, there are just so many different ways to get the news. Television, radio, the internet, newspapers, blogs, and social media like Instagram and TikTok – with so many different sources, it's more important than ever to know how to tell what's what as you learn about the world.

Today's lesson is about Media Literacy. I hear so much about what's going on these days – on our way to the park, we listened to the news on the radio. On our way home, we listened to a podcast about something else that had happened. Then when we had dinner, the television was on, and there were some folks on the television talking about the news too! Later, my Dad got on the internet and was reading about all sorts of things on lots of different websites. There are so many ways to learn things today!

Sticky Situation: Imagine that you went to your favorite news website, and there was a new story about how school buses should all be blue. But then, when you turned on the television, the news anchor was talking about how school buses should all be red! How should you decide who to listen to? Think about why the news website might say things one way, and the television news anchor another way. What sorts of questions would you want to ask these people? And would you want to ask anybody else questions about this choice?

Activity: Watch a news show on television, or open up your favorite news website on the internet. Watch or look at the headlines of a few stories, and pick one story to follow. Now that you have got your one story, go try to find other websites, television shows, radio shows, or whatever other media you want that are talking about the same story that you picked. Try to find a few different sources – what does each one of the sources say about your story? Are they saying similar things, or different things? Why do you think the different sources are agreeing or disagreeing? Do the different sources choose to focus on different things? Try explaining to a friend or a family member the ways that the different news programs talk about one story.

Civics Resources: Check out the websites below to learn more about media literacy:

<https://www.annenbergclassroom.org/resource/newsfeed-defenders/>

<https://www.factcheck.org/>