

ELA STUDY GUIDE

Grade Level: 8th Grade

Video Title: *Who Is Getting the Candy?*

Media Literacy Focus: Analyzing author's purpose and evaluating motivation behind online content

Essential Question

How can recognizing a content creator's motivation help us become more informed and responsible digital citizens?

Learning Targets

Students will be able to:

- Explain the metaphor "Who's getting the candy?" in the context of social media
- Identify and analyze various motivations behind online posts (e.g., profit, popularity, persuasion, misinformation)
- Evaluate how an author's purpose influences content tone, message, and reliability
- Use textual evidence to support critical analysis of digital media
- Reflect on how audience reaction is shaped by a creator's intent

Vocabulary

- **Author's purpose** – the reason the content was created (to inform, entertain, persuade, profit)
- **Monetization** – making money from views, likes, or online traffic
- **Bias** – a personal slant that affects how information is presented
- **Clickbait** – attention-grabbing content designed to encourage clicks, not always honesty
- **Audience manipulation** – shaping a message to provoke a strong emotional reaction

- **Motive** – the reason someone does something, especially when hidden
- **Credibility** – how believable or trustworthy a source is

Whole Group Discussion

Use these questions to spark class conversation:

1. What kinds of “candy” (rewards) do online creators hope to get from posts?
2. What clues help us figure out a creator’s true motive?
3. Is it always bad if a post is made to make money or gain fame? Why or why not?
4. How can the pursuit of “candy” shape or distort the truth?
5. What responsibilities do we have as viewers or sharers of content?

Activity Ideas

1. Social Media Motivation Lab

Have students examine screenshots or written examples of social media posts (teacher-curated). For each post, they will:

- Identify the likely motivation(s) behind it
- Highlight elements that signal bias or intent
- Rate the post’s credibility (High / Medium / Low)
- Recommend whether it should be shared or not — with reasoning

Use a digital or paper “Candy Decoder” worksheet to organize findings.

2. Motivation Remix: Rewriting for Truth

Students choose one post (real or fictional) that clearly aims to manipulate, mislead, or exaggerate. Their task:

- Identify the original motive
- Re-write the post as if the motivation were to **inform** or **help**, instead

- Compare the original and revised versions in small groups and discuss:
 - How did the tone change?
 - Was the message more trustworthy?
 - How does this show the power of purpose?

Writing Prompt

Prompt:

Write an argumentative paragraph responding to this question:

“Does motivation matter more than message when it comes to online posts?”

Students should:

- Take a clear stance
- Use at least one example (real or fictional)
- Include one vocabulary word
- Provide evidence and reasoning to support their argument

Encourage peer review using a short rubric focused on clarity, vocabulary use, and supporting details.

Extension: Reflection Journal

Have students write a short journal entry or exit ticket:

- “Think about the last post you shared, liked, or commented on. What was the poster’s motivation? Did you help them get candy — and was that a good thing?”

This promotes digital self-awareness and ethical reflection.

Final Reflection Question

How does asking “Who’s getting the candy?” help us become more skeptical, responsible, and ethical online readers and creators?

Correlation:

Study Guide Title: *Who Is Getting the Candy? – 8th Grade ELA*

Media Literacy Focus: Analyzing online motivations and author's purpose

Standard Alignment: Alabama Digital Literacy and Computer Science Course of Study (2020)

Correlated DLCS Standards – Grade 8

Strand: Digital Literacy

Standard 1: Analyze and interpret a variety of digital texts.

- **DLCS.8.1** – Analyze and interpret digital content (e.g., websites, social media, blogs) to determine credibility, accuracy, relevance, and bias.
Students identify motivations behind social media posts (fame, money, persuasion) and evaluate the credibility and purpose of content.

Standard 3: Identify the impact of digital authorship.

- **DLCS.8.3** – Evaluate how digital authorship and audience influence content presentation and messaging.
Students explore how creators shape posts to gain rewards (likes, shares, money) and how audience reaction can be manipulated.

Standard 4: Use digital tools to support critical thinking and collaboration.

- **DLCS.8.4** – Use digital tools to examine perspectives, bias, and intent in digital messages.
Activities such as “Social Media Motivation Lab” and “Motivation Remix” engage students in using critical thinking to detect intent and bias.

Strand: Computational Thinking

Standard 8: Evaluate impacts of computing.

- **DLCS.8.8** – Evaluate the social and ethical impacts of digital communication, including issues of digital citizenship.
Students reflect on ethical responsibility as consumers and sharers of media — “Should we help others get candy?”

Additional ELA Alignment (Optional Crosswalk)

If teachers also want to align with the **Alabama ELA Course of Study (2016)**:

- **ELA.8.RI.6** – Determine an author’s point of view or purpose in a text and analyze how the author acknowledges and responds to conflicting evidence or viewpoints.
- **ELA.8.W.1** – Write arguments to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence.
- **ELA.8.SL.1** – Engage effectively in collaborative discussions... building on others’ ideas and expressing their own clearly.

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