🧠 Media Masters Rock – BONUS LESSON Study Guide

Critical Thinking Characters: Think First Before You Click!
Grade Level: 7th Grade
Length: 30–40 minutes

Alabama DLCS Alignment (Grade 7)

• **7.DL.1** – Demonstrate ethical, responsible digital behaviors across communication platforms
• **7.DL.2** – Evaluate digital information for accuracy, reliability, motivation, and potential bias
• **7.CC.1** – Apply advanced critical thinking to identify manipulation, misinformation, and deceptive techniques
• **7.CC.2** – Explain how emotional triggers, algorithms, and persuasive design influence user behavior
• **7.RA.1** – Demonstrate thoughtful self-regulation when responding to digital content

🎬 Before Watching the Video

Teacher/Librarian Says:
"Online information is everywhere — but not all of it is equal. Today we'll meet the Critical Thinking Characters. Each one falls for a different thinking mistake that is *very common online.* Your job is to analyze the mistake, understand why it happens, and identify how a Media Master would handle it."

Ask:
• "Which online mistakes do you think kids your age fall for most often?"
• "Why is it so easy to believe something when it confirms what we already think?"
• "Which thinking mistake do YOU think you make most often?"

Encourage students to make connections to real experiences.

🎥 Watch the Video

Title: BONUS LESSON — *Critical Thinking Characters: Think First Before You Click*
Run Time: 2–4 minutes

Listening Focus for Grade 7:
"Pay attention not just to each character's mistake—but the *psychology* behind it and how it spreads online."

💬 After Watching – Discussion Questions

1. **Which character represents a mistake that spreads fastest online? Why?**

2. **How do emotional triggers make Captain Knee-Jerk respond too quickly?**

3. **Why is Echo Chamber Chad's mistake dangerous in today's algorithm-driven world?**

4. **How does "Overconfidence" contribute to misinformation?**

5. **Why are memes (Meme Believer Cassy) such powerful tools for spreading false ideas?**

6. **What makes Headline Harry vulnerable to clickbait manipulation?**

Students should support their answers with reasoning such as:
• "Algorithms reward emotional content."
• "People like information that agrees with their beliefs."
• "Misleading posts spread quickly because people don't check sources."

**✏️ Activity:

Critical Thinking Characters – Deep Dive Digital Analysis**

Objective:
Identify thinking errors, analyze motives, detect manipulation, and apply Media Master solutions.

Materials: Notebook, worksheet, or digital device

PART 1 — Advanced Character Analysis (Choose 4)

For each chosen character, students analyze:

1. Thinking Mistake:

What specific error did the character make?

2. Motivation:

Why did they fall for it?
(Possible motives: attention, fear, belonging, laziness, emotion, frustration, speed, popularity)

3. Context:

What kind of digital environment might make this mistake easier?
(Examples: TikTok algorithm, group chat rumor, trending meme, targeted ads)

4. Consequence:

How does the mistake affect:
• themselves
• their friends
• the online community?

Example Response:
"Echo Chamber Chad only sees opinions he already agrees with. Algorithms amplify this by showing him more of what he likes. The consequence is that he becomes less open-minded and easier to manipulate."

PART 2 — Apply the Media Master Moves

Media Master Moves:
• Check multiple sources
• Identify emotional triggers
• Pause before reacting
• Seek opposing viewpoints

• Verify evidence, not opinions
• Confirm the source's credibility
• Avoid reposting until facts are checked
• Choose kindness over clout

Student Task:
Match each analyzed character with the correct Media Master Move **and explain WHY that move works.**

Example:
"Snap Judgment Sammy needs to pause and ask questions because reacting instantly makes him believe partial or false information."

PART 3 — Real-World Application Writing Prompt

Prompt:
Write a 6–8 sentence paragraph describing a REAL example of a thinking mistake you've seen online (or in your school).
Explain:

1. Which character it matches

2. What mistake happened

3. Why it happened

4. The consequence

5. How a Media Master would fix it

Encourage examples such as:
• Viral rumors
• Screenshot "evidence"
• Clickbait "breaking news"
• Emotional videos missing context
• AI-generated content

🧩 Extension Activity:

Analyze a "Tricky Post" for Manipulation**

Provide students with a **mock post** (AI image, shocking headline, rumor screenshot).

Students analyze:

1. **What thinking mistake could this trigger?**

2. **What emotion does this post try to create?**

3. **What is the poster's motivation (money, fame, popularity, persuasion)?**

4. **What evidence is missing?**

5. **Which Media Master Move would fix it?**

This mirrors real digital literacy challenges for middle schoolers.

🧠 Wrap-Up

Teacher/Librarian Says:
"You now understand not only WHAT online thinking mistakes look like — but WHY they happen, and HOW to stop them. When you THINK FIRST, CHECK FOR TRUTH, and CHOOSE KINDNESS, you protect yourself and your friends from misinformation and negativity online."

Call-and-Response:
Teacher: "When you see something online…"
Students: **"THINK FIRST!"**
Teacher: "Before you share…"
Students: **"CHECK FOR TRUTH!"**
Teacher: "When you post…"
Students: **"CHOOSE KINDNESS!"**

"You're building real critical thinking power — and that makes the online world safer for everyone."

###