“TRUST ME”

Classroom Guide for Grades 4-6, 7-9 and 10-12+

A unit on manipulation and misinformation

Background Information

About the film

Misinformation and disinformation are all around us, and have real-world consequences. In today's information landscape where anyone can publish almost anything, who — and what — can you trust?

"TRUST ME" is a feature-length documentary that delves into the topics of manipulation and misinformation by exploring human nature, information technology, and the need for news and media literacy to help people trust one another. The film was produced by the Getting Better Foundation, whose mission is to build trust using the truth. For additional information about the film or its producers, or to get involved, visit www.trustmedocumentary.com and www.gettingbetterfoundation.org. The film is available for purchase from New Day Films at www.newday.com/film/trust-me.

The education cut of the film that accompanies this guide includes 15 segments. Depending on your schedule and objectives, you can show the full documentary or share it in segments.

About this guide

This guide was produced by the News Literacy Project (NLP) and Pamela Brunskill with support from the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation, which also funded the distribution of the education cut of the film.

The guide is intended for students in grades 4-6, 7-9, and 10-12+. The lessons are delineated for a particular grade band when appropriate and are designed for teachers to adapt, adopt, and adjust as they see fit.

GRADES 4-6

GRADES 7-9

GRADES 10-12+

The lessons are broken up into three sections: **before viewing**, **during viewing** and **after viewing** to allow for scaffolded development of concepts and understanding. Extension and further reading opportunities are listed throughout each of these sections.

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Unit Goals

- Empower students to evaluate the credibility and trustworthiness of information
- Help students assess the impact of misinformation and the important role that credible information plays in a democratic society
- Build awareness of how manipulation works to better fight being manipulated by mis- and disinformation

Manipulation by misinformation

Misinformation is not entirely an abstract concept because it influences the decisions people make and the actions they take. It also has political and social implications: Even if you manage to avoid falling for misinformation about important issues and events, the actions of other people in your community who are influenced by it can have a significant effect on you (for example, if a significant number of voters allow misinformation to determine their votes in an important election).

Therefore, for students to truly understand how misinformation works, they also need to understand how falsehoods manipulate people.

Most misinformation elicits an emotional response from its audience, tapping into deep-seated fears, beliefs and values that cause people to react more quickly and less rationally than they otherwise might. Many examples of misinformation simply “feel” right to the people who fall for them. They are consistent with the way their audience already sees and understands the world, they affirm people’s fears about how the world may be changing or they give people hope for positive change. Understood this way, misinformation is a form of exploitation — of our desire for justice, our outrage at injustice, our patriotism, our self-interests, our faith — that relies on manipulation to function.

This guide is designed to help you center the underlying concept of manipulation as you examine the core topic of misinformation in today’s information landscape.

Vocabulary

Academic: manipulation, addiction, virtual, media, polarization

Domain-Specific: brain hacking, misinformation, disinformation, confirmation bias, negativity bias, manipulation, deepfakes, conspiracy theory

Before Viewing: Introduction

LESSON #1: Introduction to Manipulation and “TRUST ME”

CCSS Primary Alignment:

> CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.4
> Interpret words and phrases as they are used in a text, including determining technical, connotative, and figurative meanings, and analyze how specific word choices shape meaning or tone.

Word Wall: manipulation

Objective: I can produce a representation of what manipulation means to me using words and/or images.

Preparation

What you’ll need:

1. Student notebooks
   - **Note**: an electronic version of a student notebook is available at http://bit.ly/trustme-notebook
   - “Manipulation Word Map Graphic Organizer” (for Option B)
2. Essential Questions Note-taking Sheet

Essential Questions (to be revisited throughout the unit):

- What is manipulation and how does it work?
- How does misinformation manipulate people?
- What are the consequences of misinformation?
- How do you know who (and what) you can trust?

Part One: The Concept of Manipulation

Option A (**Note**: teachers working with students in grades 7-9 may choose Option B if that better suits their students’ needs)

GRADES 4-6 GRADES 7-9

1. Write *manipulation* on the board. Ask students if they have heard the word before. If anyone knows its definition, have them share what they think it means. Explain that the class is going to study the word a bit by looking at its root to see if they can come up with a better understanding together.
2. Circle *man*. Ask students what other words they know that begin with the same root.
3. Draw spokes from the original word and add additional words that share the same root, *man*. Examples can include *manicure*, *manager*, *manufacture* and so on.

   - **Note**: Take a photo or save this image another way so you can revisit it at the end of the unit.
4. Have students think about what all of these words have in common. If a manicure is when someone gets their nails done, a manager is a hands-on person, and manufacturing involves making or fabricating (often with one’s hands), can students determine a possible meaning for the root *man-?

5. Tell students that manipulation comes from the Latin word for hand (*manus*) and that it means to handle or control something with skill, including people.
6. Add *manipulation* to the unit Word Wall, or whatever alternate method you use to keep track of important vocabulary.
7. Explain that today's lesson is to investigate what manipulation means and what it looks like. Share the learning objective (above). Tell students that this is the first in a series of lessons on manipulation for a documentary called "TRUST ME" that they'll learn more about at the end of the day's lesson.

