

Digital Life 101

Essential Question

What is the place of digital media in our lives?

Lesson Overview

Students are introduced to the 24/7, social nature of digital media and technologies, and gain basic vocabulary and knowledge for discussing the media landscape.

Students watch the “Digital Life Intro Video – Digital Life 101,” which shows the 24/7, social nature of digital media – a change from the media consumption culture of the past. They then make similes about their digital lives and learn that because media connect us in more social and interactive ways than ever before, it is important to carry out online relationships responsibly. This lesson also serves as an assessment baseline for teachers to gain a better understanding of their students’ familiarity with digital media and key vocabulary associated with digital life.

Estimated time: 45 minutes

Standards Alignment –

Common Core:

grade 6: RI.7, RI.10, W.4, W.6, W.10, SL.1a, SL.1b, SL.1c, SL.1d, SL.2, SL.5, SL.6, L.6

grade 7: RI.10, W.4, W.6, W.10, SL.1a, SL.1b, SL.1c, SL.1d, SL.2, SL.5, SL.6, L.6

grade 8: RI.10, W.4, W.6, W.10, SL.1a, SL.1b, SL.1c, SL.1d, SL.2, SL.5, SL.6, L.6

NETS•S: 1a, 1b, 2a, 5a, 5b

Learning Objectives

Students will be able to ...

- learn about the 24/7, social nature of digital media.
- explore their digital lives.
- learn that it is important to act responsibly when carrying out relationships over digital media.

Key Vocabulary –

media: communication, including television, radio, and newspapers, that often reaches and impacts a large audience

digital media: electronic devices and media platforms such as computers, cell phones, the Internet, digital video, social networking sites, video games, and virtual worlds that allow users to create, communicate, and interact with one another or with the device or application itself

simile: a literary device for comparing two unlike things.

Materials and Preparation

-  Preview the video, “**Digital Life 101**,” and prepare to show it to students.
- Copy the **My Media Life Is Like ... Student Handout**, one for each student.
- Copy the **Got Media Smarts? Student Handout**, one for each student.
- Copy the **Digital Life Glossary Student Handout**, one for each student.

Family Resources

- Send home the **Digital Life Family Tip Sheet (Middle & High School)**.

introduction

Warm-up (5 minutes)

DEFINE the Key Vocabulary terms **media** and **digital media**.

DISCUSS that some differences between digital media and traditional media, such as TV and radio, and how digital media generally allow people opportunities for interactive communication — for creation and self-expression. Instant Messaging, for instance, is more “two-way,” because people are talking with one another. Media such as TV and radio are generally more “one-way,” because people generally do not interact with one another through these technologies. Innovations in digital media enable us to create, share, and communicate in addition to consuming media.

ASK:

What are examples of things you do with one-way media, such as TVs or radios?

Sample responses:

- Watch TV
- Listen to the radio

What are some of the ways that people communicate with or share with others over digital media?


Sample responses:

- IM
- Go on social networks
- Text
- Talk in virtual worlds
- Blog
- Upload videos and photos
- Play multiplayer games

teach 1

Watch Video (10 minutes)

EXPLAIN to students that they are going to watch a video about how digital media are a 24/7 part of our culture – that video game consoles and portable devices, such as cell phones, seem to surround us. Remind students, though, that the media lives of all kids and families are not the same. Some kids are allowed to use more digital media than others, and some kids like these tools more than others.

 **SHOW** students the video “**Digital Life 101.**” The video touches on the different types of media and digital media that exist, the actions that people take with these technologies, and even specific programs and applications.

ASK:

What are some things you learned from the video?

Sample responses:

