

The Mascara Controversy

EXERCISE-IN-A-BOX LESSON PLAN (13-15 years old)

OVERVIEW

Students will learn to navigate the digital media landscape responsibly by understanding the roles of influencers, the responsibilities of online creators, and the nature of sponsored posts. This lesson fosters critical thinking and promotes digital citizenship.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Students will be able to:

- Analyse the roles influencers play in digital media and the ways in which influencers interact with their audience and shape opinions.
 - Critically evaluate the responsibilities of content creators, including sponsored posts and influencer marketing tactics to identify potential biases and manipulations of information.
 - Explain the importance of giving credit and citing sources online, and how to properly credit and cite sources when using them in their own work.
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DURATION

60 minutes

KEYWORDS

- **Influencers:** A person who has built a large following on social media platforms and has the power to influence the opinions and purchasing decisions of their audience.
 - **Sponsored Posts:** Sponsored posts are a type of online content where the creator or influencer has received payment or incentives in exchange for promoting a product or brand.
 - **Giving Credit:** Giving credit to someone means acknowledging the work of others and crediting the original source of content used in your own posts, such as images, videos or ideas.
 - **Creator's Responsibilities:** As digital content creators, individuals have a responsibility to uphold ethical standards, of which responsibilities include creating accurate content, and respecting intellectual property rights.
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INTERNET INDEPENDENT FRAMEWORK

The learning objectives in this workshop are aligned with the **Digital Media Literacy** pillar of the Internet Independent Framework. Visit cyberlite.org for more information.

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WARM-UP 5 MINUTES

Slide 1

Say: Today, we will be learning about the topic of digital media literacy. In an online world where anyone can create and post content, we must learn how to differentiate facts from opinions.

Slide 2

Ask: Have you ever come across an influencer who was trying to sell you a product or service?

Engage with students on their experiences and ask them to provide specific examples if possible. Many social media influencers have young audiences who are susceptible to overt advertising by people they look up to. Discuss with students whether they have ever bought or have been inclined to buy any products they've seen influencers promote.



DEFINE THE KEYWORDS 15 MINUTES

Slide 3

Ask: Does anyone know what influencers, sponsored posts, giving credit, or a creator's responsibilities are?

Allow students to guess or extrapolate meanings. Guide students to think about these key concepts in the context of digital media literacy and social media.

Slide 4

Read the contents of the slide aloud.

Discuss: Do you follow any influencers online? If so, who do you follow and why?

This is a great opportunity for educators to understand the activities your students are engaging with online. Encourage students to share openly and explain why they follow the influencers they do.

Slide 5

Read the contents of the slide aloud.

Discuss: Why is it important for influencers to declare whether their posts are sponsored or not?

Transparency is vital in sponsored content to maintain trust with an influencer's

audience. Some countries also have strict advertising regulations to ensure that consumers can distinguish between genuine content and advertising.

Slide 6

Read the contents of the slide aloud.

Discuss: Why is giving credit important, and how can it be done on social media?

Giving credit is essential to acknowledge the original creator's work. On social media, it can be done by mentioning the original creator's name in the video or tagging them in a post.

Slide 7

Read the contents of the slide aloud.

Discuss: What are some key responsibilities that online creators should be aware of?

Online creators should be responsible digital citizens, ensuring they share accurate and reliable information, respect the privacy and security of their audience, and create content that respects diverse perspectives while promoting a positive online environment.



INVESTIGATE THE SCENARIO

30 MINUTES

Slide 8

Say: In this next section, we will explore a scenario about a makeup influencer called Mikayla. Remember to keep the keywords we've just learned in mind as I show you five pieces of evidence we'll investigate together. Think critically about the information we're examining and consider the discussion questions.

(Optional) Select ten students to read as these characters: Mikayla, O'Real marketing team, Hannah, Taylor, Selena, Kamika, Teana, Jodie, Celso, and a Global News Daily journalist.

Slide 9

Read Mikayla's video transcript.

Discuss the following questions:

1. What should you take into consideration when you see sponsored posts?

When you see sponsored posts, it's essential to consider that the content might be biased as it's promoting a specific product or service in exchange for compensation. It's crucial to think critically about the claims made in the post, do your research, and look for other reliable sources of information before making decisions based on the content of the sponsored post.

2. Why are social media influencers required to tell their audience if a post has been sponsored or is an advertisement?

Social media influencers are required to disclose sponsored content or advertisements to maintain transparency and trust with their audience. Some countries' regulations also require influencers to disclose if their content is paid for to ensure ethical advertising practices.

