

# The Media Monsters:

A Media Literacy Lesson Plan  
for Grade 3-5 Educators



A lesson plan developed in partnership by:

**NAMLE** National  
Association  
for Media  
Literacy  
Education

**MAKEFULLY**

# The Media Monsters:

## A Media Literacy Lesson Plan for Grade 3-5 Educators

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### Introduction

In response to the increasing amount of media children are exposed to on a regular basis, the National Association for Media Literacy Education (NAMLE) and Makefully Studios are teaming up to provide educators with unique content that will inspire relevant, rich, and age-appropriate discussion in their classrooms about how we all consume and interact with different types of media. Using this lesson plan, students will begin to identify, reflect and recognize behaviors and media practices in themselves, and identify the media literacy skills needed to improve the ways they engage with media and think critically about the media messages around them.

### Background

Every day students interact with all kinds of media around them: pictures, television shows, advertisements, viral videos, and online influencers, just to name a few. Behind the constant stream of content is a push for more eyes and more shares in an effort to spread messages. However, sometimes the information in these messages are misleading, dishonest, or incomplete. Students may not be aware that the choices they make when they engage with media might contribute to the spread of inaccurate information. We've identified a few primary behaviors that we can practice reflecting on and challenging as we engage with our favorite media types. By recognizing these behaviors and thinking more critically about them, we can overcome our own Media Monster behavior!

### Learning Objectives

Using the lessons below, students will be able to:

- Define “media” and identify at least three different types of media they consume regularly.
- Describe one or more media monster behaviors and explain why they can be unhelpful.
- Identify one or more media monster behaviors they have exhibited in their own life and what questions they can ask to combat that behavior.

### How to use this guide:

- If you have less time... Create a single day lesson using the Introduction, one Media Monster Lesson, and one activity as either an in-class or extension activity.
- If you have more time... Create five daily lessons/activities using the Introduction, Lessons 1-3, and the included activity ideas as either daily in-class or extension activities or a more comprehensive cumulative project.

# Introduction:

## Meet the Media Monsters

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This introductory exercise is designed to introduce students to general terms and concepts in media literacy and the three Media Monsters that are covered in Mini-Lessons 1-3. This exercise and the accompanying activities can be used as the primer on the first day of a multi-day lesson plan, or activities can be skipped and the information below can be condensed and used as an introduction to any of the single-day Mini-Lessons below.

### Definitions:

- Media: Media is any means by which messages are communicated.
- Media use: How, when, why, and how we spend time with media.

### Introduce/Explain:

Introduce the lesson by telling students that they are going to think about the different types of media they use regularly.

### Launch Questions

- **What is media?**
  - Students might name more conventional forms of media, types of technology, or platforms: phone, television, YouTube, etc.
  - Additional answers to explore: pictures, TV, news, viral videos, commercials, social media, video games, movies, online videos, books.
- **What media do you use regularly?**
- **How do you use media?**
  - Possible answers: entertainment, to talk to friends, to learn about something, for homework, to create my own content (pictures, stories, graphics, etc.).
- **How many hours a day do you think you use media?**
  - Data point (Birth to age 8): Average daily screen media use for children ages birth to 8 is 2.24 hours. Less than 5% of that time is spent reading, doing homework, and video-chatting. Source: Common Sense ([Read the full report](#))
  - Data point (Ages 8-12): Average daily screen media use for children ages 8-12 is 4:44 hours, not including screen time used for school or homework. Source: Common Sense ([Read the full report](#))
- **Do you have rules about media in your home?**
  - Number of hours used?
  - Times during the day (e.g. after homework, in the evening, etc.)?
  - Type of media?
  - Age of access to certain media?

### **Exploration/Activity:**

Have students complete [this worksheet](#) from Common Sense Media™ listing the types of media they use regularly (weekly) and estimate how often they use it, how they use it (e.g., what kind of videos they watch on YouTube, etc.), and for how long. Students can estimate these amounts or this activity can be assigned as a tracking assignment the week prior.

