

Digital media and democracy

40 minutes

Following My Interests Online

Outcome 3.7

WHAT THIS LESSON DOES

You will weigh how digital media affects democracy by considering benefits like wider access and better scrutiny against risks such as disinformation and social division. You will hear both sides and form your own view without a set conclusion.

CURRICULUM OUTCOMES

Outcome	What the specification asks for
3.7	discuss the role of digital technologies, communication tools, and the internet in a democratic society

WHAT STUDENTS SHOULD BE ABLE TO DO

- Discuss the role of digital technologies in a democratic society (LO 3.7)
- Weigh benefits (access, voice, scrutiny) and risks (disinformation, manipulation, division) without a predetermined verdict
- Reach and state your own view on whether digital media strengthens or threatens democracy

BEFORE THE BELL

- Arrange classroom space to allow students to move and position themselves along a line.
- Open the opinion-line activity on your own screen beforehand and check it displays on the board, since both statements and the case bullets are already on the step for the students.
- Opinion-line interactive ready on the board; no student devices required

Digital media and democracy

HOW THE LESSON RUNS

3 min	introduction	Start
3 min	content	Examine and discuss
20 min	activity	Hands-on: the democracy debate
8 min	activity	Your turn: weigh both sides
3 min	content	Make sense
2 min	content	Reflect
1 min	summary	What you covered

TEACHING MOVES

- Keep the opening short and neutral without hinting at a favoured position.
- Use quick hand signals to show initial positions visibly to the whole class.
- Keep two sharp bullets per side on screen; use optional expanders only if a side needs more depth.
- Leave the full eight minutes for the three moves in pairs in Your turn, even if the debate is still lively, because that is where each student has to state a view and name what would change it.
- Circulate during pair work to support strong steelmanning of opposing arguments.
- Restate the strongest minority view during the make-sense section.
- If a student names a real politician, party, or creator, reframe to the mechanism not the person (speed, targeting, pile-on, gatekeeping). Keep names off the board. If someone describes harm that happened to them, thank them, do not turn it into the class example, and move back to the general case bullets. You do not need a class verdict on any real person.

WHAT TO WATCH FOR

- Students provide weak versions of the other side; push them to state it convincingly.
- Students decide before hearing both cases; remind them to listen fully first.
- Students struggle to name a changing condition; point them to the student-voice examples in the step.
- Statement 2 overruns and steals time from the pair block; keep statement 2 to a quick place and one voice from each end only.

DIFFERENTIATION

- Support: Provide sentence starters for stating views and steelmanning in pairs.
- Extension: Invite students to connect arguments to current events or platforms, staying with mechanisms rather than named individuals.
- Support: Use mixed pairs so stronger students can model discussion skills.