

# Information Literacy

Information Literacy is used as a broad term to describe the identification, evaluation, and use of information, whether in print or digital format. Information literacy is a necessary skill for teachers to cultivate in students. Being information literate requires becoming a good consumer of information and a good creator of information. One who can identify the need for information, effectively search for information from credible sources, and evaluate information is considered a good consumer of information. A good creator of information is someone who can effectively synthesize, use, and share identified information. It is important that teachers model the characteristics of good consumers and creators of information for students to follow and gain basic information literacy skills.

1. What is the difference between information, media, and digital literacy?
2. How does student information literacy awareness impact how students identify, find, evaluate, and use information?
3. Why is it critical that I model how to be a good information consumer and creator?



to Consider

Information literacy includes the ability to identify, find, evaluate, and use information effectively. The terms “media literacy” and “digital literacy”, while sometimes used as synonyms of information literacy, are more specific in the types of information sought for, evaluated, and used. Information literacy is a broad term used to describe the identification, evaluation, and use of information, whether in print or digital format. Teachers should educate students on information literacy skills to prepare them to succeed as lifelong learners in digital spaces.

Information literacy involves two components: being a good consumer and being a good creator. A good consumer of information is one who can identify the need for information, effectively search for information from credible sources, and evaluate information. When researching something, a good consumer of information will first identify the need for the information requested. To effectively search for information, an information literate student will think about which search engines to use and how to properly search for information using appropriate keywords and phrases. Common credible sources of information for K-12 students include physical and online libraries, museums, and internet search engines.

Once students obtain information from credible information sources, the next action is to evaluate information obtained. Generally, questions often asked by consumers when evaluating information include: “Who is this information coming from?”, “Is this person an expert on the topic?”, “Is the information biased?”, and “Was the information presented recently or a long time ago?”. Answers to these questions help consumers know which information is credible, and whether information fits the criteria of authority, accuracy, currency, objectivity, and coverage.

Good creators effectively synthesize, use, and share identified information. Information synthesis involves the combination of information from different sources to create and/or support an opinion. When using or sharing information from sources, students should follow general citation style guidelines to give credit to the originators of information. Good creators ask themselves: “How can I present information well so that my readers and listeners can understand?” and “How can I make sure my readers and listeners know I am not the creator of the information presented?”

It is important that teachers not only teach but also demonstrate to students what it means to be good consumers and creators of information, as students often gain skills through observed actions. Through teaching and demonstration, teachers can help students to effectively learn and show information literacy skills.

## KEY Elements