### **Pair & Share/Small Group Activity:**

Have students get into pairs or small groups and reflect on the following questions:

- How does your media use compare to others?
- Was it difficult to remember how much media you used in the last week? Why or why not?
- Was there anything surprising to you as you were filling out the worksheet?
- How might differences in the ways we use media change our behavior?

Return to the whole class and have students share what they found interesting about how they all use media differently and ways they identified that someone's media use changed their behavior.

### **Introduction of the Monsters**

Begin by introducing the Media Monsters using this description:

*We all choose the ways in which we interact with media, and sometimes, we make choices that might not be the best—by believing the hype around the latest toy or video game, following everything our favorite online personality tells us to do or allowing platforms like YouTube to consume all our attention by feeding us video after video. We can all act like Media Monsters sometimes, but once we recognize our behavior, we can learn how to conquer the monster and be helpful and productive citizens online and off. [Show the image of all three monsters on the following page] Each of these Monsters represents a behavior we might have when using media.*

Ask students the following questions to get them to start thinking critically/deconstructing the meaning of these images:

- What do you notice about the monsters' appearance?
  - Prompt: Characteristics like a large mouth (consuming), lots of arms/devices (for using/sharing lots of content/devices), big eyes (for watching).
- What media do you see?
- What type of behavior do you think they represent?
  - Prompt: Lots of arms to use too much media; big eyes to watch with.
- What do you think these images are trying to make you think about?

Teachers Note: The Media Monsters are a tool designed to help individuals of all ages identify their behaviors when interacting with media - including you! Feel free to share stories of your own experience so that kids know you can relate and it's not just a "problem with kids today."

# Lesson 1: Meet the Gullible Giant

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## Pair & Share/Small Group Activity:

1. Learn the **Ask Yourself, You Might, Try This** method to identify, analyze, and counteract media monster behaviors.
2. Identify one or more Gullible Giant monster behavior.
3. Identify one or more questions that can be asked to combat Gullible Giant behavior.

## Definitions

- Gullible: Easily persuaded to believe something.
- Media literacy: The ability to **access**, **analyze**, **evaluate**, **create**, and **act** using all forms of communication. Media literacy education refers to the practices necessary to foster these skills.
- A Media literate person: Individuals of all ages who have developed the habits of inquiry and skills of expression they need when interacting with media to be critical thinkers, effective communicators, and active citizens in today's world.

## Introduction

Show the image of the Gullible Giant and share the following description of this Monster with students:

*The Gullible Giant has signature rose-colored glasses and doesn't spend a lot of time critically thinking about the media messages they consume and create. Because of their rosy view of the world, Gullible Giants are at risk of believing everything they see and hear. This can create problems if the information they consume is partially or entirely inaccurate. It may cause them to purchase a toy that isn't quite what it seems or say something about someone that ends up not being true.*

## Launch Questions

- What do you notice about this particular monster's appearance?
- What is this monster doing with media in this image?
- What behaviors do you think this monster represents?

# Lesson 1: Meet the Gullible Giant

## Ask Yourself

Have students brainstorm ways Gullible Giant behavior might happen in real life. Some possible scenarios include:

- Have you ever seen a commercial for a new toy and asked your parents if you could buy it only to find out it wasn't as cool as you thought it would be?
- Have you ever clicked on a link that says "Cat videos you won't believe!" only to discover that it was actually an advertisement or unrelated story?
- Have you ever heard a YouTuber's opinion on a topic that interests you and believed it as fact without checking another source?

