



Essential Question: What is the place of digital media in our lives?

Learning Overview and Objectives

Overview: Students test their knowledge of digital media and learn some statistics about media use by taking the **Got Media Smarts?** quiz. They then create written similes, collages, or digital animations to express the role media plays in their lives. After watching the **Digital Life Student Video Vignettes – Life in a Connected Culture**, they draw conclusions about the positive and negative ways digital media affect them and influence the larger culture.

objectives

Students will:

- 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 have on themselves and on society

Digital Ethics Focus:

Self

Family and Friends

Community

Materials and Preparation

Materials

- **Got Media Smarts? Student Handout**
- **Digital Life Student Video Vignettes – Life in a Connected Culture**
- **My Media Log Student Handout** (with optional extension activity)

Preparation

- Copy the **Got Media Smarts? Student Handout**, one for every student
- Preview the **Digital Life Student Video Vignettes – Life in a Connected Culture**
- Copy the **My Media Log Student Handout** (optional)

Parent Resources

- Send home the **Digital Life Parent Intro Video – Digital Life Is Just Life**

Differentiated Instruction

- Motivated students can develop their own “Got Media Smarts?” quiz questions, survey their peers using free software such as www.surveymonkey.com, and report on what they discovered.
- Visual learners can create a collage of words they associate with digital media (e.g., informative, invasive, fun) to illustrate the role these media play in their lives.

Key Vocabulary

- **Digital Media:** Electronic devices and media platforms such as computers, cell phones, video, social networking sites, 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 to show a similarity between two different things. A simile resembles a metaphor, but in a simile the word *like* or *as* is used to make the comparison
- **Digital Citizenship:** Navigating the digital world safely, responsibly, and ethically



teaching plans

Introduce (15 minutes)

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

ARRANGE students in pairs, and distribute the **Got Media Smarts? Student Handout**. Let students know that 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.

INSTRUCT students to fill out the quiz, and then have them tally their scores and compare their responses with their partner's. 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 reflected how you use digital media in your own life? Which were the farthest from your own personal experience?*

Students should recognize that the same kinds of principles apply in both places, but they play out in different ways.

Teach 1: My Digital Life Similes (15 minutes)

TEACH the Key Vocabulary word **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 crazy as a game without a referee, because sometimes I get addicted and feel like I cannot stop.*



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

If time permits, **ENCOURAGE** students to make collages illustrating their similes using words and images they either draw themselves or cut from magazines.



As a high-tech option, students can make an electronic drawing or animation to illustrate their simile, using free programs such as www.pencil-animation.org or www.animoto.com. The simile can be extended in video form, using images, video clips, sound, and more.

Teach 2: Digital Life Student Video Vignettes – Life in a Connected Culture

(15 minutes)

SHOW the **Digital Life Student Video Vignettes** 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 lives?*

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 • It is sometimes 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:

Upsides	Downsides
<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



ASK *What might the boy in the video have meant when he said the Internet is like Spider-Man? Do you agree?* (Note: The boy is referring to a famous line from the Spider-Man comic strip/movie in which Uncle Ben tells Spider-Man about his special powers and advises him that “With great power comes great responsibility.” Students’ answers will vary. However, this is a key point, and students should recognize that the Internet is a powerful tool and that they have a responsibility to think about how they are going to use it.)

TEACH the Key Vocabulary term **digital citizenship**, and encourage students to connect their answer to the previous question to the concept of digital citizenship.

Wrap Up and Assess (5 minutes)

You can use these prompts/questions to assess your students’ understanding of the lesson objectives. Alternatively, ask students to text or tweet the answer to each question. If they tweet, messages should be no more than 140 characters.

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 average. They should also be able to describe, and speculate on the reasons for, their own use of various digital media.)

ASK *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.)

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



Extension Activity

Have students use the **My Media Log Student Handout** to track their media use over a one-week period, either in real time or by estimating. Students can reflect on how much media they use by writing an essay, or share and compare with friends in class.

 As a high-tech option, students can create a visual representation of the media log, such as a pie chart or bar graph, using PowerPoint or programs in Open Office.



Homework

At home or in the school library, have students watch any of the winning videos from the Trend Micro “What’s Your Story” contest <http://whatsyourstory.trendmicro.com/internet-safety/Home.do>. The goal of the contest is for teens to make videos educating others to stay safe and secure online. Students should write a response to one of the videos, or make a video of their own on one of the topics.

**Alignment with Standards – National Educational Technology Standards for Students® 2007**

(Source: International Society for Technology in Education, 2007)

1. Creativity and Innovation

- a. apply existing knowledge to generate new ideas, products, or processes
- d. identify trends and forecast possibilities

2. Communication and Collaboration

- a. interact, collaborate, and publish with peers, experts, or others employing a variety of digital environments and media
- d. contribute to project teams to produce original works or solve problems

3. Research and Information Literacy

- b. locate, organize, analyze, evaluate, synthesize, and ethically use information from a variety of sources and media
- d. use multiple processes and diverse perspectives to explore alternative solutions

4. Critical Thinking, Problem Solving, and Decision Making

- a. identify and define authentic problems and significant questions for investigation
- b. plan and manage activities to develop a solution or complete a project
- c. collect and analyze data to identify solutions and/or make informed decisions

5. Digital Citizenship

- a. advocate and practice safe, legal, and responsible use of information and technology
- b. exhibit a positive attitude toward using technology that supports collaboration, learning, and productivity