

MEDIA MATTERS

MODULE 1:

WHAT IS MEDIA?

**CLASSROOM
ACTIVITY
PACK**

ACTIVITY #1

MEDIA DETECTIVE CHALLENGE

Use **STOP • THINK • CHECK** to investigate these real-world examples.

Everyone is switching to this new app!



@TrendyTechReviews 
2,000 followers

“This one simple trick will make you smarter!



Click here!



Anonymous

Your investigation:

1. **STOP** – What's the first thing this post wants you to notice?
2. **THINK** – Who created this? Why might they want you to download the app?
3. **CHECK** – Where could you look to find out if this app is actually popular and safe?

1. **STOP** – What jumps out first – the words or the picture? Why?
2. **THINK** – What is this post promising, and why might someone use a promise like this online?
3. **CHECK** – How could you find out who made this post and whether the app or claim is real?

ACTIVITY #1

MEDIA DETECTIVE CHALLENGE

Use **STOP • THINK • CHECK** to investigate these real-world examples.

Local school raises €5,000 for charity



Source: Leinster Leader newspaper website

1. **STOP** – What catches your eye first? Is it the headline, the amount raised or the photo of the students?
2. **THINK** – Why do you think the newspaper chose this photo and headline? What message are they trying to highlight about the school or the event?
3. **CHECK** – How could you confirm this story is real? Where could you look for the original article?

A WORD OF WARNING

The images you see in Activity 1 were created by artificial intelligence – a computer programme that can create photographs that look real, even though they never happened. No real teenagers posed for those photos. No giant cheque existed. The brain with lightning bolts? Well, you can work that one out!

This is an important lesson: photographs can be created, fabricated and conjured up just as easily as posts and headlines. Just because an image looks real doesn't mean it shows something that actually happened.

When you're investigating media, don't just question the words – question the images too. Where did this photo come from? Who created it? Does it show what it claims to show? In today's world, seeing is not always believing.

ACTIVITY #2

MEDIA OR NOT MEDIA?

Sort, think and explain. Media is anything that carries a message from a creator to an audience. But not everything we see every day is media. Some things are trickier than they first appear.

YOUR TASK

Below are 16 items. Sort them into the correct columns (on next page).



A YouTube Short



A Birthday Card



A Meme



A Cereal Box



A Shop Receipt



A Radio Advert



A Private Diary



A Movie Poster



A Roblox Chat Message



A Voice Note



A Bus Timetable



A Billboard Ad



A Song on Spotify



Handwritten Note Passed in Class



A Football Match Broadcast on TV



A Screenshot of a Funny Comment Posted on Social Media

ACTIVITY #2

MEDIA OR NOT MEDIA?

Sort, think and explain.

Sort (cut and paste or write) them into the correct columns

MEDIA

NOT MEDIA

MAYBE

(you'll need to explain why)

CHALLENGE QUESTION

Choose two items from the 'Maybe' pile. Explain why some people might consider them media – and why others might not.

Item 1:

Item 2:

ACTIVITY #3

CREATE YOUR OWN MEDIA

You're making two short videos about your school for new students joining next year. Same school.
Same facts. Completely different messages.

VERSION A: THE POSITIVE VIDEO

You love the school and want new students to feel excited

1. What will you show? (Pick three things)

- Classrooms during lessons
- The playground at break time
- The school building from outside
- Students eating lunch
- A sports match or PE class
- The library
- A school event or performance
- Teachers in the staffroom

Why did you choose these three things?

2. What will you leave out? (Pick two things from the list above)

Why are you leaving these out?

3. What music or sounds will you use?

- Upbeat, energetic music
- Calm, gentle music
- No music, just natural sounds
- Students talking and laughing
- Other: _____

Why did you choose this? _____

4. How will your video start? _____

5. What headline will appear on screen?

ACTIVITY #3

CREATE YOUR OWN MEDIA

You're making two short videos about your school for new students joining next year.
Same school. Same facts. Completely different messages.

VERSION B: THE NEGATIVE VIDEO

You're disgruntled about the school and want to show its problems

1. What will you show? (Pick three things)

- Classrooms during lessons
- The playground at break time
- The school building from outside
- Students eating lunch
- A sports match or PE class
- The library
- A school event or performance
- Teachers in the staffroom

Why did you choose these three things?

