



Critical Thinking Through Core Curriculum:

Using Print and Digital Newspapers

FINANCIAL LITERACY
NUTRITION
ENVIRONMENT
CHARACTER EDUCATION
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY



Nutrition Facts	
per serving	
Total Fat	2g
Saturated Fat	0.5g
Trans Fat	0g
Cholesterol	15mg
Sodium	700mg
Total Carbohydrate	15g
Dietary Fiber	10g



Newspaper In Education Week



Newspaper
Association
of America
Foundation

2010

Critical Thinking Through Core Curriculum:

Using Print and Digital Newspapers

Newspaper In Education Week 2010

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INTRODUCTION

IN THE AGE OF WEB SITES, blogs and social networking, critical thinking skills are more important than ever. On the Internet, everything looks authoritative thanks to do-it-yourself templates and software, while blogs, citizen news sites and social networks add to the confusion.

All of these information sources make it ever more important for students to be able to weigh the merits of information, draw comparisons, sift competing interests and make judgments based on the reliability and track records of sources.

In print or electronic* form, newspapers provide an exceptional opportunity for developing critical thinking skills, not just in the fields of politics or government but also in crucial lifestyle areas such as financial literacy, nutrition, the environment, character education and information technology.

Because newspapers cover a wide range of topics, they provide myriad opportunities to develop students' critical thinking skills in areas that interest them and will affect them for life.

The 2010 NIE Week teacher's guide, which is aligned with national learning standards, features a multisubject approach that takes advantage of the wide range of topics covered by newspapers. The guide also provides an opportunity to teach critical thinking skills through subjects that will be vital to students' success as adults.

* *Electronic forms include Web sites and electronic editions. An "e-edition" presents the newspaper page by page in a digital format. For example, some newspapers use PDF files as e-editions.*



Introduction for the Teacher

In today's quickly changing world, understanding savings, budgeting and other financial matters is not sufficient. Students must know how to make effective, everyday financial decisions based on personal circumstances and society's economic climate.

With the print, electronic or Web edition of the newspaper, students can learn to:

- › Find and evaluate financial news and other information;
- › Read about personal and business situations affected by wise or poor financial decisions;
- › Identify negative financial habits and determine smarter alternatives;
- › Learn how decisions of government and big business affect small business, personal income and savings;
- › Create a personal budget based on real-life situations;
- › Compare and contrast newspaper articles with financial institution Web sites, economic blogs and other Internet sites.

National Standards/Skills

At right are the national economics and financial literacy standards and skills addressed for each grade level in this unit. Economics standards and skills cited are from McREL (www.mcrel.org). Financial literacy standards and skills cited are from the Jump\$tart Coalition for Personal Financial Literacy (www.jumpstart.org). Use the space provided on the next page to note relevant financial literacy or economics standards for your state.

Grades 3-5 should:

- Understand that savings is the part of income not spent on taxes or consumption;
- Know that households (i.e., individuals or family units) as consumers buy goods and services from business firms;
- Make financial decisions by systematically considering alternatives and consequences;
- Develop a plan for spending and saving;
- Apply consumer skills to purchase decisions.

Grades 6-8 should:

- Know that all decisions involve opportunity costs and that effective economic decision-making involves weighing costs and benefits associated with alternative choices;
- Find and evaluate financial information from a variety of sources;
- Make financial decisions by systematically considering alternatives and consequences;
- Apply consumer skills to purchase decisions;
- Develop a plan for spending and saving.

Grades 9-12 should:

- Understand how purchasing decisions relate to wants, needs, goals, values and standards;
- Find and evaluate financial information from a variety of sources;
- Learn how to make financial decisions by systematically considering alternatives and consequences;
- Learn to apply consumer skills to purchase decisions;
- Identify sources of personal income;
- Develop a plan for spending and saving;
- Learn how to use a career plan to develop personal income potential.

FINANCIAL LITERACY

State Standards



Financial Health

You probably have a good idea about what it means to have a healthy body. But do you know what it means to be financially healthy? That means making good decisions about how you use and understand money. The word “financial” is based on the word “finances,” which means “money or other resources” for a person, business or government. Our daily decisions about spending and saving will shape and affect our finances today and in the future. But when we recognize the differences between what we need and what we want, decisions about spending and saving can be easier.

ACTIVITY A:
What I Want

Instructions

1. As a class, discuss what influences spending decisions.
2. Discuss differences between needs and wants and what should come first.
3. Read the local, business and feature sections of the print, electronic or Web edition of the newspaper to find an article involving someone who paid money for something. It can be for music, games, electronics, toys, hobbies, groceries, utilities, cars, houses, a restaurant meal, clothes, movie tickets, rent for an apartment or something else.

On what did this person spend money?

Was it for a need or a want?

What decisions do you think this person made before spending money?

What questions should you ask yourself before buying something?

How can a person or a family develop a plan that allows buying what is needed and what is wanted?

Financial Health

ACTIVITY B:
What I Need

Instructions

1. Think about decisions you must make when you become an adult. Start with a place to live. Check classified ads in the print, electronic or Web edition of the newspaper to find one for a house or an apartment to rent. What is the monthly rent?
2. Using classified and display ads, clip or print other needs and wants you would have as an adult, such as transportation, food, clothing and entertainment.
3. Clip or print a bank ad to represent savings.
4. Paste ads you have chosen on a sheet of paper in order of importance as needs and wants.
5. Why did you choose this order? What would happen if you didn't have a steady job? What would happen if entertainment came before paying your rent? What would happen if you didn't save money on a regular basis?



Be Financially Smart

With so much financial information available in newspapers, on television and on the Internet, it's difficult to know what's important when it comes to money these days. But by learning how earning, spending and saving go hand in hand, you can develop a plan to be financially smart.

ACTIVITY A:

Information Overload

Instructions

1. Read the national, local and business sections in the print, electronic or Web edition of the newspaper to find an article about someone facing a financial challenge or hardship.
2. Write down the who, what, when, where, why and how of the article.
3. Using facts in the article or your previous knowledge, what factor or factors do you think led to the financial hardship?
4. Write down the steps that the person is taking to resolve the situation.
5. Search the newspaper's online archives and financial Internet sites for information on how best to overcome the situation.
6. Develop short-term and long-term goals for this person.

