

CURRICULUM PLAN

MEDIA LITERACY AND CITIZENSHIP IN THE BALKANS

INTRO

TEACHING MIL IN THE BALKANS

CHAPTER 1

WHAT IS MIL?

Lesson sheet 'What is MIL?'

CHAPTER 2

CURRICULUM TEACHING OBJECTIVES

Lesson sheet 'Curriculum teaching objectives'

M1

THE MEDIA UNIVERSE

SESSION 1 – FUNCTIONS AND TOOLS OF INFORMATION

CHAPTER 3

INFORMATION AND MEDIA

Lesson sheet 'Information and media'

Activity sheet 1: 'Word cloud'

Activity sheet 2: 'Press review session warm-up'

Activity sheet 3: 'Role-playing the information cycle'

CHAPTER 4

MEDIA AND CITIZENSHIP

Lesson sheet 'Media and citizenship'

Activity sheet 1: 'How to check sources'

Activity sheet 2: 'Quiz'

SESSION 2 – NEW MEDIA

CHAPTER 5

FROM TRADITIONAL MEDIA TO NEW MEDIA

Lesson sheet 'From traditional media to new media'

Activity sheet 1: 'Classroom investigation'

Activity sheet 2: 'The disinformation race'

CHAPTER 6

DIGITAL MEDIA: RISKS AND OPPORTUNITIES

Lesson sheet: 'Digital media: risks and opportunities'

Activity sheet 1: 'How much do you know about social media?'

Activity sheet 2: 'Protecting your data'

M2

DECRYPTING INFORMATION

SESSION 3 – INFORMATION AND DISINFORMATION

CHAPTER 7

THINKING CRITICALLY ABOUT INFORMATION

Lesson sheet ‘Thinking critically about information’

Activity sheet 1: ‘Making an evidence scale’

Activity sheet 2: ‘Applying the 5Ws’

CHAPTER 8

FIGHTING FAKE NEWS

Lesson sheet ‘Fighting fake news’

Activity sheet 1: ‘Fake news or real news?’

Activity sheet 2: ‘Make your own fake news’

SESSION 4 – DECRYPTING DIFFERENT MEDIA

CHAPTER 9

SCREEN MEDIA

Lesson sheet ‘Screen media’

Activity sheet 1: ‘Film debate’

Activity sheet 2: ‘Analysing a news programme’

CHAPTER 10

IMAGES AND THE RISK OF MANIPULATION

Lesson sheet ‘Images and the risk of manipulation’

Activity sheet 1: ‘Analysing images’

Activity sheet 2: ‘Creating a story from an image’

CHAPTER 11

NARRATIVES IN THE BALKAN COLLECTIVE IMAGINATION

Lesson sheet ‘Narratives in the Balkan collective imagination’

Activity sheet 1: ‘Collaborative storytelling’

Activity sheet 2: ‘Every photo tells a story’

Activity sheet 3: ‘National heroes’

M3

PEOPLE’S POWER AND THE MEDIA

SESSION 5 – ONLINE CIVIC ACTION

CHAPTER 12

AWARENESS AGAINST HATE SPEECH

Lesson sheet ‘Awareness against hate speech’

Activity sheet 1: ‘Cordless telephone’

Activity sheet 2: ‘Analysing a conspiracist video’

CHAPTER 13

PROMOTING CITIZEN MEDIA

Lesson sheet ‘Promoting citizen media’

Activity sheet 1: ‘Discovering citizen media’

Activity sheet 2: ‘Leading a social media campaign’

CHAPTER 14

DIGITAL CITIZENSHIP

Lesson sheet ‘Digital citizenship’

Activity sheet 1: ‘Table of good online habits’

Activity sheet 2: ‘Moving debate’

SESSION 6 – MAKING CITIZEN MEDIA (RADIO, MAGAZINE, VIDEO)

CHAPTER 15	ORGANISING A MEDIA INCUBATION WORKSHOP
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Lesson and activity sheet ‘Organising a media incubation workshop’

CHAPTER 16	MAKING A PODCAST
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Lesson and activity sheet ‘Making a podcast’

CHAPTER 17	CREATING AN ONLINE MAGAZINE FOR YOUNG PEOPLE
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Lesson and activity sheet ‘Creating an online magazine for young people’

Appendix: ‘Madmagz user guide’

CHAPTER 18	MAKING A VIDEO PROJECT
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Lesson and activity sheet ‘Making a video project’

APPENDICES

Appendix 1: ‘Madmagz user guide’

Appendix 2: ‘Practical online activities for media literacy’

SHEET 1 – WHAT IS MEDIA LITERACY?

INTRODUCTION	TEACHING MEDIA LITERACY IN THE BALKANS
LEVEL	Intermediate

WHAT IS MEDIA LITERACY?

TEACHING OBJECTIVES

1. Objective 1: Instructors are able to define media and information literacy
2. Objective 2: Instructors have a grasp of MIL issues.
3. Objective 3: Instructor are familiar with various approaches to MIL

KEY THEMES

ISSUES SURROUNDING MEDIA AND INFORMATION LITERACY

In general terms, media and information literacy encourages knowledge and understanding of media and information to improve public debate and social participation.

MIL brings together two separate areas: **mastering information** emphasises the importance of access to information, analysing it, and using it ethically. **Media literacy** emphasises the ability to understand the purposes of media, evaluate how media work to achieve these purposes, and make rational use of media to express oneself.

This field allows instructors to:

- Emphasise the role and purposes of media in society as well as the conditions under which media achieve these purposes.
- Integrate and convey the tools to evaluate media content critically.
- Create quality information media with the target audience.

To fully grasp the global impact of MIL, it must be stressed that a society that knows how to handle media and information and encourages the development of free, independent, and pluralistic media is more likely to encourage meaningful public participation.

TEACHING MIL: VARIOUS APPROACHES

Teachers of MIL should use a variety of pedagogical approaches:

- The ‘**problem – research**’ approach consists of identifying an issue, recognising the attitudes and

beliefs surrounding it, clarifying the facts and principles associated with the issue, organising and analysing avenues of research, interpreting and resolving questions, enacting measures, and reconsidering the consequences and results of each phase. This approach allows students to develop critical thinking skills and can be useful for analysing fake news and conspiracy theories.

- **Case studies** involve examining one situation or event in depth. This approach provides a systematic method of observing events, collecting data, analysing information, and communicating results.
- **Cooperative learning** can mean simply working in pairs or extend to more complex methods such as project-based learning, learning with puzzles, guided questioning by peers, and reciprocal teaching.
- In **textual analysis**, students learn to identify how codes and linguistic conventions are used to create particular perceptions targeted at certain audiences ('technical', 'symbolic', and 'narrative' codes for media content).
- **Contextual analysis** seeks to help students become familiar with topics such as classification systems for film, television, and video games, the link between property and media concentration, and matters of democracy and the freedom of expression.
- In **rewriting** students can, for example, collect a series of existing visual documents connected to a person's life and use them as a starting point for planning and creating a short documentary on that person.
- In **simulations**, students can, for example, roleplay as a television crew producing a programme on young people. The strategy is discussed with students as a pedagogical process.
- Finally, **production** gives students the chance to dive into learning through discovery and practice. By producing media content (audio, video and/or print), students can explore their creativity and express their own opinions, ideas, and perspectives.

PRACTICAL ACTIVITIES

Sheet 3 – Activity 1: 'Word clouds'

Sheet 3 – Activity 2: 'Press review'

TAKING IT FURTHER

1. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b0Fxi4XDbLo> Video 'What is media education? – Professor David Buckingham'
2. <https://en.unesco.org/themes/media-pluralism-and-diversity/media-information-literacy> Media and Information Literacy (UNESCO)
3. <https://www.hrw.org/report/2015/07/15/difficult-profession/media-freedom-under-attack-western-balkans> A 2015 report by the NGO Human Rights Watch
4. <https://rsf.org/en/ranking> RSF 2020 World Press Freedom Index

SHEET 2 – CURRICULUM TEACHING OBJECTIVES

INTRODUCTION	TEACHING MEDIA LITERACY IN THE BALKANS
LEVEL	Intermediate

CURRICULUM TEACHING OBJECTIVES

TEACHING OBJECTIVES

1. Objective 1: Instructors are able to define Media Literacy
2. Objective 2: Instructors have understood the skills to be acquired by participants
3. Objective 3: Instructors have understood the skills they must acquire to best teach MIL to participants

KEY THEMES

DEFINING MEDIA LITERACY

The aim of media literacy, as defined by UNESCO, is for **every member of the public to be active, autonomous, and think critically about all the media documents and campaigns they consume or are the target of**. The field covers all print, audiovisual, and electronic media, regardless of the technology they use (written press, radio, cinema, TV, online media, social networks, digital platforms). It does not limit itself to any one medium and, as such, encompasses the full range of communication: informative, persuasive, entertainment, and social.

UNESCO also states that media literacy should enable each individual to **learn to use the language of media and its tools for interpretation, expression, and communication**. In this way, media literacy prepares individuals to become responsible citizens that are able to contribute to the development of a democratic society.

As a result, media literacy is closely linked to civic education. The media habits of young people – future citizens – shape their relationship to society, freedom of expression, and culture, which is why media literacy education allows learners to challenge stereotypes, discursive traps, prejudices, and how messages are interpreted. Ultimately, the subject should provide ample inspiration to

teachers and students as they develop key skills to tackle topical issues and position themselves as citizens who think critically and are active, creative, and solidarity-minded.

Perhaps, though, it is the students themselves who best define media literacy. A class at the Lycée Pierre Coubertin, a secondary school in France, described what they learned in an MIL programme as follows: *We live in a society where we get news from around the world that is instantaneous and often incorrect. Everything moves very quickly, sometimes too quickly. Because of the rapid spread on social media, a chasm has opened up between traditional media and the public. Young people like us, hyperconnected as we are, are usually the first to receive and pass on information, so it is up to us to learn to decode media and information. We are the ones that need to be media literate.*

MEDIA LITERACY TEACHING OBJECTIVES

Skills to be acquired by students

UNESCO has defined **6 key skills** that each student should learn from media literacy training:

1. Understand what a journalist does and how the media work
2. Know how to get reliable news and identify its sources
3. Develop critical thinking and information decoding skills
4. Be wary of fake news, conspiracy theories, and hate speech
5. Master digital tools using reason and responsibility
6. Understand societal issues to make educated democratic choices

Skills to be acquired by teachers

Consequently, the instructor training in media literacy has the following pedagogical objectives:

1. Understand how MIL can help members of the public become more active, autonomous, and critically minded toward the media and other means of communication to which they are exposed.
2. Understand how MIL makes it possible to challenge stereotypes, discursive traps, prejudices, and the interpretation of a message.
3. Realise that MIL can inspire young people from diverse backgrounds to understand contemporary issues and position themselves as citizens who think critically and are active, creative, and solidarity-minded.
4. Understand how the media landscape has evolved; know how to approach the issue of media with young people and teach them about responsible and intelligent use of 'new media'.
5. Acquire the pedagogical knowledge necessary to teach MIL (guidelines, key concepts, developments in the field) while catering to a young audience.

6. Using practical, engaging, MIL-specific activities to facilitate skill acquisition in young people, creating positive exercises that develop civic expression (for example, online media campaigns).

TAKING IT FURTHER

<https://en.unesco.org/themes/media-and-information-literacy/gapmil/about> UNESCO's Global Alliance for Partnerships on Media and Information Literacy

SHEET 2 – CURRICULUM TEACHING OBJECTIVES

INTRODUCTION	TEACHING MEDIA LITERACY IN THE BALKANS
LEVEL	Intermediate

CURRICULUM TEACHING OBJECTIVES

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As a result, media literacy is closely linked to civic education. The media habits of young people – future citizens – shape their relationship to society, freedom of expression, and culture, which is why media literacy education allows learners to challenge stereotypes, discursive traps, prejudices, and how messages are interpreted. Ultimately, the subject should provide ample inspiration to

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TAKING IT FURTHER

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SHEET 3 – INFORMATION AND MEDIA

MODULE 1	THE MEDIA UNIVERSE
SESSION 1	Functions and modes of information
LEVEL	Easy

INFORMATION AND MEDIA

TEACHING OBJECTIVES

1. Objective 1: Instructors are able to define the terms 'media' and 'information'
2. Objective 2: Instructors are capable of explaining the three ways of communicating information
3. Objective 3: The instructor is familiar with the information cycle

KEY THEMES

DEFINITIONS

1.) Media are, above all, physical support for the mass spread of information, including print, radio, the internet, and television.

The supply of information has grown and diversified

After World War II, the information available to us increased, as did the types of media: households acquired televisions, radio stations multiplied, and numerous magazines and newspapers were founded. This is the start of 'mass media'. After that, the amount of available information grew larger and more varied than ever before, a trend that has continued into today's digital age, which has fundamentally changed how we get information.

Our relationship with information has changed

As the information available to us has grown and diversified, it is our relationship with information that has changed, especially with the dawn of the internet in the early 90s. Media are a true democratic check on power and have become vital to people's lives. This includes during election campaigns for example but also extends to the entire year; the media are representatives' and officials' primary means of getting the word out about proposals, debates, and policy.

In addition, the changes to the media landscape, especially the advent of the internet, has increased the spread of ideas and opinions that were once on the periphery – that is, less accepted by public opinion – such as conspiracy theories and extremist ideologies. This has made it easier for them to spread among the general public.

However, less visibly, the media also provide **structure and professionalism**. That is, they represent a system that is organised both economically (funding structure, pay structure for journalists) and socially (knowing what it means to be a journalist, best practices, uses, journalism training).

2.) **Information, in the context of critical media literacy, is a conveyed fact that comes from sources that have been identified, verified, and corroborated.** This may also include contextualisation that explains or interprets the fact through a social, cultural, and political lens. Furthermore, information must fulfil three criteria:

1. **Of public interest:** To be considered information in the media and social sense of the word, a fact must be of public interest. For example, one arbitrary citizen's presence at a football match does not constitute information that is likely to be of interest to all the other citizens.
2. **Factual:** Information must involve fact; it must be factual. Following on our example, this means that the score of the match or a player's being injured on the field are information in their own right because they comprise observable facts, actions, and results. Conversely, rumours of a player being transferred to another club or any potential tension there might be within the team are not information in and of themselves.
3. **Verified and verifiable:** To confirm its status as information, a fact must be verified and verifiable. In other words, we must pay heed to the idea of proof to check the fact.

HOW THE MEDIA CONVEY INFORMATION

In print media, there are **three** possible ways of transmitting information, which are used by a variety of journalistic styles:

1. **Explained information:** The journalist analyses the facts, breaking down information and informing readers of the 'how' and 'why'. This writing style is used for analyses, investigative pieces, dossiers, and interview pieces.
2. **Commented information:** In this type of writing, journalists have more freedom to interpret and decipher the facts by using humour, giving their opinion, or giving their opinion or judgment. This writing style is used in editorials, op-eds, columns, caricatures, and criticism.
3. **Straight news:** In this very narrative journalistic style, journalists present and recount the facts in detail. This is the style used in news briefs, press wires, news reports, minor news items, meeting minutes, and witness accounts.

THE INFORMATION CYCLE

The information cycle has a number of different steps:

1. The **fact**
2. The **alert** (the reporter is informed by a source)
3. **Verification** (multiple reporters are called upon to go on site to interview organisations, people, or institutions involved)
4. The media outlet may hold an **editorial meeting**. The editor-in-chief calls in the heads of the different sections to decide whether to send journalists to the scene to cover various angles: description, hypothesis, backstory, straight news, story of the day, etc.
5. During the **writing process**, the journalist drafts the article or opinion piece, which the editors then proofread, add captions to any photos, etc.
6. After the information is corroborated, it is time for **publishing**. The information is published

as a breaking item, an alert, or a dispatch depending on its importance.

Note: Having a **scoop** means being the first to publish a piece of news. Other media can use it, but must state where they got it from.

PRACTICAL ACTIVITIES

Sheet 3 – Activity 1: 'Word clouds'

Sheet 3 – Activity 2: 'Press review'

Sheet 3 – Activity 3: 'Role-playing the information cycle'

TAKING IT FURTHER

1. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HjncIEhy960> Video 'How the media affects youth' TEDx talk on gender and representation in the media
2. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f-17MbjEws4> Video 'Popular and Scholarly Sources'

SHEET 3 – ACTIVITY 1

MODULE 1: THE MEDIA UNIVERSE

Chapter 3 'Information and media'

ACTIVITY 1	WORD CLOUD – Discovering the media landscape
CHAPTER	Lesson sheet 3 – 'Information and media' (LINK)
TIME REQUIRED	30 minutes
MATERIALS	Whiteboard, pens or markers
ACTIVITY INTRODUCTION	
<p>In this word cloud activity, the word 'media' is written on the board. Students are asked to work as a group to reveal what they know about the world of media and combine their knowledge. The activity is also a chance to present the major players of Balkan media in a clear and organised fashion while pointing out how they differ.</p> <p>This activity is also a chance for instructors to take note of the media habits of the target audience (What kind of media do they use? Where do they get their news?) and tailor the workshop to their habits and preferences. Students should be encouraged to provide details or support for their responses and to give their opinions to further discussion on certain topics.</p>	
ACTIVITY INSTRUCTIONS	
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Write the word 'media' on a visual aid and jot down the names of media outlets or types (television, radio, written press, social media) that participants come up with.2. Categorise the media outlets participants suggest by their type.3. Identify which media are public and private.4. Separate traditional media from social media. Most participants will be frequent users of social media (Instagram/Snapchat/Facebook) either to deliberately look for news or just to pass the time. For this reason, the question of social media's place in the media landscape will either be brought up spontaneously by participants or by the instructor. This is a good time to introduce themes of democratisation of information on the internet and the potential for manipulation brought about by social networks. In addition, students should be reminded that social networks do not have any editors or journalists; instead of the professionals, we are the ones producing and spreading information. Caution is therefore to be encouraged since anyone and everyone can have their voice heard on social media.	
TAILORING THE ACTIVITY TO THE BALKAN CONTEXT	
<p><i>For this activity, refer to the 'Independent media' topic sheet in the 'Get informed' section of</i></p>	

our educational website ([LINK](#)). Teachers will find here the main media outlets of record in the Balkan media landscape.

SHEET 3 – ACTIVITY 2

MODULE 1: THE MEDIA UNIVERSE

CHAPTER: 'Information and media'

ACTIVITY	<i>PRESS REVIEW session warm-up</i>
CHAPTER	Lesson sheet 3 – 'Information and media' (LINK)
TIME REQUIRED	<i>30 minutes</i>
MATERIAL	<i>None</i>
INTRODUCTION	
<p>It may sometimes be useful, for example, at the start of a workshop session, to ask participants to recall a recent news item or event that made an impression on them in order to discuss it as a group.</p> <p>Starting a session with a press review is a good practical exercise of the objectives of this workshop because it uses tangible, topical examples and has numerous benefits.</p> <p>Benefits of this activity:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Encourages discussion and active participation in the workshop. Students are invited to voice their opinions current events, which bolsters participation and involvement.- Uses the news to consolidate and apply theoretical concepts that students have already learned (reviews the definition of information, the difference between information and opinion, the need for caution regarding news sources, and the natural tendency to prefer information that is sensational and/or familiar).- Provides insight into young people's media habits and their relationship with information. It has been observed that social media are often their primary source of information (SnapChat and Instagram are commonly cited). This activity is a chance to encourage them to look into other sources of information that present the news differently and more in-depth, such as fact-checking sites that they can follow on social media.	
ACTIVITY INSTRUCTIONS	

1. Students spend five minutes on their smartphones searching for a news item or event that has made an impression on them.
2. Each student presents their item to the group.
3. The student cites the news source. (Where did he or she first see this item?)
4. The student explains why it is interesting to him or her.
5. The instructor provides additional context.

TAILORING THE ACTIVITY TO THE BALKAN CONTEXT

For this activity, refer to the 'Fake news' sheets in the 'Get Informed' section of our educational website. Teachers will find here specific examples of false information that people in the Balkans have believed and spread.

SHEET 3 – ACTIVITY 3

MODULE 1: THE MEDIA UNIVERSE

Chapter 3 'Information and media'

ACTIVITY 1	ROLE-PLAYING THE INFORMATION CYCLE
CHAPTER	Lesson sheet 3 – 'Information and media' (LINK)
TIME REQUIRED	30 minutes
MATERIAL	None
ACTIVITY INTRODUCTION	
<p>In this role-play of the information cycle, participants play the parts of the different figures that help create the news:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - news subjects, witnesses, reporters, newswriters, and presenters/crew. <p>The aim is to show students the inherent difficulties of faithfully and objectively reporting an event, especially when relying on eyewitnesses.</p> <p>Objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Help students to understand, establish, and identify the people involved in the information cycle. - Put students in the role of members of the media (role-play) <p>First, divide participants into 5 groups. Each group will have a role to play in the information</p>	

cycle, consisting of the steps listed in the information cycle section in lesson sheet 3.

This activity will be most effective if **the groups have no contact with one another** before the activity stipulates that they should interact (ideally, you should make participants leave the room and come back in one group at a time).

