Digital Life 102

Essential Question
What is the place of digital media in our lives?

Lesson Overview
Students test their knowledge of digital media and learn some statistics about media use by taking a quiz. They then create written similes, collages, or digital animations to express the role media plays in their lives. After watching the video “Perspectives on Social Media,” they draw conclusions about the positive and negative ways digital media affect them and influence the larger culture.

Learning Objectives
Students will be able to ...
• learn basic statistics about the current digital landscape.
• explore the role that media plays in their lives.
• reflect on the positive and negative impact digital media has on them and on society.

Materials and Preparation
• Copy the Got Media Smarts? Student Handout, one for each student.
• Preview the video “Perspectives on Social Media” and prepare to show it to students.

Family Resources
• Send home the Digital Life Family Tip Sheet (Middle & High School).

Estimated time: 45 minutes

Standards Alignment –
Common Core:
grades 9-10: RL.4, RI.8, W.1a-e, W.2af, W.4, W.5, W.6, W.10, SL.1a, SL.1b, SL.1c, SL.1d, SL.3, SL.4, SL.5, L.4a, L.4d, L.5a, L.6

grades 11-12: RL.4, RI.4, W.1a-e, W.2a-f, W.4, W.5, W.6, W.10, SL.1a, SL.1b, SL.1c, SL.1d, SL.2, SL.3, SL.4, SL.5, L.4a, L.4d, L.5a, L.6

NETS•S: 1a, 1d, 2a, 2d, 3b, 3d, 4a-c, 5a, 5b

Key Vocabulary –
digital media: electronic devices and media platforms such as computers, cell phones, video, the Internet, and video games that allow users to create, communicate, and interact with one another or with the device or application itself
simile: a figure of speech in which a comparison is made between two different things using the word like or as
digital citizenship: navigating the digital world safely, responsibly, and ethically
introduction

Warm-up (10 minutes)

DEFINE the Key Vocabulary term digital media.

TELL students that they are going to take a quiz about today’s digital media landscape. The purpose of the quiz is to make them more familiar with some statistics on how people — and especially teens — use digital media in their daily lives.

DISTRIBUTE the Got Media Smarts? Student Handout, one per student.

INSTRUCT students to complete the quiz independently. Then have them compare their responses with one another. Have them work in pairs to discuss the following questions and report their answers back to the class.

ASK: Which one or two answers surprised you the most?

ASK: Which one or two statistics most closely reflect how you use digital media in your own life? Which are the farthest from your own personal experience?

teach 1

My Media Life Similes (15 minutes)

DEFINE the Key Vocabulary term simile, and let students know that they will be creating similes that express the role digital media play in their lives.

ENCOURAGE students to reflect on the following questions, and to jot down some brief responses in preparation for creating their similes.

ASK:
• How big a role do digital media (Internet, texting, video games) play in your life (a little, some, a lot)?
• What are your favorite and least favorite things to do with digital media?
• Do you connect with others or create things with digital media?
• What are the positive and not-so-positive aspects of having digital media in your life?

INSTRUCT students to complete one of the following statements in a way that captures and conveys the role of digital media in their lives.

My media life is like a ____________________, because ___________________________________.

My media life is as _______________________ as a ________________, because ________________.

Sample responses:
• My media life is like a window onto the world, because it allows me to see all kinds of new things and imagine other possibilities.
• My media life is like a party where I meet a lot of different people, because it feels loud, out of control, and yet fun.
• My media life is as tempting as junk food, because I don’t always know when to say no.

INVITE students to share their similes with the class and explain how they chose the similes.
Life in a Connected Culture (15 minutes)

SHOW the video “Perspectives on Social Media” and discuss the following questions with students.

ASK:

What are some of the upsides and downsides of digital life, according to the teens in the film? What do you think the upsides and downsides are in your own life?

Sample responses:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Upsides</th>
<th>Downsides</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• I learn a lot from the Internet.</td>
<td>• I don’t like some of the things people send me.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Projects in school can be more fun and interesting with technology.</td>
<td>• Some of the things I end up doing with digital media are a waste of time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• I have a good time playing video games or participating in virtual worlds.</td>
<td>• I spend more time alone than I used to.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

ASK:

What are some of the upsides and downsides of digital media for relationships?