Who, What, When, Where, Why, How?

What factors led to financial hardship? Loss of a job, medical problems or something else?

Could this person have prevented this situation? If yes, how?

List the financial sites searched and how useful you found each site.

List short-term and long-term goals for the person in the article.

Be Financially Smart

ACTIVITY B:

Consumer Search

Instructions

- 1.** Learning to be a smart consumer is a skill that will help you throughout life, especially when shopping for electronics or communications devices. Discuss with classmates what type of device you would most like to buy for yourself or your family (pick a general type, not a specific brand).
- 2.** Search ads in the print, electronic or Web edition of the newspaper for companies that make such devices and different models that are available.
- 3.** List the devices shown in ads and the different prices offered by various stores.
- 4.** Now use the Internet and the online archives of the newspaper to find consumer ratings or consumer stories discussing the brands and models advertised.
- 5.** List the ratings for each and the best and worst things said about each.
- 6.** Search the Internet for information about product recalls or complaints about the devices.
- 7.** Review information you have gathered and choose which brand and model to purchase.
- 8.** Write a paragraph summarizing reasons for your choice.



Have a Financial Plan

Do you have what it takes to be smart financially? What are your plans for college? The military? Technical or trade school? How will you pay for school? With an academic or athletic scholarship? Savings? Student loans? What are your career aspirations? Many decisions must be made about life after high school. Career training and college, your first apartment and car payments all require money. But if you're planning for the future, you're already financially smart.

ACTIVITY A:

What's the Plan?

Instructions

1. Read the national, local, business, sports and feature sections in the print, electronic or Web edition of the newspaper to find information about a career that interests you. Make inferences from the article, such as education and skills needed, demand for this occupation, etc.
2. Search the Internet to learn the type of degree needed. How many years would you expect to be in college? What are the average first-year earnings?
3. Next, choose a college and look on the school's Web site for annual tuition costs. Determine your total education costs for this degree.
4. Search the print, electronic or Web edition of the newspaper to find three ads for banks. Using the banks' Web sites, compare their student loan interest rates. Are they different? Are they fixed or variable rates? What are the payoff terms? Is the loan part of a federal program?
5. Find your chosen career in the employment ads in the classified section of the print, electronic or Web edition of the newspaper. Is there a demand for this occupation? Are the ads a fair representation of the need for this career? Why or why not? Would the employment ads in another part of the country illustrate a higher demand for this occupation? Why or why not?

What career did you choose and why?

What degree is needed? Number of years in college? Average first-year earnings?

What college did you choose and why? What is the cost per year? What is the total tuition, room and board cost to earn a degree?

What are current student-loan interest rates and payoff terms? What total amount, including interest, would you have to pay back?

Have a Financial Plan

ACTIVITY B:

Smart Planning

Instructions

- 1.** Use information from the previous activity to complete this one.
- 2.** Scan classified and display ads in the print, electronic or Web edition of the newspaper. Choose all your needs, such as housing, and your wants, such as entertainment.
- 3.** On paper or a computer spreadsheet, create a monthly budget with these headers: Wages/Income, Rent/Mortgage, Utilities, Groceries/Food, Clothing, Entertainment, Transportation, Savings, Donations, Miscellaneous (such as student loans).
- 4.** Complete each category using information in the ads. Remember, you'll need a month's worth of groceries, gas or bus tickets, etc.
- 5.** Write a summary about your total net income (income minus expenses) and whether your expenses must be adjusted. Include other factors that affect take-home pay not considered here, such as taxes, and your conclusions about spending, saving and budgeting.



Financial News — Fast

When it comes to money, people want news of changes immediately. You can obtain stock updates in text messages, breaking financial news by e-mail and changes in interest rates via Twitter.

Newspapers have always had a sense of urgency. Even when news was delivered the following morning or afternoon, readers could count on newspapers to produce in-depth coverage of issues and events in a timely manner. But is that enough with 24-hour competition and a technologically savvy audience?

Today's newspapers come in print, electronic and Web formats. Like other news outlets, they can update their Web sites throughout the day, send e-mails and texts to readers about breaking news and even distribute information through popular social networks.

With your students, explore financial news in a printed newspaper, in an electronic edition and on the newspaper Web site. Discuss format preferences and purposes for different types of financial news and information.

Compare each newspaper format with other electronic sources of financial news. How do newspapers stack up based on trustworthiness, urgency and ability to detail an issue or event?

Challenge students to devise ways that newspapers can reach more readers interested in financial news. Have students create a display ad promoting newspapers' reliability and usefulness as a financial news source.

Teaching Financial Literacy With the Newspaper

To familiarize students with identifying financial information, give them time to scan the print, electronic or Web edition of the newspaper or go through it as a class. Ask them to look for key financial literacy words, such as economy, credit, investment, stocks, debt, savings, etc.

Remember that financial news isn't found only in the business pages. Challenge students to see how many financial stories they can find in the international, national, local, features and sports sections.

Financial Literacy Resource Links



Economic Awareness Council, a nonprofit organization that works to prepare students and families for economic decisions, www.econcouncil.org

Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation's Money Smart program, a financial education curriculum that helps to build financial skills and positive banking relationships, www.fdic.gov/consumers/consumer/moneysmart

Fraud Scene Investigator, hands-on lessons to help students learn how to detect and avoid investment fraud, www.naafoundation.org/Curriculum/NIE/FSI-main.aspx

Jump\$tart Coalition for Personal Financial Literacy, a site working to ensure that basic financial management skills are learned during the K-12 years, www.jumpstart.org

Moneyinstructor.com, a site to teach and learn basic money skills and personal finance

U.S. Financial Literacy and Education Commission, a federal government site about the basics of financial education, www.mymoney.gov



Introduction for the Teacher

Many factors influence food choices – peers, parents, advertising, culture, age, time, economics, environment and convenience, to name a few. As more is learned about certain diseases and health conditions, people are realizing the great importance of proper nutrition in a healthy lifestyle.

Today, it's more vital than ever for young people to know how to find and decipher nutrition information so they can make good food decisions.