ACTIVITY INSTRUCTIONS

1. In the first step, **the first group makes up an event** of public interest, such as a car accident involving a politician, a strike by workers whose factory has been shut down, or a celebrity arrest (choose a famous actor or singer). After conferring amongst themselves away from the other groups, the first group **stages/recreates/draws the event for the second group only**.
2. The **second group**, playing the role of **witnesses**, are the **only ones to see the event** staged by the first group. The second group alerts the media.
3. The **third group** are the **reporters**, who then enter the scene. They **listen to the witnesses' testimony** (group 2) and **check the facts** by using '5W' questions to corroborate the witnesses' statements. (The '5Ws' are Who? What? Where? When? and Why?)
4. The **fourth group** are the **news writers (who have been sequestered from the beginning)**. They collect the interview write-ups and **write a newsbrief** – that is, a short article that summarises the event by answering the '5Ws'.
5. The news brief is sent to the members of the **fifth group (presenters and crew), who announce the news item** as it was reported to them in an audio or video recording or, for example, in a simulated television news programme.

The four groups that passed on the information (from the witnesses to the broadcast team) have the delicate task of conveying information as completely and neutrally as possible. It might, however, be interesting to sabotage the activity by, for example, asking one of the witnesses in group 2 to lie about what they saw or to invent a conspiracy theory about the event.

6. A brief follow-up to the activity is a chance to ask the following questions:

- Was the information passed on accurately? Did the last group's report closely resemble the actual facts?

- What are the inherent difficulties of each step/role?

- What helps or hinders each group when it comes to dealing with information? What can they do?

TAILORING THE ACTIVITY TO THE BALKAN CONTEXT

For this activity, refer to the 'Fake news' topic sheet in the 'Get informed' section of our educational website. Teachers will find here examples of news items that were distorted by the information cycle.

SHEET 4 – MEDIA AND CITIZENSHIP

MODULE 1	THE MEDIA UNIVERSE
SESSION 1	Functions and modes of information
LEVEL	Easy

MEDIA AND DEMOCRACY

TEACHING OBJECTIVES

1. *Objective 1: Instructors are able to define freedom of expression and freedom of the press as well as their role in a democratic society.*
2. *Objective 2: Instructors are capable of presenting the various ethical principles for journalists.*
3. *Objective 3: Instructors can explain to students the key role of journalists in society, including that of a counterweight that, when necessary, denounces abuses of power by the leadership.*

KEY THEMES

FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION AND FREEDOM OF THE PRESS

- **Freedom of expression** is a right: the right to freely express your thoughts.

While freedom of expression gives everyone the freedom to think and express their opinions, it has its limits: care must be taken to avoid defamation, injury, incitement of hatred toward any group on the basis of religion, skin colour, or sexuality, and encouraging terrorism and war crimes.

- **Freedom of the press** is a reflection of the freedom of expression. It guarantees that citizens will have all the necessary information to form an opinion freely.

The role of newspapers is to enlighten readers and encourage citizens to discuss ideas. To do this, journalists follow certain rules. They can talk about any topic, but they must take care to check their information to ensure quality.

In some countries, press freedom is under threat and journalists are kept from covering certain events or criticising the people in power. Each year, the NGO Reporters Without Borders publishes a [world press freedom ranking](#).

JOURNALISM ETHICS

- **Journalism** is a field that involves researching information, verifying it, putting it in context, categorising it, formatting it, providing commentary on it, and publishing high-quality news; it is not to be confused with communication.
- **Journalism as a profession:** The idea of urgency or publishing a scoop must not take precedence over serious enquiry and the verification of sources. To work properly, journalists must be able to carry out all of the activities of their profession (enquiry, investigation, capturing images and sound, etc.) freely and have access to all information sources relevant to the facts that affect public life. They must also be able to guarantee the secrecy of their sources.
- The Munich Declaration of the Rights and Duties of Journalists, written in 1971 with participation of all journalism syndicates at the European level, provides guidelines for **practicing ethical journalism**. According to the declaration, a journalist worthy of the title must:
 - Respect human dignity and the presumption of innocence;
 - Regard a critical mind, truth, accuracy, integrity, equity, and impartiality as the pillars of journalism;
 - Regard baseless accusations, intent to harm, altering documents, distorting facts, doctoring images, lies, manipulation, censorship and self-censorship, and a lack of fact-checking as the gravest professional abuses;
 - Exercise great vigilance before divulging where information comes from;
 - Be entitled to follow up on interviews, which in turn holds them accountable for the information they reveal and ensures rapid correction of any such information that should prove to be inaccurate;
 - Defend the freedom of expression, opinion, information, commentary, and criticism;
 - Shun any disloyal or corrupt methods of obtaining information;
 - Not receive payment from any public service, institution, or private enterprise in which his or her standing as a journalist, influences, or relationships are vulnerable to exploitation.

PRACTICAL ACTIVITIES

Sheet 4 – Activity 1: 'How to check sources'

Sheet 4 – Activity 2: 'Quiz'

Sheet 4 – Activity 3: 'Word of mouth'

TAKING IT FURTHER

1. https://rsf.org/en/ranking_table Press Freedom Ranking 2020 (Reporters Without Borders)
2. <https://graphism.fr/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/charter-of-munich-english.pdf> Declaration of the Rights and Duties of Journalists (written in 1971)

SHEET 4 – ACTIVITY 1

MODULE 1: THE MEDIA UNIVERSE

Chapter 4 'Media and citizenship'

ACTIVITY 1	HOW TO CHECK SOURCES
CHAPTER	Lesson sheet 4 – 'Media and citizenship' (LINK)
TIME REQUIRED	30 minutes
MATERIAL	At least 1 computer with an internet connection, otherwise at least 1 smartphone for every 2 students
ACTIVITY INTRODUCTION	
<p>Objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Allow participants to apply the journalistic practice of fact checking.- Assess a piece of information's quality and relevance.- Reflect on the difficulty of getting clear information on certain topics. <p>Participants are seated in groups in front of computers and given news items to check. It may be necessary to prepare a few topics in advance to figure out whether or not the information is true, but the objective really is to let them find out for themselves.</p> <p>Many different types of facts can be checked, ranging from the simplest – the date of an event, the content of a law, or what happened during a football match – to the most complex. For example, finding out the number of unemployed in Kosovo requires deciding on how to define 'unemployed', which varies by agency.</p> <p>The aim of this activity is to put participants into the role of 'investigator' or 'junior journalist' and encourage them to exercise caution in their everyday use of the internet.</p>	
ACTIVITY INSTRUCTIONS	
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. The instructor compiles ten or so items (depending on the number of participants) found on the internet or social media that are either fake news (debunked after	

publication) or real news that is easy to verify. The instructor must check the items beforehand and have an answer key.

2. Participants, in groups of 2 or 3, draw 2 or 3 items at random.
3. The groups of participants sit at computers and are given multiple items to check.
4. Students should be reminded of how to fact-check:
 - What kind of website was this item found on? (see the 'Legal Notices' or the 'About' section)
 - Is it an international news site, a humour site, a political blog?
 - Who is the author? A politician, journalist, expert, citizen, anonymous author? (Look up the person who wrote the article)
 - What is the author's intent?
 - Is the author trying to scare us, inform us, manipulate us, persuade us?
 - Where does the article come from and what sources/evidence does it use?
 - When was it published?
 - Was the information published on other sites?
 - Can you corroborate it, that is, can you find it in other media?
5. Each group presents how they checked the items, other groups give their impression on that group's performance, the instructor provides corrections.

TAILORING THE ACTIVITY TO THE BALKAN CONTEXT

For this activity, refer to the 'Independent media' topic sheets of our educational website. Teachers will find there multiple items to check that they can use to plan their lesson.

SHEET 4 – ACTIVITY 2

MODULE 1: THE MEDIA UNIVERSE

Chapter 4 'Media and citizenship'

ACTIVITY 2	QUIZ
CHAPTER	Lesson sheet 4 – 'Media and citizenship' (LINK)
TIME REQUIRED	30 minutes
MATERIALS	Powerpoint, projector, whiteboard or white screen
ACTIVITY INTRODUCTION	
<p>Description:</p> <p>This quiz is a tool that makes learning a game – it is not an evaluation. The activity should at least partially consist of easy, accessible questions to build students' confidence in tackling the topic and encourage them to get involved.</p> <p>This activity can give students practical experience with topics such as fake news before trying to give it a theoretical definition. At the same time, it also directly encourages them to think critically.</p> <p>Students may also be surprised to see how a news item or image can make them jump to conclusions.</p> <p>In other words, this activity raises a variety of questions related to media literacy.</p> <p>Objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Encourage oral participation, dialogue, and reasoned debate and consolidate the workshop's theoretical concepts through a practical, cognitive activity- Create a group dynamic by building team spirit- Effectively convey theoretical concepts about the media universe (freedom of the press, historical dates, etc.)	
ACTIVITY INSTRUCTIONS	

1. The instructor prepares about 15 questions (one slide of questions followed by one slide of answers).
2. The instructor separates participants into teams of four or five.
3. Each team is asked to work together to answer the questions, which are presented as multiple choice, by choosing only one of the possible answers.
4. When the teams give their answers, the instructor asks each team to give a brief oral justification of their choice.
5. The instructor reveals the correct answer, marking the number of points each team has received. Scores should be announced after each question, with 1 point awarded per correct answer.

Ideally, you should [make your own quiz](#) on the topics in question. You can look for inspiration and show your students how quizzes work by going to a website such as 'quipoquiz.com', which offers fun quizzes in a range of categories ('Science or Fiction?' is of interest here).

Sample question:

Where do you think Serbia ranks in the 2020 World Press Freedom Index?

- A. 2
- B. 20
- C. 71
- D. 93

Answer: D. Serbia is in 93rd place according to the 2020 World Press Freedom Index. Serbia remains a country where it is often dangerous to be a journalist and where fake news spreads very quickly. Most investigations into attacks against reporters have stalled or been shelved.

TAILORING THE ACTIVITY TO THE BALKAN CONTEXT

For this activity, refer to the 'Fake news' topic sheet in the 'Get informed' section of our educational website. Teachers will find here a variety of fake news items to use in the activity.

SHEET 5 – FROM TRADITIONAL MEDIA TO NEW MEDIA

MODULE 1	<i>THE MEDIA UNIVERSE</i>
SESSION 2	<i>New media</i>
LEVEL	<i>Intermediate</i>

FROM TRADITIONAL MEDIA TO NEW MEDIA

TEACHING OBJECTIVES

Objective 1: Knowing how to tell the difference between traditional and new media

Objective 2: Understanding how social media have transformed the media landscape

Objective 3: Knowing the risks and opportunities of 'citizen journalism'

KEY THEMES

Traditional media

Traditional media are the media that were **established before the internet**: radio, television, and print media. Starting with the digital revolution of the 1990s, the way information is supplied and consumed began to change, which led to traditional media adapting their content to keep up with their audience and, quite simply, to survive. As a result, written press, radio, and television have been overhauled to offer online versions of their content as well as versions for smartphones and tablets. Even though we have these new ways of getting our news, it is important to remember that traditional media still have the same goal: **providing the same information to a large group of people at once**. It is up to the people receiving the information provided to them whether they pay attention to it.

The prime asset of traditional, legacy media – characterised by their practice of professional journalism and fairly rigid formats (editorial constraints, periodicity) – is their reputation. Even today, they are still considered **reliable sources of information**, especially with the rise of news that comes from social media.

Social media

The year 2004 marked the appearance of a new media presence to compete with traditional media: social media ('new media'). These are **digital platforms whose content is generated by users** and that rely on users interacting with each other. This collaborative principle is unique to Web 2.0: users, who had previously been mere viewers of web pages, now have an active role. Today's biggest social networks include Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, Twitter, Pinterest, Snapchat, and LinkedIn.

Social media, which have become one of the primary sources of information for the general public, especially young people, have a number of **distinguishing features** that have revolutionised the media landscape. First and foremost, these platforms encourage **interaction**: nowadays, news programmes are designed to encourage social media commentary, especially Twitter, which promotes discussion amongst its users. Social media also have the power of being **instantaneous**.

Today, thanks to tools such as ‘livetweeting’, users can follow an event as it happens without having to be there. They know what is happening well before it comes on the evening news. Social media have also **broken the news monopoly** once held by traditional media; because of platforms like Facebook, anyone can be witness to an event and share it with the entire world the very next second. This practice has led to the birth of ‘**citizen journalism**’, which makes every social media user a powerful producer of information.

Information in the digital era: risks and opportunities

The rise of new, digital forms of information (online news, blogs, Wikipedia, YouTube, social networks, etc.) **encourages greater access to knowledge, freedom of expression, and public participation**. Today, the coexistence of various print, audio-visual, and online media has increased access to information and has created a culture of participation where the public is not satisfied to just consume information, but also contributes actively to its production and dissemination.

The main risk in this overhauled media landscape is **disinformation**. Mass use of social networks leads to questions about the veracity of information. What gives someone the credibility to talk about a particular topic? What about the risk of creating confusion around fake news and making it even more difficult to tell fact from fiction on the internet? From this standpoint, ‘classic’ journalism retains its relevance; its mission of curating, analysing, and interpreting information remains indispensable.

PRACTICAL ACTIVITIES

Sheet 5 – Activity 1: ‘*Classroom investigation: reporting the news as a group*’
Sheet 5 – Activity 2: ‘*The disinformation race*’

TAKING IT FURTHER

English for Media Literacy - University of Pennsylvania
What is social media? - [Link](#)

SHEET 5 – ACTIVITY 1

MODULE 1: THE MEDIA UNIVERSE

Chapter 5: From traditional media to new media

ACTIVITY 1	'Classroom investigation': reporting the news as a group
CHAPTER	Lesson sheet 5: From traditional media to new media (LINK)
TIME REQUIRED	0.5 days
MATERIALS	One or more smartphones, a room, previously prepared witness statements (text or audio), internet connection
ACTIVITY INTRODUCTION	
<p>'Classroom investigation' is a game that helps students understand how news is made.</p> <p>In other words, it is an immersive journalistic investigation in which students act as journalists.</p> <p>Objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Understand the basics of professional journalism and journalists' need for thoroughness in order ensure the information they report is correct.- Realise the importance of critical thinking when you come across information.- Be able to check sources more easily after experiencing some aspects of the work journalists do in this area. <p>Eventually, students will become used to the process and will soon do it automatically. This will help them avoid disinformation traps.</p> <p>In addition to fostering teamwork, note taking, deductive reasoning, and public speaking, this activity also focusses on the work journalists do to sift through information before sharing it.</p>	
INSTRUCTIONS	
<p>The immersive journalistic investigation comprises multiple steps:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Students spend two hours collecting documents and witness statements.2. The instructor and other 'accomplices' (teachers, school or club staff, etc.) have written and/or recorded statements and documents beforehand.	

3. The statements and documents all cover the same event, such as a mysterious disappearance of two lion cubs from a zoo, but come from different sources, such as the zookeeper or the owner of the café across the street.
4. Students compare the documents to try and understand what happened and then interview the witnesses, either in person or via chat.
5. They then create a spontaneous news report in which each student acts as the journalist while another films them on a smartphone or camera.
6. The videos can then be posted to the platform of your choice to highlight these issues to other students (and let students assess their performances!)

TAILORING THE ACTIVITY TO THE BALKAN CONTEXT

For this activity, refer to the 'Independent media' topic sheet, which explains the global context in which Balkan countries are subjected to the spread of fake news with increasing regularity.

SHEET 5 – ACTIVITY 2

MODULE 1: THE MEDIA UNIVERSE

Chapter 5: From traditional media to new media

ACTIVITY 2	The disinformation race
CHAPTER	Lesson sheet 5 – From traditional media to new media (LINK)
TIME REQUIRED	15 minutes
MATERIAL	One smartphone per group
ACTIVITY INTRODUCTION	
<p>Objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Test students' ability to quickly check dubious information- Identify which information should be checked- Learn the steps to checking information and sources <p>The disinformation race is a stimulating activity given that it is a game of speed in which students compete against one another.</p> <p>With its easy preparation, it shows students how simple it is to carry out fact-checking.</p>	
ACTIVITY INSTRUCTIONS	
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Form groups of 3 to 4 participants.2. Ask participants to go through their social media feeds until they find information that requires checking.3. Ask them to discuss how to check the information.4. Finally, see who can check it the fastest.	
TAILORING THE ACTIVITY TO THE BALKAN CONTEXT	
<p>For this activity, refer to the 'Independent media' topic sheet, which details the global context of the rise of fake news while also providing a range of independent media outlets.</p>	

SHEET 6 – DIGITAL MEDIA: RISKS AND OPPORTUNITIES

MODULE 1	<i>THE MEDIA UNIVERSE</i>
SESSION 2	<i>New media</i>
LEVEL	<i>Difficult</i>

DIGITAL MEDIA: RISKS AND OPPORTUNITIES

TEACHING OBJECTIVES

1. *Objective 1: Identifying the risks and opportunities of young people using the internet*
2. *Objective 2: Becoming aware of the influence of algorithms on how we navigate the internet*
3. *Objective 3: Understanding the role of media literacy in teaching young people about best internet practices and online civic action.*

KEY THEMES

The internet's opportunities and risks to young people

The internet and mobile telephones, beyond their entertainment value, provide a new way of socialising and accessing essential knowledge for today's children and teenagers. These new technologies represent an excellent chance to improve the quality of life of young people all over the world and provide unlimited knowledge in all essential areas – including education, health, science, and culture – with just a mouse click. The advances of the digital era are not without downsides, however. The virtual revolution has created dangers and risks similar to those of the real world that young users must face.

UNESCO has identified and classified the risks to young people online. These include exposure to paedophilic content, hate speech, and fake news as well as inappropriate advertisements, commercial scams, and manipulation of personal data.

Education is the best way to respond to these threats that await any young internet user. It is essential for parents and other responsible adults to teach media literacy so that young people learn the best practices that will shield them from the dangers of the internet.

These include properly managing your online digital identity by choosing the right settings for your social media profile and protecting your personal data. Raising awareness about good online citizenship is also important: respecting others' privacy, thinking before you post, respecting your friends' right to their image, and so on. These are essential ground rules that help prevent abuses such as cyberbullying.

Teaching young people about filter bubbles

Digital platforms such as Google and Facebook use algorithms to provide content based on our online behaviour, that is, our past interactions such as clicks, likes, purchases, and browser history. Tech companies use algorithms to offer a personalised online experience based on predictive analysis that seeks to anticipate our expectations. For the tech giants, the goal is to influence our behaviour for profit.

The influence of algorithms is far from harmless. It creates a problem for internet users and consumers like ourselves – and especially young people – known as a 'filter bubble'. This is a situation in which ***“the information internet users see is the result of a personalisation mechanism that has been deployed without their knowledge”***. The term 'filter bubble' refers to the isolation created by this mechanism: each user sees a different, unique version of the web. The risk is then that users remain stuck in a narrow digital universe that pushes a continuous loop of the same kinds of information. This algorithmic imprisonment drastically limits sources of information, reduces awareness, and undermines critical thinking. It therefore deprives users of the theoretical broadening of horizons that the internet promises; they no longer benefit from encounters with a range of opinions, which are essential to intellectual development.

This is why media literacy is needed to raise public awareness of the dangers of the algorithmic echo chamber. Understanding how it works is a vital step to breaking out of it and increasing the sources of information one sees. It is an essential condition to making the internet live up to its original promises of emancipation and freedom.

PRACTICAL ACTIVITIES

Sheet 6 – Activity 1: *'MINI QUIZ: How much do you know about social media?'*

Sheet 6 – Activity 2: *'Protecting your data'*

TAKING IT FURTHER

- 'How to help young learners stay safe on the internet' [link](#)
- 'A Chilling Case Study Shows What's Wrong with the Internet Today' [link](#)

SHEET 6 – ACTIVITY 1

MODULE 1: THE MEDIA UNIVERSE

Chapter 6 'Digital media: risks and opportunities'

ACTIVITY 1	MINI QUIZ: 'How much do you know about social media?'
CHAPTER	Lesson sheet 6: 'Digital media: risks and opportunities' (LINK)
TIME REQUIRED	30 minutes
MATERIAL	Overhead projector or whiteboard
ACTIVITY INTRODUCTION	
<p>Description:</p> <p>This mini-quiz is a tool that makes learning a game – it is not an evaluation. The activity should consist at least partially of easy, accessible questions to build students' confidence in tackling the topic and encourage them to get involved.</p> <p>The mini-quiz 'How much do you know about social media?' is a fun, collaborative exercise in which students are asked to answer questions about the risks of everyday social-media use.</p> <p>The activity enables students to do the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Realise how vulnerable internet users (especially young ones) are and learn habits to adopt in order to make the best use social networks.- Ascertain students' knowledge of the subject matter and tailor the workshop to their habits and preferences. Students need to provide details and reasoning for their answers and should be encouraged to state their opinion in order to delve deeper into certain topics. <p>Objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Allow students to play their part as members of an information- and communication-based society.- Teach them to be active, informed, and responsible 'cybercitizens'.- Teach students to be accountable for their digital consumption.	
ACTIVITY INSTRUCTIONS	
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Using the list of questions and answers supplied below, the instructor creates a mini-quiz. The instructor can also make up additional questions and answers with the	

help of *lesson sheet 6*.

