

## Example CMD Activity Plan:

## HS: Analyzing Bias in a Racist Website

See the lesson: [Constructing King](#)

Watch a 6 min. [demonstration video](#) of this activity

### Teaching Context

- **Grade level:** HS      **Subject area:** Digital Literacy,      **Unit:** analyzing websites, Martin Luther King Jr.
- **What might come before or after this activity:** This will introduce our unit on website analysis.
- **Other relevant contextual information:** Students will be studying King and civil rights in some of their classes in preparation for school-wide presentations during the school's MLK holiday celebration.

### 1) Content Objectives:

- Students will apply prior knowledge on Martin Luther King Jr. and the civil rights movement.

#### Literacy/Critical Thinking Objectives:

- Students will analyze a web site for its purpose, target audience, messages, and the methods used to communicate those messages.
- Students will reflect on the questions to ask when evaluating the credibility and bias in a web site.

### 2) Document(s) description and link:

A 2017 screen grab from the homepage of the website [www.martinlutherking.org](http://www.martinlutherking.org). This activity is taken from *Lesson #3: Constructing King* in Project Look Sharp's kit: [Media Construction of Martin Luther King Jr.](#)

### 3) Key Questions:

- *Does this look like a credible website? Why?*
- *Who is the target audience? What is your evidence??*
- *Who might be behind this web site? What is its purpose?*
- *What questions do you need to ask about websites as we navigate the Internet?*

### 4) Decoding Plan:

I will give little if any background information about this site - other than the URL: **www.martinlutherking.org**, - before starting the decoding. I will start with the question: *At first glance, does this site seem credible? Why?* If necessary I will probe about the credibility of the URL: *Does the URL add credibility?*

I will quickly ask: *Who is the target audience?* and probe: *What is your evidence?* I expect students will recognize that the site is targeting young people but will be prepared to probe for that understanding: *Who might be targeted by "pop quiz" and "rap lyrics."*

A tricky part of decoding this site is the attack against King's character: "I'm F- - ing for God." I could give a trigger warning at the beginning of the activity: *Like many sites, this one will have some questionable content that might be disturbing and inaccurate.* Or I might wait until we get into decoding the purpose and authorship before delivering the warning. Given my prior work with these students I am leaning towards the latter.

Early in the decoding I will ask "What are the messages about King" with evidence probes. This is likely where students will identify the slur from [Newsweek](#) that will call for a response from me, e.g. *Is this is an accurate quote? How do we know? Why did they include this?*

At this point I will ask: *Given what you have seen, who might be behind this web site?* I will wait to probe for evidence once a student has suggested that it is a white supremacist or neo-Nazi site. If necessary I will probe for that understanding: *"Jews and the Civil Rights Movement: Who Led the Civil Rights Movement" – What does that suggest about who is behind this site?* I will then provide some background information, that Don Black, the leader of the white supremacist site "Stormfront," purchased the URL [www.martinlutherking.org](http://www.martinlutherking.org) in 1994. I will ask: *Why might Don Black have done that?* I will ask: *What is the purpose of this site?* Probe to help students understand that this site is intended to discredit King and the civil rights movement in the eyes of young people (e.g. *Say more about that. Explain how...").*

I will end the activity by connecting to the bigger lessons here: *Given that this was one of the most popular sites in a Google search for "Martin Luther King," what do we need to do as we navigate the web?* Probe for understanding of digital literacy, and the asking of key questions (Who produced this for what purpose? is it credible and accurate? What are the biases? etc.). See [Key Questions to Ask When Analyzing Media Messages](#).