

Digital Life 102

Essential Question

What is the place of digital media in our lives?

Lesson Overview

Students test their knowledge of digital media and learn some statistics about media use by taking a quiz. They then create written similes, collages, or digital animations to express the role media plays in their lives. After watching the video “**Perspectives on Social Media**,” they draw conclusions about the positive and negative ways digital media affect them and influence the larger culture.

Learning Objectives

Students will be able to ...

- learn basic statistics about the current digital landscape.
- explore the role that media plays in their lives.
- reflect on the positive and negative impact digital media has on them and on society.

Materials and Preparation

- Copy the **Got Media Smarts? Student Handout**, one for each student.
-  Preview the video “**Perspectives on Social Media**” and prepare to show it to students.

Family Resources

- Send home the **Digital Life Family Tip Sheet (Middle & High School)**.

Estimated time: 45 minutes

Standards Alignment –

Common Core:

grades 9-10: RI.4, RI.8, W.1a-e, W.2af, W.4, W.5, W.6, W.10, SL.1a, SL.1b, SL.1c, SL.1d, SL.3, SL.4, SL.5, L.4a, L.4d, L.5a, L.6

grades 11-12: RI.4, RI.4, W.1a-e, W.2a-f, W.4, W.5, W.6, W.10, SL.1a, SL.1b, SL.1c, SL.1d, SL.2, SL.3, SL.4, SL.5, L.4a, L.4d, L.5a, L.6

NETS•S: 1a, 1d, 2a, 2d, 3b, 3d, 4a-c, 5a, 5b

Key Vocabulary –

digital media: electronic devices and media platforms such as computers, cell phones, video, the Internet, and video games that allow users to create, communicate, and interact with one another or with the device or application itself

simile: a figure of speech in which a comparison is made between two different things using the word *like* or *as*

digital citizenship: navigating the digital world safely, responsibly, and ethically

introduction

Warm-up (10 minutes)

DEFINE the Key Vocabulary term **digital media**.

TELL students that they are going to take a quiz about today's digital media landscape. The purpose of the quiz is to make them more familiar with some statistics on how people — and especially teens — use digital media in their daily lives.

DISTRIBUTE the **Got Media Smarts? Student Handout**, one per student.

INSTRUCT students to complete the quiz independently. Then have them compare their responses with one another. Have them work in pairs to discuss the following questions and report their answers back to the class.

ASK: *Which one or two answers surprised you the most?*

ASK: *Which one or two statistics most closely reflect how you use digital media in your own life? Which are the farthest from your own personal experience?*

teach 1

My Media Life Similes (15 minutes)

DEFINE the Key Vocabulary term **simile**, and let students know that they will be creating similes that express the role digital media play in their lives.

ENCOURAGE students to reflect on the following questions, and to jot down some brief responses in preparation for creating their similes.

ASK:

- *How big a role do digital media (Internet, texting, video games) play in your life (a little, some, a lot)?*
- *What are your favorite and least favorite things to do with digital media?*
- *Do you connect with others or create things with digital media?*
- *What are the positive and not-so-positive aspects of having digital media in your life?*

INSTRUCT students to complete one of the following statements in a way that captures and conveys the role of digital media in their lives.

My media life is like a _____, because _____.

My media life is as _____ as a _____, because _____.

Sample responses:

- *My media life is like a window onto the world, because it allows me to see all kinds of new things and imagine other possibilities.*
- *My media life is like a party where I meet a lot of different people, because it feels loud, out of control, and yet fun.*
- *My media life is as tempting as junk food, because I don't always know when to say no.*

INVITE students to share their similes with the class and explain how they chose the similes.

teach 2

Life in a Connected Culture (15 minutes)

▶ **SHOW** the video “**Perspectives on Social Media**” and discuss the following questions with students.

ASK:

What are some of the upsides and downsides of digital life, according to the teens in the film? What do you think the upsides and downsides are in your own life?

Sample responses:

Upsides	Downsides
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• I learn a lot from the Internet.• Projects in school can be more fun and interesting with technology.• I have a good time playing video games or participating in virtual worlds.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• I don't like some of the things people send me.• Some of the things I end up doing with digital media are a waste of time.• I spend more time alone than I used to.