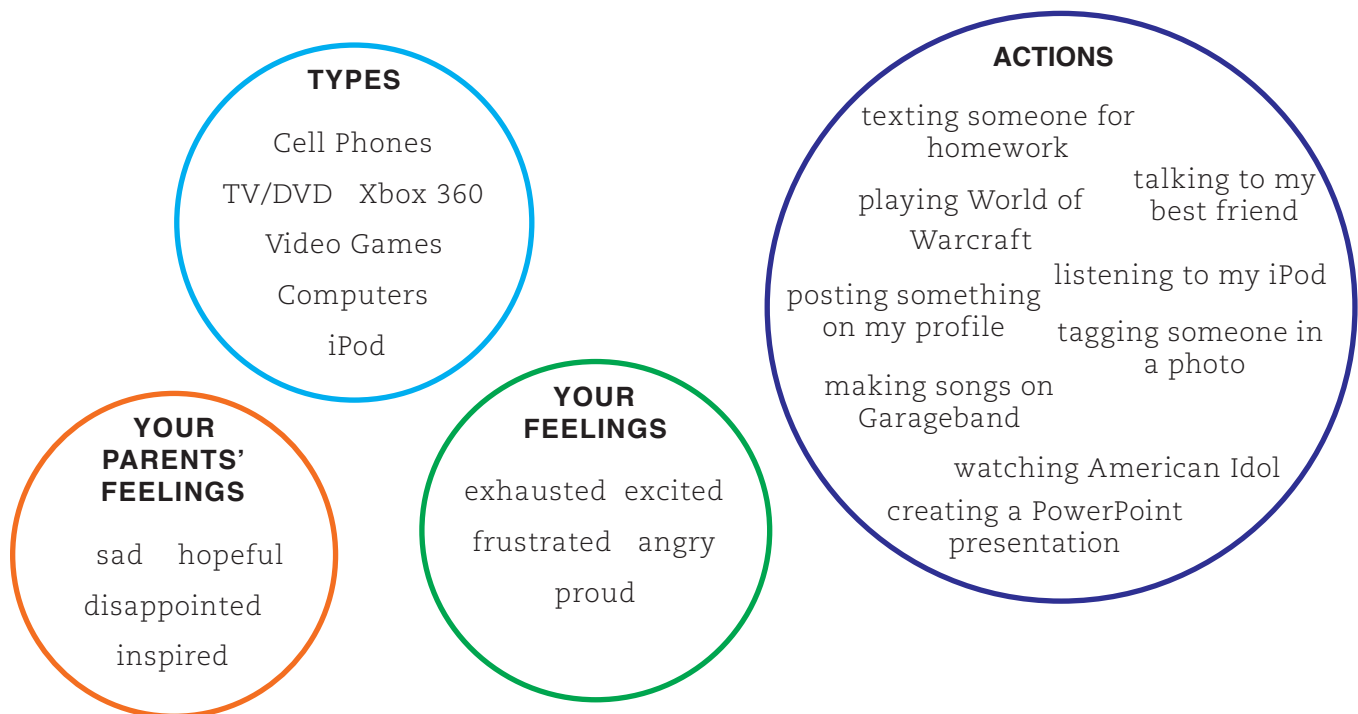
- Digital media are a 24/7 part of our culture.
- Digital media are social. They allow people to build friendships, join new communities, and provide amazing opportunities for creation and self-expression.

teach 2

Make a Concept Map (15 minutes)

CREATE a concept map on the board that contains the following headings: “Types” of digital media, “Actions” students take with digital media, “Your Feelings” about digital media, and “Your Parents’ Feelings” about digital media.

INVITE students to self-reflect and brainstorm about all four parts of the concept map. Encourage them to list items that are both general (e.g., cell phones) and specific (e.g., playing World of Warcraft).



teach 3

Create Smilies (10 minutes)

DEFINE the Key Vocabulary term **simile**.

HAVE students fill out the **My Media Life Is Like ... Student Handout** in which they create and illustrate a simile about their digital lives. When students are finished, they should share their similes.

HAVE students place their similes on their desks and rotate three to four times so they can see different people's similes. Have students share observations about their classmates' similes with each rotation. You may want to provide the following examples for students of similes:

- Someone who does not use much media at all might say that her media life is like a dry desert because there is little life there.
- Someone might say that his media life is like a track meet because he is exhausted at the end of the day.

Wrap-up (5 minutes)

You can use these questions to assess your students' understanding of the lesson objectives. You may want to ask students to reflect in writing on one of the questions, using a journal or an online blog/wiki.

ASK:

What are digital media?

Digital media and technologies are electronic devices and media platforms such as computers, cell phones, digital video, social networking sites, the Internet, video games, and virtual worlds, which allow users to create, communicate and interact with one another or with the device or application themselves.

What are two important characteristics of digital media?

- (1) They are a 24/7 part of our culture
- (2) They are social – people communicate over digital media

Why might people feel differently about their digital lives?

Some people use digital media more than others. People like and dislike different things for different reasons.

Extension Activity

Have students turn their similes about digital life into songs. Group students in fours and fives and ask each group to create a simile about their digital lives. As with the similes by individuals, the simile should be phrased, “My digital life is like a...” and the lyrics should focus on the nature of their digital lives. Have students turn the simile into a country, rock, or rap song called “My Digital Life.” They can create the song without computers or with computers using software such as GarageBand.

At-Home Activity

Have students complete the **Got Media Smarts? Student Handout** – a quiz about basic media terms and concepts – along with a parent or another family member. Students should tell their family member that their class assignment is for them to go head-to-head against one another to test their knowledge about digital media. Students can also quiz their family member on the terms and definitions listed on the **Digital Life Glossary Student Handout**.

