ELA STUDY GUIDE

Grade Level: 7th Grade
Video Title: *Who's Getting the Candy?*
Media Literacy Focus: Evaluating online content creators' motives and their impact on credibility and audience trust

Essential Question

Why does the motivation behind a post matter, and how can understanding it help us respond responsibly online?

Learning Targets

Students will be able to:

- Define the metaphor "Who's getting the candy?" in relation to online influence and reward

- Identify and evaluate the motivations behind digital content (e.g., profit, popularity, persuasion, or manipulation)

- Analyze how motivation affects credibility and audience perception

- Use evidence and reasoning to critique and respond to online messages

- Reflect on how their own digital choices affect others

Vocabulary

- **Motivation** – the reason someone creates or shares something

- **Manipulation** – using influence dishonestly or unfairly

- **Bias** – a slant or personal preference that may affect truth

- **Credibility** – trustworthiness and reliability of information

- **Attention economy** – the idea that online attention (views, likes, clicks) has value

- **Influencer** – someone who gains status, money, or followers from online posts

- **"Candy"** – a reward from posting online (money, likes, attention, influence)

Whole Group Discussion

Guide students through these deeper questions:

1. What kinds of "candy" do people chase online? Why is it so tempting?

2. How does motivation shape the way a message is framed or delivered?

3. Can a post be helpful even if the creator's motivation is selfish? Why or why not?

4. How do advertisers, influencers, and viral creators compete for your attention?

5. What happens if we never stop to ask "Who is getting the candy?"

Activity Ideas

1. Motivation Mapping (Individual or Pairs)

Show students a sample social media post (real or teacher-created). Have them analyze it using these prompts:

- What's the post trying to get from the audience?

- Who benefits from this post and how?

- Is this a trustworthy message? Why or why not?

Students can present findings using a 4-box "Candy Analyzer" graphic organizer:

1. Post Description

2. Creator's Motivation

3. Evidence of Credibility or Bias

4. Your Final Evaluation

2. Build-A-Post: Motivation Challenge

In small groups, students create their own fictional social media post—but first, they must spin a "Motivation Wheel" to determine whether their post is made for:

- 💵 Money

- 🌟 Fame

- 🎯 Influence/Persuasion

- 🎁 Helpful Sharing

- 🫥 Manipulation

Each group presents:

- Their post (as a slide or poster)

- The hidden "candy" behind it

- How audiences should think critically about it

Writing Prompt

Prompt:
Write a media critique paragraph using this frame:
"People don't just post things for fun—they post for candy. One post I saw recently was about ___. I believe the person who posted it was trying to ___. The type of candy they were going after was ___. I know this because ___. This matters because ___. Now I think more carefully before I ___."

Encourage students to:

- Use evidence

- Include at least one vocabulary word

- Reflect on their own digital habits

Extension: Self-Audit Reflection

Ask students to scroll through their own recent online activity (posts, likes, shares, comments) and privately journal:

- What kinds of "candy" was I chasing?

- Did I help or hurt the online space I'm part of?

- What will I do differently now?

This deepens the personal connection and supports social-emotional learning.

Final Reflection

When we ask, "Who's getting the candy?" how does that question help us think smarter and post more responsibly?

Correlation:

Study Guide Title: *Who's Getting the Candy? – 7th Grade ELA*
Media Literacy Focus: Evaluating online content creators' motives and their impact on credibility and audience trust
Aligned to: Alabama Digital Literacy and Computer Science Course of Study (2020), Grade 7

Correlated DLCS Standards – Grade 7

Strand: Digital Literacy

Standard 7.1: Analyze complex motivations behind digital content creation and distribution.

- **DLCS.7.1** – Identify and critique motivations including profit, persuasion, popularity, manipulation, and altruism behind digital media.
  Students analyze "candy" as rewards (money, fame, influence, helpfulness) and how motivation shapes messaging.

Standard 7.2: Evaluate credibility, bias, and the impact of digital content on audiences.

- **DLCS.7.2** – Assess credibility and bias of online content and its effect on audience trust and perception.
  Activities such as "Motivation Mapping" help students evaluate trustworthiness and identify bias.

Standard 7.3: Use evidence-based reasoning to respond responsibly to digital media.

- **DLCS.7.3** – Construct reasoned critiques and reflections on digital content, incorporating evidence and vocabulary.
  Writing prompts encourage use of evidence and reflection on personal digital behavior.

Standard 7.4: Reflect on and adjust personal digital behaviors for responsible citizenship.

- **DLCS.7.4** – Analyze personal online actions and their effect on digital communities and practice ethical digital citizenship.
  Extension activities and reflections support self-audit and growth in digital responsibility.

Crosswalk to Alabama 7th Grade ELA Standards (optional)

- **7.SL.1** – Engage effectively in collaborative discussions on grade-appropriate topics.

- **7.W.1** – Write arguments to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence.
  Writing tasks support argumentative and analytical writing aligned to ELA standards.

Summary

This study guide supports seventh graders in:

- Understanding complex creator motivations and "candy" rewards

- Critically evaluating digital credibility and bias

- Using evidence to critique digital media and reflect on personal digital choices

- Practicing responsible and ethical online behavior

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