2. What will you leave out? (Pick two things from the list above)

Why are you leaving these out?

3. What music or sounds will you use?

- Slow, dramatic music
- Silence
- No music, just natural sounds
- Students complaining
- Other: _____

Why did you choose this? _____

4. How will your video start? _____

5. What headline will appear on screen?

ACTIVITY #3

CREATE YOUR OWN MEDIA

You're making two short videos about your school for new students joining next year.

Same school. Same facts. Completely different messages.

REFLECTION:

Compare your two versions

1. Did you show the same things in both videos, or different things?

2. How did your choices change the message about the school?

3. If someone only watched VERSION A, what would they think about the school?

4. If someone only watched VERSION B, what would they think about the school?

5. Both videos show the same school. So which one tells the truth?

WELL DONE, MEDIA MAKER!

You've just learned that every piece of media – from a Hollywood film to a school video – is shaped by the choices its creator makes. The same facts can tell very different stories depending on perspective, selection and framing.

This is why STOP • THINK • CHECK matters. Always ask: who made this, and what do they want me to believe?

UNDERSTANDING WHY PEOPLE CREATE MEDIA

The person making Version B might have parents who had a bad experience at the school years ago. They might have recently been dropped from the football team or they might be going through a tough time.

There are always reasons why people post what they do. Your job isn't to judge them – it's to be smart about how you interpret what they've created. Ask yourself: what might have influenced their choices? What perspective are they coming from?

ACTIVITY #4

WORD SEARCH TIME

This word search is packed with words linked to the world of media. Can you spot them all? There's also a hidden word that doesn't appear in the list.

Clue: *Safe in the hands of ...*

MEDIA	<input type="radio"/>
MESSAGE	<input type="radio"/>
AUDIENCE	<input type="radio"/>
CREATOR	<input type="radio"/>
CONTENT	<input type="radio"/>
NEWSPAPER	<input type="radio"/>
RADIO	<input type="radio"/>
TELEVISION	<input type="radio"/>
MAGAZINE	<input type="radio"/>
WEBSITE	<input type="radio"/>
PODCAST	<input type="radio"/>
VIDEO	<input type="radio"/>
SOCIAL	<input type="radio"/>
CHOICES	<input type="radio"/>
IMAGES	<input type="radio"/>
ONLINE	<input type="radio"/>
PLATFORM	<input type="radio"/>
HEADLINE	<input type="radio"/>
LIBRARY	<input type="radio"/>
SAFETY	<input type="radio"/>
?	<input type="radio"/>



Extra Challenge

If you're done, test your skills by putting all the words into alphabetical order.

Curriculum Links

Section	Details
Strand	Wellbeing
Area	Media and Digital Wellbeing
Stage	Stage 3 – 5th and 6th Class
Learning Outcomes	DL 3.1 – Exploring Digital Information DL 3.2 – Recognising Constructed Media DL 3.3 – Critical Digital Thinking DL 3.4 – Evaluating Sources DL 3.7 – Understanding Edited and Artificial Media
Key Competencies	DL – Being a digital learner CL – Being a critical and creative thinker AL – Being an active learner SL – Being a social learner
Learning Intentions	Understand what media is; explore traditional vs online media; recognise constructed nature of media; begin questioning purpose; use STOP • THINK • CHECK; identify unreliable images.
Success Criteria	Explain media; distinguish media types; identify creator choices; apply STOP • THINK • CHECK; recognise unreliable images; sort Media / Not Media / Maybe.
Methodologies	Discussion; modelling; analysis; sorting; creative activity; reflection; vocabulary reinforcement.
Assessment	Written responses; observation; questioning; oral explanations; reflection questions.
Differentiation	Support: sentence starters, grouping, oral options. Challenge: compare sources, identify influence, create misleading headlines.
Safety Notes	AI-generated images; questioning images; safe content; STOP • THINK • CHECK as thinking tool; no fear-based messaging.
Teacher Reflection	Pupils explored media construction, applied STOP • THINK • CHECK, classified media, analysed artificial images and examined influence and reliability.