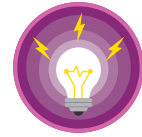




GRADE 11

Clicks for Cash



NEWS & MEDIA LITERACY

*We are critical
thinkers & creators.*

How does internet advertising contribute to the spread of disinformation?

OVERVIEW

Well-crafted headlines benefit everyone. They help readers digest information and publishers sell news stories. But what if the headline is misleading? What if it's crafted just to get clicks or even to spread disinformation? "Clickbait" headlines may benefit advertisers and publishers, but they don't benefit readers. Help students recognize and analyze clickbait when they see it.

[See the U.K. version of this lesson plan](#)

Learning Objectives:

- Describe how advertisers and publishers make money through online advertising.
- Describe how clickbait can contribute to the spread of fake news and disinformation.
- Use the Take a Stand thinking routine to consider different perspectives about whose responsibility it is to fight fake news and disinformation.

Key Vocabulary:

advertisement

a message that promotes a product, service, opportunity, or event using television, the internet, billboards, or other public spaces

advertiser

a person or company who is hired to create advertisements

clickbait

an image or headline that tries to get you to click on it, usually for advertising purposes

disinformation

false or inaccurate information intended to deceive

publisher (website)

the person or company who created the website and its contents

Key Standards Supported

CASEL

4a, 4b, 4c, 4d, 5a, 5b, 5e, 5f

AASL

I.A.2, I.B.1, I.D.1, I.D.2, I.D.3, I.D.4, II.A.1, II.A.2, II.B.1, II.C.1, II.C.2, II.D.1, II.D.2, II.D.3, III.A.1, III.A.2, III.B.1, III.B.2, III.C.2, III.D.1, IV.A.1, IV.A.2, IV.A.3, IV.B.1, V.A.1, V.A.2, V.A.3, VI.A.1, VI.A.2, VI.A.3, VI.D.1, VI.D.2

ISTE

1d, 2b, 3a, 3b, 3d, 6a, 6b, 7a, 7b, 7c, 7d

What You'll Need

Some resources below are available in Spanish

Classroom resources

- Lesson Slides
- Whose Fake News Handout Teacher Version
- Lesson Quiz

Take-home resources

- Family Tips
 - Family Activity
 - Family Engagement Resources
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Lesson Plan

Consider: **Clicks for Cash**

10 mins.

1. **Project** three images of advertisements and ask: *What do these images have in common?* **(Slide 4)**

Invite students to share out. Explain that they all show examples of advertisements.

2. **Ask:** *What is an advertisement? Who usually makes them?*

Invite students to respond. Clarify that an **advertisement** is a message that promotes a product, service, opportunity, or event using television, the internet, billboards, or other public spaces. Advertisements are usually created by paid **advertisers**, which are people or companies who are hired to create advertisements for companies that want to promote their products or services to increase their sales. **(Slide 5)**

Explain that advertisers also have to pay to put their ads in places where people will see them. The price depends on how many people will end up seeing the ad. Ad space in a newspaper, with small circulation, can be cheap. But television ad space during the Super Bowl, when millions of people are watching, can be really, really expensive (CBS charged \$5.25 million for just one 30-second spot in 2019!).

3. **Say:** *One place that ads have become really common is the internet. Where do you typically see ads on the internet?*

Invite students to respond. They may identify pop-ups, emails, the space next to articles on websites, and their social media feed. Explain that whenever you see an ad on a website, the publisher of that website has been paid by the advertiser to place it there. The **publisher** is the person or company that created the website and controls its content. **(Slide 6)**.

4. **Ask:** *How do you think publishers set the price for ad space? If it's usually based on how many people will see the ad, how do they figure that out?*

Invite students to share their ideas. Explain that there are two common ways that it is calculated:

- **Clicks:** The advertiser pays every time someone clicks the ad.
- **Impressions:** The advertiser pays every time someone sees the ad (i.e., views the page with the ad).

5. **Review** the process from when companies hire an advertiser to when a publisher gets paid based on clicks or impressions. **(Slide 7)**

Say: In today's lesson, we're going to talk about one of these ways that publishers get paid: clicks. This is a common way for publishers to make money, but it has led to all kinds of consequences, both intended and not.

Explore: **All About the Money?**

10 mins.

1. **Explain** that some websites and news pages publish clickbait to generate money. Define **clickbait** as an image or headline that tries to get you to click on it, usually for advertising purposes. **(Slide 8)** When you follow a link that is clickbait, you might be taken to another site where you will be shown even more ads.

If the clickbait is really compelling, you might even share it on social media or with other people, which will get more people to come to the site. This makes money for the publishers, but it can also create big problems when it comes to news and information.

2. Show the video **How Do Fake News Sites Make Money?** by BBC News (**Slide 9**).

Ask: *According to the video, how do fake news sites make money?* Sample responses:

- Fake news outlets rely on the ability to attract visitors. They charge other sites, companies, or products who want to advertise on their site.
- They publish a story with false content and a catchy or interesting headline. They post the story on social media or other websites to bring people to their site.
- Every time a visitor clicks on an ad on their site, fake news websites make money. More clicks equal more profit for the advertiser and the publisher.

3. Tell students that fake news websites can help spread **disinformation**, which is *false or inaccurate information intended to deceive*. (**Slide 10**)

Ask: *Why do you think the spread of disinformation might be a problem?*

Invite students to respond. Clarify that disinformation can have several negative effects:

- It can lead people to make uninformed decisions (political elections, health decisions, etc.).
- It can lead to more disagreement and divisiveness between people.
- It can lead to injustices if it prevents people from holding the government or other institutions accountable for their actions.

Take a Stand: **Whose Fake News**

20 mins.

1. Distribute the **Whose Fake News Student Handout**.

Invite a student to read aloud the dilemma in Part 1.

2. Explain that in Part 2, the class will be using the steps of Take a Stand to consider the question at the end of the dilemma.

Take a Stand is a thinking routine for exploring perspectives on dilemmas about community and civic life.

3. Show the steps of Take a Stand (**Slide 11**) and facilitate the class discussion and activity. Have students follow along and take notes on their handout.

Note: Use the **Teacher Version** of the handout for guidance and suggestions for an enriching discussion. (This activity will take the majority of time in this step!)

4. After students have completed the four steps, say: *The aim of this activity was not to lead us to a "right" answer. Rather, the goal was to slow our reactions down, take time to listen to different perspectives, and be reflective about our stance on this dilemma.*

Explain that listening to others' perspectives can also help us discover shared beliefs or values, even when we disagree on how to resolve specific issues (if possible, give an example that surfaced during the discussion -- e.g., two students who had different stances but were both thinking about people's rights). Understanding how and why we don't see eye to eye can support greater mutual understanding and more productive dialogue about how to resolve issues in our society and world.

5. **Optional:** If time permits, have students discuss one or more of the questions in Part 3 of the handout.

Wrap Up: Disinformation Infestation

1. **Say:** *Based on the conversation we had today about online advertisements and fake news websites, who do you think should be responsible for preventing the spread of disinformation?*
 2. **Invite** students to share their thoughts. Highlight how their answers show a wide range of perspectives and opinions.
 3. Have students complete the **Lesson Quiz**. Send home the **Family Activity** and **Family Tips**.
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Additional Resources:

1. For additional news and media literacy lessons, videos, printables, and more, see our **News and Media Literacy Resource Center**.
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