2. The instructor splits the students up into teams of 4 or 5.
3. Each team is asked to work together to answer the quiz questions, which are presented as multiple choice.
4. When the teams give their answers, the instructor asks each team to give a brief oral justification of their choice.
5. The instructor reveals the correct answer, marking the number of points each team has received. Scores are announced after each question, with one point awarded per correct answer.

Sample questions (and answers):

1. Which social networks are used most by 13 to 17-year-olds worldwide? Select 3 correct answers.

- Snapchat
- Instagram
- Facebook
- Twitter
- TikTok

Answers:

Number one is Snapchat (84%) - 2: Instagram (72%) - 3: Facebook (38%) - 4: Twitter (30%) - 5: TikTok (13%). Snapchat may be the most popular among young people, but the others are not exactly ignored!

2. On the internet, my profile consists of...

- My picture
- My first name, last name, and user name
- Any information about me

Answer:

My internet profile consists of any and all information about me. Nowadays, everyone has to manage their digital identity, which consists of their information and comments they make online. For example, you should choose the profile information you use to describe yourself wisely if you want to project a good image of yourself to others. Your digital identity is who you are, who you know, what you do, where you are... and so much more!

3. Deleting your Facebook account works right away:

- True
- False

Answer:

False. It gets deactivated, not deleted! Facebook will not let you go that easily. For a while, the account remains active. Read Facebook's terms and conditions for more information.

4. Your online reputation is... (select 2 correct answers)

- What I want people to say about me
- What search engines reveal about me
- My posts, 'likes', comments, etc.
- Nasty comments about me

Answer:

- *What search engines reveal about me*
- *My posts, 'likes', comments, etc.*

Your online reputation is a major part of your digital identity. Knowing your online reputation is knowing the image you project and what people say about you. To do this, put your name into a search engine and look at the results. Some of the information you will find is important because it is difficult to influence. Often, the top results for your name are not your social media profiles, but posts about you.

5. How old do you have to be to sign up for Facebook?

- No age limit
- 13
- 16

Answer:

You need to be 13 to sign up for Facebook. Facebook follows American law, and the Children's Online Privacy Protection Act (COPPA) bans websites from collecting data from children under the age of 13 without parental consent. And collecting data is exactly what Facebook wants to do!

SHEET 6 – ACTIVITY 2**MODULE 1: THE MEDIA UNIVERSE****Chapter 6 'Digital media: risks and opportunities'**

ACTIVITY 2	PROTECTING YOUR DATA
CHAPTER	Lesson sheet 6 – 'Digital media: risks and opportunities' (LINK)
TIME REQUIRED	30 minutes
MATERIAL	One smartphone or computer for each student -or- one for the teacher (with overhead projector if possible)
ACTIVITY INTRODUCTION	
<p>The aim of this activity is to teach students to protect their data online. To do this, the teacher shows students step-by-step how to change their privacy settings on the internet and social media.</p> <p>Start with one social network and slowly go through and make the changes to the account.</p> <p>Objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Make students aware of the simple steps they can take to protect their online and social-media privacy.- Show students how to do this on one social network so they can do the same on others.	
INTRODUCTION	
<p><u>Step 1: Making students aware</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Log into your Facebook account from your computer or smartphone.2. See for yourself how well Facebook 'remembers' works: https://www.facebook.com/memories. On this page, Facebook lets you see content (photos, life events, and posts) by the date they were posted and the friends that are tagged. You can also decide to hide these memories by clicking on <i>Hide Memories</i> so that you never see suggested memories for you to post.3. In the menu on the top of the page, click on <i>Activity Log</i>. You will see all of your Facebook activity and posts from other people that you have been tagged in. You explore the options on the left-hand side of the screen, such as <i>Posts</i>, <i>Timeline Review</i>, and <i>Activity You're Tagged In</i>. You can change or delete your posts and tags by clicking on them.4. View and download all of your personal data: Go to the menu at the top of the page and click on <i>Settings</i>, then click on <i>Your Facebook Information</i> in the left column.	

Step 2: Changing your account's privacy settings

1. Log into your Facebook account.
2. Open the menu on the top of the page, then click on *Settings*. In the left column, click on *Privacy*. Limit your audience by selecting who can see your posts: depending on your preferences, choose *Friends*, *Friends Except Acquaintances*, or *Close Friends* if available.
3. Remaining under *Settings*, click on *Timeline and Tagging* in the left column to limit who can post on your timeline and how. Select *Only Me* or *Friends* according to your preference.
4. Under *Settings*, click on *Public Posts* in the left column. If you wish, select *Friends* for each option.
5. Under *Settings*, click on *Apps and Websites* in the left column. Select the apps that you no longer use and delete them.

Note: Deleting a Facebook-linked app may also delete your account for that app. For example, if you log into the travel website Booking.com via Facebook, you may lose your Booking.com account and all of your hotel reservation information.

6. Repeat the previous step for the options in the left column *Instant Games* and *Business Integrations*. The same risks apply.
7. Under *Settings*, click on *Ads* to limit targeted ads. Explore all of the options, especially the *Your Information* section. Explore the *About you* and *Your categories* tabs.

Finally, strengthen your password (choose one that is long and secure with a minimum of 8 characters). Choose a password that you do not use for any other account. Open the menu at the top of the page, then click *Settings*, followed by *Security and Login* and finally *Change password*.

Geolocation and Facebook

If you have Facebook installed on your mobile device, you may have authorised Facebook to track you without your knowledge!

To check this from your computer, go to *Settings* and click on *Location* in the left column. If you have activated geolocation, Facebook will show you the history of your movements!

Step 3: Do the same for your other social media accounts

The steps you take to change your privacy settings on a social network may vary depending on the device you are using (computer, smartphone) and the operating system (iOS, Android).

- To change your **Instagram** settings from your smartphone: Go to your profile > Click on your profile photo > Click on *Settings* (at the bottom of the menu) > Click on

Privacy and Security > Explore the different options.

- To change your **Twitter** settings from your computer or smartphone: Go to your profile > Click on your profile photo > Click on *Settings and privacy* > Click on *Privacy and security* > Explore the different options.
- To change your **Pinterest** settings from your computer: Go to your profile > Click on your profile photo > Click on *Change settings* > Be sure to look at your basic account and social media settings.
- To change your **YouTube** settings from your computer: Go to your profile > Click on your profile photo > Click on *Settings* > Be sure to look at your *Account History* and *Privacy*.

To do more, check the settings for the Google account that is linked to your **YouTube** account: <https://myaccount.google.com/privacy>

- To change your **LinkedIn** settings from your computer: Go to your profile > Click on your profile photo in the menu at the top of the page > Click on *Settings and Privacy* > Be sure to look at the *Privacy* and *Ads* tabs.

Step 4: Changing your browser settings

To add another layer of protection to your privacy and block ads, you can download browser extensions.

Different settings and extensions are available to you depending on the browser you use.

1. **Block 'third-party cookies'.** You can find instructions for this on WikiHow: <https://www.wikihow.com/Disable-Cookies>

2. **Install an ad blocker**, such as *AdGuard*, *AdBlocker*, *AdBlock* or *uBlock Origin*. Enter 'ad blocker' and 'extension' into your search engine along with the name of your browser, for example: 'ad blocker extension Firefox'.

Note: Installing an ad blocker might cause certain websites to not function properly. You can temporarily deactivate ad blockers by changing the options in the blocker you have installed.

3. **Use a private browser window** to avoid targeted ads. Enter the keywords 'private browser' followed by the name of your browser into your search engine, for example: 'private browser Chrome'.

The top results will show you how to use a private window in your browser. Private browsing does not make you anonymous. It means that it will not save your search history, cookies, or the information you have entered into forms on your device.

Downloaded files and favourites are saved. Your activity remains visible to the sites you view (to compile statistics), your employer, or your school as well as to your internet service provider.

4. **Activate 'Do Not Track':** Enter the keywords 'Do Not Track' into your search engine followed by the name of your browser, for example: 'do not track Firefox'. The top results will show you how to activate the 'Do Not Track' option on your browser.

SHEET 7 – THINKING CRITICALLY ABOUT INFORMATION

MODULE 2	INTERPRETING INFORMATION
SESSION 3	Information and disinformation
LEVEL	Intermediate

THINKING CRITICALLY ABOUT INFORMATION

TEACHING OBJECTIVES

1. *Objective 1: Understanding what it means to think critically and the importance of thinking critically about information*
2. *Objective 2: Knowing and applying journalistic principles when searching for information*
3. *Objective 3: Learning about the central issue of verifying sources*

KEY THEMES

Critical thinking: a core concept of media literacy

When it comes to media literacy, critical thinking means paying close attention to available information by researching the topic and finding evidence for that information. It is about having a *critical eye* that does not overgeneralise, jump to conclusions, or blindly accept received wisdom, prejudices, and baseless allegations. In general, critical thinking means *thinking autonomously, rationally, and deliberately*. It also means being able to analyse and understand media content while bearing in mind the author's motive.

Critical thinking is based on three principles:

- **The principle of autonomy:** being able to think for yourself, independently of the people and environment around you.

- **The principle of self-awareness:** knowing the limits of your understanding of events and knowing how your own cognitive biases and emotions as well as others' can affect our judgment and beliefs.
- **The principle of learning:** Critical thinking is learned and acquired through the knowledge and discoveries that lead to intellectual awakening. Specific examples of critical thinking include comparing hypotheses and checking the sources of information.

In concrete terms, thinking critically about media means being committed to the following practices:

- **Being informed:** Taking the time to become informed, seeking out information and understanding it before judging it, commenting on it, or sharing it.
- **Evaluating information:** Identifying and checking sources before endorsing the information
- **Differentiating fact from interpretation:** Separating actual facts from interpretations of events.
- **Seeking interpretations:** Familiarising oneself with different interpretations that a piece of information might elicit and accepting this diversity.
- **Categorising interpretations:** Classifying in order of legitimacy the interpretations confirmed by experimentation and research, hypothesis, and opinions arising from belief.

How journalists verify information

Critical thinking is the heart of journalism, which involves examining information thoroughly before publishing it. To do this, a journalist needs to **inquire, investigate, and find sources**. They analyse facts and possible explanations and put them into perspective.

The practice of journalism is even more vital in today's digital society where false information, doctored images, and manipulated videos run rampant on the internet.

In media literacy education, the journalistic practice of verifying information has been condensed down to a **list of best practices** to accommodate a young audience:

- ***Find out about the site where you found the information.*** The 'Legal Notices' and 'About' sections will usually tell you what kind of website you are looking at (blog, humour site, government, etc.).
- **Trace the information back to its source.** Quite often on the internet, information is shared, spread, and sometimes also distorted, decontextualised, or interpreted. It is therefore important to find out where the information came from.
- **Check the information's publication date.** These days, information quickly becomes outdated or is confirmed or denied.
- **Check the identity and reliability of the author of the information.** Is it a journalist? Are they a specialist in the subject?
- **Identify their aims and intentions.** Are they looking to inform? Manipulate? Are they selling something?
- **Ask the right questions.** Be curious and question the author without becoming distrustful or paranoid.

Why it is important to check sources

The source is where information comes from, its starting point. When we talk about finding out where

information comes from, we call it ‘tracing it back to the source’.

Cross-checking information is one of the most important and fundamental rules of journalism. Information is moving ever faster, partly due to the explosion of social media and to economic pressures, which have sadly taken a toll on this principle.

A reliable source is usually a qualified person or entity – an expert or informed person on a subject – who is giving information on that subject.

To increase reliability and the chance of being considered correct, information needs to be found and confirmed by other sources or be viewable on other media. We say that information must be **corroborated** to be verified.

There are four main kinds of source:

- **Institutional sources:** public authorities, governments;
- **Intermediary sources:** NGOs, professional organisations, political parties, trade unions;
- **Personal sources:** discreet or secret sources that the journalist has amongst the powerful and within professional circles;
- **Occasional sources:** spontaneous sources, statements provided voluntarily or on request depending on circumstances, eyewitness reports.

PRACTICAL ACTIVITIES

Sheet 7 – Activity 1: Making an evidence scale

Sheet 7 – Activity 2: Applying the ‘5Ws’

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Media Smarts: Canada’s Centre for digital and media literacy

Authenticating and Verifying information - [Link](#)

SHEET 7 – ACTIVITY 2

MODULE 2: DECRYPTING INFORMATION

SESSION 3: INFORMATION AND DISINFORMATION

ACTIVITY	<i>Thinking critically: Making an evidence scale</i>
CHAPTER	Lesson sheet 7: Thinking critically about information (LINK)
TIME REQUIRED	<i>1 hour</i>
MATERIAL	<i>Whiteboard, printed cards or Post-Its</i>
ACTIVITY INTRODUCTION	
<p>By making their own ‘reliability scale’ based on scientific reasoning, students learn to rank types of evidence by their reliability. Students can thus analyse each news item and use reliability criteria to arrange the types of evidence from weakest to most irrefutable.</p> <p>Objective: Show participants that not all proof and evidence are created equal.</p> <p>Definition: What is a <i>level of evidence</i>?</p> <p>In science, this refers to a study’s ability to answer a particular question. In media and information literacy, there are multiple levels of evidence:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Indications (low reliability):<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Report of an individual witness statement- Individual witness statement heard first-hand- Expert statement2. Evidence (high reliability):<ul style="list-style-type: none">- A case study confirming a hypothesis- Multiple case studies confirming a hypothesis- Meta-analyses of studies- Scientific consensus <p>However, even if reliability is high (scientific study, case study, etc.) it is important to still think critically and cautiously about the information you consult and use.</p>	
ACTIVITY INSTRUCTIONS	
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. <u>Prepare the activity</u>: Choose a scientific topic that may be subject to disinformation (example: climate change)2. <u>Set up the room</u>: On the whiteboard, draw an ‘evidence scale’ (see appendix)	

3. Hand out suggestions on paper to participants, who are then asked to place them on the board on the 'evidence scale'.

Sample suggestions

- Scientific report by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
 - My uncle told me 'climate change is not caused by human activity'
 - A scientist declares on television that climate change is accelerating
 - The President of the United States, Donald Trump, says 'global warming isn't real'
 - Etc.
4. Correction: Once participants have placed the suggestions on the board, the instructor corrects by rearranging them in the right order as indicated in the activity introduction.
 5. Reclassifying the evidence: Next to the corrected reliability scale, participants place the suggestions by level of evidence as indicated in the activity introduction.
 6. Discussions: The activity concludes with a debate on the scientific method and critical thinking skills as well as on the utility of this method when thinking critically about information (see SHEET 7 – Thinking critically about information).

DOING THIS ACTIVITY ONLINE

On a Google Drive: Present the reliability scale and use the suggestions below so participants can classify them. Then, use a prepared table to classify the suggestions by evidence type.

APPENDIX: RELIABILITY SCALE

High reliability:



Low reliability:



SHEET 7 – ACTIVITY 2

MODULE 2: DECRYPTING INFORMATION

SESSION 3: INFORMATION AND DISINFORMATION

ACTIVITY	Applying the 5Ws
CHAPTER	Lesson sheet 7: THINKING CRITICALLY ABOUT INFORMATION (LINK)
TIME REQUIRED	1 hour
MATERIAL	Paper and pens
ACTIVITY INTRODUCTION	
<p>Objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Provide a method for analysing information that allows students to assess the content of an article or post.- Encourage participants to use the rules of journalism.- Develop critical thinking skills by asking students to challenge preconceived notions. <p>Definition: The 5Ws rule is a journalistic method that allows journalists to structure their writing to ensure that their audience understand the most relevant information. It answers the basic questions about a piece of information: Who? What? When? Where? Why?</p> <p>This is a way of handling information critically and methodically and it provides a framework to receive that information. It is therefore useful for participants to be able to identify the most important information of an article or social media post.</p>	
ACTIVITY INSTRUCTIONS	
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. <u>Select an article</u> on a current local news topic that is the subject of rumours or disinformation.2. <u>Put participants into pairs</u> and give them the article or post.	

3. On a separate sheet of paper (or computer) participants answer the 5Ws as completely as possible. If necessary, they can look up the information in the sources cited in the article.
4. Compare responses to each 'W' by correcting as a group and putting the correct answers on the board.
5. Discuss the activity and the relevance of applying this method in daily life.

DOING THIS ACTIVITY ONLINE

Send the link to participants via Google Drive and ask them to answer the 5Ws.

SHEET 8 – FIGHTING FAKE NEWS

MODULE 2	INTERPRETING INFORMATION
SESSION 3	Information and disinformation
LEVEL	Intermediate

FIGHTING FAKE NEWS

TEACHING OBJECTIVES

1. Objective 1: Understanding fake news
2. Objective 2: Understanding how to fight disinformation
3. Objective 3: Getting familiar with fact-checking

KEY THEMES

UNDERSTANDING FAKE NEWS: AN INTEGRAL PART OF MIL

Definition: When people talk about ‘false information’ or ‘fake news’, they are referring to information that has been **fabricated, falsified, or distorted** and purposefully spread by individuals, activists, or political officials with the intent of manipulating the public and converting them to their ideas.

Spreading false information can be detrimental to a society, as when the aim is to target or accuse a minority group in order to **stoke fear and incite hatred** toward that group. This is also the case when false information is used to create a feeling of insecurity in pursuit of electoral ambitions; manipulating information turns out to be an extremely effective tool.

Example: There was an uptick in anti-migrant protests in the runup to the general elections in Serbia that took place on 21 June. On 2 March 2020, around 500 people had already gathered in Subotica, a city in the far north that borders Hungary, to denounce the ‘crimes’ committed by migrants within Serbia despite the fact that, according to police data, violations committed by refugees made up a mere 0.06% of registered offenses in the country.

Some news events and scandals, such as the Cambridge Analytica scandal in the United States, in which millions of users’ data were used to target them for fake news, reminds us of how manipulated information has an impact on our lives, from our daily life to presidential elections.

Example: In Bosnia and Herzegovina in March 2020, a 51-year-old woman who had just returned home from a trip to Italy tested positive for coronavirus and was harassed by social media vigilantes after erroneous information was published by a number of media outlets, which stated that she had been to a concert and taken public transport. Some Facebook comments declared that she deserved

to be killed because she was infected and that she should never have returned to Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The upshot is that, by distorting, manipulating, and falsifying reality to stoke hatred and win people over with false arguments or information that does not exist, **false information undermines the very notion of truth** and citizenship in modern societies. Fake news tends to prey on our emotions and prejudices, often confirming our opinions, which makes it easy to spread and take hold on social media. This in turn amplifies its detrimental effects on the quality of available information.

For this reason, because information is essential to our lives and at the heart of our decision making as well as our relationships with others, it is vital that we **preserve its reliability** and transparency to avoid potential manipulation as much as possible. Beyond being mindful of information quality, thinking critically about the content you read or receive helps limit your risk of manipulation or external influence and form a more balanced view.

OUTSMARTING DISINFORMATION TRAPS

There are a number of ways to fight disinformation:

- Better control the spread of information online by **holding platforms and 'web giants' accountable** (Facebook, Google, Twitter, etc.). These companies have all enacted measures along these lines by giving users the option of flagging false information and deleting accounts that spread hate speech and fake news as well as by launching and promoting prevention campaigns. For example, in January 2020, Facebook announced that it would delete and ban 'deepfake' videos on its platform.

It should be noted, though, that letting Big Tech regulate their platforms' content themselves may be problematic in terms of freedom of expression and censorship since the web giants' hegemony looms so large. For this reason, some countries have independent bodies in charge of overseeing both the activities of traditional media as well as ensuring that information is checked and users are protected on these online platforms.

- Sensing the urgency of the matter, many countries have also acted, often taking the **legislative path**, to live up to their role in monitoring and ensuring the reliability of the information that flows within their borders. However, caution is required so that any measures enacted to limit disinformation and bolster methods of control do not, paradoxically, also limit the media's and people's freedom of expression, which would hinder the work of journalists.
- It is also possible to **prepare the public** to confront the rising amount of false information, manipulated images, and increasing, rapid spread of conspiracy theories. Campaigns such as teaching **critical media and information literacy** seek to encourage the public to protect themselves against these manipulations by arming them with knowledge and teaching them to think critically and for themselves.
- Finally, awareness can also be raised among **traditional media**. A new kind of journalistic activity has emerged recently in certain countries as well as at a more international scale to mitigate the risks of disinformation: fact checking.

FACT CHECKING

Origins and definition

With the rise in false information and doctored videos and images, especially on the internet, journalistic methods of handling and verifying information have become so vital that many media

outlets have recently developed specialised **fact-checking** websites.

This new journalistic activity originally consisted of systematically verifying politicians' statements and elements of public debate – such as figures or legislative content. However, as fake news has increased and with it the dangers of disinformation, fact checking today has come to mean **quickly ascertaining the truth in a fact, image, or rumour** and, more broadly, in any type of information that circulates online.

The limits of fact checking

Although fact checking is a useful tool for verifying information, it must not become an immutable declaration of truth. Indeed, some questions cannot be resolved by simply checking facts, as is the case with issues of politics, opinion, or morality. As its name states, fact checking is about staying *factual* and checking specific facts.

Moreover, the methods of verifying information may sometimes be incomplete or dependent on other bodies. For example, a fact-checking website looking to determine how many people attended a demonstration would have to trust the numbers released by either the authorities or the organisers of the demonstration, which will almost certainly lead to huge disparities.