Option B

GRADES 7-9 | GRADES 10-12+

1. Write *manipulation* on the board. Ask students if they've heard the word before; if so, in what context?
2. Draw spokes from *manipulation* to emulate the "Manipulation Word Map Graphic Organizer." As students offer ideas, add one or two of them to the spokes so that they mirror the graphic organizer.
3. Distribute the graphic organizer.
4. Give students a few minutes to fill in as much of the organizer as they can, perhaps by sharing their ideas with a partner. Then, have some students share their ideas with the whole class. For example, an idea for "What is it?" could be to influence skillfully. Ideas for "What is it like?" might include making others do what you want them to do, guilting others, and sometimes having a minor effect on another's life and other times having a significant effect. Some examples include being talked into buying an expensive product, an acquaintance offering to do a favor to get something in return, or a politician using rhetoric that exploits voters' hopes or fears.
   - **NOTE**: Have students save these graphic organizers to revisit at the end of the unit.
5. Explain that today's lesson is to investigate further what manipulation means. Share the learning objective. Tell students that this is the first in a series of lessons on manipulation for a documentary called "TRUST ME" that they'll learn more about at the end of the day's lesson.

Word Map for Manipulation

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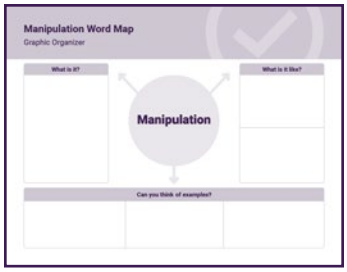

Part 2: Essential Questions

In this portion of the lesson, students will work in groups to brainstorm issues surrounding manipulation.

1. Since students are going to develop a representation of what manipulation means to them, tell them that they're going to explore the concept in small groups by focusing on one of four essential questions related to manipulation.
2. Post the essential questions:
   - What is manipulation and how does it work?
   - How does misinformation manipulate people?
   - What are the consequences of misinformation?
   - How do you know who (and what) you can trust?
3. Divide the class into small groups and distribute the "Essential Questions Note-Taking Sheet."

Essential Questions Note-Taking Sheet

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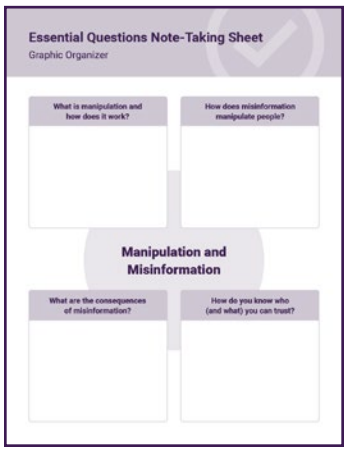


4. Assign each group a question. Give the groups 5-10 minutes to brainstorm answers to that question. Groups can either write, draw, and/or discuss their ideas and record them. Then ask groups to share their answers and any other highlights of their discussion. (Any group that finishes early may discuss the other questions.)
    - If groups struggle, push their thinking with purposeful questioning. Have you ever been tricked? What happened? What is your experience with so-called fake news or misinformation? Have you ever manipulated anyone? Can you explain exactly how you did it, and why it worked?
5. As students share their ideas, record their responses on a class version of the Essential Question handout that can be referenced periodically throughout the unit. Students may also take notes in their notebooks on each of the questions. Tell them that the class will revisit these questions throughout the unit.

Part 3: Student Practice

1. Ask students to produce a representation of what manipulation means to them in their notebooks using words and/or images.
2. Share a short video about manipulation and allow students to add to their responses.
    a. **Grades 4-6:** "What's the Truth?" at https://www.trustmedocumentary.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/WhatstheTruth_MusicVideo.mp4
    b. **Grades 7-9** & **10-12+**: "TRUST ME" Trailer at https://vimeo.com/438048106
3. Have students share their representations with a partner, call on some to share with the class and collect their representations to review. Tell students over the next few days they'll be viewing all or parts of the documentary "TRUST ME" while focusing on one particular aspect of manipulation.

Before viewing extension

If your students need additional support in developing the concept of manipulation, you might want to dive further into their experiences manipulating others and being manipulated by deconstructing those events to see if they can find common elements. For example:

- How does manipulation work? Salespeople sell you an image of yourself, or flatter you. Friends capitalize on imbalances in popularity or feelings of envy. People leave out important pieces of context when sharing comments or stories.
- Ask the students why manipulation seems so much clearer to those targeted by it in hindsight. Why are we sometimes blind to it or blindsided by it? What strategies could help people preempt manipulation in the future?

Go deeper: Use the interactive lesson "Misinformation" on the News Literacy Project's Checkology® virtual classroom to explore different types of misinformation more deeply at https://checkology.org/demo/lesson/87b19174077e2f37880249d75e185317a99f411e.

Student Resources

- The News Literacy Project's "Five Types of Misinformation" infographic at http://newslit.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/Misinformation-2020.pdf within the context of manipulation. What is manipulation's role in misinformation?