With the print, electronic or Web edition of the newspaper, students can learn to:

- Identify factors that influence food choices;
- Understand how eating properly can help to reduce health risks;
- Understand the reliability and validity of various sources of food and nutrition information.

National Standards/Skills

At right are the national health and nutrition standards and skills addressed for each grade level in this unit. Standards and skills cited are from McREL (www.mcrel.org). Use the space provided on the next page to note relevant health or nutrition standards for your state.

Grades 3-5 should:

- Understand essential concepts about nutrition and diet;
- Know factors that influence food choices (e.g., activity level, peers, culture, religion, advertising, time, age, health, money/economics, convenience, environment, status, personal experience).

Grades 6-8 should:

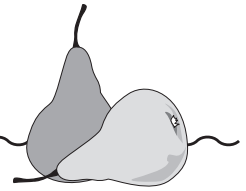
- Understand how eating properly can help to reduce health risks;
- Know appropriate methods to maintain, lose or gain weight according to individual needs and scientific research.

Grades 9-12 should:

- Understand how nutrient and energy needs vary in relation to gender, activity level and stage of life;
- Understand the reliability and validity of various sources of food and nutrition information;
- Understand the role of food additives and their relationship to health.

NUTRITION

State Standards



To Eat or Not to Eat

It's easy to know what we like to eat and what we don't. But how do we know which foods are good for our bodies and which can slow down or even harm our bodies? Learning to make smart food choices will strengthen your body and brain for years.

ACTIVITY A:
What's on Your Plate?

Instructions

1. Using all sections of the print, electronic or Web edition of the newspaper, clip or print at least 10 photos of food items.
2. On the back of each photo, write "like" or "don't like."
3. As a class, discuss why you like certain foods and dislike others. Do you like certain foods when you're happy and other foods when you're upset?
4. Discuss which of the foods you like are healthy. What makes them healthy?
5. Using paper plates or circle cutouts, design a healthy breakfast, lunch and dinner using healthy foods you like. Paste the photos and/or draw pictures on the plates to show food choices for each meal.

What foods do you prefer when you're happy? Why?

What foods do you prefer when you're upset? Why?

What foods that you like are healthy choices?

Print and electronic tools can help people shop for groceries, plan meals, find recipes and do other things related to food. What does your family use?

To Eat or Not to Eat

ACTIVITY B:

Recipe Roundup

Instructions

1. Search the food or health section in the print, electronic or Web edition of the newspaper to find a recipe for a healthy meal. List at least five ingredients that make the meal healthy.
2. As a class, search the Internet for a recipe you think would taste good but is not healthy. Discuss ways you could make that recipe healthier. Could you exchange unhealthy ingredients for more nutritious foods? Can you prepare the meal in a healthier way, such as baking instead of frying?



Health Matters

Drinking sugary soft drinks, munching on fried snacks and eating other unhealthy foods can make you gain weight, lead to problems with teeth, skin or energy levels, and even affect your mood. Daily diets filled with the wrong foods also can lead to serious health problems and diseases now and later. On the other hand, balanced diets packed with essential nutrients can provide energy, help you think more clearly, strengthen teeth and bones, and even help to prevent certain diseases.

ACTIVITY A:
Food Facts

Instructions

1. Read the health, local and national sections in the print, electronic or Web edition of the newspaper to find an article about obesity, cancer, heart disease, dental health or another health condition.
2. Using a marker or your computer's highlight tool, mark any reference to food and nutrition in the article.
3. Based on this article, make conclusions about how good or poor nutrition plays a role in this health issue.
4. Using the Internet or the newspaper's online archives, search for other articles about the health issue.

How does good or poor nutrition play a role in this health issue?

What foods could have possible positive effects on this health issue?

On what Internet sites did you find information about this health issue?

Which site had the most balanced information? Which seemed the most authoritative? Why?

Health Matters

ACTIVITY B:

Healthy or Hype?

Instructions

1. Search the print, electronic or Web edition of the newspaper for ads for products or programs claiming to have a health benefit, assist in weight loss or provide another nutritional benefit.
2. Choose one and cut out or print the ad.
3. On a computer spreadsheet or paper chart, list the claims for this product.
4. Search the Internet for articles, ads or opinion sites that assess, counter or dispute the claims.
5. List your findings on your spreadsheet or chart.
6. Compare the information. What are your opinions or conclusions regarding this product?
7. Finish your spreadsheet or chart by adding a list of healthy alternatives to this product.



Nutrition by the Numbers

Sometimes sticking to a healthy diet can seem like a numbers game. Among the many things to consider are calories, fat grams and sodium intake. But understanding what your body needs based on your age, gender and activity level will make the numbers game a lot easier and help your body be at its best for years.

ACTIVITY A:

What Does Age Have to Do With It?

Instructions

1. Search the print, electronic or Web edition of the newspaper to find an ad for vitamins or a nutritional, weight-loss or muscle-building supplement.
2. Visit the product manufacturer's Web site. What ingredients are in the product?
3. Research at least three of the ingredients online. Do any have known side effects or pose other health concerns?
4. Search the Internet for a reliable source to determine your nutritional needs (calories, vitamins, etc.) based on your age, gender and activity level.
5. Using product claims in the ad, determine ways you could achieve the same results for your age, gender, etc., without using an artificial supplement.
6. Search the Internet for a reliable source to learn your nutritional and exercise needs.

Based on the ad, what does the product claim to do?

What ingredients are in the product?

List any reported side effects or other health concerns of the product.

List healthy ways a person can achieve the same goals without this product.

Based on your age and gender, how many daily calories do you need? How much weekly exercise should you have?

Nutrition by the Numbers

ACTIVITY B:

Fast Food Facts

Instructions

1. Scan the print, electronic or Web edition of the newspaper to find ads for a fast-food or chain restaurant.
2. Using that restaurant's Web site, find the nutritional value of its menu offerings.
3. Based on the nutrition values (calories, fat grams, etc.) needed by someone your age and gender, choose a healthy meal.
4. On paper or computer, design a new ad for this restaurant highlighting healthy choices for teenagers. Include a disclaimer about the harmful effects of food additives.
5. Write a paragraph or short essay discussing the critical thinking skills needed to assess claims in media advertising.



