

Media Literacy Presentation Text

Media literacy is an emerging field that has gained momentum in the last decade. One area of media literacy deals specifically with the news process. Today's short media literacy tutorial explores the steps involved in how a news story begins, to how it is interpreted by you, news consumer.

It is often said that democracy is about a plurality of ideas and opinions that are in competition with one another. In a democratic society, people are free to express their opinions and ideas, and there is an accepted tolerance for this exchange. The press is one place where a variety of ideas can be expressed. In most news stories, a person can expect to find things that he or she doesn't agree with or doesn't like, because it is the role of the press to present multiple viewpoints. Journalists, for the most part, strive to present all sides of a story.

There are many ways journalists go about getting different sides of a story. First, when journalists are given a story, they must go out and find relevant sources that represent various viewpoints on the issue. They then have to balance the responsibilities of their profession and yet do this while working under the constraints of a deadline. Despite having their own perspectives, diligent journalists strive to present an accurate, well-rounded story. In addition, there are some checks and balances in the system, including an editing process with fact checking and review by multiple editors. Also there is a code of ethics that journalists operate under that stresses reliable and credible reporting. However, no matter what journalists do, in the final analysis, your viewpoints and experiences as a news consumer are equally relevant.

There are three key concepts in media literacy education that are important to consider when you read and interpret a news story. The concepts are: (1) all media messages are constructed; (2) different people experience the same message differently; and (3) media professionals, including journalists, conform to a set of industry norms.

When you watch the news or read the newspaper, you bring your own interpretations. These personal preferences influence your understanding of a story. For example, you choose what news stories to read based on your own taste and interests, while avoiding other stories. Two people reading the same story can focus on different aspects and may interpret the story differently. As a reader, you should weigh arguments carefully and understand that, in the press, a variety of views will be presented. Engaging with the various sides of an issue is an important step in forming your own opinion.

So it's a relationship: on the one hand the journalist striving to provide accurate information and on the other hand, you the news consumer striving for a fuller understanding of specific issues and concerns.

Freedom of the press and freedom of expression are two of the founding principles of democracy. The public's right to understand and know what's happening in their world or with their leaders is essential to a functioning democracy. Ultimately it is the job of the press and the public to work together to foster inclusive debate necessary for democracy.