During Viewing

In this portion of the unit, students will use the jigsaw technique to learn more about manipulation while viewing "TRUST ME." The students will be divided into groups to investigate one of four learning-focused strands. Then they will share what they learned with the other groups. Finally, the whole class will investigate a fifth learning-focused strand. Teachers have the option of assigning the whole film to students or specific segments for this part of the unit.

Access 15 classroom-friendly film clips for "Trust Me" that go along with this guide at https://vimeo.com/439401884/f69e7c34d6.

K-12, Collegiate, and Parental/Community educational and screening licenses may be purchased through www.trustmedocumentary.com.

LESSON #2: Inquiry-Based Learning Strands

Note: This lesson will take multiple days. The actual number of days will be determined by how much time you allow for video viewing and group interaction.

CCSS Primary Alignment:

> CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.1 (for Strand 1. How Manipulation Works)
> Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.

> CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.2 (for Strand 2. Why We're Vulnerable to Manipulation)
> Determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas.

> CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.3 (for Strand 3. Impact of Manipulation)
> Analyze how and why individuals, events, or ideas develop and interact over the course of a text.

> CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.8 (for Strand 4. Challenges of Dealing with Manipulation)
> Delineate and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, including the validity of the reasoning as well as the relevance and sufficiency of the evidence.

Word Wall: manipulation, addiction, virtual, media, polarization, brain hacking, misinformation, confirmation bias, negativity bias, manipulation, deepfakes

Objective: I can investigate a key aspect of manipulation and explain it to others.

Preparation

What you'll need:

1. "'TRUST ME' Viewing Guide" handout
2. "Viewing Guide: Words to Know" handout
3. Student Notebooks
4. Internet access for all students
5. LCD projector connected to a computer with internet access

Part One: Forming Inquiry Groups

1. Remind students of the introductory lesson. Pass back their representations of manipulation. Highlight one or two examples that harnessed the essence of manipulation as the ability to influence someone or something skillfully.
2. Share the learning objective.
3. Tell students the next step in this unit is to further investigate the concept of manipulation by viewing the documentary "TRUST ME."
4. Play the first 30 seconds of the film. Pause after the quote, "The way we see the world depends on the information we receive" with all the different attributions.
5. Ask the students who actually said it. Using think-pair-share, have students think about their answer, talk about it with a partner, and then share their thoughts with the whole class.
6. Because it's unclear who actually said the quote, tell students they will revisit the quote after viewing "TRUST ME" and finish the discussion then. Explain that they're going to investigate this question along with another key aspect of manipulation in small, inquiry groups. They will use the jigsaw technique:
    - Form "home" groups of four students in a group.
    - Explain that each member of the home group is responsible for teaching one aspect of manipulation to the other members.
    - Either assign or allow each student in the group to choose one inquiry strand to investigate about manipulation. The four inquiry strands are: how manipulation works, why we're vulnerable to manipulation, the impact of manipulation, and challenges surrounding manipulation.
    - **Note**: In Part Three of the lesson, students will work in new "expert" groups to gather and discuss information on their topical strand. After that, they'll return to their home groups to teach about their respective inquiry strands.

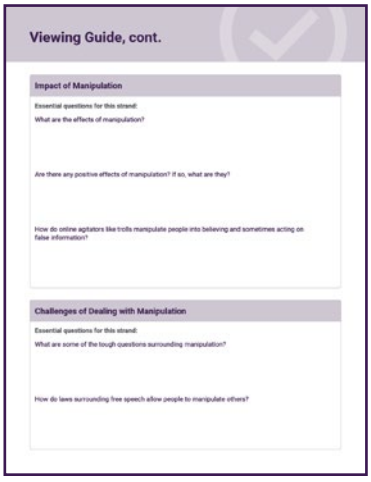
Part Two: Investigative Strands

1. Distribute the "TRUST ME" Viewing Guide and "Words to Know" handout to all students.

"TRUST ME" Viewing Guide

Pages 22-23

"TRUST ME" Viewing Guide
Graphic Organizer
Directions: As you watch "TRUST ME," jot down any notes and evidence from the film to help you answer the questions in each strand.
Essential Questions for the entire film
What is manipulation and how does it work?
What are the consequences of misinformation?
How do you know who (and what) you can trust?
How Manipulation Works
Essential questions for this strand:
How does manipulation work?
Who manipulates and why?
Why We're Vulnerable to Manipulation
Essential questions for this strand:
What role does psychology play in manipulation?
Why does almost everyone fall for some of the untruths or misinformation they see?


Viewing Guide, cont.
Impact of Manipulation
Essential questions for this strand:
What are the effects of manipulation?
Are there any positive effects of manipulation? If so, what are they?
How do online agitators like trolls manipulate people into believing and sometimes acting on false information?
Challenges of Dealing with Manipulation
Essential questions for this strand:
What are some of the tough questions surrounding manipulation?
How do laws surrounding free speech allow people to manipulate others?