Searching for Good Nutrition

Print, electronic and Web editions of newspapers are packed with examples of good and poor nutrition. Articles appear daily about new research and the relationships between diet and diseases. Photos are published of local people and celebrities eating healthily or poorly. After all, newspapers – in every format – are a reflection of your community, the nation and the world. Each format has something different to offer readers seeking better nutrition.

It's easy to clip your favorite recipe from the print newspaper, find archived articles in the electronic edition and search the newspaper's Web site. Allow

students time to explore each format for nutrition information. Start a discussion about the ways each format is most useful.

Have students write a newspaper article about each format with quotes from classmates about their preferred format.

Teaching Nutrition With the Newspaper

Examples of good and poor nutrition are abundant and not limited to the health section of the print, electronic or Web edition of the newspaper. The sports section may show a professional basketball star eating a hamburger, while the entertainment section may show a celebrity drinking a bottle of water.

Allow students time to explore the print, electronic or Web edition of the newspaper and to clip or print photos and articles about good and bad nutrition choices. If they see a role model doing something good or bad, are they more likely to follow that behavior? Give them time to compare grocery store and other food-related ads. Do they detect a trend from ad to ad?

Nutrition Resource Links



American Society for Nutrition, a nonprofit organization site that provides nutrition news, information about studies and other resources, www.nutrition.org

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, a federal government site for nutrition information, www.cdc.gov/nutrition

KidsHealth, a site for kids and teens about health, behavior and development, www.kidshealth.org

www.nutrition.gov, a federal government information site about food and human nutrition for consumers

www.nutritiondata.com, a source for nutritional analysis



Introduction for the Teacher

Today's kids and teens are much "greener" than those of previous generations. From the earliest grades, they are aware of the importance of recycling, picking up litter or caring for streams, lakes, rivers, wetlands or the ocean. Thanks to research, education in schools and media reports, this knowledge has grown. But students must understand the scientific basis for green environmental decisions and how society's decisions could affect the environment in future generations.

With the print, electronic or Web edition of the newspaper, students can learn:

- Ways human activities affect the physical environment;
- Ways resources can be managed and why that is important;
- Environmental consequences of intended and unintended outcomes of technological changes;
- The global impact of human changes in the physical environment;
- How different regions nationally and worldwide may make future environmental impacts.

National Standards/Skills

At right are national science standards and skills addressed for each grade level in this unit. Standards and skills cited are from McREL (www.mcrel.org). Use the space provided on the next page to note relevant science or environmental standards for your state.

Grades 3-5 should:

- Know how people affect the environment in negative and positive ways;
- Know the ways people alter the physical environment;
- Know the ways in which resources can be managed and why it is important to do so.

Grades 6-8 should:

- Understand the environmental consequences of people changing the physical environment;
- Understand the reasons for conflicting viewpoints about how resources should be used;
- Understand the environmental consequences of both the unintended and intended outcomes of major technological changes in human history.

Grades 9-12 should:

- Understand programs and positions related to the use of resources on a local to global scale;
- Know issues related to the reuse and recycling of resources;
- Understand how the environment influences the health of the community;
- Understand the concept of sustainable development and its effects in a variety of situations.

THE ENVIRONMENT

State Standards



Friend of the Earth

Everyone can be a friend of the Earth. Being “environmentally friendly” can mean many things, including using products that don’t harm the planet’s natural resources and taking active steps to save or care for wildlife, habitats or resources.

You, your family and school already may be doing at least one good thing for the environment, such as recycling, reusing grocery bags or picking up trash in a park. It seems as if you can’t turn on the television, log on to the Internet or read the print, electronic or Web edition of the newspaper without learning that some group is working for something that affects the environment. With all of this information, how do we know what is best for the planet?

ACTIVITY A:

What’s Your Point?

Instructions

1. As a class, read the national, local, business and editorial sections in the print, electronic or Web edition of the newspaper to find a group working for the environment or a group trying to change rules for the environment.
2. In groups or as a class, research this issue further using the newspaper, its online archives, the Internet, encyclopedias or other resources.
3. What issues are important to the group working for the environment? What are other views in the discussion or debate? How has technology made an impact on this issue? Are there underlying reasons why this group wants to bring about this change?
4. On a separate sheet of paper, write a short letter to the editor expressing your opinion on this issue. Be sure to include facts and information from the newspaper articles and Web sites in your letter.

What are the issues important to the group working for the environment?

What are other views in the discussion or debate?

How has technology had an impact on this issue?

Are there underlying reasons this group wants to bring about change?

What next steps do you think the group should take?

If the group takes those steps, what do you think will happen?

Friend of the Earth

ACTIVITY B:
Community Patrol

Instructions

1. Read the print, electronic or Web edition of today's newspaper to find an environmental issue facing your community, or search the newspaper's electronic edition or Web site for previous articles.
2. As a class, pick one topic.
3. In three groups, create an advertising campaign about ways the community can help to improve the local environment. Group 1 should design a print newspaper ad. Group 2 should write a television ad. Group 3 should create an Internet ad.
5. Each group should present its ad to the class. What are the strengths and weaknesses of each ad?



Balance and the Environment

Making decisions about the environment is often a balancing act. Government and community leaders must balance the need to protect the environment with concerns for providing jobs and economic growth for a city or region. In setting a course, communities must consider the actions of those who work to help the environment and those of businesses or individuals that may damage the environment while providing other benefits.

ACTIVITY A:

Earth Leaders

Instructions

1. Alone or with a partner, search the print, electronic or Web edition of the newspaper for articles showing ways that individuals, groups and businesses are helping the environment.
2. Find examples of ways that individuals, groups and businesses are harming the environment.
3. As a class, discuss what you found and give examples from your own experiences.
4. Divide into two groups. Half of the class should represent business leaders for companies that deal with natural resources or operate in areas near natural resources. The other half should represent community leaders.
5. Community leaders should discuss the impact businesses can have on natural resources and the environment through actions such as construction or resource use, along with companies' responsibilities to the community. Business leaders should discuss costs of doing business with or near natural resources, ways their companies provide jobs for the community and the effect of environmental rules on businesses.
6. What are the goals of the business leaders? What are the goals of the community leaders? What compromises can the two groups make? Work together to find solutions that benefit businesses, citizens and the environment.