3. What responsibility does Mikayla have as an influencer, in terms of transparency and authenticity in her content?

As an influencer, Mikayla has a responsibility to be transparent and authentic in her content. This includes disclosing sponsored posts, like the one in the scenario, to ensure her audience is aware of the relationship between her and the brand. Additionally, she should provide accurate information and avoid making exaggerated or misleading claims about the products she promotes.

Slide 10

Read the comments.

Discuss the following questions:

1. How can consumers be more critical of the products and advertisements they see on social media and in mainstream media?

Individuals can be more critical by questioning the claims made in the advertisements, researching the product and the brand, comparing multiple sources of information, and being aware of any biases that may be present in the content.

2. Should influencers be held to the same standards as mainstream advertisements when it comes to honesty and accuracy?

Yes, influencers should be held to the same standards as mainstream advertisements when it comes to honesty and accuracy. Influencers have a significant impact on their audience's opinions, preferences, and purchasing decisions.

Slide 11

Read this email exchange, starting with Mikayla's email on the left.

Discuss the following questions:

1. Why do you think brands like O'Real like to work with social media influencers like Mikayla?

Brands like O'Real choose to work with social media influencers like Mikayla because they have a large following and can reach a wide audience quickly. Influencers can create a personal connection with their followers, who tend to trust their opinions and recommendations.

2. Do you think Mikayla would have said anything differently in her video if she wasn't sponsored by O'Real?

Without the sponsorship, Mikayla might have been more objective in her review of the product and possibly more cautious with the claims she made. Mikayla might have also been more inclined to share her honest opinions, including any

potential drawbacks or criticisms of the product, rather than focusing solely on its positive aspects.

3. Is it fair for O'Real to tell Mikayla she's not allowed to take down the video, even though it's hurting her mental health?

While it is in the terms of the contract between Mikayla and O'Real, it would be more ethical for O'Real to consider Mikayla's mental health and potentially negotiate a compromise that respects her well-being in this situation. This highlights the transactional nature of sponsored posts.

Slide 12

Read the comments for this UTube video.

Discuss the following questions:

1. Why is it important to give influencers and content creators like Mikayla credit for the original idea?

By giving credit, you show respect and acknowledge the creativity of the original creator like Mikayla, Giving credit also demonstrates your own credibility and integrity as a content creator. It also helps to foster a culture of collaboration and mutual respect, which can lead to greater opportunities and success for all parties involved.

2. How can failing to give credit to the original content creator impact their work?

Failing to give credit to the original creator is essentially "stealing" another person's idea. This means the original creator isn't recognised for their creative efforts, making it difficult for them to build their reputation and grow their audience. It can also result in lost sponsorship opportunities, and other creators may benefit financially from the original idea.

Slide 13

Read this article in Global News Daily.

Discuss the following questions:

1. If you see multiple copycat videos of people repeating the same claims that the mascara actually works, does it mean it becomes a fact?

No, multiple copycat videos repeating the same claims about a product do not necessarily make those claims factual. It's important to remember that the popularity of a trend doesn't guarantee its accuracy.

2. How can we differentiate between facts and opinions when it comes to content on social media?

We can learn to differentiate facts and opinions by considering the following:

- *Compare the information with other sources to see if it's consistent or contradicted by other reliable sources.*
- *Look for evidence supporting the claim, such as scientific research, studies, or reputable sources.*

- *Be aware of biases that may be present in the content, such as sponsorship or affiliation with a particular brand.*
- *Approach content with a critical mindset, questioning the claims made and not taking them at face value.*

**KEY TAKEAWAYS**
10 MINUTES

Slide 14

Say: Here are some things we've learned from this lesson.

1. Social media influencers are not sources of truth and facts. They may share personal opinions or promote a product for commercial reasons, so their content should never be taken at face value for fact.
2. Sponsored posts mean the influencer or content creator has been paid to promote a certain product by the brand.
3. Always use critical judgement when viewing anything on social media.
4. Giving credit to original creators is an important aspect of digital media literacy and responsible online behaviour as it fosters a collaborative and positive culture online.
5. When you want to post anything online, consider your personal responsibilities as a content creator and the ethical standards you should aim to achieve.

Ask: What are some key takeaways you've learned from this lesson?
Call on volunteers to share what they've learned.