Digital Life 101

Directions

Think about your life with media. First consider the questions below. Use your responses to help you finish the statement, “My media life is like a ...” This statement is a simile, a literary device for comparing two unlike things. For instance, someone who does not use much media might say that her media life is like a desert, because there is little life there. Someone might say that his media life is like a track meet, because he is exhausted at the end of the day. Finally, make a picture or drawing of the simile you created. The drawing can include text.

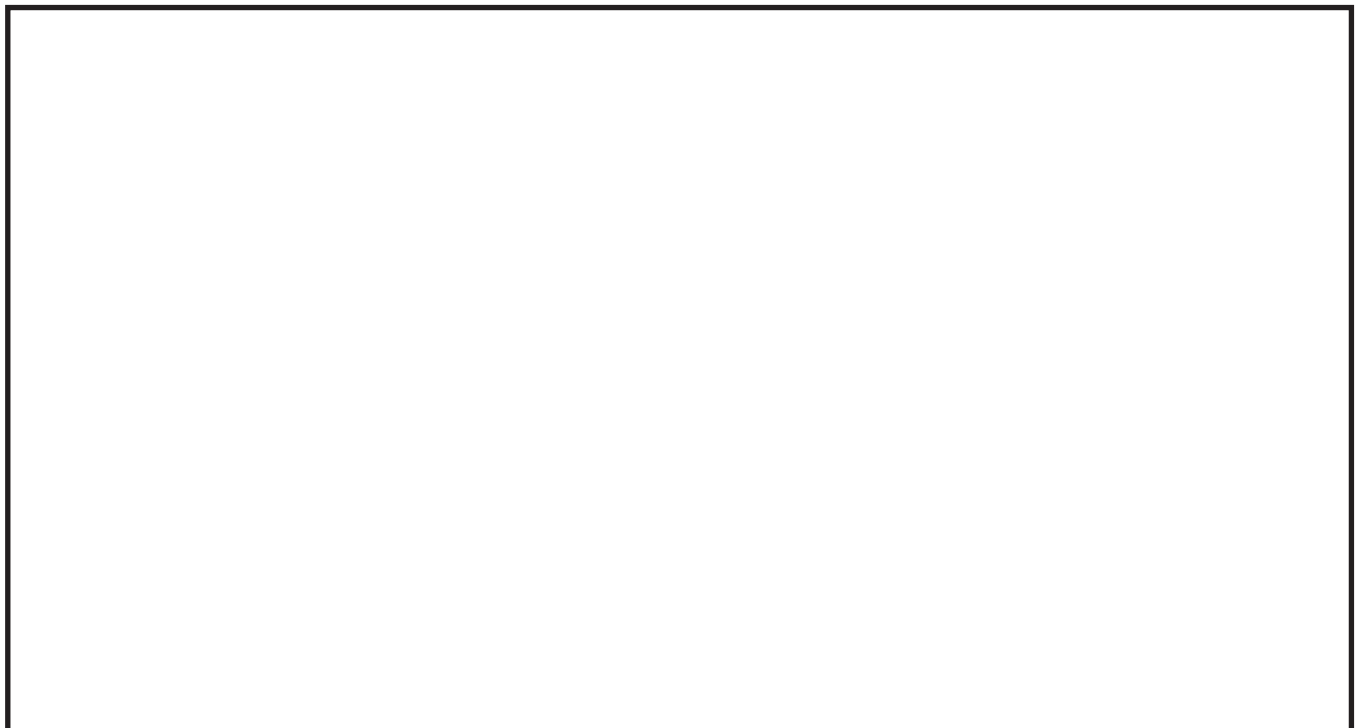
Questions to consider:

1. Are digital media a small, medium, or big part of your life?
2. What kind of impact do digital media have on you (a little, some, a lot)?
3. What are your favorite and least-favorite things to do with digital media?
4. Do you connect with others or create things with digital media?

Finish this statement: My media life is like a _____

because _____.

Illustrate your simile here:



Digital Life 101

Directions

Below are common words and terms related to digital media. Test your family members on the definitions. If they are having trouble understanding the term, help them by reading the correct definition.

An **aggregator** is a website or Web application where headlines and other content are collected for easy viewing. Aggregators such as Google News compile news articles and posts.

An **avatar** is a two- or three-dimensional icon that represents a computer user or a gamer. An avatar can be a cartoonish graphic, a photograph, a screen name, or a fully-developed character.