Words to Know

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Viewing Guide: Words to Know
Directions: When you hear one of these terms in "TRUST ME," add it to the chart below and write down its definition and include an example of the term.
Vocab Box
manipulation, addiction, virtual, media, polarization, brain hacking, misinformation, confirmation bias, negativity bias, manipulation, deepfakes
Vocabulary Word
Definition
Example
CHALLENGE
Investigate the terms "news judgment," "native advertising," and/or "sockpuppet." Explain how these terms relate to the concepts and vocabulary words in "TRUST ME."

2. Assign students to inquiry strands for viewing the film. If you are not having students watch the full film, determine which video segments you want each inquiry strand to view. Then have students take notes in their respective section. They should also record vocabulary notes on the "Words to Know" handout.
    - Encourage students to complete additional research to verify their notes.
3. Once everyone has viewed the assigned video segments, have all members of an inquiry strand meet in a new "expert" group. At this point, the students should share their notes on the video segments and discuss their thoughts.
    - Prompt student learning using the "Discussion Questions" page.

Discussion Questions

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Discussion Questions for "TRUST ME"

(in order of appearance in film)

1. Why is social media addicting?
2. Why are social media platforms free? How do they make money?
3. How do online bullies and trolls manipulate others?
4. What problems can confirmation bias cause?
5. How do search engine algorithms and social media algorithms work? What do they do?
6. What role do PolitiFact and other fact-checking sites play in the war on misinformation? Do you think they are effective? Why or why not?
13. What is native advertising? Why can it be problematic?
14. Why isn't all data equal? How can data be manipulated and used as misinformation?
15. How did the Internet Research Agency manipulate Americans before and after the 2016 presidential election?
16. What are some vulnerabilities Americans have that can be exploited? What are some vulnerabilities you have that someone publishing misinformation could exploit?
17. What are the potential consequences of

4. Each member of the expert group should add pertinent notes to their own Viewing Guide.
5. As a group, expert members should decide the most pertinent and relevant information to teach to the home groups.

TIP!

Inquiry group #4 involves nuanced concepts and judgments and best explored with students who enjoy higher-level discussions. Segment #4 requires inferencing with incidental manipulation. Segment #12 really dives into the concept of challenges of dealing with manipulation.

Part two continued on next page.

Inquiry Strands and Video Segments

Inquiry Strand	Correlating Video Segments*														
1. How Manipulation Works	GRADES 4-6	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
	GRADES 7-9	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
	GRADES 10-12+	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
2. Why We're Vulnerable to Manipulation	GRADES 4-6	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
	GRADES 7-9	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
	GRADES 10-12+	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
3. Impact of Manipulation	GRADES 4-6	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
	GRADES 7-9	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
	GRADES 10-12+	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
4. Challenges of Dealing with Manipulation	GRADES 4-6	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
	GRADES 7-9	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
	GRADES 10-12+	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15

*segments 13-15 will be viewed in Lesson #3

Video Segment	Content	Run Time	Start Time (in full documentary)
A	"What's the Truth?" media literacy song	1:30	0:00
B	Opening to "TRUST ME" documentary	1:48	1:30
1	Tech Addiction and Media Business Models	7:44	3:15
2	Social Pressure and Bullying	1:31	11:10
3	Mis- and Dis-information, Confirmation Bias	5:07	12:44
4	Mainstream Media Sharing Misinformation	3:25	18:00
5	Citizens Misled by Disinformation	2:38	21:35
6	Costs of Overprotective Parenting	4:48	24:22
7	Risks of Medical Misinformation	8:55	29:30
8	Erosion of Church and State in Journalism	2:27	38:25
9	Foreign Interference in Democracy -Russian Trolls -ISIS	 9:47 3:07	 41:00 50:56
10	Misleading Technologies (Deepfakes)	2:24	54:00
11	Fatal flaws of Anonymous Messaging	6:07	56:37
12	Freedom of Expression Challenges	3:47	1:02:51
13*	Media Literacy in the Classroom	4:53	1:06:47
14*	Solutions to Media "ill-literacy"	8:39	1:11:50
15*	The Gap between Perception and Reality	8:45	1:20:40
—	"We're All in This Thing Together" and credits	3:45	1:29:29
—	Petition for media literacy school funding	:07	1:33:15

*segments 13-15 will be viewed in Lesson #3

Part 3: Teaching Your Strand

1. Have students return to their home groups.
2. Each member is responsible for teaching their expert, inquiry strand content to the rest of their home group. As students listen to the other experts in their groups, they should complete their Viewing Guide and ask the expert clarifying questions. Listening group members should also share any relevant information they learned from their videos.
    - Sentence starters for groups that might need help respectfully engaging in learning from one another include:
        - Why do you think...
        - I don't understand...
        - Can you explain that again?
        - Can you give me an example?
3. The home groups should also go over the vocabulary from "Words to Know."
4. After all members have led their portion of the discussion and all members have finalized their "Words to Know" pages, home groups should revisit and discuss the essential questions in light of what they have learned, and share their conclusions with the whole class:
    - What is manipulation and how does it work?
    - What role do people's emotions play when they are manipulated?
    - What are the consequences of misinformation?
    - How do you know who (and what) you can trust?
5. Ask students to complete an exit ticket: Using what you've learned already and your Viewing Guide notes, explain three ways you think people can fight manipulation.