Therefore, caution and critical thinking should be encouraged here as well to determine when to trust a fact-checking website and when an issue should be examined more objectively.

THE BALKAN CONTEXT

Heading 'The Media in the Balkans', especially:

- 'Fake news observatories'
- 'Real news vs fake news' (10 sheets)

PRACTICAL ACTIVITIES

Sheet 8 Activity 1: 'Separating truth from fiction: fake news or real news?'

Sheet 8 Activity 2: 'Make your own fake news'

Sheet 10 Activity 1: 'Analysing images and/or photo editing photoediting'

TAKING IT FURTHER

1. <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/04/04/us/politics/cambridge-analytica-scandal-fallout.html> Cambridge Analytica scandal
2. <https://balkaninsight.com/2017/06/29/macedonia-s-young-spammers-fear-golden-age-is-over-06-29-2017-1/> North Macedonia's role in the American presidential election
3. <https://balkaninsight.com/2020/03/19/bosnias-republika-srpska-imposes-fines-for-coronavirus-fake-news/> Fighting coronavirus-related fake news in the Balkans
4. <http://balkans.aljazeera.net/vijesti/facebook-ce-zabraniti-deepfakeove-ne-i-parodicne-videosnimke> Deleting and banning deepfakes on Facebook
5. https://eeas.europa.eu/headquarters/headquarters-homepage/84059/four-western-balkans%E2%80%99fact-checking-organisations-join-facebook%E2%80%99platform-against_en The European External Action Service's piece on fact checking in the Balkans
6. Fact-checking bodies in the Balkans (in partnership with Facebook):
Raskrinkavanje.ba – Bosnia and Herzegovina (link is external)

[Raskrinkavanje.me \(Centre for Democratic Transition\) – Montenegro \(link is external\)](#)
[Metamorphosis Foundation and Truthmeter – North Macedonia \(link is external\)](#)
[Istinomer \(Centre for research transparency and accountability\) – Serbia \(link is external\)](#)

SHEET 8: ACTIVITY 1

MODULE 2: DECRYPTING INFORMATION

SESSION 3: INFORMATION AND DISINFORMATION

ACTIVITY 1	'Separating truth from fiction: fake news or real news?'
CHAPTER	Lesson sheet 8: 'Fighting fake news' (LINK)
TIME REQUIRED	40 minutes – 1 hour
MATERIAL	Computer, internet connection, video projector (optional)
ACTIVITY INTRODUCTION	
<p>The aim of this activity is to teach students to use fact-checking tools and encourage them to ask the right questions when they encounter sensationalist news.</p> <p>In the activity, they are shown a number of online articles and news items and asked to identify which ones have been manipulated and can be classified as 'fake news' and which ones are real, verified news. Finally, they are asked to describe the fake news by answering a few questions intended to open a more general discussion on how information is manipulated.</p> <p><u>Possible variations:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- The fact-checking can be done individually or in groups.- The articles can be provided to participants directly on their computers (by USB flash drive or email) or displayed on a screen with a video projector (participants then must find the article first before deciding whether or not it is fake news).	
ACTIVITY INSTRUCTIONS	

1. Collect articles: For this activity, finding and selecting the articles is an important step since the activity's success hinges on it. The articles presented need to make students use their analytical, reasoning, and critical thinking skills. It is recommended that you use real news items that are relatively surprising or even sensationalist to show participants that it is not always easy to tell the difference, thus making them really think critically. It is also preferable to choose a variety of fake news items, such as one scientific story, one political item, one bit of celebrity gossip, etc. Ideally the number of articles to be analysed should not exceed 6 so as to not overburden the students.

2. Set up the room: Seat students in front of computers either individually or in groups.

3. Pass out the articles: Participants will then receive the articles they are to analyse to determine which category they fit into (fake news or real, verified, and reliable news).

4. Verification: Participants check facts and apply journalistic methods (see 'SHEET 7 – Thinking critically about information'). You can present these methods prior to the activity or let participants verify the information in the manner of their choosing. Students may come up with this method naturally. However, if the methodology is not explained before the activity, it is important to go over it at the end. Furthermore, since there are now a large number of fact-checking websites, some fake news items will probably already have been checked. Participants may use these sites but need to understand how the information was verified and, if the item is fake, which procedure was used.

5. Presentation: Once they have finished, each participant presents their 'fake news or not fake news' ratings. You can show the articles on a screen and let the groups say 'fake news' for the fake news items and 'not fake news' for the non-fakes. Depending on which ones participants get wrong, you will need to figure out where they went wrong and correct them. You can also vary how you correct their work, such as asking participants to move to different parts of the room depending on their answer (those who think it is fake news stand on the right, the others on the left). Another idea is to give the students coloured sheet of paper to hold up depending on their answers (red for fake news, green for articles that have been verified).

6. Wrap up: Afterwards, to push students to think more about the subject and open up a discussion, it is recommended that you ask them a few questions, for example:

- What was the intent behind the fake news items (scam, inciting hatred, promoting someone, influencing elections, etc.)
- What methods were used in the fake news items (doctored images, decontextualisation, distorting a real news item, etc.)?
- Did it take very long to check? Could you do the same thing in your daily life?

These questions can serve to introduce other concepts presented in the lesson sheets, such as fact-checking.

DOING THIS ACTIVITY ONLINE

1. The teacher creates a link on the videoconferencing platform Zoom and sends it to students (teachers can also use other platforms that they are familiar with).
2. Once everyone is in the same 'virtual meeting room', the teacher puts the students into groups.
3. The teacher assigns the articles to the groups.
4. The groups leave the main meeting room and enter 'breakout rooms' (this is an option on Zoom), where the groups do their web searches and categorise the articles as either 'fake news' or 'reliable, verified news'. Each member can work independently and communicate with other members through the chat function or via videoconference.
5. Correction is done in the main 'meeting room'. This is when group spokespeople, previously selected by the teacher, give their answers and explanations on behalf of the group.
6. The teacher can then base the discussion on what the students got wrong and bring up the topic of fake news, how it is made and shared, and its aims and impact.

SHEET 8 – ACTIVITY 2

MODULE 2: DECRYPTING INFORMATION

SESSION 3: INFORMATION AND DISINFORMATION

ACTIVITY 1	‘Make your own fake news’
CHAPTER	Lesson sheet 8 ‘Fighting fake news’ (LINK)
TIME REQUIRED	40 minutes – 1 hour
MATERIAL	Computer or smartphone, internet connection, video projector
ACTIVITY INTRODUCTION	
<p>The goal of this exercise is to show students how manipulating information and creating fake news is easy and can be done by anyone, and therefore to urge them to exercise more caution with the news they get from social media.</p> <p>By putting them in the place of fake news producers or conspiracy theorists, they learn which tools and methods are used and become better at detecting this type of content in their daily internet use.</p> <p>Fake news can take different forms and cover different topics. There is commercial fake news, conspiracy theories, fake science news, fake political news, fake pictures, and fake articles.</p>	
ACTIVITY INSTRUCTIONS	

1. Set up the room: Have participants sit at the computers in groups.
2. Produce fake news:
 - a) In this step, participants must choose the theme of fake news they want to make (scientific, political, etc.). The instructor can also suggest themes or specific topics.
 - b) Once they have chosen the theme, participants must find news items and arguments to distort that news item. For example, they can find articles about their topic and take certain statements out of context, twist them, etc. They can also use photo editing software, such as Photoshop, or use doctored photos they find on the internet.
 - c) To produce a fake news item, participants can follow the typical fake news pattern:
 1. The story must be surprising and/or shocking.
 2. Know who you want to target, whose attention you want to grab.
 3. Complain that 'censorship' is keeping your news item from being shared.
 - d) When it comes to visual aspects, participants can simply write up an article in Microsoft Word or use a fake news generator to make the piece look 'media-friendly'. Here are a few links:

<https://breakyourownnews.com/>, <https://www.thefakenewsgenerator.com/>,
<https://www.worldgreynews.com/add-news>.
3. Present and assess: Each group takes turns presenting their fake news piece or pieces. Other participants give their opinion.
 - a) The teacher writes down students' observations on the board. At the end of this part, students use the teacher's notes on the board to identify recurring characteristics of fake news. They then offer explanations of fake news, how it works, its aims, and the impact that sharing fake news can have.
 - b) Using the students' explanations as a transition, the teacher gives more detail on how information is manipulated (see *SHEET 8 – Fighting fake news* and *SHEET 10 – Images and the risk of manipulation*).
 - c) At the end of the activity, students give each fake news piece a grade to determine which ones were the most believable and most successful. Students must explain why these pieces were the most convincing.
4. Wrap up: This activity can be used to introduce the issue of false information and the distortion of images and facts.

DOING THIS ACTIVITY ONLINE

1. The teacher creates a link on the videoconferencing platform Zoom and sends it to students (teachers can also use other platforms that they are familiar with).

2. Once everyone is in the same 'virtual meeting room', the teacher puts the students into groups.
3. The teacher assigns the themes of fake news the students will produce.
4. Once the themes are chosen, students meet in 'breakout rooms' and work on creating the fake news item. To do this, they look for articles online and take their content out of context and distort the information.
5. They can work together in real time on the same document using Google Drive, Framapad, or other collaborative online word processors.
6. Once the groups have created their fake news, they return to the 'main meeting room' to present it to the class. The teacher can use an 'online Post-It' site as a virtual whiteboard (e.g. <https://note.ly/>) and show it to students in real time by sharing their screen.

SHEET 9 – SCREEN MEDIA

MODULE 2	<i>DECRYPTING INFORMATION</i>
SESSION 4	<i>Decrypting different media</i>
LEVEL	<i>Intermediate</i>

SCREEN MEDIA

TEACHING OBJECTIVES

1. *Objective 1: Distinguishing between different information formats and their objectives*
2. *Objective 2: Understanding the role of images in different audio-visual formats*
3. *Objective 3: Finding representative examples to approach the issue of screen media*

KEY THEMES

Audio-visual works

Documentaries and news reports

Definitions: Documentaries are part artwork and part journalistic enquiry. They are different from fiction because they cover real topics and the primary goal remains to tell the public about reality. As opposed to a news report, **documentaries use artistic language** that appeals to viewers' emotions to make them think. Conversely, **a news report is a journalistic enquiry anchored in objectivity**, even though the author of the report may be a stakeholder and activist. In a news report, all aspects of fiction are abandoned in favour of fact.

Examples:

- Serbian director Mila Turajlić's documentary *Druga strana svega* ('The Other Side of Everything', 2017) revisits the last 70 years of Serbia's history from the perspective of Srbijanka Turajlić, the director's mother and a peace activist. The director creates a dialogue between her family's history and that of her country, examining the question of the political engagement of previous generations in juxtaposition with the disillusionment of today's young Serbs.

- Another documentarian, Samir Karahoda of Kosovo, examines the emigration of a section of Kosovo's youth in his film *Në Mes* ('In Between', 2019). In the documentary, Karahoda highlights a crucial and topical issue facing his country: the lack of economic prospects for a large swath of its young people and the splintering of the family, a very important social unit in Kosovar society.

- There are many televised reports from the Balkans devoted to issues such as corruption and organised crime. One example of this comes from Montenegrin journalist Olivera Lakić, the force behind an investigation into organised crime who was subsequently the target of a firearm attack as a result.

Film and cinema

Fiction and cinema can also examine the same themes as documentaries and news reports, but without following the same formulas. Films can tell fictional stories that are actually inspired by real life. This makes cinema a less restrictive way of dissecting major societal issues and making viewers think.

Example: In his film *Honeymoons* (2009), Serbian director Goran Paskaljević tells the fictional story of two couples, one Serbian and one Albanian, to examine the topic of emigration to Europe through a lens that is both ironic and dramatic.

Television: Television news programmes

In the history of media and access to information, the arrival of television was similar to today's social networks in that both have been gamechangers in the way people consume information. This iconic medium retains its importance in our societies, forcing us to reflect on how this audio-visual tool is used to convey information.

Definition: A **television news programme** generally lasts several dozen minutes, is shown on television, and hosted by one or more presenters. It may offer news reports on international, national, or local topics and be interspersed with recurring segments such as the weather forecast.

The primary aim of a news programme is to provide high-quality reports on current events or feature stories covered by journalists or correspondents that work for the channel. As opposed to radio, which itself provides quick, newsflash-style reports, a **television news programme places particular importance on images**, both in terms of presenters' mannerisms and appearance as well as in the reports, photography, and infographics shown on screen (colour-coding, text formatting, set decoration, etc.).

Example: In 2016, the heads of the Albanian channel Zjarr TV's news programme decided to have nearly topless anchorwomen, their chests barely covered by open blazers, present the headlines. Though an extreme case, this choice, which was strongly criticised as sexist, well illustrates the importance of managing the visuals in a televised news programme.

A limited medium

Although television is a very popular medium, TV channels are not immune to certain economic forces and sometimes even political influence (especially in the case of public channels), which can have an effect on the quality of the information they provide and limit the range of opinions and opposition movements they report on. In the Balkans in particular, pertinent news topics are often replaced with lighter segments, in a manner that mimics tabloid newspapers and gossip magazines.

Example: In March 2019, protestors from Serbias #1od5 miliona movement and other opposition-party representatives demonstrated in front of the offices of Radio Television of Serbia (RTS) to criticise this lack of television representation.

This situation has encouraged multiple international news channels to invest in the region both to give viewers an alternative as well as for geopolitical reasons. As a result, the Qatari channel Al Jazeera has opened a local bureau in Sarajevo in recent years and Russia Today has begun airing news in the local language on Serbian radio station Studio B.

Television news remains popular, but it is losing more and more ground to online media and social networks.

The new screens

Time spent looking at screens has risen steadily each year in every country worldwide, especially among young people. Television takes up a large proportion of that time, but it is social media that has really driven the increase in screen time. A 2019 study by BusinessFibre.co.uk presented a list of countries with the highest number of hours spent online, indicating that the world average for screen time is 6 hours and 42 minutes per day (see link under 'Taking it further').

A large part of the time spent on social media is dedicated to watching videos, ever-present on the internet, especially via the app from video giant **YouTube**.

Definition: YouTube is a video hosting platform and a social network where users can send, watch, comment on, rate, and share streamed videos. Created in February 2005 by three ex-PayPal employees, Steve Chen, Chad Hurley, and Jawed Karim, and purchased by Google in October 2006 for 1.65 billion dollars, it is one of the most visited websites in the world. In 2020, YouTube had more than 2 billion users log in per month.

It is therefore interesting to note that the platform has adopted **certain audio-visual codes from television**. For example, we talk about 'YouTube channels' and YouTubers need to have the same skills as TV presenters: good oral expression, a look that draws people in, some even replicate TV programmes.

Example: YouTubers with the most followers by country:

Bosnia and Herzegovina: <https://www.youtube.com/user/Seherzad>

Serbia: <https://www.youtube.com/user/SerbianGamesBL2>

Montenegro: <https://www.youtube.com/user/BalkanGamesHD>

Some television channels have realised the appeal of this format to younger generations and have invested in the medium by re-posting shows there or having the option of watching the channel live on YouTube, such as the Serbian channel RTS Sajt– Zvanični, which broadcasts its programme *Moja*

generacija Z ('My Generation Z) there.

The success of YouTube over television can also be attributed to the wealth of the content it offers. Anyone online can produce or post a video, so people's tastes and opinions are much better represented than on television. This makes it a **tool that citizens can use** to express themselves on topics that interest them, produce 'explainer' videos, make their ideas heard, raise awareness on a topic, or communicate important information, such as when protestors livestream their movements during a demonstration.

By making itself a **hub of audio-visual production and publishing**, YouTube and video-ready social media enjoy a dominant position in our relationship with information. This, however, raises central questions around freedom of expression, monopolies, and responsibility they bear for the content they support, especially potentially false information, hate speech, and conspiracy theories, which have sadly become very common on this platform that is used by so many young people.

PRACTICAL ACTIVITIES

Sheet 9 – Activity 1: 'Film debate'

Sheet 9 – Activity 2: 'Analysing a news programme'

Sheet 9 – Activity 3: 'Creating a news programme'

TAKING IT FURTHER

1. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/may/08/investigative-journalist-olivera-lakic-shot-montenegro> Article on Montenegrin journalist Olivera Lakić who was shot and injured last year for her documentary
2. <https://www.youtube.com/c/Hexatorm/featured> Montenegrin YouTube channel where 6 youtubers discuss interesting topics
3. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IQ3OvhrAN00> Protest by the #1od5 milionara movement in front of the RTS offices in Serbia
4. <https://www.news.com.au/finance/business/media/albanian-newsreaders-strip-down-to-boost-audience/news-story/dfdcebdccf9bd3e64b4fe07e005b9e16> Article on the weatherwomen of Albanian channel Zjarr TV
5. <https://businessfibre.co.uk/screen-time/> Screen-time study
6. <https://www.brandwatch.com/blog/youtube-stats/> YouTube usage statistics

SHEET 9 – ACTIVITY 1

MODULE 2: DECRYPTING INFORMATION

SESSION 4: DECRYPTING DIFFERENT MEDIA

ACTIVITY 1	FILM DEBATE
CHAPTER	Lesson sheet 9 'Screen media' (LINK)
TIME REQUIRED	40 minutes –1 hour (+ film/documentary viewing time)
MATERIAL	Projection screen or white wall + video projector or TV, DVD player or computer Internet connection, scrap paper, pencils Worksheets for students to fill in
ACTIVITY INTRODUCTION	
<p>A film debate uses a film or video viewing to encourage students to voice their opinion on societal issues (Balkan youth emigration, ethnic tensions, discrimination against the LGBT+ community, widespread corruption, etc.). The post-viewing discussion gives participants a chance to express their points of view and also, in a respectful and attentive atmosphere, confront ideas that differ from their own and thus nurture different points of view.</p> <p>Additionally, this activity is also a way of discussing portrayals on screen and the possible use of images to discuss an issue – such as in the case of a film – and to analyse audio-visual media tools such as documentaries and news reports.</p> <p>More broadly, the activity inspires students to think critically about the things they have learned in the news report or film by understanding the ways information is shared through images and ultimately through debate and discussion.</p> <p>Furthermore, the activity showcases the advantages of an audio-visual tool that is popular with young people and captures their attention more effectively.</p>	
ACTIVITY INSTRUCTIONS	

1. Prepare the film debate: Teachers identify a news report, film, or documentary on the issues they want to discuss with participants.
2. Prepare the worksheets for students to fill in: Teachers provide students with worksheets that contain necessary information about the film (including information on the director and background information to understand the creator's motivation behind the piece). For sample evaluation grid that can be customised if necessary, SEE 'APPENDIX'.
3. Set up the room and procure the required equipment (video projector, speakers, chairs/desks).
4. Hand out the sheets: Participants fill in the first part of the sheets during viewing.
5. Watch the film.
6. Before starting the discussion, lead into it by identifying with participants the methods used to convey information (Interview? Hidden camera? Is the story being told sad or hopeful? Positive or negative images? etc.).
7. Lead the discussion of ideas with the help of the second part of the worksheet prepared beforehand by the teacher: 'Questions for students'. The discussion should lead students to ask various questions about the particular issue.
Example: The teacher takes a quote or scene from the film that can be interpreted in multiple ways. The teacher states his or her point of view, asks the students to express theirs, and then to explain and justify them. Students express their opinion physically by moving to different parts of the room (students stand on the left, right, or in the middle depending on their opinion) in the style of a moving debate. Once they have joined their side, students are asked to express their point of view. They can change sides but cannot stay in the middle.
8. Wrap up: This is the moment to ask participants what they thought of this activity (did they like the debate? The film?) and to encourage them to take greater advantage of this medium, which is generally is more detailed and reliable than news found quickly on the internet.

DOING THIS ACTIVITY ONLINE

1. Teachers send students the video file or grant them access to a film/documentary viewing platform and do the same for the worksheets (see appendix: evaluation grid for debate).
2. Students watch the film remotely.
3. Students answer the questions on the worksheets.

4. The teacher creates a link on the videoconferencing platform Zoom (or other platform) and sends it to students.
5. Once everyone is in the same 'virtual meeting room', the teacher puts the students into groups (depending on the number of participants).
6. Most videoconferencing platforms have screensharing, which students can use to share their answers and opinions written on virtual Post-Its from the website <https://note.ly/>.
7. The teacher uses these observations to moderate the discussion.

APPENDIX: EVALUATION GRID FOR THE FILM DEBATE

- 1. Director:** personal history; what other films has this director made?
- 2. Film characters:** Who are they? What do they do in the film? What do they have to say?
- 3. Visual style:** Describe the visual elements (images, ambiance, etc.) Why did the director make these visual choices?
- 4. Intent:** Is the director using the film to convey a message? Why did the director choose to do so with a film/documentary?