A **blog**, from the term “weblog,” is a type of website usually updated by an individual or a group of bloggers. Some blogs provide news or opinions on a specific subject, while others are more like online journals. Most blogs allow readers to leave comments on blog posts.

Flaming is the act of saying mean things online, usually in ALL CAPS, and often in a public forum with the intention to humiliate. **Flame wars** can occur easily online, as it can be difficult to figure out people’s intentions or emotions online.

A **mash-up** is a remix or blend of multiple songs, videos, or other media content into one product. Fan fiction writing is one form of a mash-up, as writers take characters from a well-known video game, movie, or book, and rewrite their actions or relationships.

A **massively multiplayer online game (MMOG)** is usually an online virtual world that multiple players navigate and play in together. While in this virtual world, their avatars chat, cooperate, and quest together, oftentimes towards a goal.

A **P2P**, or **Peer-to-Peer**, network allows for sharing of mp3s, videos, and other digital files by transferring information directly between two computers rather than by going through a central server. P2P technology is also behind the popular Internet phone service Skype.

Phishing is the illegal act of sending emails or messages that appear to come from authentic sources, but really come from spammers. Phishers often try to get people to send them their personal information, everything from account numbers to passwords.

A **podcast** is a downloadable video or audio file. Podcasts can be verbal, based on a certain topic, or can include music, video, and commentary. Most podcasts are updated regularly through the addition of new episodes.

An **SMS**, or **text message**, is a short message of fewer than 160 characters sent from a cell phone. An **MMS** is a text message that contains an attached multimedia file, such as a picture or song.

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Digital Life 101

Directions

Kids and family members face off! Find out who is the bigger master of media. Begin by filling out the quiz together. If there are questions that you don't agree on, circle two answers. Next, use the answer key to calculate who had more correct answers. Write the number you got correct for both student and family member at the top.

Q1. In 2009, kids ages 11 to 14 spent the most time with this type of media:

- A. Computers
- B. Music
- C. TV
- D. Video games

Q2. Who spends more time browsing the Internet, teens (ages 12 to 17) or adults?

- A. Teens
- B. Adults

Q3. What is a mash-up?

- A. A glitch on a computer caused by a virus
- B. A techno remix of a song
- C. Slang for when a computer crashes and is beyond repair
- D. A digital collage containing text, graphics, music, video, or animation from already created digital works combined to create a new work

Q4. How many texts on average do teens (ages 13 to 17) send and receive each month?

- A. 2,000
- B. 2,500
- C. 3,000
- D. 3,500

Q5. In Internet slang, what is a “troll” ?“

- A. A multiplayer game that can be embedded in a website
- B. Someone who posts spam on online message boards
- C. A website that takes too long to load
- D. Someone who has an ugly profile picture

Q6. What is an “avatar”?

- A. An email address that forwards your email to a different address (alias)
- B. A graphic image used to represent a real person online
- C. Someone who tries to get you to give them personal information online
- D. The fastest jet on many online flight-simulator games

Q7. According to the privacy policies of Facebook, how old must you be to register for an account?

- A. 10
- B. 12
- C. 13
- D. 16

Q8. Who can edit articles on Wikipedia, the free, online encyclopedia?

- A. Registered users older than 13
- B. Employees of Wikipedia
- C. College professors and students
- D. All of the above

Q9. If someone responds to your instant message by saying, “rofl,” what do they mean?

- A. My mom is reading over my shoulder, watch out.
- B. That was really funny.
- C. Really? I don’t believe you.
- D. Hold on a minute, I’ll be right back.

Q10. What is an MMOG?

- A. Movie Making Online Generator, an online tool that helps people create mashups of videos posted on the web
- B. The Million Mothers Organizing Group, an online social networking site popular for parents of teenagers
- C. A Massive Multiplayer Online Game, usually an online world multiple players navigate and play in together
- D. IM shorthand to say My Mom’s On Guard, a signal to quickly start censoring the conversation

Q11. What was the first home video game console sold in the United States?

- A. Atari 2600
- B. Nintendo NES
- C. Sega Genesis
- D. Nintendo Game Boy

Q12. How many characters (letters, punctuation marks, and spaces) can you send in a regular text message?

- A. 100
- B. 160
- C. 200
- D. 260

Q13. What percentage of tweens (ages 8 to 12) use a cell phone?

- A. 37%
- B. 60%
- C. 71%
- D. 85%

Q14. With which of the following can young people not only listen to but also create music?

- A. Rhapsody
- B. GarageBand
- C. Pandora
- D. iTunes

Q15. As of late 2009, approximately how many views did YouTube get each day?