List what your team learned about individuals, groups and businesses that are helping or harming the environment.

What are key points learned from your class discussion?

What are the goals of the business leaders?

What are the goals of the community leaders?

What compromises can the two groups make?

Balance and the Environment

ACTIVITY B:

Lobbying for Change

Instructions

1. Search the print, electronic or Web edition of today's newspaper and the archives of the electronic edition or newspaper Web site for articles about decisions by large businesses or corporations that have harmed the environment locally or nationally.
2. As a class, determine issues to include in an advertising campaign aimed at big businesses. The campaign should "sell" corporations on what they should or shouldn't be doing to help the environment.
3. Divide into four groups. Group 1 should design a newspaper ad. Group 2 should write a television ad. Group 3 should create an Internet ad. Group 4 should write a newspaper editorial.
4. Each group should share its work with the class. How effective is each ad or editorial? What are the advantages of each medium?



Thinking Globally

When the environment is involved, just thinking about one's community or even country is not sufficient. So much of what we do in cities, towns, states and the country affects other nations. We must be concerned about the effect of other countries' policies on us. Thanks to technology, following what's happening environmentally worldwide is easy. Information is power, and we all share the same planet.

ACTIVITY A:

It's a Small World After All

Instructions

1. Read the international, national, business and editorial sections of the print, electronic or Web edition of the newspaper and choose an article about an issue with environmental implications on a global scale.
2. Determine possible far-reaching and long-term solutions.
3. Use answers from the questions at right to write a letter to the editor about this issue on a separate sheet of paper. Be sure to cite facts found in the article and in further Internet research.

What resources, locally or globally, are at the center of the issue?

Are recycling or reuse of materials a part of this issue?

What are the views of the different sides in the discussion or debate?

What are the effects of this issue on health or financial concerns?

How extensive is this problem? (Give examples.)

How does technology play a role?

Thinking Globally

ACTIVITY B:

Attention, Politicians

Instructions

- 1.** Search the print, electronic or Web edition of today's newspaper, and the archives of the electronic edition or the newspaper's online archives, for articles about restricting or capping use of environmental resources.
- 2.** As a class, list your opinions about what the federal government should or shouldn't be doing to cap use of environmental resources.
- 3.** Devise an advertising campaign directed to politicians about what you think the nation's role and policies should be.
- 4.** Divide into five groups. Group 1 should design a newspaper ad. Group 2 should write a television ad. Group 3 should create an Internet ad. Group 4 should write a newspaper editorial. Group 5 should write a citizen's speech.
- 5.** How effective do you think your ad campaign would be? What is the impact of editorials or speeches? What are the benefits of each media format?



Newspapers Without the Paper

For years, newspapers have tried to help the environment by using environmentally friendly ink and by printing, at least in part, on recycled paper. Recently, many newspapers have really gone green.

A trend in the newspaper industry is to reduce – or in some cases eliminate – use of paper. Electronic editions and Web newspapers have joined forces or even replaced traditional ink and newsprint.

Electronic editions, also called e-editions, present the newspaper page by page in a digital format (for example, some newspapers use PDF files as e-editions). Web newspapers present news in a Web site format.

Reasons beyond environmental concerns for these changes are cost efficiency and capturing new and younger audiences. The trend also is sparing many trees. Mixed emotions have resulted. Some people prefer to hold an actual newspaper, turn its pages and easily clip articles and photos. Others love electronic search functions, portability and other capabilities of digital newspapers.

Challenge students to examine the three newspaper formats – print, e-edition and Web. Lead a discussion about which is more useful, the purposes of each and the format individual students prefer. Talk about the trustworthiness of newspapers and whether one format is trusted more than another. Have them write letters to the editor about how they feel about this issue.

Teaching the Environment With the Newspaper

Chances are, students are naturally interested in the environment. Encourage them to share ways they are already helping the environment at home and school.

If your class uses an e-edition or the Web edition, tell students that it's just one way they are doing their part for the environment. Discuss how electronic and Web newspapers reduce – but do not eliminate – readers' environmental "carbon footprint" and how that advances green lifestyles.

Challenge them to see how many times they can find words such as recycling, green, eco, sustainable, renewable, biodegradable, energy and other environmental words in the newspaper.

Environment Resource Links



Earth 911, a site for news and information about reducing, reusing and recycling, www.earth911.com

Kids for a Clean Environment, a site for children that teaches about issues and encourages action, www.kidsface.org

National Geographic, a media-rich site to see and read about environmental issues, <http://environment.nationalgeographic.com/environment>

U.S. Department of Energy, a federal government site to learn about environmental news, policies and issues, www.energy.gov/environment

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the federal government's agency for environmental science, education and assessment, www.epa.gov



Introduction for the Teacher

Good character may mean different things to different people, which may make teaching character education a challenge. Yet that challenge can make a lifetime of difference.

Character education teaches students to look at themselves and others differently. It asks them to decide what qualities are most important in being a “good person” and shows them how those qualities can be acquired. The lessons of character education last long after a student’s final school bell.

With the print, electronic or Web edition of the newspaper, students can learn about these character traits:

- › Respect
- › Responsibility
- › Caring
- › Integrity
- › Kindness
- › Perseverance
- › Cooperation

National Standards/Skills

At right and on the next page are national standards and skills that relate to character education. Some are included among civics standards; some are included among behavioral studies or health standards. Standards and skills cited are from McREL (www.mcrel.org). Use the space provided on the next page to note relevant character education or civics standards for your state.

Grades 3-5 should:

- Know private character traits that contribute to the health of ... democracy such as individual responsibility, self-discipline/self-governance, honesty, persistence and compassion;
- Understand that various factors (e.g., interests, capabilities, values) contribute to the shaping of a person’s identity;
- Know behaviors that communicate care, consideration and respect of self and others (including those with disabilities or handicapping conditions).