SHEET 9 – ACTIVITY 2

MODULE 2: DECRYPTING INFORMATION

SESSION 4: DECRYPTING DIFFERENT MEDIA

ACTIVITY 2	ANALYSING A NEWS PROGRAMME
CHAPTER	Lesson sheet 9 'Screen media' (LINK)
TIME REQUIRED	30 – 40 minutes
MATERIAL	Projection screen or white wall; video projector, DVD player, or computer; internet connection; pencils; scrap paper
ACTIVITY INTRODUCTION	
<p>This activity involves watching and analysing a television news programme.</p> <p>Objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Understand how news programmes convey information.- Understand what goes into creating televised journalism.- Become familiar with the methods of creating and sharing information (professional journalism and its ethics, economic model, etc.). <p>Activity variations: You may want to show participants two different news programmes and have them compare them. Students can also watch a news report from a TV news programme and one from an 'infotainment' outlet, such as BuzzFeed, on the same news topic. They can then compare the two ways of sharing information.</p>	
INSTRUCTIONS	
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. <u>Set up the room:</u> Set up the required viewing equipment.2. <u>Watch the news programme.</u>3. <u>Divide students into groups and pass out worksheets:</u> For this activity, teachers need to divide students into two or three groups. The students then answer the questions.	

Teachers must prepare the worksheets in advance. They should contain questions about various aspects of the news programme watched in class → SEE 'APPENDIX' for a sample WORKSHEET.

4. Students answer the questions as a group: Each group produces one answer to each question, which is presented to the class by a single spokesperson chosen from the group.
5. Presentation to the class: This part will shine a light on the most important elements identified by students.

DOING THIS ACTIVITY ONLINE

1. Teachers provide students with links to the news programmes or videos and worksheets (□ see 'Appendix').
2. Students watch the news programme remotely.
3. Students are divided into groups to answer the questions. Students can do this remotely using sites such as Google Drive or Framapad, which allow them to collaborate on the same document.
4. Answers are presented to the class using a videoconferencing platform, such as Zoom. The teacher sets up an access link and sends it to students.
5. Only the group's spokespeople can present responses to the class. The spokesperson should be chosen beforehand either by the teacher or by other members of the group.
6. The teacher can use an 'online Post-It' website, such as <https://note.ly/>, as a virtual whiteboard and then leads the discussion.

APPENDIX: WORKSHEET

CREDITS: Opening music: what impression does it give? Is it always the same? What is its purpose? What do the images or symbols used represent? What feelings do the credits seek to evoke? What is the colour scheme?

PRESENTOR AND SET: Do you know the presenter? How is he or she dressed? Are they sitting? Standing? What do they say to introduce the programme? What tone does the presenter use? How is the programme shot, using close-ups or wide angles? What is the presenter looking at?

CONTENT: What topics are announced? In what order (and why, in your opinion)? How are the topics presented (duration, tone, etc.)? What do the images show and for what purpose? What essential information to the presenters give?

SHEET 10 – IMAGES AND THE RISK OF MANIPULATION

MODULE 2	DECRYPTING INFORMATION
SESSION 4	Decrypting different media
LEVEL	Intermediate

IMAGES AND THE RISKS OF MANIPULATION

TEACHING OBJECTIVES

1. Objective 1: Viewing the importance of images in our societies objectively
2. Objective 2: Preventing manipulation via images
3. Objective 3: Approaching images critically and positively

KEY THEMES

The power of images

'A picture is worth a thousand words'

For decades now, images have had an important role in our societies, be they on television, in media, advertising, or more directly in our lives with the frequent use of social media. When you see an image, you think you are getting an immediate and full picture of reality, much more quickly than with written text or a speech. As a result, this type of communication and expression has **great symbolic power** because it can contain so much in so little content.

A double-edged sword

That being said, this great symbolic power is not without its flaws. The tendency to think that an image can speak for itself is a trap to be avoided because images can easily trick our senses, meaning they can be used to mislead or manipulate us. For example, it is very possible to interpret one image in multiple ways.

With the power of social media and the internet, an image, photograph, or video can **go viral and global**. On the one hand, this virality can be a good thing when spreading images helps to raise awareness, such as the photo of a young Serbo-Croat couple kissing proudly while wrapped in their respective flags, which was disseminated widely on social media. At the same time, however, it means that sometimes we have to deal with the massive and rapid spread of false information or conspiracy theories illustrated by or directly linked to images or videos.

Fabricating and manipulating images

The central role of images and their impact on our societies helps us to understand why the most effective and widespread false information uses visual aids (images, photos, videos). Even when it is not directly linked to a photo, the creator of the false information will usually look for an image (often manipulated or taken out of context) to illustrate it.

There are different types of image manipulation:

- **Removing context:** This is the most common method because it is very easy to do. It involves reinterpreting the meaning of an image to make it say something else by taking it out of its original context. As a result, the real reasons and circumstances in which the photo was taken no longer matter. The goal is to try and illustrate a statement by only using the surface-level appearance of the image and omitting the backstory, which itself is a kind of betrayal of the image's meaning.

Example: In August 2020, an image circulated on social media claiming that a 5G antenna had been installed on the roof of a minaret of a mosque in Bosnia and Herzegovina. In reality, the photo showed nothing but the minaret, but the caption said that it had a 5G antenna that was emitting strong magnetic radiation, even though 5G has yet to be installed in the country.

- **Doctoring and photo editing:** This method involves **artificially modifying** the original image or photo with the intent of changing its meaning. This can be:
 - A person or object added to or removed from a photo or video.

Example: After the explosion in the port of Beirut in August 2020, doctored images appeared online that had a missile added into them using video software, implying that the explosion had been a military attack by a foreign country, specifically Israel.

- The photo can also be cropped to hide part of it, such as during a meeting or demonstration: It is possible to crop out parts of the image where there are no people to give the impression that the whole area was full.
- **Deepfakes:** This is a manipulation technique that uses artificial intelligence software to **replace a person's face in a video**. For example, there is a video of a fake speech by Barack Obama in which he insults his successor Donald Trump. The manipulation was achieved with 'DeepFake' technology. With the recent technological advances, it has become increasingly difficult to tell which images have been doctored or manipulated and, with the arrival of new video manipulation methods, even greater caution and more verification of sources will be required.

False information and social media: two connected issues

Sharing photos and videos is a core function of the vast majority of social networks (Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat). In that regard, the danger is actually twofold because, on the one hand, it is possible for any person to publish or share images **to a large social media audience**, and, on the other hand, image manipulation does not require any actual technical proficiency (as was the case of the photo of the 5G antenna on a minaret in Bosnia and Herzegovina).

Newspaper cartoons and caricatures

The symbolic power of images is something the press has been using for a long time to convey its messages. Even before photography existed, newspapers used images as a **form of criticism**, particularly caricatures. It is interesting to note that even today, despite widespread use of images and photography, caricatures are still used in the press and the technique has even become a

profession unto itself.

Definition: A symbolic **form of expression** that **synthesises a concept**, issue, or current event by exaggerating a person or phenomenon's features or appearance. Most caricatures use a humorous tone to censure and criticise.

Example: In Serbia in November 2018, caricatures by the famous cartoonists Predrag Koraksić Corax and Dušan Petričić were the subject of such controversy that the Lazaravac Library had to take down their drawings. The illustrators were very adamant defenders of freedom of expression and an exhibition of their cartoons and caricatures opened on 22 November at the Stari Grad municipal building in Belgrade.

Caricature is an interesting topic when considering the use of images and their impact, but it is a tool that is seldom used by young people. Because of its symbolic power and the fact that it is attached to a specific context or subject, talking about caricatures with young people often requires contextualisation to allow them to understand the issues and topics the caricature addresses.

THE BALKAN CONTEXT

Heading 'The Media in the Balkans', especially:

- Real news vs fake news: 'Fake science news'

PRACTICAL ACTIVITIES

Sheet 10 – Activity 1: 'Analysing images and/or photoediting'

Sheet 10 – Activity 2: 'Creating a story from an image'

TAKING IT FURTHER

1. <https://raskrinkavanje.ba/analiza/nije-tacno-da-je-u-donjem-vakufu-na-vrh-munare-postavljena-5g-bazna-jedinica> Example of a photo taken out of context (5G)
2. <https://raskrinkavanje.ba/analiza/montaza-a-ne-vijest-snimci-projektila-koji-razara-bejrut-nisu-autenticni> Example of doctored photos
3. <https://balkaninsight.com/2013/03/11/croat-serb-kiss-announces-new-era/> The power of images: Photo of a Serbo-Croat couple
4. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EtEPE859w94> Example of DeepFake: Video of a fake speech by Barack Obama
5. <http://astro.wsu.edu/worthey/astro/html/im-ufo/im-aliens/aliens9.html> Example of a doctored photo: 'George W. Bush shaking hands with an alien'
6. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AaAUMWjpJ38> See the works of Predrag Koraksić Corax and Dušan Petričić

SHEET 10 – ACTIVITY 1

MODULE 2: DECRYPTING INFORMATION

SESSION 4: DECRYPTING DIFFERENT MEDIA

ACTIVITY 1	Analysing images and/or photoediting
CHAPTER	Lesson sheet 10: IMAGES AND THE RISK OF MANIPULATION (LINK)
TIME REQUIRED	20–30 minutes
MATERIAL	Computer, photo paper, video projector, projection screen or whiteboard
ACTIVITY INTRODUCTION	
<p>In this activity, participants play the part of a fact checker to determine whether a news item, particularly an image or video, is real. The aim is to demonstrate how images can be manipulated, taken out of context, or misinterpreted on the internet, especially on social media. Participants are asked to decrypt images that have been edited or manipulated (for example, by taking them out of context) in order to disinform users.</p> <p>Possible activity variation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- This activity can be done individually or in groups.- One option to make the activity more dynamic would be to give each participant or group a certain number of images to fact check and, just for fun, present the activity as a competition to select the best fact checker.	
ACTIVITY INSTRUCTIONS	

1. Choose images: Teachers prepare the activity in advance by searching for photos and/or videos that have been in the news recently and that may have been manipulated or doctored
2. Set up the room: Participants will need computers and an internet connection to do this activity.
3. View the photo: Teachers put the participants into groups at computers. The activity can be carried out in one of two ways, either by giving participants the images to check directly – on a USB flash drive or on the computer – instructing them to find out the images' origins, or by sharing the entire fake news piece, such as the article or social media post.
4. Checking the source: Participants can check the source of the image or photo by copying it to the search field in *Google Images*. Sites such as <https://tineye.com/> and *Google Images* (<https://images.google.com/>) will let you do a reverse-image search of a photo. These search engines search the web for similar content, often allowing you to find the origin of the image.
5. Class discussion: Talking about the activity as a class gives participants a chance to react to the results. This is also a chance to remind students that checking images is a quick, easy, and useful way to avoid being manipulated.

DOING THIS ACTIVITY ONLINE

1. Teachers must prepare the activity in advance by finding photos or videos that have been in the news recently and that may have been manipulated or doctored and emailing them to students.
2. The teacher creates a Zoom link (or other meeting platform) and sends it to students.
3. Once students are in the video conference with the teacher, they can have another look at the doctored photo or video.
4. The teacher divides the students into groups. This can be done using the 'breakout room' function most videoconferencing platforms such as Zoom provide. The students do their web research in these groups.
5. Once they have found the photo's source, the groups go back to the main meeting room and give their answer and explanation of how they performed the search as well as why they think the creator wanted to manipulate the photo.

SHEET 10 ACTIVITY 2

MODULE 2: DECRYPTING INFORMATION

SESSION 4: DECRYPTING DIFFERENT MEDIA

ACTIVITY 2	Creating a story from an image
CHAPTER	Lesson sheet 10 IMAGES AND THE RISK OF MANIPULATION (LINK)
TIME REQUIRED	20 – 30 minutes
MATERIAL	<u>To display the image:</u> Computer or paper photo or video projector and projection surface <u>To write the story:</u> Computer or pen and paper
ACTIVITY INTRODUCTION	
<p><u>Objectives:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Understand the benefits and limits of images as a source of information.- Channel your own perceptions of reality to challenge and deconstruct them. <p>In this activity, students examine an image and its possible interpretations. Participants will be asked to come up with a story based on a photo or short video.</p> <p>The same image will be shown to multiple groups (either as a hard copy or a projection). Each group, working separately from the others, will then have to explain it or tell the story of the image.</p> <p><u>Possible variations:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- When explaining the activity to the class, you can give them guidance on what type of story they should invent. For example, one group is told to give a more positive and happy interpretation, while another is told to present the photo as portraying a negative, or sad, event.	
ACTIVITY INSTRUCTIONS	

1. Choose the images: Teachers plan the activity in advance by looking for photos or videos that are open to interpretation or that may even have been manipulated or doctored in the news recently. You can also choose iconic photos that students might not know, such as the man standing in front of Chinese Army tanks during the 1989 Tiananmen Square demonstrations in the People's Republic of China.
2. Set up the room: Divide participants into groups and spread the groups as far apart from one another as possible so they cannot overhear each other.
3. View the photo: There are two options here: either you can project the image onto a screen so each group can see it and make up a story on paper or on the computer, or you can give the photo to each group individually, either on paper or on the computer.
4. Make up the story: Participants have free reign to interpret the image and invent/write a relatively short story based on their own inspiration or the emotion they have been assigned. The writing can take the form of an article or a narrative story.
5. Class discussion: At this point in the activity, the groups take turns presenting their stories to the other participants. This way, participants can see and react to the diversity of the results.
6. Check the source: Once the groups have finished, it is time to reveal the true story behind the photo and tell them the real context in which it was taken. This could also lead to a fact-checking session (see *SHEET 8 – Fighting fake news* and *SHEET 7 – Thinking critically about information*).
7. You can wrap up the activity with a class debate about using images as evidence and their potential for manipulation and interpretation.

DOING THIS ACTIVITY ONLINE

1. Teachers plan the activity in advance. They find the photos and send them to students.
2. The teacher creates a Zoom link (or a link to another platform) and sends it to students.
3. Once all students have joined the videoconference with the teacher, they can look at the photo again.
4. The teacher divides the students into groups. Each group meets in a 'breakout room', which is a function offered by most remote conferencing platforms (such as Zoom). Participants have free reign to interpret the image and invent/write a relatively short story based on their own inspiration or the emotion they have been assigned. The writing can take the form of an article or a narrative story. They work

together in the same document using a platform such as Google Drive or Framapad.

5. Once they have finished writing, students return to the 'main meeting room', where the groups take turns presenting their stories to the class. This way, participants can see and react to the diversity of the results.
6. Once the groups have finished, it is time to reveal the true story behind the photo and tell them the real context in which it was taken.
7. You can wrap up the activity with a class debate about using images as evidence and their potential for manipulation and interpretation.

SHEET 11 – NARRATIVES IN THE BALKAN COLLECTIVE IMAGINATION

MODULE 2	DECRYPTING INFORMATION
SESSION 4	Decrypting different media
LEVEL	Difficult

NARRATIVES IN THE BALKAN COLLECTIVE IMAGINATION

TEACHING OBJECTIVES

1. Objective 1: Deepening understanding of myths and their purpose
2. Objective 2: Exploring examples of myths from the region
3. Objective 3: Exploring the role of film as a vector for myths and a tool for deconstructing them

KEY THEMES

MYTHS IN POLITICAL DISCOURSE

Typology and purposes of myths

Definition: Myths are a **fictional construct** used to explain and justify certain social practices and act as rallying points. In addition, though, they also constitute a special type of discourse that is reminiscent of dreams and legends. According to historian Raoul Girardet, fictional constructs loom large in the history of political ideas because **they may explain the strong pull of some political systems** that lack a religious basis.

The young post-Yugoslav republics all have an interest in creating national myths and symbols in order to create a **common sense of belonging to the nation or group**. Historian Raoul Girardet suggests four recurring themes found in most myths that show the fundamental importance of fictional constructs in the evolution of society and political ideas:

- The **unity myth**: This myth exalts the homeland, the collective, and the community, which is represented by one single group of similar individuals (reinforcing 'us' versus 'them'-type thinking).
- The **saviour myth**: This myth singles out a hero, a guide that can be identified as a role model and who confers legitimacy.

- The **golden age** myth: This myth idealises the old days, creating nostalgia for a bygone era and attachment to parts of the past in the quest for stability in the present and future.
- The **conspiracy theory myth**: This myth points the finger at a foreign culprit. The group's woes are blamed on an enemy figure, which mobilises people in the group against the external enemy.

In general, myths are used as political tools during **times of turmoil** – moments of identity crisis or **anxiety resulting from changes in society and lifestyle**. As internal tensions rise, a mythos becomes necessary. These fictional constructs are thus a reaction to changes, lost bearings, and challenged traditions. Myths therefore have a clear political function: **to rally the population around a story and common reference points**.

Just as an image can capture an idea or event, a myth can capture people's imaginations. This happens even more so among certain demographics, such as young people **searching for an identity**, looking to explain the world around them, or who are faced with an **uncertain future**.

EXAMPLES OF IMPORTANT MYTHS IN THE BALKAN REGION

Every culture has a variety of myths, and not all of them serve the same purpose, but the rich culture of the Balkans has enabled a number of myths specific to the region to spread and thrive.

Example: 'Descendants of Alexander the Great'

In North Macedonia, the myth that says the Macedonians are the heirs of Alexander the Great is very widespread, even though it is impossible to match the territory of modern Macedonia to the Macedonia of that era, or even to find an ancestral link between the people that lived there in the past and those that do today. Although some of North Macedonia overlaps with some areas controlled by Philip II when he died in 336 BC, Alexander the Great's kingdom was centred around Vergina in Greece. In addition, the people of the Balkans today are the result of complex intermingling stemming from successive invasions and migrations that have swept the region for more than two thousand years.

Nevertheless, these myths **feed contemporary nationalist lines of discourse** in the Balkans, which seek to affirm their people's history in a particular place in order to legitimise their ambitions.

When a myth spreads, it can **strain relations between groups of people** in the region. In fact, the issue of Alexander the Great's Macedonian heritage revived tensions during debates around changing the country's name in 2018. Greek nationalists, who see the term 'Macedonia' as a part of Hellenic heritage, refused to let the former Yugoslav republic use the name. This led to multiple violent demonstrations in both countries.

Example: The myth of the 'Orthodox brotherhood'

In Serbia, Montenegro, and North Macedonia, there is a strong tie with Russia in many people's minds that comes from a feeling of 'Orthodox brotherhood' that unites them especially closely to that country. According to a 2017 study by the Serbian government, one quarter of inhabitants (24%) named Russia as the primary donor of financial and material aid to their country, when in fact 75% of donations and aid come from the European Union or its member states. In addition, over 70% of foreign investment from 2010 to 2017 came from the EU, compared with around 10% from Russia, according to the National Bank of Serbia.

This myth thus arises from an emotional tie rather than a rational one. That emotional relationship endures with the help of politicians such as Serbian president Aleksandar Vučić or Milorad Dodik of

Republika Srpska.

To limit their negative impact, myths must be deconstructed through **research and in-depth historical or journalistic efforts**. However, it is not always easy to conduct research on topics that remain sensitive for the people and governments of the countries involved. Journalists' lack of resources, the lack of interest from the media in historical research, and the quick spread of conspiracy theories online can hinder the progress of research and the deconstruction of some persistent myths.

It is for this reason that the "Krokodil" Association started a campaign in Belgrade in June 2020 against the instrumentalization of history for political purposes. The goal is to create a **space for historical and intercultural dialogue** in the countries borne of the breakup of Yugoslavia and to encourage a culture that allows people to come to terms with the past.

Finally, some channels for spreading information can be used to bypass the issue of historical study and the media's lack of attention to this serious matter. One example of this is cinema.

CINEMA: BOTH A MOUTHPIECE FOR THE PEOPLE AND VECTOR OF MYTHOS

Cinema is another way of promoting a national mythos. Films can be a source of inspiration and are highly likely to have a major impact on public imagination. In fact, unless you are very well-versed in the specific history of the topic in question, it can be difficult to determine the veracity of the events on screen. Furthermore, it is not unusual for some films to have a biased view of events or even to bolster and propagate certain myths, legends, and received wisdom.

Example: In late 2017, RTS (Serbian National Television) produced and broadcast the series *Senke nad Balkanom* ('Shadows Over Balkan') by director Dragan Bjelogrić. It takes place in Belgrade, capital of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes and then of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, in the 1920s and 30s. The series presents this period as a golden age for the country. There had already been television adaptations of Mir-Jam's trilogy (*Ranjeni orao*, *Nepobedivo srce*, *Samac u braku*) between 2008 and 2014, as well as a film that led to a series, *Montevideo, Bog te video* (2012-2014), all of which are sagas that provide a nostalgic view of this same period in the country's history

However, films can also be used as a powerful tool of deconstruction and as a mode of expression for civil society to confront important contemporary societal issues.

Example: The 2019 short film *Take me somewhere nice*, by Ena Sendjarević, a young director originally from Bosnia, tells the story of a young Bosnian woman living in the Netherlands with her family who returns to the country of her birth. The film tackles the issues of immigration, interculturality, nationalism, and the return to one's roots that can prove complicated for young people.

Example: Macedonian director Milcho Manchevski's film *Before the Rain*, which won the Golden Lion at the 1994 Venice Film Festival, talks about the war and ethnic tensions between Macedonians and Albanians.