- A. 500,000
- B. Over 1 billion
- C. Over 2 billion
- D. Over 3 billion

Got Media Smarts? Answer Key

Q1. In 2009, kids ages 11 to 14 spent the most time with this type of media:

- A. Computers
- B. Music
- C. TV
- D. Video games

Answer: C (followed by music, computers, and video games, in that order) Kaiser, 2010:

www.kff.org/entmedia/upload/8010.pdf

Q2. Who spends more time browsing the Internet, teens (ages 12 to 17) or adults?

- A. Teens
- B. Adults

Answer: A (Pew, 2009: www.slideshare.net/PewInternet/social-media-and-young-adults)

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- B. A techno remix of a song
- C. Slang for when a computer crashes and is beyond repair
- D. A digital collage containing text, graphics, music, video, or animation from already created digital works combined to create a new work

Answer: D

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- A. 2,000
- B. 2,500
- C. 3,000
- D. 3,500

Answer: D (adults send about 500) Nielsen, 2010: http://blog.nielsen.com/nielsenwire/online_mobile/big-screen-smart-screen-small-screen/

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- B. Someone who posts spam on online message boards
- C. A website that takes too long to load
- D. Someone who has an ugly profile picture

Answer: B

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- C. Someone who tries to get you to give them personal information online
- D. The fastest jet on many online flight-simulator games

Answer: B

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- A. 10
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- C. 13
- D. 16

Answer: C facebook.com: www.facebook.com/terms.php?ref=pf

Q8. Who can edit articles on Wikipedia, the free, online encyclopedia?

- A. Registered users older than 13
- B. Employees of Wikipedia
- C. College professors and students
- D. All of the above

Answer: D wikipedia.org: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:About>

Q9. If someone responds to your instant message by saying, “rofl,” what do they mean?

- A. My mom is reading over my shoulder, watch out.
- B. That was really funny.
- C. Really? I don’t believe you.
- D. Hold on a minute, I’ll be right back.

Answer: B

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- B. The Million Mothers Organizing Group, an online social networking site popular for parents of teenagers
- C. A Massive Multiplayer Online Game, usually an online world multiple players navigate and play in together
- D. IM shorthand to say My Mom’s On Guard, a signal to quickly start censoring the conversation

Answer: C

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- A. Atari 2600
- B. Nintendo NES
- C. Sega Genesis
- D. Nintendo Game Boy

Answer: A The Atari 2600 made its debut in 1977 and sold more than 30 million consoles.

Popular Atari games were Pacman and Pitfall: www.pewinternet.org/~media/Files/Reports/2008/PIP_Teens_Games_and_Civics_Report_FINAL.pdf.

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- A. 100
- B. 160
- C. 200
- D. 260

Answer: B

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- A. 37%
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Answer: C Pew, 2009: <http://pewresearch.org/pubs/1315/teens-use-of-cell-phones>

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Answer: B

Q15. As of late 2009, approximately how many views did YouTube get each day?

- A. 500,000
- B. Over 1 billion
- C. Over 2 billion
- D. Over 3 billion

Answer: B YouTube: <http://youtube-global.blogspot.com/2009/10/yoooooooooooooutube.html>

Digital Life 101

1. Which of the following activities involve using a type of digital media? (You may circle more than one answer.)

- a) Instant messaging
- b) Playing baseball
- c) Sending a text message to a friend
- d) Playing a card game
- e) Sending a postcard to a friend

2. People use the term “24/7” to describe digital media because:

- a) This type of media is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.
- b) You need a password with 24 letters and 7 numbers to use digital media.
- c) There are 24 different kinds of digital media.

3. When digital media is described as being interactive, this means:

- a) People can make friends on the Internet
- b) Communication can be “two-way”
- c) Both a and b

1. Which of the following activities involve using a type of digital media? (You may circle more than one answer.)

- a) **Instant messaging**
- b) Playing baseball
- c) **Sending a text message to a friend**
- d) Playing a card game
- e) Sending a postcard to a friend

Answer feedback

The correct answers are **a** and **c**. Instant messaging and sending text messages both use digital media. All of the others are offline activities.

2. People use the term “24/7” to describe digital media because:

- a) **This type of media is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.**
- b) You need a password with 24 letters and 7 numbers to use digital media.
- c) There are 24 different kinds of digital media.

Answer feedback

The correct answer is **a**. “24/7” is a term used to describe things that are always available.

3. When digital media is described as being interactive, this means:

- a) People can make friends on the Internet
- b) Communication can be “two-way”
- c) **Both a and b**

Answer feedback

The correct answer is **c**. Digital media is described as interactive because people use it to interact with each other.