LESSON #3: How to Fight Manipulation by Misinformation

CCSS Primary Alignment:

> CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.7
> Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse media and formats, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words.

Objective: I can devise a plan for fighting manipulation.

PREPARATION

What you'll need:

1. "How to Fight Manipulation by Misinformation" handout
2. LCD projector connected to a computer with internet
3. Student devices with internet
4. Student notebooks

Part One: A Bridging Activity

1. Share a few students' ideas for fighting manipulation as recorded on their exit tickets. Have students discuss those ideas and explain their strengths and weaknesses. If necessary, remind students how to hold a respectful discourse with sentence starters. A few include:
   - I agree with...I disagree with ...
   - I believe that's really important because ...
   - That's an interesting idea, but …
2. Distribute the "How to Fight Manipulation by Misinformation" handout.
3. Have students write down what they think are the three best ideas in the "Prediction" column.
4. Explain that the class is going to watch the last three sections of "TRUST ME" and watch to see if any of the exit ticket ideas are discussed in the film. If so, students should put a "C" in the middle column of the handout. If they are disconfirmed, students should put a "D" in the middle column. If the film doesn't address the issue, students should put an "N" in the middle column. The class will also add to these ideas by recording new thoughts on how to fight being manipulated by misinformation. (Example below.)
5. Share the learning objective to go over the objective of today's lesson.

"How to Fight Manipulation by Misinformation"

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How to Fight Manipulation by Misinformation
Graphic Organizer

Prediction	Confirmed, Disconfirmed, or Neither?	New Thinking

Ideas I Hadn't Thought Of / Other Notes

Prediction	Confirmed, Disconfirmed, or Neither?	New Thinking
Go to trustworthy fact-checking sites.	C	There are several sites I can visit to confirm a story.

Part Two: Video

1. Play sections 13-15 of "TRUST ME," stopping periodically to allow students to compose their thoughts on their "How to Fight Manipulation and Misinformation" handout.
2. Hold a whole-class discussion on how to fight manipulation by way of misinformation, both as an individual as well as how institutions and companies (such as social media platforms) can do so. Students should refer to the notes they took and provide evidence from the documentary.
   - Scaffold student discussions using the "Discussion Questions," if you didn't already use them all.
3. Have the class rank its ideas from "How to Fight Manipulation and Misinformation." The list should start with what students believe is most effective down to the least effective. Students should defend their rankings by explaining why they ranked them the way they did using evidence from the film.

Part 3: Developing a Plan

1. Have students decide which steps they'll take to avoid being manipulated by misinformation and, if you choose, how to help others avoid this as well. They should write this plan in their notebooks or on the back of the "How to Fight Manipulation and Misinformation" handout.

2. Once students have a plan they're happy with, have them share it with a partner. Partners should tell each other what they like in the plan and what is confusing or needs to be clarified. With their partner, students should revise their plan.
   - To help them revise, you may provide a sentence starter. A few examples are:
     - Although misinformation comes in many forms ...
     - Manipulation is a problem in the digital age, so ...
     - You might think _____, but really ...
3. Have a few students share their revised plans with the class. Applaud all efforts. Collect plans and assess formatively for understanding and make a plan to meet with students who seem to lack a solid comprehension of the concepts in "TRUST ME."
   - **Note**: If you are completing this assignment prior to the 2020 U.S. presidential election, you might make this a focus of students' plans. You might also consider having students share their plans, or create tip sheets or infographics for friends and family members.

During viewing extension

Have students pretend to have a conversation with someone who believes a piece of misinformation (for example, a conspiracy theory fragment such as the idea that COVID was intentionally created in a lab, or that activists intentionally cause wildfires in the Pacific Northwest). They can practice explaining why one of the examples of misinformation from "TRUST ME" was erroneous or dangerous to support their points.

For Grades 7-9 or 10-12+: Have students take the News Literacy Project's "Fighting falsehoods on social media" quiz at https://newslit.org/educators/resources/fighting-falsehoods-on-social-media/

Student Resources

- The News Literacy Project's "How to know what to trust" infographic at https://newslit.org/educators/resources/how-to-know-what-to-trust/
- The News Literacy Project's quiz "Should You Share It?" at https://newslit.org/educators/resources/should-you-share-it/

Educator Resources

- Center for Media Literacy (CML) Framework and Media Lit Kit: https://www.medialit.org/cml-medialit-kit
- Armstrong, S., & Brunskill, P. (2018). *Information literacy: Separating fact from fiction: Finding information, analyzing information, using information.* Huntington Beach: Shell Education.
- Otis, Cindy L. (2020). *True or False: A CIA Analyst's Guide to Spotting Fake News.* New York: Macmillan Publishing Group.
  - Note for or 10-12+: This book is also appropriate for young adults.
- The psychology of misinformation. (2020, September 18). Retrieved September 25, 2020, from https://firstdraftnews.org/long-form-article/the-psychology-of-misinformation/
- Breakston, J., Smith, M., Wineburg, S., Rapaport, A., Carle, J., Garland, M., & Saavedra, A. (2019, November 14). Students' Civic Online Reasoning. Retrieved September 25, 2020, from https://sheg.stanford.edu/students-civic-online-reasoning
- Hobbs, Renee (2021). Media Literacy in Action https://www.mlaction.com/

After Viewing

Lesson #4: Practicing Verification Skills

CCSS Primary Alignment:

> CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.7
> Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse media and formats, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words.

