



# **MEDIA MASTERS ROCK – 8th Grade Study Guide**

## ***Digital Citizenship for Kids: How to THINK FIRST Online***

**Designed for:** Alabama Library Media Specialists

**Grade Level:** 8th Grade

**Estimated Time:** 45–50 minutes

**Focus:** Critical Thinking, Misinformation, Bias, AI Manipulation, Cognitive Bias, Source Evaluation, Digital Responsibility



## **Alabama DLCS Standards Alignment (8th Grade)**

### **8.DL.1 – Demonstrate safe, ethical, responsible behavior in sophisticated digital environments.**

Students evaluate how online information shapes behavior, opinions, and decisions.

### **8.DL.2 – Analyze digital content for bias, accuracy, credibility, and purpose.**

Students examine creator motive, algorithm influence, emotional triggers, and mis/disinformation tactics.

### **8.DL.3 – Explain how digital media uses persuasive techniques, emotional design, and AI manipulation.**

Students identify persuasion strategies used in videos, memes, deepfakes, and viral posts.

### **8.CC.1 – Apply critical thinking to digital sources to determine reliability and truthfulness.**

Students engage in deeper reasoning with evidence, context, and source comparison.

## **8.CC.2 – Use lateral reading and multiple trusted sources to verify online information.**

Students cross-check facts across platforms and learn academic research habits.



# **BEFORE WATCHING THE VIDEO**

### **Librarian Says:**

“In 8th grade, you’re online more than almost any other age group — which makes critical thinking one of the most powerful skills you have. AI can make videos of things that never happened, and misinformation spreads fast. But your brain is stronger than any algorithm. Today we’ll learn how Media Masters THINK FIRST.”

### **Discussion Starter:**

- “What’s the most convincing fake you’ve seen online this year?”
- “Why do false stories spread faster than true ones?”
- “How do algorithms influence what you think is ‘important’ or ‘true’?”

(Optional: Show samples of AI-generated images or deepfake screenshots.)



# **WATCH THE VIDEO**

Tell students to listen for the **3 Critical Thinking Questions**:

### **1. Who made it — and why?**

(motive, bias, purpose)

### **2. Is there solid proof it’s real?**

(evidence, verification, consistency)

### **3. Why do I feel this way?**

(emotional manipulation, persuasion)



# AFTER-VIEWING DISCUSSION – ADVANCED LEVEL

## 1. Identify Misinformation Techniques

Ask:

“What specific techniques did the examples use to convince people they were real?”

Examples:

- Emotional urgency
- AI realism
- Lack of context
- Viral language
- Sensational claims

## 2. Bias & Motive

“Why might someone create a deepfake or exaggerated post? Who benefits?”

Discuss:

- Money
- Influence
- Persuasion
- Comedy
- Manipulation
- Political messaging
- Algorithmic reward

## 3. Evidence Evaluation

“What qualifies as *high-quality* evidence versus weak or misleading evidence?”

Students should be able to distinguish:

**Strong:** multiple credible sources, reputable outlets, consistent data

**Weak:** screenshots, rumors, single accounts, AI-generated visuals

## 4. Algorithms & Echo Chambers

“How might your feed shape what you believe or how fast you react?”  
Students recognize algorithmic reinforcement and confirmation bias.

### **ACTIVITY 1 – Lateral Reading Fact-Check (Stanford Method)**

**COS Alignment:** 8.CC.1, 8.CC.2, 8.DL.2

Give students a questionable post (choose one from the video: pizza tree, flying hamster, pudding house, rumor screenshot, or an AI deepfake).

#### **Student Steps:**

1. **Open a new tab**
2. Search for the claim using neutral keywords
3. Check 3 separate credible sources
4. Identify contradictions or confirmations
5. Write a short analysis explaining:
  - What they checked
  - What they found
  - Why the post is real, fake, or misleading

This introduces real-world academic digital literacy skills.

### **ACTIVITY 2 – “Dissect the Trick”: Misinformation Autopsy**

**COS Alignment:** 8.DL.3, 8.CC.1

Students work in teams to “break down” one of the fake examples from the video.

They analyze:

- **Creator**
- **Intended audience**
- **Purpose/motive**
- **Emotional hook**
- **Visual technique**
- **Elements designed to bypass logic**
- **What a Media Master should do instead**

Teams create a small poster or slide explaining how the trick works.

## **ACTIVITY 3 – AI vs. Real: Deepfake Detection Challenge**

**COS Alignment:** 8.DL.2, 8.CC.1

Provide students with sets of paired visuals:

- Real vs. AI person
- Real vs. AI animal
- Real vs. composited environment
- AI-generated “fake celebrity speech”
- Edited vs. unedited video frames

Students must identify:

- Evidence of manipulation
- Inconsistencies (lighting, hands, shadows, reflections, artifacts)
- Missing context
- Source credibility

Students justify their decisions.

## **EXTENSION – Algorithm Reflection Journal**

**COS Alignment:** 8.DL.1, 8.DL.3

Students write a one-paragraph personal reflection:

“What kinds of posts does my feed show me most? What might that teach me about how algorithms shape my beliefs?”

This helps students become aware of personalized online ecosystems.

## **CLOSING / LIBRARIAN WRAP-UP SCRIPT**

“Being an 8th grade Media Master isn’t about memorizing rules — it’s about training your brain to question, verify, and think clearly. The internet will always have fakes, tricks, deepfakes, rumors, and emotional posts. But your critical thinking skills can cut through all of it.

Before you believe, react, or share:

**Ask who made it.**

**Ask where the proof is.**

**Ask why you feel this way.**

Think first — and you’ll make the internet smarter, safer, and kinder for everyone.”

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