

Dear **Middle School Librarians**,

For over two decades, [Project Look Sharp](#), a mission-driven not-for-profit **media literacy** organization at Ithaca College, has been collaborating with educators to provide free, question-based, standards-aligned **media analysis lessons** that integrate core subject area content and skills with [habits of critical questioning](#).

Below you will find an overview of our lessons for **middle school library and information literacy** followed by an introduction to the purpose and pedagogy of [our approach](#), ending with information about our free professional development resources for [Constructivist Media Decoding](#).

LESSONS FOR INFORMATION LITERACY:

While all 500+ Project Look Sharp lessons teach to AASL standards, many of the lessons will be particularly useful for library-based activities. Below are just some the **newest** of our [47 lessons](#) tagged for “**Information Literacy**” at the **middle school** level. Click on any title below to get a brief description and to download all the teaching materials.

[Conspiracy Theories About COVID-19: Who’s Selling? Who’s Buying?](#)

[Spotting Fake News: How to Help](#)

[YouTube Recommendations: What Do I Do?](#)

[The Death of Kobe Bryant: How Viral Media Spreads Misinformation](#)

[Trusting Web Videos on COVID-19 \(Or Not\)](#)

[Incan Religion – What Sources Should I Use?](#)

[Real Bugs TV Commercial Decoding](#)

[Pride in Our Hispanic Heritage: Countering Stereotypes](#)

[Apocalyptic Weather Systems in Movies: Science Fact or Science Fiction](#)

[Lemmings: Documentary Film Clip Decoding](#)

[Techniques of Persuasion: Smoking, Vaping and Health](#)

CONSTRUCTIVIST MEDIA DECODING:

Our [constructivist approach](#) is particularly effective for leading civil and reflective document-based analysis about **potentially polarizing issues**. Our lessons and methodology help students learn to habitually ask key questions; assess truth, credibility, and accuracy in media messages; and become **metacognitive** about their own thinking.

We believe that the critical analysis of all media messages - from books to blogs, TV to TikTok - must become habitual for all our students. They need **continual practice** in asking [critical thinking questions](#) such as:

- *Who produced this for what purpose?*
- *Is the source and information credible?*
- *What are the biases in this message?*
- *How does my own identity influence how I see this?*

For this kind of self-reflective critical analysis to become ingrained, we need to have students practice this questioning, in age-appropriate ways, from kindergarten through 12th grade, and in diverse subject areas. And we need effective and **efficient methodologies and free materials** to support the integration of media analysis into the core curriculum – helping us to teach what we already teach in ways that **engage more students** more effectively.

Project Look Sharp has published over [500 media analysis lessons](#) on our website and over [70 professional development resources](#) for this purpose. All our lessons – including the lesson plans, media materials, and student handouts – are grant-funded so we can make them available **FREE for educators** through the [Project Look Sharp](#) website. All you need to do is set up an [account](#).

LIBRARIANS AS LEADERS FOR MEDIA LITERACY:

School librarians are in a unique position to help prepare our students for a world filled with powerful media messages that educate, entertain, persuade, and too often misinform. School librarians, with their expertise and training in information literacy, their broad perspective on the curriculum and their contacts with all teachers, are uniquely placed to lead this work.

At Project Look Sharp we are working closely with school librarians to develop the strategies, materials, and support that will assist them in becoming effective instructional leaders and coaches for the integration of question-based media analysis across the curriculum.

Consider pushing out our [Guides by Subject/Grades](#) to your teachers. Please be in contact with us if you have suggestions for how we can be most successful in this work. We are always interested in feedback and in collaborations with librarians. Also, check out our PD resources designed to support teachers to practice effective student-centered questioning.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT RESOURCES:

Our website also hosts [70 free professional development resources](#) for integrating [Constructivist Media Decoding](#) into the core curriculum, including:

- [Short video demonstrations](#) of classroom media decoding at different levels and subjects, including new videos for online decoding.
- [Handouts](#), including [Key Questions for Media Analysis](#) that can be made into posters for your library or classrooms.
- [Articles, webinars](#) and a [DIY Guide](#) for creating your own media decoding lessons.

Please consider signing up for a [free account](#) to fully view our lessons and get added to our [email list](#) so that you will get periodic notices about new lessons and resources. And please pass on the word about [Project Look Sharp](#) to your teachers. Together we can build a more civil, reflective and just society for all.

Project Look Sharp

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