Sample responses:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Upsides</th>
<th>Downsides</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• People can connect with lots of others quickly.</td>
<td>• People can say nasty things when they are anonymous.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• People are connected to a larger community than the people they know offline.</td>
<td>• Sometimes it is easier to misinterpret what people mean online.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• People can get to know others who are geographically far away.</td>
<td>• Damaging information can spread quickly online.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

ASK:

What are some of the benefits of digital media for our country as a whole? What are some of the problems it might cause?

Sample responses:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Benefits</th>
<th>Problems</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• People have access to more information and can learn about almost anything online.</td>
<td>• People do not spend as much time talking face to face.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• We produce innovative technologies for medicine and other important fields.</td>
<td>• People can get addicted to technology.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Many tasks can be done faster with technology.</td>
<td>• People can become lazy and depend on technology instead of using their brains.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Wrap-up (5 minutes)

You can use these questions to assess your students’ understanding of the lesson objectives. You may want to ask students to reflect in writing on one of the questions, using a journal or an online blog/wiki.

ASK:

- **How did the statistics you learned in the quiz compare with the way you use digital media in your own life? Which digital media do you think you use the most and the least – and why?**

  Students should have ideas about whether they use certain media more or less than the average. They should also be able to describe, and speculate on the reasons for, their own use of various digital media.

- **What did your simile indicate about the role that digital media plays in your life?**

  Students should be able to explain their similes, including what it suggests about the role digital media plays in their lives, and its positive and negative effects.

- **Can you describe one upside and one downside for yourself about living in a digital world? For your relationships with others? For society as a whole? Do you connect with others or create things with digital media?**

  Students should be able to name and explain some of the positive and negative aspects of digital technologies discussed in Teach 2.
Digital Life 102

Directions
First, take the quiz on your own. When you are done, trade with your partner. Together, use the answer key to calculate each other’s score. Discuss what surprised you the most and which answers were the closest to or farthest from your own experiences.

1. 82% of teens say that they own which of the following?
   a) cell phone
   b) smartphone
   c) iPod Touch or similar device
   d) iPad or similar device

2. What percent of teens describe themselves as “addicted” to their cell phones?
   a) 11%
   b) 27%
   c) 41%
   d) 63%

3. 68% of teens say they do which of the following at least once a day?
   a) text
   b) visit a social network
   c) instant message (IM)
   d) use email

4. What percent of teens agreed they wish they could “unplug” for a while?
   a) 13%
   b) 27%
   c) 29%
   d) 43%

5. 51% of teens visit social networking sites _________________.
   a) at least once a day
   b) several times a day
   c) once a week or less
   d) never
6. What percent of teens say that they don’t understand their social networking site’s privacy policies?
   a) 24%  b) 35%  c) 46%  d) 61%

7. True or false? More teens say they prefer texting with their friends than talking in person.
   TRUE  FALSE

8. What percent of teens say they have said something bad about someone online that they wouldn’t have said in person?
   a) 25%  b) 35%  c) 49%  d) 67%

9. What percent of teens say that social networking helps them connect with people who share a common interest?
   a) 35%  b) 42%  c) 57%  d) 66%

10. True or false? More teens say that social media makes them feel better about themselves than worse.
    TRUE  FALSE

**Note:** All statistics and answer feedback (except for question #4) come from Social Media, Social Life: How Teens View Their Digital Lives, the 2012 research report from Common Sense Media’s Program for the Study of Children and Media. We surveyed more than 1,000 13- to 17-year-olds nationally to understand how they perceive social media (like Facebook and Twitter) affects their relationships and feelings about themselves.
1. 82% of teens say that they own which of the following?

The correct answer is a, a cell phone. The vast majority of teenagers have their own cell phone (82%), including 41% who say they have a smartphone. Cell phone ownership varies by age – 74% of 13- to 14-year olds, compared with 87% of 15- to 17-year-olds.

2. What percent of teens describe themselves as “addicted” to their cell phones?

The correct answer is c, 41%. And 21% of wish that their parents would spend less time with their cell phones and other devices.