ASK:

What are some of the upsides and downsides of digital media for relationships?

Sample responses:

Upsides	Downsides
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• People can connect with lots of others quickly.• People are connected to a larger community than the people they know offline.• People can get to know others who are geographically far away.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• People can say nasty things when they are anonymous.• Sometimes it is easier to misinterpret what people mean online.• Damaging information can spread quickly online.

ASK:

What are some of the benefits of digital media for our country as a whole? What are some of the problems it might cause?

Sample responses:

Benefits	Problems
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• People have access to more information and can learn about almost anything online.• We produce innovative technologies for medicine and other important fields.• Many tasks can be done faster with technology.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• People do not spend as much time talking face to face.• People can get addicted to technology.• People can become lazy and depend on technology instead of using their brains.

closing

Wrap-up (5 minutes)

You can use these questions to assess your students' understanding of the lesson objectives. You may want to ask students to reflect in writing on one of the questions, using a journal or an online blog/wiki.

ASK:

How did the statistics you learned in the quiz compare with the way you use digital media in your own life? Which digital media do you think you use the most and the least – and why?

Students should have ideas about whether they use certain media more or less than the average. They should also be able to describe, and speculate on the reasons for, their own use of various digital media.

What did your simile indicate about the role that digital media plays in your life?

Students should be able to explain their similes, including what it suggests about the role digital media plays in their lives, and its positive and negative effects.

Can you describe one upside and one downside for yourself about living in a digital world? For your relationships with others? For society as a whole? Do you connect with others or create things with digital media?

Students should be able to name and explain some of the positive and negative aspects of digital technologies discussed in Teach 2.

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Directions

First, take the quiz on your own. When you are done, trade with your partner. Together, use the answer key to calculate each other's score. Discuss what surprised you the most and which answers were the closest to or farthest from your own experiences.

YOUR SCORE

___ / 10

1. 82% of teens say that they own which of the following?

- a) cell phone
- b) smartphone
- c) iPod Touch or similar device
- d) iPad or similar device

2. What percent of teens describe themselves as “addicted” to their cell phones?

- a) 11%
- b) 27%
- c) 41%
- d) 63%

3. 68% of teens say they do which of the following at least once a day?

- a) text
- b) visit a social network
- c) instant message (IM)
- d) use email

4. What percent of teens agreed they wish they could “unplug” for a while?

- a) 13%
- b) 27%
- c) 29%
- d) 43%

5. 51% of teens visit social networking sites _____.

- a) at least once a day
- b) several times a day
- c) once a week or less
- d) never

6. What percent of teens say that they don't understand their social networking site's privacy policies?

a) 24%

b) 35%

c) 46%

d) 61%

7. True or false? More teens say they prefer texting with their friends than talking in person.

TRUE

FALSE

8. What percent of teens say they have said something bad about someone online that they wouldn't have said in person?

a) 25%

b) 35%

c) 49%

d) 67%

9. What percent of teens say that social networking helps them connect with people who share a common interest?

a) 35%

b) 42%

c) 57%

d) 66%

10. True or false? More teens say that social media makes them feel better about themselves than worse.

TRUE

FALSE

Note: All statistics and answer feedback (except for question #4) come from Social Media, Social Life: How Teens View Their Digital Lives, the 2012 research report from Common Sense Media's Program for the Study of Children and Media. We surveyed more than 1,000 13- to 17-year-olds nationally to understand how they perceive social media (like Facebook and Twitter) affects their relationships and feelings about themselves.

Digital Life 102

1. 82% of teens say that they own which of the following?

The correct answer is **a**, a cell phone. The vast majority of teenagers have their own cell phone (82%), including 41% who say they have a smartphone. Cell phone ownership varies by age – 74% of 13- to 14-year olds, compared with 87% of 15- to 17-year-olds.

2. What percent of teens describe themselves as “addicted” to their cell phones?

The correct answer is **c**, 41%. And 21% of wish that their parents would spend less time with their cell phones and other devices.

