

## Maggie's Civics Corner

### Lesson #40 – Media Literacy



#### Maggie says ...

*Nowadays, there are just so many different ways to get the news. Television, radio, the internet, newspapers, blogs, podcasts, 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 real 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 you went to your favorite news website and there was a story about how school buses should all be painted blue. But then, you turned on the television and a news anchor was talking about how school buses should all be painted red! How do you decide which news outlet to believe??? Is each outlet sharing facts about the story? Is each presenting the information through an Opinion piece? Think about why a news website might say things one way and the television news anchor might phrase it another. This is important information to know because the type of information might influence how you interpret it.

What types of questions could you ask the journalist, anchor, or news representative for you to make an informed decision on the issue? What kinds of questions could you ask those who have a different opinion than you to better understand how they decided their position on the issue?

**Activity:** Watch a news program on television or visit your favorite news website on the internet. Watch/Look at the headlines of a few news stories there, then pick one story for this exercise. Now that you have chosen **your one news story**, try to identify other news sites, television programs, radio shows, or other media that you deem credible and that are talking about the **same story you picked**. Choose at least 3 of these news sources to study their coverage further. For each one, consider the following: What does this source say about the story you picked? Does this source have a similar reporting style to the original source you used? In what ways are they alike? Are there any differences (different information)? Why do you think some of the additional sources you selected have stories similar in content to the original source? Why do you think some sources' accounts of the story are different from the original story? Do these sources each approach the story from a different focus, or are they all essentially the same? Be prepared to explain your findings to the class. OR, Tell a friend or family member about your findings regarding the different ways news outlets convey the same story.

**Civics Resources:** For more information about media literacy, visit:

[Annenberg Classroom – NewsFeed Defenders](#)

[FactCheck.org](#)