

Media Masters Rock – BONUS LESSON Study Guide

Critical Thinking Characters: Think First Before You Click!

Grade Level: 8th Grade

Length: 35–45 minutes

Alabama DLCS Alignment (Grade 8)

- **8.DL.1** – Demonstrate ethical, safe, and responsible digital decision-making in a variety of platforms
- **8.DL.2** – Evaluate digital content using credibility checks, author analysis, and evidence
- **8.CC.1** – Identify bias, logical fallacies, propaganda, and persuasive techniques in online content
- **8.CC.2** – Analyze motivations behind online posts, including financial, political, social, and emotional incentives
- **8.RA.1** – Apply self-regulation strategies to avoid reacting impulsively to digital content



Before Watching the Video

Teacher/Librarian Says:

“By 8th grade, you are interacting with digital media constantly — videos, memes, screenshots, headlines, viral challenges, and AI-generated content. Today’s lesson helps you spot the *thinking traps* people fall into online. These Critical Thinking Characters represent REAL mistakes people make on social media.”

Ask:

- “Why do smart people still fall for misinformation?”
- “Which platforms do you think encourage the *fastest* thinking mistakes?”
- “Do you think YOU have ever believed something too quickly online?”

Encourage honest discussion — 8th graders appreciate real-life examples.



Watch the Video

Title: BONUS LESSON — *Critical Thinking Characters: Think First Before You Click*

Run Time: 2–4 minutes

Listening Focus for Grade 8:

“Pay attention to HOW each character is influenced by:

- algorithms
- emotion
- popularity
- lack of evidence
- or bias

This will help you analyze their mistakes.”

💬 After Watching – Discussion Questions

1. **Which thinking mistake is the most dangerous in society today? Why?**
2. **How could Overconfident Ollie contribute to misinformation during a crisis or trend?**
3. **Why do memes often bypass critical thinking (Meme Believer Cassy)?**
4. **How does an “Echo Chamber” amplify extreme opinions?**
5. **Why are screenshots, AI images, and short clips especially misleading?**
6. **Which character do you think algorithms would reward the most — and why?**

Encourage extended answers and explanations using vocabulary such as: *confirmation bias, emotional manipulation, incomplete context, algorithmic amplification, source credibility, evidence-based reasoning*.

** Activity:

Critical Thinking Characters — Grade 8 Deep Analysis Lab**

Objective:

Evaluate digital behavior using advanced critical thinking skills, detect fallacies and motives, and apply Media Master Moves to online content.

PART 1 – Character Diagnostic Breakdown (Choose 5)

For each character, analyze:

1. Thinking Mistake:

Name the fallacy or bias (ex: hasty generalization, bandwagon effect, emotional reasoning, confirmation bias, impulsive reaction, overconfidence effect).

2. Psychological Trigger:

Which mental shortcut or emotional reaction caused the mistake?
(feeling left out, desire for approval, anger, speed, fear, boredom, curiosity)

3. Algorithm Influence:

How could the platform's design encourage this mistake?
(For example: TikTok's "For You" page, trending audio, viral memes, limited context videos)

4. Real-World Consequence:

Who is harmed?
How does misinformation spread?
Could this damage trust, relationships, or reputation?

Example Response:

"Headline Harry falls for clickbait because of emotional triggers and algorithmic amplification. His mistake spreads misinformation by boosting unverified content."

PART 2 – Media Master Fix (Argument-Based Response)

Media Master Moves available:

- Cross-check with credible sources
- Slow down—pause before reacting
- Question motivations (money, fame, popularity, persuasion)
- Look for full context (not just clips or screenshots)
- Identify emotional manipulation
- Seek out opposing or neutral viewpoints

- Check for evidence, citations, and reputable reporting
- Prioritize kindness and empathy

Student Task:

For each character from Part 1:

Write a **3–4 sentence correction plan** explaining EXACTLY how a Media Master prevents the mistake.

****PART 3 – Real-Life Application:**

Analyze an Online Post (Short Essay)**

Students select (or are provided) a mock post such as:

- A viral meme
- An AI-generated photo
- A dramatic headline
- A rumor in text form
- A “breaking news” screenshot

Essay Prompt (8–10 sentences):

Analyze the post using these questions:

1. Which Critical Thinking Character would fall for this – and why?
2. What persuasive tricks or fallacies are used?
3. What emotions is the post trying to trigger?
4. What evidence is missing or suspicious?
5. What is the possible motive behind it (money, fame, popularity, influence)?
6. What Media Master Move should be applied?
7. What could happen if people believed or shared this?

This builds real digital literacy and prepares students for high school media use.

**** Extension Activity (Optional):**

Create a PSA (Public Service Announcement)**

Students create a 30–60 second PSA teaching younger students how to avoid one of the character's thinking mistakes.

This can be:

- a mini-skit
- a TikTok-style video
- a poster
- a narrated slideshow
- a digital comic strip

Encourage creativity but require accuracy and critical thinking.



Wrap-Up

Teacher/Librarian Says:

“By 8th grade, you have the ability to think deeply about what you see online. Every one of these Critical Thinking Characters made a mistake — but YOU learned why the mistake happens and how to stop it.”

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 habits that protect you — and your entire community — from misinformation, manipulation, and digital harm.”

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