3. 68% of teens say they do which of the following at least once a day?

The correct answer is **a**, text. Two-thirds (68%) of teens text every day, half (51%) visit social networking sites daily, and 11% send or receive tweets at least once every day. Teens prefer texting due to the convenience – 30% saying it’s the quickest and 23% because it’s the easiest way to get in touch with one another.

4. What percent of teens agreed they wish they could “unplug” for a while?

The correct answer is **d**, 43%. Of this percentage, 13% agree strongly and 30% agree somewhat that they sometimes wish they could “unplug.” More than a third agree “somewhat” that they sometimes wish they could go back to a time when there was no Facebook.

5. 51% of teens visit social networking sites _____.

The correct answer is **a**: Just over half of teens visit social media sites at least once per day, and about one third of teens – 34% – visit social media sites several times a day. In fact, 90% of teens say they have used social media and 75% currently have a profile on a social networking site.

6. What percent of teens say that they don’t understand their social networking site’s privacy policies?

The correct answer is **a**, 24%. About a quarter of teen users admit they understand their social networking site’s policies either “not too well” or “not at all.”

7. True or false? More teens say they prefer texting with their friends than talking in person.

The correct answer is **FALSE**. When asked about their favorite ways to communicate with friends, about half of teens (49%) say they prefer in person communication. 38% believe face-to-face conversations to be more fun, and 29% say that they can better understand what people really mean in person. Fewer teens - (33%) - say texting is their favorite. Only 4% prefer talking on the phone as their favored way to communicate with friends.

8. What percent of teens say they have said something bad about someone online that they wouldn't have said in person?

The correct answer is **a**, 25%. A quarter of all teens admit to saying something bad about someone online that they wouldn't have in person. Similarly, 1 in 4 (24%) social media users say they "often" encounter one or more types of derogatory speech (sexist, homophobic, racist, or anti-religious).

9. What percent of teens say that social networking helps them connect with people who share a common interest?

The correct answer is **c**, 57%. A majority of teens say social media help them keep in touch with friends they can't see regularly (88%), get to know other students at their school better (69%), and connect with new people who share a common interest (57%).

10. True or false? More teens say that social media makes them feel better about themselves than worse.

The correct answer is **TRUE**. Most teens — 81% — actually say social media doesn't make much difference on way or the other in terms of how they feel about themselves. But some teens do see an effect, and more find that the effect is positive: 15% say social media makes them feel better about themselves, compared to only 4% who say that using social media makes them feel worse.

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Digital Life 102

1. Using the chart below, show whether the following sentences are an upside (positive) or downside (negative) of media life.

Upsides	Downsides

- a) Private information can be copied and sent to anyone
- b) You can stay in touch with friends easily
- c) Many fun things online are also free
- d) You may spend less time with others face to face
- e) Anything you do online leaves a permanent record
- f) You can look up information quickly

2. What does digital citizenship mean?

- a) Any information about you on the Internet
- b) Using digital media safely, responsibly, and respectfully
- c) An online membership
- d) Not giving credit to someone else's work

3. Which is an example of digital media?

- a) Computers
- b) Social network sites
- c) Video games
- d) All of the above

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1. Using the chart below, show whether the following sentences are an upside (positive) or downside (negative) of media life.

Answer feedback

Upside	Downside
b) You can stay in touch with friends easily c) Many fun things online are also free f) You can look up information quickly	a) Private information can be copied and sent to anyone d) You may spend less time with others face to face e) Anything you do online leaves a permanent record

2. What does digital citizenship mean?

- a) Any information about you on the Internet
- b) Using digital media safely, responsibly, and respectfully**
- c) An online membership
- d) Not giving credit to someone else’s work

Answer feedback

The correct answer is **b**. Digital citizen acts safely, responsibly, and respectfully online.

3. Which of the following is an example of digital media?

- a) Computers
- b) Social network sites
- c) Video games
- d) All of the above**

Answer feedback

The correct answer is **d**. Going online, working on the computer, talking and texting on cell phones, and playing online games are all examples of using digital media.