Objectives:

- I can determine if a source is trustworthy or not.
- I can collaborate with my classmates to develop a concept map of manipulation.
- I can evaluate another group's concept map.

PREPARATION

What you'll need:

1. LCD projector connected to a computer with internet
2. "Manipulation Word Map Graphic Organizer," "Manipulation Word Map, Extended Version" or a blank piece of paper/poster. (Please choose what you feel is the best approach for your students.)
3. Student Notebooks

Essential Questions:

- What is manipulation and how does it work?
- What are the consequences of misinformation?
- How do you know who (and what) you can trust?

Part 1: Quote Time!

1. Once more, display the quote, "The way we see the world depends on the information we receive."
2. Remind students that this quote was shown a couple of times in "TRUST ME." Ask students who said it.
3. Using think-pair-share, have students think about their answer, talk about it with a partner, and then share their thoughts again with the whole class.
4. Tell students that the film's director, Roko Belic, made up the quote to express the theme of the film. The changing bylines show how the meaning of the quote changes depending on attribution, Leonardo Da Vinci versus Rosa Parks, for example, and they plant doubt about the trustworthiness of the attribution. By now, the students should recognize that just because someone says something or puts quotes around a statement, it doesn't make it true. Tell students that today's lesson will involve practicing what they have learned about manipulation from "TRUST ME" and then collaboratively revising their original manipulation Word Maps to create a stronger visual representation of the concept. Share the learning objectives.

Part 2: Trust Me?

1. Have students go to three different websites, identify the source and consider what standards guide their work and whether any overt biases or conflicts of interest are present. For example, these three pieces about homelessness in Washington, D.C. provide distinct contrasts:
   - **"Homeless in Washington, DC"** (In the Now, YouTube at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y1chLaNUn20).
     - **Teacher note:** This YouTube channel is a propaganda news outlet run by the Russian government. Like other state-run media, it often includes accurate details and stories, but with an intent to promote Russian interests around the world — including by amplifying problems and social divisions in the United States.
   - **"Annual homeless count shows slight drop, fewest unhoused since 2001"** (Patricia Sullivan, The Washington Post at https://www.washingtonpost.com/local/dc-homeless-survey/2020/06/11/fd16f1aa-ab44-11ea-a9d9-a81c1a491c52_story.html).
   - **"2019 Point-in-Time Count of People Experiencing Homelessness in the District of Columbia"** (Washington, D.C. Department of Human Services at https://dhs.dc.gov/page/2019-point-time-count-people-experiencing-homelessness-district-columbia).
2. Have students identify who is behind the information and what their primary purpose was in producing it. They should determine if they can trust that source or not, and justify their position to the rest of the class. For example, you might guide students' inquiry by asking them to carefully examine the YouTube page hosting the first example from In the Now. How many notice the disclaimer stating that "RT is funded in whole or in part by the Russian government"? What can they discover about this source if they do a quick web search about it?

   You might want to have students put this information in a chart in their notebooks as follows:

Article	Trustworthy Source? (Yes, No, or Not Sure)	Why or Why Not?

Part 3: Manipulation Word Map

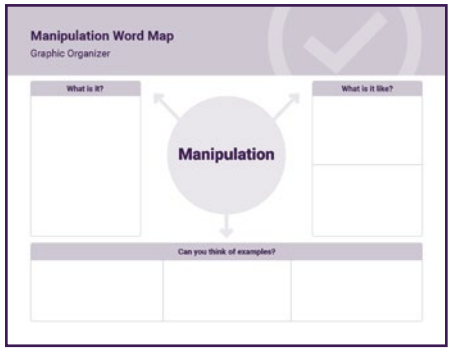
1. Students who completed the word study etymology activity for the root *man* should revisit their thoughts from that discussion. Students who completed the "Manipulation Word Map Graphic Organizer" activity at the beginning of the unit should revisit their graphic organizers.
   - Ask students how their understanding of manipulation has deepened and evolved, especially as it relates to misinformation, and allow several students to share their ideas.
2. Hold a brief class discussion synthesizing the students' thoughts on the three essential questions for the unit (see above).
3. Ask students to collaborate on new Word Maps focused on "Manipulation in the Digital Age" (one per group). Each group must share its new Word Maps with another group and defend its work. Require students to include a select number of vocabulary terms (5-10) and explain how the terms are related.

Students should also use examples from "TRUST ME." The listening group must evaluate the presenting group's decisions in light of the essential questions. Then, the other group presents and the roles reverse.

- **Note:** You can customize this process for your students by differentiating the product. Students who need more prompting can use the original Word Map graphic organizer. Students ready for a little deeper thinking can use the extended version and draw lines to clearly show how concepts are related. Challenge groups that are able to create their own representations to do so with a blank poster.