## You Might

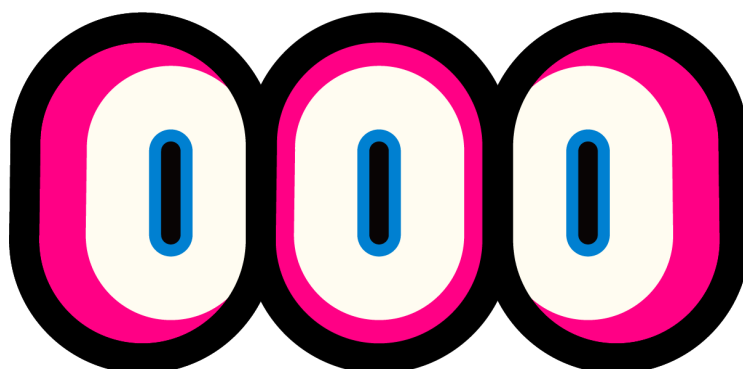
- Ask students the following question: How many of you answered "yes" to any of the questions we just discussed?
- Say: "If you answered "yes" to any of these questions, YOU might be a Gullible Giant!"

## Try This

- Gullible: Easily persuaded to believe something.
- Media literacy: The ability to [access](#), [analyze](#), [evaluate](#), [create](#), and [act](#) using all forms of communication. Media literacy education refers to the practices necessary to foster these skills.
- A Media literate person: Individuals of all ages who have developed the habits of inquiry and skills of expression they need when interacting with media to be critical thinkers, effective communicators, and active citizens in today's world.

## Reflection/Activity

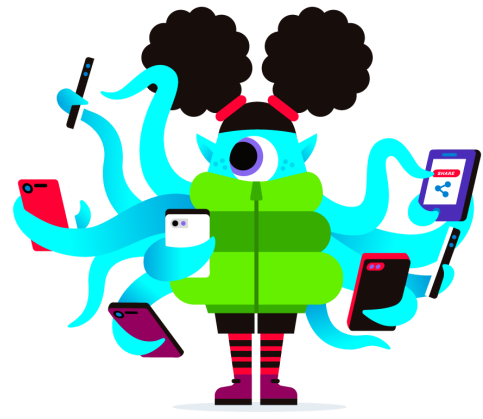
Use the worksheets below for the Launch Questions or Ask Yourself sections, or choose from one of the group or individual activities listed after Lesson 3.



## Lesson 2: Meet Scary Share-y

### Pair & Share/Small Group Activity:

1. Learn the [Ask Yourself, You Might, Try This](#) method to identify, analyze, and counteract media monster behaviors.
2. Identify one or more Scary Share-y monster behavior.
3. Identify one or more questions that can be asked to combat Scary Share-y behavior.



### Definitions

- Media literacy: The ability to [access](#), [analyze](#), [evaluate](#), [create](#), and [act](#) using all forms of communication. Media literacy education refers to the practices necessary to foster these skills.
- A Media literate person: Individuals of all ages who have developed the habits of inquiry and skills of expression they need when interacting with media to be critical thinkers, effective communicators, and active citizens in today's world.
- Media Ecosystem: A complex combination of print, broadcast, digital, and social media that work together to create an interconnected information environment.

### Introduction

Show the image of the Scary Share-y and share the following description of this Monster with students:

*This is Scary Share-y. A Scary Share-y is easily recognized thanks to its seemingly infinite number of tentacles and single, lightning-fast eye. It uses its only eye to quickly glance at content and then its tentacles share faster than you can say "Scary Share-y."*

### Launch Questions

- What do you notice about this particular monster's appearance?
  - Prompts: Lots of arms; multiple kinds of media.
- What is this monster doing with media in this image?
- Which behavior do you think this monster represents?

### Ask Yourself

Have students brainstorm ways Scary Share-y behavior might happen in real life. Some possible scenarios include:

- Have you ever seen or heard a rumor online and told a friend only to find out later it wasn't true?
- Did you share a video with friends before watching it all the way through before realizing that the ending was not what you expected it to be?
- Have you ever shared a scary or gross photo or video with a friend just to get a reaction and they wished you hadn't shown them?



## Lesson 2: Meet Scary Share-y

### You Might

- Ask students the following question: How many of you answered “yes” to any of the questions we just discussed?
  - Note: The media monsters are about recognizing behavior towards media within ourselves.
- Say: “If you answered “yes” to any of these questions, YOU might be a Scary Share-y!”