Grades 6-8 should:

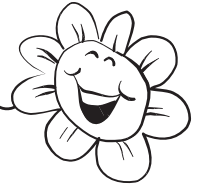
- Know private character traits that contribute to the health of ... democracy such as individual responsibility, self-discipline/self-governance, honesty, persistence and compassion;
- Understand the importance for individuals and society of commonly held personal responsibilities such as taking care of one’s self, supporting one’s family, accepting responsibility for the consequences of one’s actions, adhering to moral principles, considering the rights and interests of others and behaving in a civil manner;
- Understand contemporary issues that involve personal responsibilities (e.g., failure to provide adequate support or care for one’s children, cheating on examinations, lack of concern for the less fortunate);
- Know the various possible causes of conflict among youth in schools and communities, and strategies to manage conflict.

CHARACTER EDUCATION

Grades 9-12 should:

- Understand the importance of dispositions that lead citizens to become independent members of society such as self-discipline, self-governance and individual responsibility (i.e., fulfilling the moral and legal obligations of membership in society);
- Understand the importance of dispositions that foster respect for individual worth and human dignity such as compassion and respect for the rights and choices of individuals;
- Know possible causes of conflicts in schools, families, and communities, and strategies to prevent conflict in these situations;
- Understand that even when the majority of people in a society agree on a social decision, the minority who disagree must be protected from oppression, just as the majority may need protection against unfair retaliation from the minority;
- Understand that the decisions of one generation both provide and limit the range of possibilities open to the next generation.

State Standards



Kind Kids

How do you feel when someone does something nice for you? What about when someone hurts your feelings? How do you feel when you help someone else? When you take time to think about how your actions make someone feel – and make yourself feel – it’s much easier to remember the right thing to do. Doing the right thing is called having good character. Character is important to everyone, because your character tells others what kind of person you are.

ACTIVITY A:
You Make Me Smile

Instructions

1. In teams or as a class, use a print or online dictionary to find and write down the definitions of the following character traits – respect, responsibility, caring, integrity, kindness, perseverance and cooperation.
2. Read the comics in the print, electronic or Web edition of the newspaper and choose one that reminds you of a personal experience that involved at least one of these character traits.
3. Share the comic strip with the class and tell a story about your personal experience. Give examples of at least one character trait and how the actions made you feel.
4. Finish by finding a story or photo in the print, electronic or Web edition of the newspaper in which a person demonstrated a character trait. Clip or print out the story and show it to the class as an example. Explain your choice.

What is the definition of respect?

What is the definition of responsibility?

What is the definition of caring?

What is the definition of integrity?

What is the definition of kindness?

What is the definition of perseverance?

What is the definition of cooperation?

Kind Kids

ACTIVITY B:

Dear Friend

Instructions

1. Read the sports, business and feature sections of the print, electronic or Web edition of the newspaper to find a story about a person or a group of people who exhibit at least one of the character traits discussed in the first activity. What did the person or group do to show this trait? How did this affect someone else?
2. Think of someone you know, such as a parent, grandparent, brother, sister, teacher or friend, who exhibits one or more of the character traits.
3. Write a letter to this person stating ways he or she shows the character traits, how that makes you feel and ways you will try to exhibit the same traits. Be sure your letter includes the date, address, greeting, body text, closing and signature.
4. Address an envelope to the recipient and include the letter.



Character Rules!

What does your character say about you?
What do you want it to say about you?
Decisions people make every day affect how others see us and how we see ourselves. By taking time to make correct decisions, we can avoid conflict, achieve goals and feel really great inside.

ACTIVITY A:

What's My Line?

Instructions

1. Think about the meaning of these character traits: respect, responsibility, caring, integrity, kindness, perseverance and cooperation.
2. In groups, read the local, sports, business and feature sections of the print, electronic or Web edition of the newspaper to find a story in which people are missing one or more of these traits. What trait or traits are not apparent? Who is missing this trait or traits? How has this caused a problem? How could the outcome have been different if the person or people had shown good character?
3. In groups, act out the story. Each character should discuss how actions of others made him/her feel. Together, produce a solution to the problem.
4. As your character, write a letter to another character in the story about your feelings regarding your behavior or his or hers. What compromises can you suggest?

List the who, what, where, when, why and how of the article.

Who is lacking certain character traits? What are those missing traits?

How could the outcome have been different if the person or people had shown good character?

Character Rules!

ACTIVITY B:

In Hindsight

Instructions

- 1.** Using the article from the first activity, rewrite the story showing the subjects making good character choices.
- 2.** What character traits do the subjects now possess? How did this change the outcome of your story?
- 3.** Do you feel the original newspaper article was effective in how it examined character issues? Why or why not?
- 4.** How do you think television news would have covered this topic? How about Internet news sources?
- 5.** Find the story on the Internet. What is the source of this account of the story? How does it compare to the coverage in the newspaper?



A Matter of Character

It is an unfortunate fact that discrimination still exists in this country and in the world. But why are people of certain races, religions and cultures treated differently? Is it lack of education and understanding among others? Long-term rivalries or biases? What does discrimination say about the character of people who treat others unfairly? What does the response of people facing discrimination say about their character? A person's character goes far beyond his or her beliefs. Character, good or bad, is evident in every person's actions toward others.

ACTIVITY A:

Character Flaws

Instructions

1. Search the editorial, national, local and/or faith/values sections in the print, electronic or Web edition of the newspaper, or the online newspaper archives, to find an article about a person or group being discriminated against because of race, religion, culture, etc.
2. Think about these character traits – respect, responsibility, caring, integrity, kindness, perseverance and cooperation – in relation to this article.
3. Search the Internet for other news articles about discrimination against this person or group.

How is this person or group being treated unfairly? Why?

Who is doing the discriminating?

How is it affecting the person or group? How is it affecting others?

What character traits are missing, and who is missing them?

What character traits can help someone overcome discrimination?

What influence do the news media have on coverage of social issues like this?

A Matter of Character

ACTIVITY B:

Stand Up for Character

Instructions

- 1.** Using the newspaper article from the previous activity, research the same social issue online. What additional information did you find? What patterns did you detect? Has your opinion about this issue changed since reading the articles?
- 2.** Think about what this person or group has endured and the ways character plays a role. Write a journal or blog entry expressing your opinions regarding this social issue or post a comment on the newspaper's Web site. How can you influence a change? How has learning about this issue changed the way you think about your character and the character of others?