3. 68% of teens say they do which of the following at least once a day?

The correct answer is a, text. Two-thirds (68%) of teens text every day, half (51%) visit social networking sites daily, and 11% send or receive tweets at least once every day. Teens prefer texting due to the convenience – 30% saying it’s the quickest and 23% because it’s the easiest way to get in touch with one another.

4. What percent of teens agreed they wish they could “unplug” for a while?

The correct answer is d, 43%. Of this percentage, 13% agree strongly and 30% agree somewhat that they sometimes wish they could “unplug.” More than a third agree “somewhat” that they sometimes wish they could go back to a time when there was no Facebook.

5. 51% of teens visit social networking sites ____________.

The correct answer is a: Just over half of teens visit social media sites at least once per day, and about one third of teens – 34% – visit social media sites several times a day. In fact, 90% of teens say they have used social media and 75% currently have a profile on a social networking site.

6. What percent of teens say that they don’t understand their social networking site’s privacy policies?

The correct answer is a, 24%. About a quarter of teen users admit they understand their social networking site’s policies either “not too well” or “not at all.”
7. True or false? More teens say they prefer texting with their friends than talking in person.

The correct answer is FALSE. When asked about their favorite ways to communicate with friends, about half of teens (49%) say they prefer in person communication. 38% believe face-to-face conversations to be more fun, and 29% say that they can better understand what people really mean in person. Fewer teens - (33%) - say texting is their favorite. Only 4% prefer talking on the phone as their favored way to communicate with friends.

8. What percent of teens say they have said something bad about someone online that they wouldn’t have said in person?

The correct answer is a, 25%. A quarter of all teens admit to saying something bad about someone online that they wouldn’t have in person. Similarly, 1 in 4 (24%) social media users say they “often” encounter one or more types of derogatory speech (sexist, homophobic, racist, or anti-religious).

9. What percent of teens say that social networking helps them connect with people who share a common interest?

The correct answer is c, 57%. A majority of teens say social media help them keep in touch with friends they can’t see regularly (88%), get to know other students at their school better (69%), and connect with new people who share a common interest (57%).

10. True or false? More teens say that social media makes them feel better about themselves than worse.

The correct answer is TRUE. Most teens — 81% — actually say social media doesn’t make much difference on way or the other in terms of how they feel about themselves. But some teens do see an effect, and more find that the effect is positive: 15% say social media makes them feel better about themselves, compared to only 4% who say that using social media makes them feel worse.

Note: All statistics and answer feedback (except for question #4) come from Social Media, Social Life: How Teens View Their Digital Lives, the 2012 research report from Common Sense Media’s Program for the Study of Children and Media. We surveyed more than 1,000 13- to 17-year-olds nationally to understand how they perceive social media (like Facebook and Twitter) affects their relationships and feelings about themselves.
1. Using the chart below, show whether the following sentences are an upside (positive) or downside (negative) of media life.

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<tr>
<td>b) You can stay in touch with friends easily</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c) Many fun things online are also free</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d) You may spend less time with others face to face</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e) Anything you do online leaves a permanent record</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f) You can look up information quickly</td>
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2. What does digital citizenship mean?
   a) Any information about you on the Internet
   b) Using digital media safely, responsibly, and respectfully
   c) An online membership
   d) Not giving credit to someone else’s work

3. Which is an example of digital media?
   a) Computers
   b) Social network sites
   c) Video games
   d) All of the above
1. Using the chart below, show whether the following sentences are an upside (positive) or downside (negative) of media life.

**Answer feedback**

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<td>b) You can stay in touch with friends easily</td>
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2. What does digital citizenship mean?

a) Any information about you on the Internet

b) **Using digital media safely, responsibly, and respectfully**

c) An online membership
d) Not giving credit to someone else’s work

**Answer feedback**

The correct answer is **b**. Digital citizen acts safely, responsibly, and respectfully online.

3. Which of the following is an example of digital media?

a) Computers

b) Social network sites

c) Video games

d) **All of the above**

**Answer feedback**

The correct answer is **d**. Going online, working on the computer, talking and texting on cell phones, and playing online games are all examples of using digital media.