Explain to students how Scary Share-y behavior can be problematic:

*You control what, where, and with whom you share information you get online and everything you share adds to the media ecosystem. When you stop to think about what you are sharing, why you are sharing, and how you are sharing, you may decide to post more, less, or not at all! You can choose whether you share a meme, a screenshot, or an image with all of your friends, or a small group of close friends, or a private message. Think about the information you are sharing and if it's something that is worth sharing.*

### Try This

Explain to students that the way to combat media monster behavior is to ask ourselves questions about all media we consume. Have students try asking these questions about the scenarios created in the Ask Yourself section above:

- Is this fact, opinion, or something else?
- Can I trust this source to tell me the truth?
- Who might be harmed by this?
- How might different people interpret this differently?
- How does this make me feel and how do my emotions influence what I think about this or how I share it?

### Reflection/Activity

Use the worksheets below for the Launch Questions or Ask Yourself sections, or choose from one of the group or individual activities listed after Lesson





## Lesson 3: Meet the Gobblin' Goblin



### Pair & Share/Small Group Activity:

1. Learn the [Ask Yourself, You Might, Try This](#) method to identify, analyze, and counteract media monster behaviors.
2. Identify one or more Gobblin' Goblin monster behavior.
3. Identify one or more questions that can be asked to combat Gobblin' Goblin behavior.

### Definitions

- Media literacy: The ability to [access](#), [analyze](#), [evaluate](#), [create](#), and [act](#) using all forms of communication. Media literacy education refers to the practices necessary to foster these skills.
- A Media literate person: Individuals of all ages who have developed the habits of inquiry and skills of expression they need when interacting with media to be critical thinkers, effective communicators, and active citizens in today's world.

### Introduction

Show the image of the Gobblin' Goblin and share the following description of this Monster with students:

*You can always recognize a Gobblin' Goblin by their signature marathon media consumption: they gobble up every show, every video, every song, every commercial, every little piece of media and become glued to it. Nothing avoids their gaze or their never-ending media consumption.*

### Launch Questions

- What do you notice about this particular monster's appearance?
  - Prompts: large mouth, staring at phone
- What is this monster doing with media in this image?
- Which behavior do you think this monster represents?

### Ask Yourself

Have students brainstorm ways Gobblin' Goblin behavior might happen in real life. Some possible scenarios include:

- Do you ever start to watch one online video, and suddenly realize you've actually watched 10?
- Do you decide to take a break from homework to play a game on a device and then realize an hour has passed?
- Have you ever kept playing a video game with friends even when you are exhausted and should take a break?

## Lesson 3: Meet the Goblin' Goblin

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### You Might

- Ask students the following question: How many of you answered “yes” to any of the questions we just discussed?
- Say: “If you answered “yes” to any of these questions, YOU might be a Goblin' Goblin!”

Explain to students why Goblin' Goblin behavior can be problematic:

*Making conscious choices about what kind of media you spend time with and how much time you spend with that media is empowering. Remember, not all content is created equally. Be mindful of focusing on content that is interesting to you, over content that is pushed to you.*

### Try This

Explain that the way to combat media monster behavior is to ask ourselves questions about all media we consume. Have students try asking these questions about the scenarios created in the Ask Yourself section above:

- What does this want me to think or think about?
- Is this message good for me or people like me?
- How does this make me feel?
- How might I react/act productively/positively in reaction to this message?
- Is it time to take a break from media for a little bit?

### Reflection/Activity

Use the worksheets below for the Launch Questions or Ask Yourself sections, or choose from one of the group or individual activities listed after Lesson



# Media Monster Activities

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Use any of the following activities to extend/apply learning from lessons 1-3 above in the following ways.

- Create your own monster based on your own media behaviors using art supplies, found objects, the computer, etc. Be creative!
- Create your own monster that incorporates one characteristic of your own media behaviors from each of the media monsters you learned about this week.
- Create a comic strip about one media monster behavior.
- Write a story about a media monster and how it got its monstrous behaviors!
- Create a video or audio recorded Public Service Announcement about a media monster behavior.