Character Is Everywhere

Character, good and bad, is part of everyone’s life. It’s present in decisions we make every day and in issues facing the nation and the world.

However, with access to countless opinions available through social networks, blogs and Web sites, it’s easy to become confused about what is right or wrong. It’s also easy to confuse citizen journalism and opinion sites with professional, unbiased reporting.

As a class, choose a social issue to explore. Have students find articles about this topic in the print, electronic or Web edition of the newspaper. Then have them search the Internet to find the same topic on citizen journalism sites, blogs, social networks and other sites.

What similarities and differences did they find? Discuss which sites they trust most as sources and how they know whether they can trust a source.

Challenge students to create an editorial cartoon depicting the character of one type of electronic information source and the responsibilities of people who disseminate information through that source.

Teaching Character Education With the Newspaper

Because the newspaper provides a broad portrait of people and events around the community, state, nation and world, examples of good and poor behavior can be found throughout its pages.

Chances are, students will have different views on positive character traits. Let them challenge one another by role-playing scenarios found in the newspaper.

One trick for creating storyboards for role-playing or writing assignments is to clip or print comic strips from the print, electronic or Web edition of the newspaper and use a pencil eraser or a liquid eraser to remove the dialogue. Let students fill in the blank spaces to create their own character education stories.

Character Education Resource Links



Character Education Partnership, site of a nonprofit group that fosters character education in K-12 schools, www.character.org

www.goodcharacter.com, a site for free character education resources, materials and lesson plans

Kids Care Clubs, a program of HandsOn Network that works to develop compassion and inspire service in elementary and middle school students, www.kidscare.org

Partnerships in Character Education Project Program, the U.S. Department of Education’s character education grant program, www.ed.gov/programs/charactered

The Random Acts of Kindness Foundation, a nonprofit group that provides activity ideas, lesson and project plans, teacher’s guide and other character education resources, www.actsofkindness.org



Introduction for the Teacher

Information technology has transformed the way people communicate. Texting, blogs and social networks have given students expansive new ways to connect and express themselves. With the features and portability of smartphones and other devices, they can communicate anywhere, anytime with audio, video, still photography and more.

These tools of technology give students unprecedented opportunities for gathering and sharing information. They also raise new and challenging issues of responsibility, safety, fairness and civility. They make it ever more important for students to be able to weigh the merits of information, draw comparisons, sift competing interests and make judgments based on the reliability and track records of sources.

As chroniclers of change and innovation, newspapers, electronic editions and newspaper Web sites offer great opportunities for teaching students the skills and ethics needed to succeed in an increasingly technologically savvy world.

With the print, electronic or Web edition of the newspaper, students can learn:

- Ways information technology changes how people work, play and communicate;
- Benefits and drawbacks of advanced technology;
- What it means to be ethically and technologically responsible;
- Steps to ensure safety online.

National Standards/Skills

At right and on the next page are national technology standards and skills addressed for each grade level in this unit. Standards and skills cited are from McREL (www.mcrel.org). Use the space provided on the next page to note relevant technology or science standards for your state.

Grades 3-5 should:

- Know that technology facilitates better communication by providing storage and retrieval of large amounts of data, an easy means of accessing data, a means of processing and displaying data and faster communication among individuals;
- Understand the risks of sharing personal information online.

Grades 6-8 should:

- Know that technology facilitates better communication by providing storage and retrieval of large amounts of data, an easy means of accessing data, a means of processing and displaying data and faster communication among individuals;
- Understand the risks of sharing personal information online;
- Know examples of copyright violations and computer fraud;
- Know etiquette rules when using the Internet.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

Grades 9-12 should:

- Know that communication systems can transfer information from person to person, person to machine or machine to machine;
- Understand the uses of listservs, usenet newsreaders and bulletin board systems;
- Observe common courtesies and acceptable use policies while telecomputing;
- Understand the impact of the Internet on society;
- Understand the risks of sharing personal information online.

State Standards



An Electronic World

It may be difficult to imagine, but your parents can probably remember a time before cell phones, texting, the Internet and e-mail. Technology changes very fast. While it can greatly improve our lives, it also can complicate them. Used responsibly, technology can bring us closer as friends, a community, a nation and a planet.

ACTIVITY A:

Technology Is in the Bag

Instructions

1. From the print, electronic or Web edition of the newspaper, cut or print photos of information technology devices, such as cell phones and computers. How many did you find?
2. As a class, discuss the different information technology devices you use at home and at school.

What devices did you find? What devices did you discuss?

How is each intended to be used?

How has technology changed the way we communicate? How has this made life easier? What's bad about technology?

Can you think of ways people might misuse technology devices?

An Electronic World

Think about your answers and the class discussion. Write a journal or Internet blog entry about your everyday life using information technology devices. What technology do you use daily, and how? What could you stop using, and what can't you live without? What do you think life was like 10 years ago? What advances will be made in the next 10 years?

ACTIVITY B:

Can You Keep a Secret?

Instructions

1. In teams, read the local, features, business and sports sections of the print, electronic or Web edition of the newspaper to find articles about ways people use computers to communicate, such as e-mail, blogs, social networks, etc.
2. With your teacher, find an article about a sports star. Together, type that person's name into an Internet search engine. How many Web site sources did this search produce? What types of sites did you find – news, social networking, opinion, advertising? What are the differences between these sites?
3. What type of site do you think would be most trustworthy? Why? What type of site do you think would be least trustworthy? Why?
4. Discuss in class the dangers of sharing personal information online. What information shouldn't be shared? What sites should be avoided?
5. What are your responsibilities while using the Internet?



Technology Smarts

When you want to tell your friends something exciting, make plans for the weekend or just pass the time, do you use your cell phone to call or send a text message? Do you use Twitter or e-mail? Do you post information on a social network such as MySpace or Facebook? Think about how many ways you use technology to communicate instantly.

Information technology allows people near and far away to keep in touch. It allows us to be more informed and to learn information quickly. But with convenience comes risk. That's why when using technology, it's best to sharpen one of your very best tools – your mind.