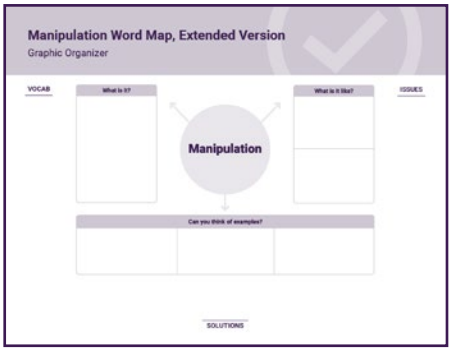
Word Map for Manipulation

Page 20



Extended Word Map

Page 27



Your own poster!

Manipulation in the Digital Age

After reading extension

Have students act out the vocabulary words from "TRUST ME." For students interested in continuing a deeper exploration of manipulation and misinformation, you might want to assign an inquiry project such as:

- Write an enduring issues essay about what you think the central idea is for being news and information literate. (For example, all content isn't equal/misinformation can have catastrophic consequences.)
- Create a quiz that includes false and credible information. Then, challenge your classmates, friends and family members to use it to test their skills. For inspiration, see one or more quizzes on the News Literacy Project's website at https://newslit.org/educators/resources/.
- Design a job posting or classified ad for a fact-checker. Include what the job involves, why the job is important, and what it pays.
- Compare and contrast propaganda throughout history. How has it changed? What is the same? How would you define propaganda? Who decides what should count as propaganda? Hypothesize what's going to happen in the future.
- Student-designed research project

Student Resources

Students looking for more resources to help them deepen their understanding of news literacy and sharpen their ability to differentiate between credible and unreliable information might wish to explore the following:

- The News Literacy Project's mobile app, Informable® (for Android and iPhone).
- "Spot the Troll," an interactive website from the Media Forensics Hub at Clemson University at https://spotthetroll.org/.
- "Trust Me" Link to Online Student Workbook: https://acrobat.adobe.com/link/review?uri=urn:aaid:scds:US:517ae419-9628-3969-aa66-6b32deab9d86

Educator Resources

Educators interested in learning more about news literacy, misinformation and manipulation might wish to explore the following resources:

- Center for Media Literacy (CML) Framework and Media Lit Kit: https://www.medialit.org/cml-medialit-kit
- The News Literacy Project's Checkology® virtual classroom at https://checkology.org/, a no-cost e-learning hub with 13 interactive lessons hosted by real-world subject matter experts, plus extension and supplemental activities. It includes a lesson focused on misinformation and a student fact-checking hub called "The Check Center" where students learn digital verification skills. A new lesson on Checkology addressing the appeal and spread of conspiracy theories will launch in early 2021.
- NLP's educator resource library contains lesson plans, classroom activities, infographics, posters, quizzes and more.
- NLP's The Sift® educator newsletter brings you the latest viral rumors, hoaxes and other examples of misinformation each week, along with other ideas for teaching news literacy based on recent headlines.
- Resources from the Stanford History Education Group at https://sheg.stanford.edu, including studies evaluating students' "civic online reasoning" skills and classroom resources at https://cor.stanford.edu/curriculum/?tab=collections.
- Silverman, C. (2015, February 15). Lies, Damn Lies, and Viral Content. Retrieved September 26, 2020, from https://www.cjr.org/tow_center_reports/craig_silverman_lies_damn_lies_viral_content.php

Graphic Organizers and Student Handouts

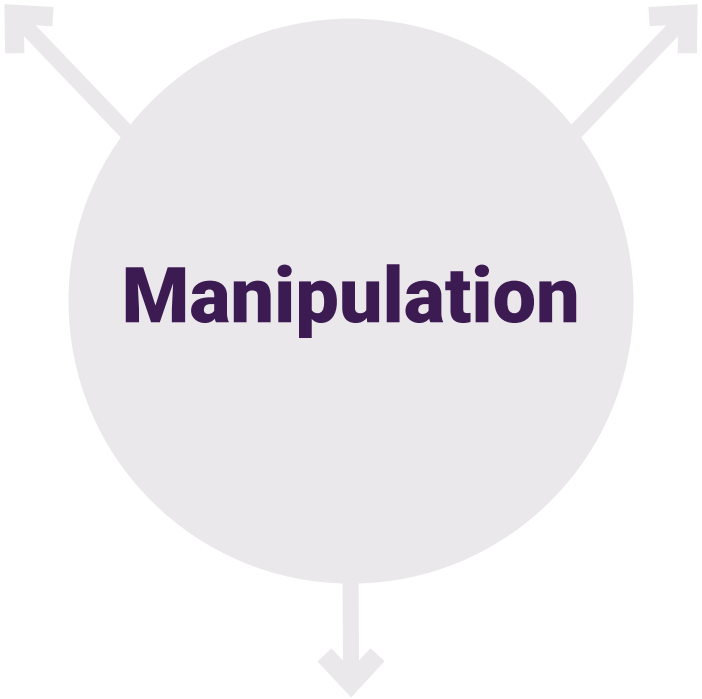
“TRUST ME” Classroom Guide

Page 20	Manipulation Word Map Graphic Organizer
Page 21	Essential Questions Note-Taking Sheet
Pages 22-23	“TRUST ME” Viewing Guide
Page 24	Viewing Guide: Words to Know
Page 25	How to Fight Manipulation by Misinformation
Page 26	Discussion Questions for “TRUST ME”
Page 27	Manipulation Word Map, Extended Version

Manipulation Word Map

Graphic Organizer

What is it?



