STOP.
REFLECT.
VERIFY.

YALICHECKS

Media Literacy Self-Assessment

U.S. DEPARTMENT *of* STATE

YALINETWORK

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YALICHECKS:
MEDIA LITERACY SELF-ASSESSMENT

Media literacy is the ability to identify different types of media and the messages they are sending. In today's digital age, it is easy for anyone to create media, and sometimes difficult for consumers to understand why something was created and whether it's credible. It is increasingly important to be an educated media consumer to help stop the spread of incorrect information. Being a leader in your community starts with sharing information responsibly and contributing to an accurate information environment. The prompts in this workbook will help you identify your media literacy skills and direct you to useful tools and resources.

EVALUATE YOURSELF

The goal for this exercise is to answer each question as honestly as possible and then score yourself using the answer key below.

1. Where do you go to get your daily news?	*Example: I get most of my news from Facebook and from conversations with my friends.*
2. How do you determine that a person or website is credible?	*Example: I run a Google search of the author's name.*
3. What steps do you take to determine that a story is accurate?	*Example: I check to see if the story includes quotes from experts in the field.*
4. What other factors, in addition to the story itself, might affect your judgment of a story?	*Example: I might be in a hurry and not take the time to fact-check the source.*
5. Why should you carefully evaluate websites before using and sharing their information?	*Example: Sharing false information can be damaging to my reputation and career success.*

ANSWER KEY

Use the following pages to score your answers to each question. Remember that the more honest you are with your answers, the more this assessment will benefit you.

1 - NEEDS IMPROVEMENT	2 - AVERAGE	3 - EXCELLENT	RATING
1. Where do you go to get your daily news?			
☐ Your response included primarily **social media sites** (e.g., Instagram, Facebook).	☐ Your answer included a mix of **social media sites and newspapers**.	☐ Your response included a mix of **experts in the field**, newspapers, and some social media sites.	
2. How do you determine that a person or website is credible?			
Your response does not mention any of the following: ☐ The author is identified by **name**. ☐ The author's **educational background or place of work** is listed. ☐ The author's **contact information** is available. ☐ The story is free of **grammatical errors**. ☐ If digital, the site **URL follows a standard format** (e.g., not news.com.co).	Your response mentions one or two of the following: ☐ The author is identified by **name**. ☐ The author's **educational background or place of work** is listed. ☐ The author's **contact information** is available. ☐ The story is free of **grammatical errors**. ☐ If digital, the site **URL follows a standard format** (e.g., not news.com.co).	Your response mentions three or more of the following: ☐ The author is identified by **name**. ☐ The author's **educational background or place of work** is listed. ☐ The author's **contact information** is available. ☐ The story is free of **grammatical errors**. ☐ If digital, the site **URL follows a standard format** (e.g., not news.com.co).	

1 - NEEDS IMPROVEMENT	2 - AVERAGE	3 - EXCELLENT	RATING
3. What steps do you take to determine that a story is accurate?			
Your response does not mention any of the following: ☐ Read beyond the **headline**. ☐ Check the author's **credentials**. ☐ Determine the intended **audience**. ☐ Decide if the **images** are accurate. ☐ Look for **supporting sources** and facts. ☐ Determine the **type of information** (i.e., fact, fiction, opinion). ☐ Check the **date**. ☐ Ask the **experts**.	Your response mentions one or two of the following: ☐ Read beyond the **headline**. ☐ Check the author's **credentials**. ☐ Determine the intended **audience**. ☐ Decide if the **images** are accurate. ☐ Look for **supporting sources** and facts. ☐ Determine the **type of information** (i.e., fact, fiction, opinion). ☐ Check the **date**. ☐ Ask the **experts**.	Your response mentions three or more of the following: ☐ Read beyond the **headline**. ☐ Check the author's **credentials**. ☐ Determine the intended **audience**. ☐ Decide if the **images** are accurate. ☐ Look for **supporting sources** and facts. ☐ Determine the **type of information** (i.e., fact, fiction, opinion). ☐ Check the **date**. ☐ Ask the **experts**.	
4. What other factors, in addition to the story itself, might affect your judgment of a story?			
Your response does not mention any of the following: ☐ I may just accept a story as accurate because it **confirms my point of view.** ☐ I may judge a story as credible because it's **timely.** ☐ The story made me especially **angry, upset, or sad.** ☐ I may believe a story because **I have believed others like it** in the past.	Your response mentions one or two of the following: ☐ I may just accept a story as accurate because it **confirms my point of view.** ☐ I may judge a story as credible because it's **timely.** ☐ The story made me especially **angry, upset, or sad.** ☐ I may believe a story because **I have believed others like it** in the past.	Your response mentions three or more of the following: ☐ I may just accept a story as accurate because it **confirms my point of view.** ☐ I may judge a story as credible because it's **timely.** ☐ The story made me especially **angry, upset, or sad.** ☐ I may believe a story because **I have believed others like it** in the past.	