ACTIVITY A:

To Trust or Not to Trust

Instructions

1. Search the news, sports and features sections of the print, electronic or Web edition of the newspaper to find an article or subject that interests you. Include movie and TV listings.
2. Use at least three different search methods to find more or different information about this subject on Internet sites. What are the different ways you searched the Internet? What was most effective?
3. When you began your search, were you seeking additional information, different information or varying opinions? What did you find? What type of sites did you use – news, advertising, social networking, blogs or other opinion sites?
4. As a class or in small groups, discuss the reliability or trustworthiness of each type of site. What factors make you feel safe on a site? How do you know whether the content is legitimate or manufactured by the site producers?
5. Discuss the trustworthiness of newspapers, whether printed, electronic or Web site, versus other news media, such as television, radio and Internet. How trusted are newspapers when compared to promotional sites, such as advertisements, and self-published sites, such as blogs?

What are the different ways you searched the Internet? What was most effective?

When you began your search, were you seeking additional information, different information or varying opinions? What did you find?

What type of sites did you use – news, advertising, social networking, blogs or other opinion sites?

What factors make you feel safe on a Web site? How do you know whether the content is legitimate or manufactured by the site producers?

How trusted are newspapers when compared to promotional sites, such as advertisements, and self-publishing sites, such as blogs?

Technology Smarts

ACTIVITY B:

Responsibility Behind the Screen

Instructions

1. Read the national, editorial, business and local sections in the print, electronic or Web edition of the newspaper or use the newspaper's online archives to find an article about misuse of electronic communication.
2. What happened? Who was harmed? How? Who was responsible?
3. As a class or in small groups, discuss ethical responsibilities involved with using cell phones, e-mail, texting and the Internet, including social networks and blogs. For instance, do you have the right to write anything you want about a person? What are possible implications for the writer and the person written about? How does copyright play a part in electronic communications? What are dangers about sharing your name, address and other personal information online?
4. Individually, write a blog entry expressing your opinions about the benefits, dangers and responsibilities of electronic communication. Be sure to cite facts from the news and personal experiences.



Information Everywhere

Information is all around us. At any moment, you may receive a text, e-mail or voice mail message. Schools can send important information to parents via blast phone messages. Long-distance friends can message instantly. You can tell the world what you're thinking when you're thinking it.

With these privileges, however, come great responsibilities. Information technology, with all its conveniences, is only as good as the practices, ethics and intentions of its users. When it is used properly, we can communicate faster, easier and more often.

ACTIVITY A:

*Great Technology,
Great Responsibility*

Instructions

1. In small groups, search the print, electronic or Web edition of the newspaper, plus the online archives, for articles dealing with ways that teenagers have positively and negatively used or been affected by information technology. Together, choose one news article to examine.
2. Use the Internet to research this news event on at least three different types of sites – news, social networking, promotional, listservs, citizen journalism, personal blogs, for-profit sites, etc.
3. Share your group's discussion with the class. Together, talk about such issues as cyberbullying, plagiarism or other issues and consequences that may result.
4. Individually, write a newspaper editorial about what students, parents and schools can do to protect students from being harmed or abused by information technology.
5. Look on the editorial page of your print, electronic or Web newspaper for the e-mail address of the editorial department. E-mail your submission.

How did each type of site treat this story? Did you learn more from one site than another?

Which site do you trust most? Why?

Which site do you trust least? Why?

What is the role of newspapers, whether print, electronic or Web, compared to electronic information sites? Do you think newspapers display more responsibility? Why or why not? Do you think they have higher ethical standards? Why or why not?

What are your individual responsibilities when using technology to communicate? What steps should you take to protect yourself? What are your ethical responsibilities toward others?

Does knowing that information on the Internet is permanent change your attitude or practices?

Information Everywhere

ACTIVITY B:

Risky Business

Instructions

1. Refer to the article you chose for the previous activity regarding a teenager positively or negatively affected by information technology.
2. Think about your small group and class discussions from the activity and your own opinions.
3. Design a poster or Web page detailing risks students should be aware of when using various forms of electronic communications.



The New Newspaper

Technology has certainly changed how we work, play and communicate. It also has changed how and when we receive information.

Newspapers once competed only with other print media, radio and television. Now newspapers also compete with a variety of Internet news outlets, social networks and citizen journalism sites. Virtually all of these vie for readers and advertising dollars.

As newspapers evolve, the industry seeks ways to become more useful and essential. While some newspapers remain print-only, many have gone digital with Web sites and electronic editions, which are digital replicas of the printed paper.

Challenge students to search the Internet to identify various forms of digital competition for newspapers. Have students write editorials about the current and future roles of newspapers, ways the industry should reinvent itself (or not) to capture readers and advertising dollars, and newspapers' heritage and history of being informed readers' most trustworthy source of information. Encourage them to submit these editorials to the local newspaper and NIE program.

Teaching Information Technology With the Newspaper

Examples of how people use computers, cell phones, smartphones and other communication devices can be found throughout the newspaper.

The business section may have articles about breakthroughs in electronics, marketing of new products or the expanding influence of Internet search engines such as Yahoo! and Google. Lifestyle sections may highlight ways parents are using texting or other technologies to stay in touch with children. The local section may cover incidents of Internet fraud, identity theft or cyberbullying.

Display ads are an ongoing source of information about the newest cell phones, computer games or wireless devices coming to market.

One way to introduce information technology to students is to send them on a newspaper scavenger hunt. Let them clip or print examples of ways people use cell phones, smartphones, MP3 players, computer software, etc. Challenge students to see who can find the most examples and then to imagine life without these devices once looked on as luxuries but now considered essential.

Information Technology Resource Links



Childnet International, site of a nonprofit organization that provides information about making the Internet safe for children, www.childnet-int.org

Internet Keep Safe Coalition, an informational site teaching children safe use of technology and the Internet, www.ikeepssafe.org

NetSmartz Workshop, a site from the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children about Internet safety, www.netsmartz.org

SafeKids.com, an information and resource site about Internet safety and kids, www.safekids.com

The Student Press Law Center, a student journalism resource site offering information on copyright and First Amendment issues, student publishing rights and updates on case law regarding student use of Web sites, blogs and social media, www.splc.org

WiredSafety, a site for Internet safety, help and educational resources, www.wiredsafety.org