PRACTICAL ACTIVITIES

Sheet 11 – Activity 1 'Collaborative history'

Sheet 11 – Activity 2 'Every photo tells a story'

TAKING IT FURTHER

1. https://folk.uio.no/palk/Historical_myths.htm ‘The use of historical myths in changing Balkans societies’. Article from the Institute of East-European and Oriental Studies by Pal Kolsto, professor of Russian and Central European and Balkan Area Studies at the University of Oslo.
2. <https://balkaninsight.com/2020/06/17/north-macedonia-greece-rewriting-history-after-prespa/> Article on the tensions between Greece and North Macedonia over the legacy of Alexander the Great and the name ‘Macedonia’
3. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qtHkCG1ybYo> Protest in Greece against the use of the name ‘Macedonia’ in January 2019
4. <http://www.krokodil.rs/eng/2020/06/declaration-entitled-defend-history-has-been-announced/> Initiative by the Krokodil Association to promote historical research
5. <https://www.polygraph.info/a/the-balkan-line-russian-disinformation-on-the-big-screen/30026068.html> Article from fact-checking site Polygraph on the film Balkan Line

SHEET 11 – ACTIVITY 1

MODULE 2: DECRYPTING INFORMATION

SESSION 4: DECRYPTING DIFFERENT MEDIA

ACTIVITY 1	COLLABORATIVE STORYTELLING
CHAPTER	Lesson sheet 11 'Narratives in the Balkan collective imagination' (LINK)
TIME REQUIRED	30 – 40 minutes
MATERIAL	Whiteboard, scrap paper, pencil, ball
ACTIVITY INTRODUCTION	
<p>The aim of this exercise is to deconstruct stereotypes and perceptions of 'the other'. Students will explore the images they have of people from other cultures and social groups.</p> <p>To do this, students will work together in groups to create a story about two fictional characters with particular identities (for example, a young Kosovar named Valmir and a young Serb named Dragan).</p> <p><u>Comment:</u> Since this exercise deals with stereotypes and perceptions, it may be useful to remind students at the start of the activity that they must be respectful toward others, including toward the fictional characters in the story they create. As such, if an element of the story seems too controversial or disrespectful, you may have to intervene to tone it down.</p> <p>It is also possible to limit the activity to just one character.</p>	
ACTIVITY INSTRUCTIONS	

1. Set up the room: Participants form a large circle in the room.
2. Assign roles: One or more students play the role of observers. They stay outside of the circle and take note of the story to be created.
3. The other members of the group work together to make up a story. To do this, they use a ball to pass to one another. The participant who gets the ball must add on to the story.
4. Start the story with a statement such as 'This is the story of Valmir, a young Kosovar...' and pass the ball to a member of the group, who then continues the story by adding on elements about the character. Each person adds a few words or up to a few sentences before passing the ball to someone else.
5. The group continues the activity, working together to build a story.
6. After 10 or 12 turns, depending on how much participants have added, ask for the ball back and say 'Valmir knows Dragan, a young Serb who has a story of his own...'. Then pass the ball to a member of the circle to continue Dragan's story as part 1 of the activity by adding one or two sentences per person and then passing the ball.
7. The activity ends once both stories are of sufficient length and everyone has had a chance to contribute to both stories.
8. Class discussion and debate: After the activity is over, the teacher asks the group to tell the stories of Valmir and Dragan, recounting their respective lives. The teacher gets students to think about the stereotypes and prejudices contained in the students' made up stories. The main points are written down on the whiteboard. The teacher can then lead a debate about stereotypes and perceptions of the other.

DOING THIS ACTIVITY ONLINE

1. The teacher creates a Zoom link and sends it to students.
2. Students use a word processing platform such as *Google Drive* or *Framapad* to write their collaborative story together in the same document. The story starts with a statement such as 'This is the story of Valmir, a young Kosovar...'. The group continues the exercise, working together to create a story.
3. After 10 or 12 turns, depending on how much participants have added, the teacher intervenes and adds a new sentence: "Valmir knows Dragan, a young Serb who has a story of his own...". The collaborative story starts again with a group member continuing the story of Dragan in the same way as in part 1 of the exercise, with each person adding one or two sentences.

4. The activity ends once both stories are of sufficient length and everyone has had a chance to contribute to both stories.
5. Class discussion and debate: After the activity is over, the teacher asks the group to tell the stories of Valmir and Dragan, recounting their respective lives. The teacher gets students to think about the stereotypes and prejudices contained in the students' made up stories. The main points are written down on a whiteboard. The teacher can then lead a debate about stereotypes and perceptions of the other. The teacher can use an 'online Post-It' website as a virtual whiteboard (example: <https://note.ly/>) and take down participants' observations.

SHEET 11 – ACTIVITY 2

MODULE 2: DECRYPTING INFORMATION

SESSION 4: DECRYPTING DIFFERENT MEDIA

ACTIVITY 2	EVERY PHOTO TELLS A STORY
CHAPTER	Lesson sheet 11 'Narratives in the Balkan collective imagination' (LINK)
TIME REQUIRED	30 – 40 minutes
MATERIAL	Whiteboard, pencil, scrap paper, photos
ACTIVITY INTRODUCTION	
<p>Objective: Show students that our perceptions are distorted and influenced by factors such as past experiences, expectations, and culture and that the images we have of others effect our interpretation of their behaviour.</p> <p>This activity has multiple parts. First, the teacher gives students photos that have been cut in half. Then, students are asked to 'complete' the photos with the information they can deduce from them. Their perceptions and views of others will affect how they reconstruct the photos.</p> <p>After showing the complete photo to students, they will work with the teacher to identify recurring themes in their stories. After writing these down on the whiteboard, the teacher starts a discussion about stereotypes and preconceived notions as well as the role of myths in our interactions with others.</p>	
ACTIVITY INSTRUCTIONS	

1. Teachers give each student a photo that has been cut in half.
2. Students 'complete' the story told in the first half of the photo. They have 5 minutes to write the story.
3. Students share what they have written with each other. If the group is large, teachers can create smaller groups of six to eight.
4. The teacher reveals the second half of the photo and asks students to reconsider their impressions.

DOING THIS ACTIVITY ONLINE

1. The teacher prepares the exercise in advance and chooses the photo. The photo to be cut up should reveal a more complex reality as a whole than the incomplete version.
2. The teacher emails the photo to students along with a set of instructions and a link to the meeting room in Zoom or any other platform for the videoconference.
3. In the videoconference, the teacher divides the students into groups.
4. Each group uses a word processor such as Google Drive or Framapad to 'complete' the story represented in the first half of the photo. They have 5 minutes to write the story.
5. Class discussion: The teacher can use an 'online Post-It' website such as <https://note.ly/> as a virtual whiteboard to write down elements from the various stories. The teacher can then moderate a discussion.

APPENDIX: EXAMPLE OF A PHOTO CUT IN HALF



Students 'complete' the photo using the information they can deduce from the image.

Here is the complete picture:



It shows Gisèle Marie Rocha, a Brazilian Muslim woman who plays guitar in a metal band.

SHEET 11 – ACTIVITY 3

MODULE 2: DECRYPTING INFORMATION

SESSION 4: DECRYPTING DIFFERENT MEDIA

ACTIVITY 3	Perceptions of 'national heroes'
CHAPTER	Lesson sheet 11 'Narratives in the Balkan collective imagination' (LINK)
TIME REQUIRED	1.5 – 2 hours
MATERIAL	Whiteboard, clear tape, post-its, pencils, scrap paper (optional: computer and internet connection)
ACTIVITY INTRODUCTION	
<p>Objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Discover the diversity of perspectives of shared historical events as well as the varying views of the major political figures associated with them.- Think more critically about one's own national history. <p>This activity can be followed up with a discussion on national myths and the figures they pertain to.</p>	
ACTIVITY INSTRUCTIONS	
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. <u>Set up the room</u>: Divide students into groups according to the number of participants.2. Once groups are formed, each group chooses the <u>national historical or political figures</u> they consider 'heroic' or important and explains why they admire and are proud of these figures. This first part should take between 10 and 20 minutes. Participants can choose an unlimited number of figures.	

3. If necessary, and if the room is equipped for it, participants can use computers or their smartphones to collect information or place the figures they have chosen into the correct historical context.
4. Once they have chosen their 'heroes', the groups present their lists to each other and the teacher writes the names on the board, underlining those who are mentioned most often.
5. The next part of the activity involves asking the participants questions, such as:
 - Was anyone surprised by the heroes listed? Why?
 - Does anyone know all of the heroes listed?
 - Why are national heroes the ones most people know? What human values do they represent?
 - What makes us admire some heroes more than others? Where did we learn to respect them and why? Do you think that if they were still alive today their actions and values would still make them heroes?
 - Do you think the heroes listed are universal? Do you think everyone considers them heroes?

These questions should open a discussion among participants.

DOING THIS ACTIVITY ONLINE

1. The teacher creates a link to a Zoom (or other videoconferencing platform) meeting and sends it to students.
2. Once they are in the 'virtual meeting room', the teacher puts students into groups (depending on the number of participants).
3. Each group chooses the national historical or political figures they consider 'heroic' or important and explains why they admire and are proud of these figures. This first part should take between 10 and 20 minutes. Participants can choose an unlimited number of figures.
4. Once the groups have chosen their 'heroes', they present their lists to one another and the teacher writes down the names on a virtual whiteboard, such as <https://awwapp.com/#>, underlining the names that are mentioned most often.
5. The groups leave the main meeting room and enter 'breakout rooms' on Zoom.
6. The next part of the activity involves asking the participants questions, such as:
 - Was anyone surprised by the heroes listed? Why?

- Does anyone know all of the heroes listed?
- Why are national heroes the ones most people know? What human values do they represent?
- What makes us admire some heroes more than others? Where did we learn to respect them and why? Do you think that if they were still alive today their actions and values would still make them heroes?
- Do you think the heroes listed are universal? Do you think everyone considers them heroes?

These questions can be sent via Framapad link to the two groups in the Zoom breakout rooms.

7. This is when participants should start researching online to collect information or place the figures they have chosen into the correct historical context.
8. Once the groups have finished their research and answered the questions, they return to the main meeting room to start the class discussion. The teacher can use an 'online Post-It' website such as <https://note.ly> as a whiteboard and show it to all participants in real time via screensharing.

SHEET 12 – AWARENESS AGAINST ONLINE HATE SPEECH

MODULE 3	PEOPLE POWER AND THE MEDIA
SESSION 5	Online civic action
LEVEL	Intermediate

AWARENESS AGAINST ONLINE HATE SPEECH

TEACHING OBJECTIVES

1. Objective 1: Knowing what makes a conspiracy theory
2. Objective 2: Making the connection between conspiracy theories and hate speech
3. Objective 3: Understanding the role of MIL in the fight against conspiracy theories

KEY THEMES

Conspiracy theories

While they are not actually a new phenomenon, conspiracy theories have been very popular in recent years, particularly because of how they spread on social media and on the internet more broadly.

Definition: A conspiracy theory is a seemingly coherent and 'logical' story or theoretical narrative that aims to demonstrate or reveal the existence of a small group of powerful people who secretly plan illegal or harmful acts to change the course of events or who are trying to take over the world.

Conspiracy theories differ from false information in that they come from an aggregation of hypotheses and arguments that are manipulated to support a particular theory. False information is sometimes used in conspiracy theorists' arguments, but it does not always align with the theory.

The media and false information do play a crucial role in the extent of the phenomenon. Firstly, wariness or even distrust of the media increases conspiracy theories' credibility and popularity, all the more so in countries where the media are seen as corrupt or under the thumb of the political system. Secondly, false information uses the same mechanisms as conspiracy theories, such as leveraging fear and manipulating facts, and are often about the same topics.

Examples of some of the best-known conspiracy theories:

- The Illuminati are a secret society whose members include the world's most powerful people – The world is flat instead of round – No one has ever landed on the moon – A plot between Germany and the Vatican is responsible for the breakup of Yugoslavia. There are also more topical conspiracy theories about 5G, coronavirus, and vaccines.

Hate speech and moderating hateful content

Conspiracy theories are a major part of our relationship with information and with society. They straddle the intersection of prejudices, political leanings, and beliefs and can even have close ties to **hate speech**. As such, they can quickly sow conflict when they spread. This has been the case, for example, of theories about a worldwide Jewish conspiracy.

Definition: When we talk about hate speech, we are referring to **expressions of hatred** that may take the form of a phrase, text, sound, or image that expresses **rejection of others**, is hurtful and thus encourages feelings of hatred. When such an expression of hatred is made public, it can also incite witnesses of it to prove their hatred for one or the other – to choose their side – and sometimes to express that hatred again with similar or higher levels of violence as a result of pressure from the group. This what is known as **inciting hatred**.

When combined with a lack of critical thinking, this type of content, based on **stereotypes** and **misconceptions**, leads to divisive and violent speech by turning one group into a scapegoat bearing all responsibility and guilt, which then leads to overgeneralisations and a feeling of paranoia.

Example: The **Roma community** is often the target of discrimination and prejudices, being portrayed as dishonest or thieves, all of which keeps them from getting skilled work. Roma are twice as likely to be unemployed than other groups and many of them still live in areas where homes do not have running water.

Moderating particularly hateful content on social media, for example, while providing more inclusive education in civics, media, and digital technology can help limit the slippery slope that leads to physical and mental violence.

Definition: Moderation means **deleting, penalising, or even punishing creators of hateful content to prevent its spread**. This type of content may include a violent comment on a post, sharing an article, video, photo, or infographic that stigmatises a particular group of people, or a private email or instant message exchange.

Fighting conspiracy theories

Definition: Conspiracism is the tendency to **incorrectly** present events or phenomena as being the **result of an organised conspiracy**. It is a way of thinking or attitude that denies generally accepted explanations of facts and replaces them with a conspiracy whose shadowy aim is unknown.

The consequences of conspiracism:

- Generates hate speech
- Makes people believe in unproven theories
- Locks people up into a logic of distrust and misconception, which limits the discussion of ideas
- Makes it more difficult to keep the powerful in check and reveals real political malfeasance or possible conflicts of interest.

Ways to limit conspiracism:

1. Regulating and limiting hateful content and false information (fact-checking websites, holding social media platforms accountable, etc.)
2. Developing the public's critical thinking skills through media and information literacy training in order to:
 - Question the mechanism of the conspiracy: Is this really sufficient proof?
 - Encouraging caution to raise and maintain vigilance among the public (without confusing caution with distrust or doubt with suspicion)
 - Channeling criticism and allowing people to be better informed by using logical and verifiable

procedures – and finally looking at the world around us objectively.

THE BALKAN CONTEXT

Sheets under the heading 'The Media in the Balkans', particularly:
- *Real news vs fake news: 'Fake news conspiracy'*

PRACTICAL ACTIVITIES

Sheet 12 – Activity 1: 'Cordless telephone'
Sheet 12 – Activity 2: 'Analysing a conspiracist video'

TAKING IT FURTHER

1. <https://balkaninsight.com/2020/07/07/conspiratorial-corona-hoaxes-and-conspiracy-theories-in-the-balkans/>: Coronavirus conspiracy theories in the Balkans
2. <https://iep.utm.edu/conspira/>: Encyclopaedia of Philosophy: 'Conspiracy Theories'
3. <https://www.space.com/apollo-11-moon-landing-hoax-believers.html>: Example of a popular conspiracy theory
4. <https://www.coe.int/en/web/european-commission-against-racism-and-intolerance/hate-speech-and-violence>: The Council of Europe's publication on hate speech
5. <https://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/news-centre/news/2018/Despite-some-progress-Marginalized-Roma-community-still-most-excluded-in-Western-Balkans.html>: Article on discrimination suffered by the Roma community in the Balkans

SHEET 12 – ACTIVITY 1

MODULE 3: PEOPLE’S POWER AND THE MEDIA

SESSION 5: ONLINE CIVIC ACTION

ACTIVITY 1	‘Cordless telephone’
CHAPTER	Lesson sheet 12 ‘Awareness against online hate speech’ (LINK)
TIME REQUIRED	30 – 40 minutes
MATERIAL	Computer or tablet, internet connection, scrap paper, pencils, whiteboard
ACTIVITY INTRODUCTION	
<p>‘Cordless telephone’ is an activity in which participants play together and witness together the disinformation that a speech or event can undergo when it is shared and spread on social media as well as in everyday life. The activity teaches the issue of how statements that circulate online can be twisted and explains the consequences this distortion can cause, especially if the statements directly target people or groups of people.</p> <p>To begin, a person makes up a story, then whispers it into the ear of the person next to them, who does the same, continuing until every participant has heard the story and told their version of it.</p> <p>In the post-activity discussion, teachers can bring up the issue of interpretation and subjective biases in spreading information.</p> <p><u>Activity variation:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- You can show a picture or short video to the first participant, who then tells their neighbour what they have seen without showing the neighbour the same image. The information is passed orally to the next participant, and so on. At the end of	

the activity, the teacher shows the original image to the group and observes how it was distorted.

ACTIVITY INSTRUCTIONS

1. Prepare the activity: Teachers must first prepare one or more stories for the game or find images showing an action or event to maximise the number of elements to take into account. You can adjust the difficulty of the activity by adjusting the complexity of the image or story.

2. Set up the room: Teachers give the instructions and tell their version of the story or show the image to the first person.

3. Procedure: First, students sit in a large circle. The first person whispers their story (or their description of the image) into the ear of the person sitting to their right. This person then whispers their version into the ear of the person sitting next to them, and so on until everyone has heard the story. The last person repeats the version that they heard aloud. The group then compares this version with what was told to the person who first told the story and note the differences.

4. Class discussion: To discuss, use the following questions (written on the board): How did the story change when it was told multiple times? What affects the way someone hears and interprets information? What impact do our experiences and interests have on our points of view? Do people sometimes hear multiple interpretations of the same story and start to wonder which version is more accurate? If everyone sees and hears everything slightly differently, how do we know if the story is accurate? How do the changes to the story make you feel? Compare how the first person to tell the story feels compared to the rest of the group. What happens when the story is a personal one and the meaning of the story changes? Would you be willing to share what happened in this activity on the internet?

SHEET 12 – ACTIVITY 2

MODULE 3: PEOPLE'S POWER AND THE MEDIA

SESSION 5: ONLINE CIVIC ACTION

ACTIVITY 2	Analysing a conspiracist video
CHAPTER	Lesson sheet 12 'Awareness against online hate speech' (LINK)
TIME REQUIRED	30 minutes
MATERIAL	Computers, internet connection, pencils, scrap paper, video projector

INTRODUCTION

The aim of this activity is to **identify as a group the 'tools' conspiracists use** (unveiling a 'mystery', rhetoric, analysing details) as well as to point out the audio-visual techniques used in conspiracist videos (frightening music, robotic voices, deceptive editing, analysis of symbols, etc.).

To make the activity run more smoothly, it is preferable to find a video in advance that has clearly identifiable conspiracist arguments and elements.

Here are some of the elements to be identified in the video:

- ❶ Anxiety-inducing ambiance: Often, you hear a robotic or mysterious voice accompanied by frightening music (such as in a horror film).
- ❷ Special effects: As with the sound, visual effects such as drawings, edited photos, or 'face morphing' can sum up the theory and make it simple and memorable.
- ❸ The video is well-structured and well-edited: The structure usually follows a certain logic, such as by starting with a historical element to lend the video a scientific air. Photomontages (series of images) are also a major factor.

④ Quotes pulled from articles or statements: This takes the quotes out of the context of an article, news report, or a person's statement (such as a politician or scientist) in order to provide evidence for the theory.

⑤ Truthful but surprising elements: This is not a matter of taking a fact or statement out of context, but rather of using a true fact or real image, such as images or videos of cats behaving strangely.

⑥ Uncertain or completely false elements: Some of the pseudo-evidence for the presented theory include elements that are wholly made up, extremely uncertain, or unproven. These are slipped into the explanations to overwhelm and confuse viewers.

ACTIVITY INSTRUCTIONS

1. Before starting the exercise, find a conspiracist video about a current topic or specific issue such as terrorist attacks, new world order, or epidemics.

2. Set up the room: Seat students in front of the projection surface and show the video using a projector. You should instruct them to write down the elements used in the video to persuade viewers and identify the main message, thus identifying the tools – i.e. the form – and the meaning – i.e. the function.

3. Note taking: Participants are asked to take notes throughout the video to be able to report on their comments and impressions.

4. Class discussion: Ask participants about the elements they identified and tell them about elements they may not have seen. This is also a chance to expand the discussion to things participants frequently see on the internet: Have they already seen videos like this before? On which topics? Did those videos convince them? Does the video target a particular group as the enemy, such as politicians or banks?

DOING THIS ACTIVITY ONLINE

1. This activity can also be done remotely. Before class, teachers email the conspiracist video as a file or link.
2. Teachers send the link to the videoconference on Zoom (or any other platform).
3. Students work remotely using Google Drive, Framapad, etc. to note down the most important elements.
4. The class discussion takes place on the videoconferencing platform. The teacher can use an 'online Post-It' website, such as <http://note.ly>, as a whiteboard and take down students' observations. The teacher then leads the discussion.

SHEET 13 – PROMOTING CITIZEN MEDIA

MODULE 3	PEOPLE'S POWER AND THE MEDIA
SESSION 5	Online civic action
LEVEL	Intermediate

PROMOTING CITIZEN MEDIA

TEACHING OBJECTIVES

1. Objective 1: Understanding key concepts of 'cyber-citizenship' and 'citizen media'
2. Objective 3: Giving examples of successful citizen media
3. Objective 3: Assessing the risks and drawbacks of citizen media

KEY THEMES

What is citizen media?