What is it like?

Can you think of examples?

Essential Questions Note-Taking Sheet

Graphic Organizer

Manipulation and Misinformation

What is manipulation and how does it work?	How does misinformation manipulate people?

What are the consequences of misinformation?	How do you know who (and what) you can trust?

“TRUST ME” Viewing Guide

Graphic Organizer

Directions: As you watch “TRUST ME,” jot down any notes and evidence from the film to help you answer the questions in each strand.

Essential Questions for the entire film

- What is manipulation and how does it work?
- What are the consequences of misinformation?
- How do you know who (and what) you can trust?

How Manipulation Works

Essential questions for this strand:

How does manipulation work?

Who manipulates and why?

Why We’re Vulnerable to Manipulation

Essential questions for this strand:

What role does psychology play in manipulation?

Why does almost everyone fall for some of the untruths or misinformation they see?

Viewing Guide, cont.

Impact of Manipulation

Essential questions for this strand:

What are the effects of manipulation?

Are there any positive effects of manipulation? If so, what are they?

How do online agitators like trolls manipulate people into believing and sometimes acting on false information?

Challenges of Dealing with Manipulation

Essential questions for this strand:

What are some of the tough questions surrounding manipulation?

How do laws surrounding free speech allow people to manipulate others?

Viewing Guide: Words to Know

Directions: When you hear one of these terms in "TRUST ME," add it to the chart below and write down its definition and include an example of the term.

Vocab Box

manipulation, addiction, virtual, media, polarization, brain hacking, misinformation, confirmation bias, negativity bias, manipulation, deepfakes

Vocabulary Word	Definition	Example

CHALLENGE

Investigate the terms **"news judgment," "native advertising,"** and/or **"sockpuppet."** Explain how these terms relate to the concepts and vocabulary words in "TRUST ME."

How to Fight Manipulation by Misinformation

Graphic Organizer

Prediction	Confirmed, Disconfirmed, or Neither?	New Thinking

Ideas I Hadn't Thought Of / Other Notes

Discussion Questions for "TRUST ME"

(in order of appearance in film)

1. Why is social media addicting?
2. Why are social media platforms free? How do they make money?
3. How do online bullies and trolls manipulate others?
4. What problems can confirmation bias cause?
5. How do search engine algorithms and social media algorithms work? What do they do?
6. What role do PolitiFact and other fact-checking sites play in the war on misinformation? Do you think they are effective? Why or why not?
7. What emotion do people spreading misinformation appeal to most? Why?
8. Analyze the "Covington Catholic High School incident" involving Nick Sandmann and the Native American elder, or Edgar Welch and the pizza shop. What went wrong? Can you justify your response? How are these misinformation examples different?
9. What are the offline consequences of online activity?
    - How do events spiral out of control?
10. How are parents being manipulated by misleading or false claims concerning their children's safety?
11. What role does negativity bias play in the spread and appeal of manipulation?
12. Explain the disconnect between parents being more afraid when the reality is actually safer. What can we learn about the susceptibility to manipulation from the segment describing Dr. Andrew Wakefield's role in the vaccine story? Why does this continue to be a pressing issue about which there is so much misinformation?
13. What is native advertising? Why can it be problematic?
14. Why isn't all data equal? How can data be manipulated and used as misinformation?
15. How did the Internet Research Agency manipulate Americans before and after the 2016 presidential election?
16. What are some vulnerabilities Americans have that can be exploited? What are some vulnerabilities you have that someone publishing misinformation could exploit?
17. What are the potential consequences of deepfakes? Are they dangerous?
18. What are some of the problems caused by anonymous messaging in apps like Whatsapp?
19. What are the legal issues surrounding manipulation and misinformation? Why can't the U.S. government just stop misinformation from spreading?
20. How can people evaluate sources of information to make sure they're credible? Why is it our responsibility to make sure sources of information are credible?
21. Why should individuals be skeptical of what they read, see, and hear online and elsewhere?
22. What does it mean to be news and media literate? How can we help the "good guys"?
23. What does this quote mean: "The way we see the world depends on the information we receive"?
24. Do you agree or disagree that "[s]haring our stories helps us see how connected all are?" What effect would finding common ground have on the problems of manipulation and misinformation?

Manipulation Word Map, Extended Version

Graphic Organizer

VOCAB

What is it?

Manipulation

What is it like?

ISSUES

Can you think of examples?

SOLUTIONS

Can You Trust This Source?

Directions: Go to three different websites. Identify the source. Think about what bias could be there. Justify how you can or cannot trust what you are reading.

List your information in the chart below.

Article	Trustworthy Source? (Yes, No, or Not Sure)	Why or Why Not?