1 - NEEDS IMPROVEMENT	2 - AVERAGE	3 - EXCELLENT	RATING
5. Why should you be careful to evaluate websites before using and sharing their information?			
Your response does not mention any of the following: ☐ Thinking critically about stories makes me a **wiser social media user or news consumer**. ☐ Sharing stories with misinformation **reduces my credibility** as an individual. ☐ Sharing stories with misinformation can **hurt my business's reputation.** ☐ Spreading misinformation can **hurt those who need to hear the truth.** ☐ Today there are **more opportunities to encounter misinformation** so being media literate is especially important.	Your response mentions one or two of the following: ☐ Thinking critically about stories makes me a **wiser social media user or news consumer**. ☐ Sharing stories with misinformation **reduces my credibility** as an individual. ☐ Sharing stories with misinformation can **hurt my business's reputation.** ☐ Spreading misinformation can **hurt those who need to hear the truth.** ☐ Today there are **more opportunities to encounter misinformation** so being media literate is especially important.	Your response mentions three or more of the following: ☐ Thinking critically about stories makes me a **wiser social media user or news consumer**. ☐ Sharing stories with misinformation **reduces my credibility** as an individual. ☐ Sharing stories with misinformation can **hurt my business's reputation.** ☐ Spreading misinformation can **hurt those who need to hear the truth.** ☐ Today there are **more opportunities to encounter misinformation** so being media literate is especially important.	

SCORE CALCULATION:

5-6: Needs improvement **7-9:** Average **10-12:** Good **13-15:** Excellent

WHAT'S NEXT?

Now that you've taken your self-assessment, read on for more tips and tricks to stay informed. With these tools, you'll be all set to stop, reflect, and verify!

1) Watch:

Check out these three videos about misinformation and learn how you can protect your reputation and community!

STOP

In the rapidly expanding and increasingly open information world in which we live, there are good and bad actors. It's on you to commit to being a responsible promoter of reliable and credible information. That starts by stopping to pause when you receive new information.

REFLECT

Reflecting on the information before you share it involves reading the whole story, not just the headline. That means examining your own biases and those of the person or organization that sent it to you. Ask yourself if multiple voices and viewpoints are represented. Are those voices credible? What is the evidence, and is it verifiable on other channels or websites?

VERIFY

Don't be taken in by shocking or flashy headlines. Read the story that accompanies it. If the headlines greatly exaggerate or misrepresent the information in the story — don't share it. Also, misspellings and grammatical errors are usually a sign that something is not from a professional source. Be sure to make note of the facts cited in the story, then do a search to see if you can verify them.

2) Read:

Once you've watched the videos above, check out these blog posts on misinformation and what you can do to improve your media literacy.

The Ethics of Paid Content

In this guest blog, Robert Malit from Kenya reflects on the changing media landscape in his community and on the benefits and drawbacks of new media. Robert encourages young leaders

to scrutinize paid advertising, biased news stories and other manipulated content, offering tips and tricks to find trusted, reliable information.

She Wanted More Accountability on Child Marriage. So She Made a Film.

For Beatrice Savadye, a YALI Network member in Zimbabwe, bringing to light the struggles of young brides in her community culminated in a documentary film, one featuring first-person storytelling and rigorous research. As Beatrice explains, it's through efforts like these that young women have "an opportunity to rewrite their story and become change agents."

Journalist Brings Positive Change to Nigerian Communities

In this blog post, Oluwatoyosi Ogunseye reflects on her work as a journalist in Lagos and on the struggles she faced in making a name for herself. Today, Oluwatoyosi is reporting on topics ranging from politics and crime to the environment and health and encourages other young leaders to consume media responsibly for a more nuanced perspective.

3) Stay Informed:

Finally, we recommend the following resources to stay up to date on the latest misinformation loopholes and to ensure that you're ready to stop, reflect, and verify!

Making a Change: Media Literacy

This website from the Newseum offers a wealth of resources to better understand how misinformation spreads and what you can do to recognize it. The site's videos and courses are useful too, for teaching friends and family about media literacy, why it matters, and how it affects your reputation.

The News Literacy Project

This site features nonpartisan, independent programs to help you separate fact from fiction in the digital age. The project's resources also provide you with the tools you need to teach others how to become smart, active consumers of news and information and engaged, informed participants in their communities.

The Columbia Journalism Review

Monitoring the press in all its forms, CJR is an essential resource both for journalists and for others in communications, technology, academia and related fields. Calling attention to the media's shortcomings and its strengths, the site will help you to better understand and promote the standards of honest, responsible journalism.

For more videos, blog posts, and other resources, visit our **YALIChecks page** and don't forget to stop, reflect, and verify!

SOURCES:

#YALIChecks

News and Media Literacy Tools (PBS)

Media Literacy Fundamentals (Canada's Centre for Digital and Media Literacy)

Topic Backgrounder: News and Media Literacy (Common Sense Education)