Definition: The term 'citizen media' contains the words 'citizen' and 'media'. It does indeed refer to media – that is, radio, TV, the internet, and other tools that are used to convey information to a large audience. In addition, the modifier 'citizen' indicates that **the people who write these articles and conduct these investigations are not professional journalists, but rather average citizens** who want to lead discussions on specific issues or problems that affect society at large.

As a result, readers **stop being purely passive** and get involved in shaping and spreading information. Participation is therefore a very important part of citizen media, be it on the radio (online or otherwise), blogs, vlogs (blogs that primarily use video), podcasts, or other means. It allows average people, researchers, or NGO workers to **have their voice heard** by a large audience.

Example: Blogging as civic engagement in Albania: The blog *Peizazhe të Fjalës* ('Landscapes of the Word'), created in 2007 by Ardian Vehbiu, presents itself as a separate, independent space: a sustainable model in the rapidly changing, financially drained, credibility-challenged, and largely politicised Albanian media landscape. In the words of its creator, 'from the start, the blog has strived to be a "sanctuary" of Albanian free thinking that is protected from intimidation, shaming, humiliation, stigmatisation, trials, indictments, "silencing of the majority", and other contemporary forms of censorship in public discourse'.

Involvement on social media

Social media have also transformed how information circulates; whereas the model used to be vertical, with news coming down from the top, its spread today has become more horizontal. **Anyone can produce and spread content** within their own network and even beyond it. Not only do you have the chance to have your voice heard virtually, but also **before or during real-life campaigns on the ground**. During the Arab Spring, for example, social networks played an undeniable role, but the political changes came as a result of social movements, such as protests and blockades. Social networks allowed information and ideas to spread quickly, but societal-level change only came about when these actions met physical reality on the ground.

Example: Serbia's [#1of5million](#) movement started in late 2018 and was able to benefit from new technology and modern means of communication to mobilise the public by sharing content online and exchanging information on social networks. The movement was in turn quick to attract a large audience on Facebook and Twitter, which allowed it to create discussion groups and mobilise masses of people against the political system's creeping authoritarianism and for freedom of expression.

Risks and drawbacks

Remember that journalism is a profession that requires a special skill set and adherence to a code of ethics. At the same time, anyone can train to become a reporter, especially by talking to professional and amateur journalists. **Sharing knowledge** makes it possible for citizen media to become **real, alternative, and reliable sources**.

The ease with which anyone today can become an amateur journalist also brings some risks. Producers of information are sometimes unaware of fundamental ethical standards in journalism and **publish incorrect or even completely manipulated information**.

With citizen media, television channels, written press, and even social media, the amount and variety of information available today is larger than ever. This richness requires **keeping a critical mind** when faced with all of these sources of information.

Furthermore, while the internet is a place of freedom, it is also a **place of economic exchange**. The logic of marketing is invading both the internet and social media, turning information into another source of profit.

The spread of certain types of information, especially that which plays to readers' emotions, is also a potential source of profit in a system that is funded by advertising. **Clickbait** is on the rise, enticing users to click on a link to visit a website and read an article. The author of the article and owner of the website then get paid by the advertisements on the website based on the number of views the article receives. This also constitutes a source of risk because it is possible to spread misinformation to attract viewers.

PRACTICAL ACTIVITIES

Sheet 13 – Activity 1 'Discovering citizen media'

Sheet 13 – Activity 2 'Making citizen media'

TAKING IT FURTHER

1. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Mo2Ai7ESNL8&t=5s> Zeynep Tufekci: 'How the Internet has made social change easy to organize, hard to win' TED Talks
2. <https://adespresso.com/blog/clickbait-facebook-advertising-examples/> How clickbait works, with examples
3. <https://peizazhe.com/> Ardian Vehbiu's blog

SHEET 13 – ACTIVITY 1

MODULE 3: PEOPLE'S POWER AND THE MEDIA

SESSION 5: ONLINE CIVIC ACTION

ACTIVITY 1	Discovering citizen media
CHAPTER	Sheet 13 (session 5) 'People's power and the media' (LINK)
TIME REQUIRED	20 – 30 minutes
MATERIAL	Computer, internet connection, projection screen, PowerPoint, video projector, sound system, newspapers
ACTIVITY INTRODUCTION	

In this activity, students discover the topic of citizen media. They will learn to understand for themselves – while remaining under teacher supervision – **the similarities and differences between traditional and citizen media**. To do this, they will work in groups to compare different types of media.

Each group reads and analyses a type of media provided by the teacher (a daily newspaper, a URL to news programme, a website, a blog, etc.). One group should be assigned a traditional media outlet to analyse, such as a daily newspaper, and the other a citizen media outlet, such as a blog.

Students can do quick web searches on computers and/or on their smartphones.

The aim of the activity is to ensure that the two groups work together to come up with their own definition of citizen media.

Afterwards, teachers can delve deeper into the subject of citizen media and their impact on the world of information.

ACTIVITY INSTRUCTIONS

1. Set up the room: Divide the students into groups and seat them at computers.
2. Students analyse the suggested media outlet (print newspaper, episode of a news programme, news website, blog, etc.).
3. Students answer questions.
Example: 'Describe the media outlet: Do the articles have bylines? Whose name? What type of news does it provide? How is it covered? What type of news is prioritised? Does it have ads? What kinds? How is the information presented (analyse headlines, text, images, etc.)?'
4. Class discussion of what students have found and creation of a common definition based on students' suggestions. Answers to the questions will lead the teacher to talking about 'citizen media'.

Note – **Definition**: *Citizen media is media – meaning outlets such as radio, TV, and the internet sources – that are used to provide information to a large audience. The adjective used to modify it – 'citizen' – means that **the people creating the articles and investigations are not journalists, but rather average citizens** who are looking to lead debates on specific issues or problems that affect all of society.*

DOING THIS ACTIVITY ONLINE

1. The teacher sends students a Zoom link (or any other platform).
2. Once students are in the meeting, the teacher puts them into 'virtual breakout groups' and assigns them the media outlet to analyse by sending them a link.
3. Students can discuss the outlet using the separate 'rooms' offered by videoconferencing platforms such as Zoom.
4. The teacher sends the link to the list of questions (created online, for example via the website <https://www.dragnsurvey.com/en>). Students respond in groups.
5. Class discussion happens remotely on a videoconferencing platform. The teacher can use an 'online Post-Its' website, such as <https://note.ly> as a whiteboard and then lead the discussion.

SHEET 13 – ACTIVITY 2

MODULE 3: PEOPLE'S POWER AND THE MEDIA

SESSION 5: ONLINE CIVIC ACTION

ACTIVITY 2	Leading a social media campaign
CHAPTER	Sheet 13 (session 5) 'Promoting citizen media' (LINK)
TIME REQUIRED	2 – 2.5 hours
MATERIAL	Computers, smartphones, internet connection
ACTIVITY INTRODUCTION	
<p>Objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Become familiar with the tools of information and communication- Use social media for social campaigns- Develop critical thinking skills <p>The aim of this exercise is for participants to create an online social campaign. After choosing which topics they want to address, for example, local issues that affect their neighbourhood, as well as a social network to use in order to share their social campaign's content, students promote a cause by choosing suitable images and slogans. They then share the media content on that social network.</p> <p>Definition:</p> <p>An online social campaign can be defined using the tools of social media communication and marketing in order to take on a social issue (the environment, feminism, racism, poverty, etc.). The goal is to promote certain values and mobilise or raise awareness among individuals, especially internet users, on important social issues, or even to create a movement the likes of #MeToo, Black Lives Matter, or the Serbian #1of5million movement.</p>	
ACTIVITY INSTRUCTIONS	

1. Prepare: Together with students, teachers select the topics their social media campaigns will tackle.
2. Assign tasks: Once topics are chosen, teachers form several groups depending on the number of participants. Each group works on one topic and chooses the best social network to host their campaign.
3. Research: To make an effective social media campaign, participants must gather information on the topics they have chosen so that they understand the context and can make/spread a message that helps support the cause.
4. Find a communication strategy: Participants should think about the best strategy to get their message across:
 - Identify the target audience (teens, adults, men, women, etc.).
 - Choose the right social network, for example, Instagram for images and Twitter or Facebook for videos and text.
 - Type of message (personal account, humour, figures, mini news report, etc.).
 - Format of the message (photographs, text, infographics, video, etc.).
 - Using the right keywords or hashtags to share the post widely.
5. Launch the campaign: Participants can choose to start their campaign by posting their content to their personal accounts or to create a specific account for the campaign.

SHEET 14 – DIGITAL CITIZENSHIP

MODULE 3	PEOPLE'S POWER AND THE MEDIA
SESSION 5	Online civic action
LEVEL	Intermediate

DIGITAL CITIZENSHIP

TEACHING OBJECTIVES

1. Objective 1: Understanding the concept of 'digital citizenship'
2. Objective 2: Giving specific examples of best practices on the internet
3. Objective 3: Highlighting the limits of 'digital citizenship'

KEY THEMES

What is digital citizenship?

Nowadays, it is difficult or even impossible to live either our professional or private lives without the internet. As ubiquitous as it is, however, it is worthwhile learning how best to use the internet, which includes having better control and **understanding of our digital lives**.

Definition: Digital citizenship refers to the way in which internet users **behave and interact** online. Essentially, it is the behaviour we adopt in our online interactions with other users when dealing with sensitive topics of a social or political nature. The rights and obligations we have in real life are the same online. Our behaviour and interactions also define how others perceive us on the internet. At the same time, the way we connect online is not just limited to how we act or what we post, it is also defined by **how we protect our privacy** in terms of passwords, location, and internet history.

This means that digital citizenship also asks us to have a **critical view of the internet** and how we use it, especially when it comes to the personal information we share, sometimes without knowing it.

Best digital practices

Definition: 'Best practices' refer to both the way we should behave to make the internet a **place of freedom and mutual respect** as well as the **rules** that websites and apps require us to follow. In fact, many sites and web services set rules of conduct and rights of users.

Example: The web application **Twitter** gives this advice for using its tools:

Consider what you Tweet. You are in control of how much information you share on Twitter or any other website. Don't post information you consider to be private, and be thoughtful about when you want to publicly share your location. Be wary of any communication that asks for your private contact information, personal information, or passwords. If you are ever unsure before you Tweet, we recommend you ask yourself the following questions: Who am I sharing this information with? How much and what type of information am I sharing? How many people can see the information I am sharing? Can I trust all the people that see this information?

But the app also has some **essential rules**:

Violence: You may not threaten violence against an individual or a group of people. We also prohibit the glorification of violence. Hateful conduct: You may not promote violence against, threaten, or harass other people on the basis of race, ethnicity, national origin, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, religious affiliation, age, disability, or serious disease.

It is therefore useful to remember as much as possible that **our virtual behaviour has a real impact on people** and that online harassment, for example, can lead to real-life tragedy.

On the other hand, the internet nowadays also represents a **real instrument for the people**. It makes it possible for citizens to be more informed and democracy more participative, as well as making access to information much more fluid. It is a tool that enables the **discussion of ideas, communication**, and can be used to speak out against dangers and risks to society at large, as is the case of 'whistleblowers' who use the internet to denounce corruption or attacks on liberties (see the film/documentary *Citizenfour* on Edward Snowden).

Maintaining a digital footprint and a positive mindset

Definition: Your digital footprint is the **sum total of information on the internet about your online activity**. It is an image of you, built up according to your behaviour and posts and your personal choices.

For this reason, it is important to keep a positive digital footprint! You can keep a blog on a particular topic, share your talents, film a video tutorial, collect money for a charitable cause, or help to organise events. The list of possibilities to transform your digital footprint is endless!

PRACTICAL ACTIVITIES

Sheet 14 – Activity 1: 'Quiz'

Sheet 14 – Activity 2: 'Moving debate'

Sheet 14 – Activity 3: 'Table of best practices'

TAKING IT FURTHER

1. <https://www.amnesty.org.au/6-really-practical-ways-to-protect-your-privacy-online/> '6 really practical ways to protect your privacy online'
2. **Citizenfour**: A 2014 documentary by Laura Poitras about Edward Snowden's revelations and the NSA's worldwide espionage scandal

SHEET 14 – ACTIVITY 1

MODULE 3: PEOPLE'S POWER AND THE MEDIA

SESSION 5: ONLINE CIVIC ACTION

ACTIVITY 1	The table of good online habits
CHAPTER	Lesson sheet 14 'Digital citizenship' (LINK)
TIME REQUIRED	20 – 30 minutes
MATERIAL	1 computer, PowerPoint, projection surface, video projector or whiteboard Printed documents (optional, if no computer or whiteboard)
ACTIVITY INTRODUCTION	

Objectives:

- Ask yourself questions about which practices you should adopt online.
- Encourage positive, respectful digital citizenship.
- Know how to talk about and argue your opinion.

This activity consists of participants filling in a table and a list of a number of possible behaviours on the internet. Participants must choose which practices/behaviours they think are good and bad.

In addition, dialogue and argumentation are vital to this activity; students are required to justify their choice. This objective is achieved even more effectively by appointing a spokesperson for each group, which forces students to seek coordination and consensus before submitting a final answer.

Activity variation: If you do not have a computer or whiteboard, you can print out multiple copies of the best practices table and leave a number of blank squares for participants to fill in as suggestions are made.

ACTIVITY INSTRUCTIONS

1. Set up the room: Divide students into two or three groups and present the best practices table on the board, on the projector, or on paper.

2. Give some examples of suggestions that participants should categorise:

- Reporting a hateful or violent comment on a post.
- Accepting any and all friend requests.
- Blocking someone on a social network.
- Debating someone who spews insults in the comment section of a video.
- Giving away your address or personal information.
- Posting photos of your friends without asking.
- Using the same password for all social media.

3. Each response should be logically argued by the groups, with a short debate being held based on the following elements: freedom of expression, moderating hateful content, conspiracy theories, or defamation (see *SHEET 14 – DIGITAL CITIZENSHIP* and *SHEET 12 – AWARENESS AGAINST HATE SPEECH*).

DOING THIS ACTIVITY ONLINE

To have participants fill in the table remotely, send it to them and give them some examples of suggestions to use to insert into the table.

APPENDIX

Sample table of digital habits:

Good digital habits	Bad digital habits

SHEET 14 – ACTIVITY 2

MODULE 3: PEOPLE’S POWER AND THE MEDIA

SESSION 5: ONLINE CIVIC ACTION

ACTIVITY 1	MOVING DEBATE
CHAPTER	Lesson sheet 14 – ‘Digital citizenship’ (LINK)
TIME REQUIRED	30 minutes – 1 hour
MATERIAL	Projection surface, overhead projector, PowerPoint, computer, internet connection Alternatively: printout of a Twitter or Facebook post
ACTIVITY INTRODUCTION	
<p>In a moving debate, students move about the room in response to questions asked by the teacher. The activity is useful because it encourages students to participate and be dynamic.</p> <p>The aim of the activity is to push students to think about their digital habits and rights on the internet.</p> <p><u>Note:</u> A question does not necessarily have to be polarising or controversial to participants. For many questions, participants’ minds will not yet be made up.</p>	
ACTIVITY INSTRUCTIONS	

1. Set up the room: Students will work as one group.
2. Using a visual aid, such as a PowerPoint slide projected on a screen or white wall, the teacher displays a controversial social media post (for example, a post with an insulting comment from a user) and asks students to move about the room by saying 'If you think you are allowed to say this, stand on this side. If you do not, stand on that side.' No one can stay in the middle.
3. Students go and stand on their side
4. Once the participants have positioned themselves, they must justify and explain their position, either by volunteering or by using other methods of choosing who can speak (for example, by passing around a ball). Once one side has given their argument, the other side gives their argument. If a participant thinks the other side's argument is valid, he or she can change sides.
5. After the debate and the explanations, another question is asked and students change positions again, and so on until the end of the activity.

APPENDIX: Example of a controversial post



Oulala ! @Oulala08514297 - 19 August 2019

*The law of the Quran is taking over the law of the Republic
Therefore Islam is actually incompatible with democracy and the Republic!
We need to ban this death cult in France like they did in Slovenia and China!*

SHEET 15 – ORGANISING A MEDIA INCUBATION WORKSHOP

MODULE 3

PEOPLE'S POWER AND THE MEDIA

SESSION 6	<i>Producing citizen media</i>
LEVEL	<i>Intermediate</i>

ORGANISING A MEDIA INCUBATION WORKSHOP

TEACHING OBJECTIVES

- 1. Objective 1: Instructors are able to help students create media*
- 2. Objective 2: Instructors can come up with a format and identity suited to their students and objectives as well as teach basic media concepts*
- 3. Objective 3: Instructors understand how to bring media to life both for the young journalists and the target audience*

KEY THEMES

Getting started

1. First steps

The first step is to **put together a team** of very motivated individuals that will bring the project to life and see it through. This will be the editorial ‘core’. You can also bring in regular and occasional participants to be in charge of op-eds, photos, writing jingles, person-on-the-street interviews, longer interviews, social media, uploading podcasts, and scheduling guests. Then you should draw up the roadmap to creating your media outlet and assign responsibilities according to participants’ preferences.

2. Coming up with a format and identity

- Ask what the aim of your media product is: Do students want to actively shape the life of their school or club? Allow as many young people as possible to express themselves? Encourage their own discussions on the topic of media?
- Determine your target audience: Students in a school? Members of a club? An entire community?
- Figuring out the tone is also vital: Should it be funny? Satirical? Investigative and research-based? Do you want the style to be more direct or more literary?
- Choosing a title (and logo) should also be taken seriously. After all, this is what will set you apart, affirm your identity, and (literally) make a name for your product.

- Finally, you need to take stock of the resources you need for your media product and desired publication frequency. The number of team members, their commitment, and their availability are major factors as well as your available equipment and budget.

3. Choose your media formula

To maintain the interest of your audience, draw them in, and pique their curiosity, you need to be sure that you supply information in a variety of ways.

Here are the **main genres of journalism** available to you:

Reports, investigations, and interview pieces are the main genres of journalism.

Editorials, op-eds, news briefs, regular columns, reviews, summaries, portrait pieces, and person-on-the-street interviews offer a wide range of options for adding variety.

4. Coming up with a topic

- Setting the angle

Choosing a topic is just the first step. You cannot cover every aspect of that topic, otherwise you may end up with an article that is too long, convoluted, and difficult to read. In other words, you may lose your audience. Therefore, you need to pick an angle, or **point of view**. You need to pick out which of the topic's aspects you want to highlight and which ones you do not.

Example: 'Podcasts' is a topic, 'women in podcasting' is an angle.

- The six essential questions

In order to write an article, student journalists need to ask the questions Who? What? Where? When? Why? and How?

Creating your media product and bringing it to life

• Simulating an editorial board:

- Setting up an editorial meeting is, firstly, a chance to **bring together and introduce** the various participants as well as to **come up with a name**.
- Secondly, the meeting is a chance to discuss the **editorial line**, the topics to be covered, the various possible angles, and also the formats (report, interview, debate, newsflash)

Ideally, the board should meet once a week or at some **regular interval** to encourage engagement.

• Assigning roles:

This is also the time to:

- Assign the roles of 'journalist', 'expert', 'presenter', and 'crew' (camera operator, editor) so everyone knows **who is in charge of what**.
- **Give guidance** to each participant to help them prepare (research, list of questions, reporting, commentary)
- **Form groups** of two or three based on participants' skills and preferences

- Students will need to give their media product a **visual identity**:

- The instructor show students **Canva** (<https://www.canva.com/>) to create visual aids (logo, banners, illustrations, etc.).
- Instructors can also point out the tools offered by **Madmagz**, a newspaper (print and online) design app for young people: <https://madmagz.com/> (see Sheet 17)

- **Disseminating and promoting information:**

- In order to increase your content's visibility on websites like Wordpress, it is important to pay attention to **additional enhancing features**, such as headlines, ledes, photos, and snippets that show up on search engines.
- These features need to be **eye-catching** to grab readers' attention and curiosity.
- **Tags** (keywords for the topics covered in the article) are also important to improve referencing.
- **Social networks** can be a forum of expression, a place to post content, and also a platform to raise visibility. Do not hesitate to have a presence on multiple social networks to maximise the reach of your content. Promotional texts should be short and to the point.
- Regardless of the medium or aids (photo, video, or sound) it is crucial to **link to other sites**.

An article that contains one or more of these features will get many more views than one that is just text with no options to interact with other platforms.

- You must also pay attention to the **level of language**, which should be neither too formal nor too familiar.

PRACTICAL ACTIVITIES

This lesson sheet can also be used as a basis for a media creation activity with young people.

SHEET 17 – CREATING AN ONLINE MAGAZINE FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

MODULE 3	<i>PEOPLE'S POWER AND THE MEDIA</i>
SESSION 6	<i>Producing citizen media (radio, podcast, magazine, video)</i>
LEVEL	<i>Intermediate</i>

Creating an online magazine

TEACHING OBJECTIVES

1. *Objective 1: Instructors are able to guide students in creating an online magazine*
2. *Objective 2: Instructors can supervise students through the steps of creating an online magazine*
3. *Objective 3: Instructors have a general understanding of how the app Madmagz works*

KEY THEMES

1. INTRODUCTION

Creating a magazine helps students gain basic knowledge while developing skills (critical thinking, teamwork) and building character (encouraging curiosity, perseverance).

2. CREATING AN ONLINE MAGAZINE STEP-BY-STEP

1. Getting started

The first task is to put together a team of very motivated individuals that will bring the project to life and see it through.

This will be the editorial 'core' who will be in charge of

- and writing articles
- Taking/finding photos and videos for the magazine
- Finding interview subjects, interviewing them, and writing up the interviews
- Publishing the magazine on social media

The most effective way to do this is to organise regular **meetings of the editorial board** so that everyone knows their role in producing the magazine based on their preferences and abilities.

2. Coming up with a format and identity

- Ask what the aim of the magazine is: Do students want to actively shape the life of their school or club? Allow as many young people as possible to express themselves? Encourage their own discussions on a particular topic?
- Set your target audience: Students in a school? Members of a club? An entire community?
- Ask what the editorial line should be: Keeping your target audience in mind, try to summarise the magazine's ethos in a few lines: its mission, preferred topics, tone (serious, lighthearted, humorous), type of content, and how it will be covered.
- Choose a title for your magazine that will set it apart, affirm its identity, and (literally) make a name for it.
- Finally, you need to take stock of the resources you need for your magazine and desired publication frequency. The number of team members, their commitment, and their availability are major factors as well as your available equipment.

3. Choosing content

To maintain the interest of your audience, draw them in, and pique their curiosity, you need to be sure that you supply information in a variety of ways.

Here are the **main genres of journalism** available to you:

Reports, investigations, interview pieces, editorials, reviews, summaries, portrait pieces.

Pick an angle for every topic

To avoid ending up with an article that is too long, convoluted, and difficult to read, you need to pick an angle, or **point of view**. You need to pick out which of the topic's aspects you want to highlight and which ones you do not.

Example: The opening of a new cinema is a topic.

The effects on local tourism from the new cinema is an angle.

4. Assigning roles

In a newsroom, people do not all do the same job. The Madmagz model suggests dividing the team into three groups:

- one editor-in-chief (in Madmagz: 'super chief redactor')
- editors (in Madmagz: 'chief redactor')
- writers (in Madmagz: 'redactors')

(See appendix to sheet 17). You can adjust these roles if you do not wish to follow the Madmagz model.

In order to write an article, every writer needs to remember to ask the **six essential questions**: Who? What? Where? When? Why? and How?

People must also agree on the **length** of the article and the **level of language** of the magazine before writing begins (not too formal or informal).

Other roles you might want include:

- **Illustrator**: An illustrator draws pictures, takes or uploads photos or other images, sounds,

and graphics (either free from copyright or with the source cited) to illustrate the magazine.

- Community manager: A community manager looks for ways of linking the content created by the writers to other sites. They are also in charge of social media and promote the magazine to maximise its audience by focusing on **additional enhancing features** for the articles such as the headlines, ledes, photos, and snippets to show up in search engines.

5. Publishing the magazine

Once the magazine is ready, you can to publish it online or in print (see appendix to sheet 17) depending on your preferences, aims, and target audience.

3. MADMAGZ

You can use the application Madmagz to create your online magazine. Its interface is set up for working in teams and makes formatting and adding graphics easy.

Madmagz (<https://madmagz.com/>) is an **app that helps you create a magazine or newspaper simply and as a team**. It is highly customisable with options to create all types of publications (school newspaper, conventional newspaper, newsletter, etc.). Your only limit is your imagination!

Madmagz allows its users to work collaboratively to create an online magazine that, once finished, can be made into a print magazine.

The platforms tools help you to do the following:

- Choose the right magazine template for your content
- Create page categories (covers, table of contents, editorial, article, etc.)
- Write and proofread articles with hierarchical collaboration functions
- Add, modify, edit, and delete pages
- Choose formatting options
- Add photos, sounds, videos, and links to other websites
- Publish your magazine online or in print once you have proofed all of the content.

These steps are all explained in detail in the appendix to sheet 17

PRACTICAL ACTIVITIES

- You can use this lesson sheet as a basis for creating a magazine or newspaper with young people.
- See also the appendix to sheet 17 for more information on Madmagz

TAKING IT FURTHER

<https://madmagz.com/> Madmagz website
<https://madmagz.com/faq> Frequently asked questions

SHEET 17 (APPENDIX) – MADMAGZ USER GUIDE

MODULE 3	<i>PEOPLE'S POWER AND THE MEDIA</i>
SESSION 6	<i>Producing citizen media (radio, podcast, magazine, video)</i>
LEVEL	<i>Intermediate</i>

Creating an online magazine

TEACHING OBJECTIVES

1. *Objective 1: Instructors are able to guide students in creating an online magazine.*
2. *Objective 2: Instructors understand how the app Madmagz works.*
3. *Objective 3: Instructors can supervise students in creating the magazine while encouraging teamwork through sharing links and assigning each member a role based on the website's hierarchy ('super redactor', 'chief redactors', 'redactors').*

KEY THEMES

1. USING MADMAGZ TO CREATE AN ONLINE MAGAZINE

- 1 – Log in via Facebook, Google, or you Madmagz account.
- 2 – Choose the template that best suits your needs. You can preview the templates to help you choose.
- 3 – Give your magazine a title, issue number, and theme.
- 4 – If you want to create your magazine as a team, assign roles to each project participant. The different roles have varying access rights: 'super redactor', 'chief redactor', 'redactor', which are roughly equivalent to editor-in-chief, editor, and staff writer, respectively.
- 5 – Add pages to your magazine (minimum four pages). In this step, you can select page headers based on the editorial plan of your project (cover, table of contents, editorial, articles).
- 6 – Add various types of content to the pages (text, links, images, videos, podcasts).

7 – Publish your magazine (cannot be undone): You can see an online preview or download a PDF before final approval.

8 – Share your magazine via a dedicated URL by email or on social media!

2. FORMATTING AND ADDING YOUR CONTENT

To format your magazine, choose from the page-category options on the left side of the screen: *Cover*, *Summary* (table of contents), *Edito* (editorial), *Article*, and so on. Each category gives you a wide range of layout options.

It is up to you to decide which one you want to use and which best suits your content!

To **choose a layout design**, simply select it and click *Validate*. You can add or delete pages at any point while you are creating your magazine by going to the overview, represented by the icon of a small grid of squares, where you can see all the pages of the magazine. Then select + or - to **add or delete a page**.

To **modify a page**, click on the icon of a pencil and paper. The arrows allow you to move your pages around.

To edit a page, click on the pencil and paper icon. You can then make changes to the different parts of your page, such as the title, text, or photos.

Click on the area you would like to change (title or text) to see the editing tools (bold, italic, underline, align, etc.) at the top of the page. You can also zoom in and out for a better view.

Note, you cannot enlarge the text fields! Make sure you do not insert too much text, otherwise it may be cut off.

To **modify or add a photo**, click on it. You will be given two options: you can choose an image from your computer or import one from the internet by copying and pasting the image URL into the field and clicking *Validate*.

Once you have added the photo, you can crop it. Indications below the image, will tell you if the image quality is suitable for a web publication and/or print. It is best to choose images that are large and of high quality. If you need to, you can add a higher-quality image by clicking *Change pic* and then *Validate*.

3. COLLABORATION: THEORY

We can now have a look at one of our users' favourite options: collaboration. Creating a school newspaper with Madmagz means you have the opportunity to work together. To do this, everyone has their own role with their own responsibilities.

‘Super redactor’:

- The ‘owner’ of the magazine whose account it is assigned to
 - The only person able to publish the magazine
 - Can invite ‘chief redactors’ (editors) and ‘redactors’ (writers) and also delete team members.
- Note: If a chief redactor is deleted, the redactors below that chief redactor and their pages are also automatically deleted from the project!**
- Can add and modify pages as well as modify and delete the pages of project team members.

Finally, the ‘super redactor’ can invite other people to work on the magazine and assign them to one of two categories: ‘chief redactors’ and ‘redactors’. This is done by sending them the appropriate link.

‘Chief redactors’:

- Can create pages
- Can invite members to the team (‘redactors’)
- Can modify and delete their team members’ pages
- Can send their own and their team members’ pages to the super redactor, who can choose to include them in the magazine.

‘Redactors’:

- Can be invited by a chief redactor or the super redactor
- Can add and modify pages that they can send to their chief redactor or the super redactor, depending on who added them as a redactor.

As you can see, the structure is hierarchical.

As such, redactors send their pages to chief redactors who then send them to the super redactor for approval. If the chief redactor is unsatisfied with a page, he or she can send it back to the redactor. If the super redactor sent the collaboration link directly to a redactor, this redactor can send their pages directly to the super redactor.

Once the super redactor is satisfied and has approved all the pages, he or she can add them to the magazine.

4. COLLABORATION IN PRACTICE

After these brief explanations and demonstrations, you will be able to assign the roles of redactor and chief redactor to your magazine’s team members. As we have already seen, team members have different roles and duties: super redactor, chief redactor, and redactor.

The **super redactor** can invite an unlimited number of team members to the magazine. These team members can create pages and send them to other team members.

To **invite team members**, you can share one of the collaboration links provided at the start of the creation process. All you have to do is click on *I invite collaborators*.

(You can also invite collaborators during editing by clicking on the icon on the overview page, but more on that later.)

The rules of collaboration:

- The team members you invite will have access to their own space to create pages, which they then send to you for approval and that you can send back for changes.
- Once all the pages have been collected, the super redactor can publish the magazine.
- You can also create an intermediate role, chief redactor, to create sub-teams.

In this case, you are the owner. When you click on *I understand*, you will go to the **Manage collaborators** page.

On this page, you can do the following:

- Send a collaboration link to a redactor or chief redactor by copying the link on the page and sending it.
- Once you have collaborators, you can send them pages or delete the collaborator using the arrow and trash can icons.

Imagine now that you are a **chief redactor** who receives a link. You must now enter your name and click on *Collaborate*.

In the chief redactor's space:

- Access is not granted to the entire magazine
- Pages can be created with the template chosen by the super redactor and then sent to the super redactor
- Once a page is sent to the super redactor, it disappears from the chief redactor's interface.

As the **super redactor**, you will receive and can view, modify and delete all of the pages or send them back for changes.

To send a page back, simply select the page and click on the button *Send back to collaborator*.

Once a page is sent back, it will no longer appear on the super redactor's interface but instead is shown on the chief redactor's interface, who can modify and re-send it.

To manage your list of collaborators, click on the icon showing three people.

The **chief redactor** can also invite collaborators and manage them by clicking on the icon on the lower left of the screen (below the *Pause* button). The only difference is that the chief redactor can send collaboration links to redactors.

The **redactor** arrives on the landing page and will be asked to enter a name to be able to access the redactor area and create pages as described above. Redactors send their pages directly to the person who invited them so they can be approved or proofread.

Once the super redactor has received, checked, proofread, and approved all the pages, he or she can publish the magazine.

5. PUBLISHING THE MAGAZINE

It is finally time to publish your magazine!

Once the magazine is ready, you can publish it. Before you do that, though, a few checks are necessary:

- You can generate a web preview of the magazine (eye icon)
- You can also download a high-definition PDF overview of your magazine (pages icon)
- You can then check the layout of the text and images as well as the image quality.

Note:

- **The total number of pages must be a multiple of four and the minimum number of pages is four.** If you do not follow either of these two rules, you will not be able to publish your magazine.
- **Publication cannot be undone.**

Click *Publish* to publish your magazine.

Before publishing your magazine, you can change the following:

- title
- issue number

Now just click *Publish*.

Congratulations, you have just created your first Madmagz magazine!

Publishing methods:

Premium magazine:

- This publishing method lets you share your magazine via an email containing a link to the online magazine. You can also share it via Facebook and Twitter or add it to your website or blog using an embed code that changes according to your chosen layout and the magazine's pixel size.
- Once your magazine is published, you can add ways to interact with it: links, videos, sound, gifs. You can also manage privacy settings and see how many times it has been viewed!

PDF :

- The PDF is perfect for reading on a screen, but it is not print-quality. The PDF is available immediately after purchase when you click on *Download*.

High-definition PDF:

- This publishing method is recommended if you want to print your own magazine. You can choose from two print types: at-home (on your printer) or professional (for better results).

6. INSPIRATION AND USE CASE

You are almost there! Come and visit the Madmagz blog, Edu, where you can find a number of use cases to inspire you to create your own school newspaper.

The blog has magazines created by schoolchildren of all ages working on projects that are for their school, class, or group. You can also submit your project and find out about what Madmagz is doing to help schools.

Use case: An year-nine class enjoyed following the story of *Les Miserables* in an **interactive and collaborative magazine** focussed on the book and the life of its author, Victor Hugo. Students added sound clips and videos (when you add videos to your magazine, you can see them in ‘e-reader’ format). They also added a link to their school.

TAKING IT FURTHER

<https://madmagz.com/> Madmagz website

<https://madmagz.com/faq> Frequently asked questions

SHEET 18 – MAKING A VIDEO PROJECT

MODULE 3	<i>PEOPLE'S POWER AND THE MEDIA</i>
SESSION 6	<i>Producing citizen media (radio, podcast, magazine, video)</i>
LEVEL	<i>Difficult</i>

MAKING A VIDEO PROJECT

TEACHING OBJECTIVES

1. *Objective 1: Instructors are able to help students prepare, produce, edit, and broadcast a news programme.*
2. *Objective 2: Instructors can provide students with appropriate reference materials to help them understand an issue.*
3. *Objective 3: Instructors are able to help students prepare, produce, edit, and broadcast a short film.*

KEY THEMES

PRODUCING A NEWS PROGRAMME

Resources: Before you start working on the news programme, you must choose a (user-friendly) camera or decide to use the team members' smartphones. You will also need editing software (see links below) and to teach your students the basics of video editing. Then, you need to choose at least one publishing platform, such as YouTube or social media.

Time requirement: Producing a news programme in a group may require multiple half-days of individual and group work.

1. Choosing topics:

The first step is to hold a meeting of the editorial board to pick the name of the programme, the topics to be covered, the formats (report, interview, debate, newflash), and the angles.

2. Assigning roles:

This is also a good time to assign the roles of 'journalist(s)', 'expert(s)', 'presenter(s)', and 'crew' (camera operator and editor) to answer the following questions: Who is in charge of what? What does each person need to do to prepare? (research, coming up with questions, reporting, commentary)?

3. Cue sheet and script:

Next, you need to come up with a cue sheet – a minute-by-minute breakdown of the show – and help the presenters write their script (everything should be scripted: opening, introduction of topics/journalists, segment closers, transitions, closing, acknowledgements) and rehearse on set so that they do not look down at the script too much.

4. Filming:

The programme should be pre-recorded rather than live. Segments should be filmed individually to avoid noise from chairs and movements as well as to keep the rhythm.

For example: Opening and introduction / topic 1 / conclusion and introduction / topic 2 / conclusion / interview intro / interview / conclusion introduction / topic 3 / programme close/ acknowledgements.

The background should be neutral or specially chosen. Make sure there is enough light and a suitable fixed frame.

5. Editing:

Next, put all the segments in order to make it seem like it is live (or to make everything flow). Make sure you follow the cue sheet you made using software.

6. Posting:

Finally, share the programme, for example on YouTube, and also post it to social media or your intranet making sure to give it tags, link it to other content, and that it already has a visual identity (logo and title). Add a short description so users will want to watch it.

MAKING A SHORT FILM, DOCUMENTARY, OR NEWS REPORT

Video production comprises **various formats** including:

- **Short films** (a short, scripted story)
- **Documentaries** (an investigation-style video that covers multiple aspects of an issue)
- **News reports** (a video that covers one specific topic from a unique angle)

Resources: To make a video, you do not necessarily need professional equipment. A digital camera, smartphone, or tablet may suffice.

Time requirement: Making a short film in a group may require multiple half-days of individual and group work. You can save time by filming the video in one long take to avoid having to do any editing.

1. Choosing a subject

Before starting working on the film itself, it is a good idea to familiarise students with the subject they have chosen by providing them with a variety of educational materials in order to create an environment that is conducive to starting a dialogue on the subject. You and your students can then discuss the different possible approaches, explore and use existing resources, and come up with a message.

Once you have your message, it is helpful to write, as a team, a short (one-page) summary of what happens in your film. This is the **synopsis**; it follows the narrative structure and specifies the ending.

2. Format:

- **Format:** A maximum two-minute film must be concise and effective. You will need to choose a format: info-clip, advertisement, sketch, trailer, narrative, news report
- **Screenplay:** The screenplay should be extremely detailed to make filming go fast. The story

is then broken down into narrative sequences and each sequence into shots to create a storyboard.

3. Before filming:

- You need to find **locations** (scouting) and **sets, text, dialogue, costumes, and props**.
- The team also needs **role assignments**: camera operator, editor, scriptwriter, director, sound engineer (sound recording and music), and actors.

Your team will also need to agree on **techniques**:

- **Visual techniques**: standard film (actors acting out scenes), stop-motion animation (modelling clay, Lego, Playmobil, photo cut-outs, etc.), pixilation (photography of images), slideshow with sound and narration.
- **Audio techniques**: live recording while filming, dubbing (re-recording voices), soundtrack (voiceover, commentary, music).

Before filming, you will need to get authorisation to use the sound and video recordings.

For easier editing, you can start each take with a clapper that says the scene number or name and take number.

4. **During filming** you will need to select the most interesting shots and save all of the shots on a computer or memory card.
5. **Editing** comprises multiple steps:
 - **Importing video and sound files**, editing sound and video, adding any effects, music (free of copyright), subtitles (if necessary), and opening and closing credits.
 - Then, it is time to **export the final edit** for viewing. You can choose to show the final edit in any way you wish (online, video projection, television, etc.).

PRACTICAL ACTIVITIES

You can use this lesson sheet as a basis for organising a video production activity with young people.

TAKING IT FURTHER

[Download Shotcut](#) (Editing software – in French)

[Download Magix Video Easy](#) (Editing software – in French)

<http://windows.microsoft.com/fr-FR/windows/get-moviemaker-download> (Editing software)

<https://www.apple.com/fr/ilife/imovie/> (Editing software)

http://www.gypsevideo.fr/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=163:live-m (Tutorial – in French)

CFI, the French agency for media development, and ESJ (Lille School of Journalism) have created a website called **24h in a newsroom**: <https://www.24hdansuneredaction.com/en/tv-en/>.

The site provides numerous resources on the practice of journalism as well as on the production of news videos, including:

- 'Conducting a good interview': <https://www.24hdansuneredaction.com/en/tv/08-conducting-a-good-interview/>
- 'Talking with pictures': <https://www.24hdansuneredaction.com/en/tv/10-talking-with-pictures/>
- 'Writing for the screen': <https://www.24hdansuneredaction.com/en/tv/12-writing-for-the-screen-graphs-headers-and-captions/>

SUPPLÉMENT

PRACTICAL ONLINE ACTIVITIES

INTRODUCTION

This sheet provides you with guidance on how to lead practical online activities related to media literacy. The activities are in English.

You can lead these activities via videoconference, first presenting the exercises, then carrying them out, then having a discussion and debate as a class.

You can also send the students links to activities as well as 'homework' for them to do on their computers.

1. ONLINE QUIZ – IDENTIFYING FAKE NEWS

The online quizzes below help familiarise learners with the method of fact checking. They are asked to assess whether the articles or images present verified news or fake news. The UNICEF activity is specifically dedicated to fighting the distortion of information around the coronavirus.

Online quiz from ABC EDUCATION

'Real, LOLZ, oops or fake' – [link](#)

Online quiz from QUIZZZ

'Media literacy and fake news' – [link](#)

Online quiz from FACTITIOUS

'True or false: Check your fact-checking skills through 6 levels' – [link](#)

Online quiz from UNICEF:

'Fact or fiction: How much do you know about the coronavirus disease' – [link](#)

2. DEBATES ON PODCASTS OF 'ON THE

ON THE MEDIA has created a podcast series that discusses issues related to media, information, and fake news. We have selected three episodes that could be useful as part of a lesson. You can tell your students to listen to the podcasts and then bring up the debates online around specific conspiracy theories, online hate speech, or disinformation campaigns.

Podcast 1:

'The Covid Conspiracy Boom on Facebook' – [link](#)

Podcast 2:

'Conspiracy and xenophobia in the Polish media landscape' – [link](#)

Podcast 3:

'Coronavirus disinformation campaigns' – [link](#)

3. ESCAPE GAMES – IMMERSIVE, MIL-RELATED ONLINE GAMES

To make media literacy education more tangible, you can let your students produce their own information or fake news using immersive online games.

Become a junior reporter for the BBC

'iReporter Game for students' – [link](#)

Your role as a BBC reporter is to provide up-to-the-minute news coverage by posting your story to *BBC Live*. Your story will be judged on how it balances accuracy, impact, and speed.

Become a fake news producer with FAKE IT TO MAKE IT

Immersive online game – [link](#)

Fake it to make it is a fake news simulator that shows why and how people can be manipulated. In the game, you play a student who makes ends meet the easy way using a fake news site, which makes profits from ads and shares to other (fake) social media groups.

4. ONLINE ACTIVITIES ON THE TALMIL PLATFORM

The youth section of the TALMIL platform offers practical online activities to help students have fun while they learn about the main concepts of media literacy.

Online quiz:

Test your media and news knowledge! – [link](#)

Online quiz:

Real news or fake news? Can you identify the real news items? – [link](#)

Practical online activity:

I'm going to be a junior reporter – [link](#)