

Study Guide: Media Masters Rock! The AQBS Rule

Grade Level: 8th Grade

Subject Focus: Digital Literacy and Digital Citizenship

Objective:

Students will learn the importance of the AQBS Rule—"Ask Questions, Be Skeptical"—and how to apply critical thinking when navigating social media and reacting to online posts.

Before Watching the Video

Discussion Starter:

1. Have you ever seen a social media post that made you feel very angry, sad, or excited? What did you do next?
2. Why do you think it's important to pause and think before reacting to posts online?

Vocabulary:

- **Media Master:** A responsible and thoughtful internet user.
- **AQBS Rule:** A guideline to ask questions and be skeptical when encountering strong emotions online.
- **Skeptical:** Being cautious and questioning the truth of something.
- **Emotional Triggers:** Situations or content that cause strong emotional responses.

While Watching the Video

Key Points to Listen For:

- What does the AQBS Rule stand for?
- Examples of questions to ask when encountering strong emotions online.
- Why is it important to be skeptical about both your emotions and the post itself?

After Watching the Video

Discussion Questions:



1. In your own words, explain what the AQBS Rule means.
2. How can asking questions about your emotions help you make better decisions online?
3. Why is it sometimes better to not respond to a post at all?
4. Can you think of a situation where being skeptical about a post might have prevented a problem?

Activity: AQBS in Action


1. **Materials Needed:** Index cards or paper.
2. **Instructions:**
 - Provide each student with a card containing a sample fictional social media posts (e.g., “Breaking news!” or “Look what [celebrity] just said!”). with a mix of strong emotional content, true facts, and misleading information.
 - EXAMPLES might include the following:

Viral Outrage Post




 **BREAKING NEWS!** 


A new law just passed that will BAN all video games for kids under 16!   Starting next month, game companies will be required to shut down accounts for anyone underage. Is this fair?!? COMMENT BELOW!  #SaveGaming #UnfairLaws

 **True Fact:** Some countries have introduced gaming restrictions for minors.

 **Misleading:** There is no such law in the U.S. banning all video games for kids under 16.

Celebrity Scam Post

 **OMG!** Taylor Swift just announced she’s giving away \$10,000 to her first 1,000 followers who comment "SwiftieForLife" on this post!  Hurry before it’s too late! 

 #TaylorSwift #CashGiveaway

✓ **True Fact:** Celebrities sometimes give money to charity.

✗ **Misleading:** This is a fake giveaway, likely a scam to collect personal information.

Emotional Hoax Post

🐶💔 This poor puppy was abandoned at a gas station and has been crying for days! If you don't share this post, Facebook will delete it, and no one will help! 😞🙏 SHARE NOW to help save this puppy! #SaveThePuppy #Urgent

✓ **True Fact:** Animal abandonment is a real issue.

✗ **Misleading:** Facebook doesn't delete posts like this, and the story may not be true.

Fear-Mongering Post

⚠️ *DO NOT DRINK TAP WATER!* ⚠️

A new study shows that tap water in the U.S. contains dangerous chemicals that can cause memory loss and mood swings! Scientists say we should ONLY drink bottled water from now on! Stay safe! 🚫💧🚰 #HealthWarning

✓ **True Fact:** Some areas have water contamination concerns.

✗ **Misleading:** Most U.S. tap water is heavily regulated and safe to drink.

Conspiracy Theory Post

🚀 *NASA HIDING THE TRUTH?!* 🚀

A leaked document reveals NASA has known about ALIEN CONTACT for years but is keeping it SECRET from the public! 🙄👁️ Why aren't they telling us the truth?! SHARE if you think we deserve answers! #AliensExist

✓ **True Fact:** NASA studies space and the possibility of extraterrestrial life.

✗ **Misleading:** There is no leaked document confirming alien contact.

Fake Health Post

🧠 Doctors *HATE* this simple trick! 🧠

Did you know that eating **one marshmallow before bed** can CURE ANXIETY?! Scientists say this small habit improves sleep and lowers stress instantly! Try it tonight!

😴✨ #HealthHack #LifeChanging

✅ **True Fact:** Some foods may influence sleep and mood.

❌ **Misleading:** There is no scientific evidence that marshmallows cure anxiety.

Discussion Prompts for Students:

- What questions should we ask before believing this post?
- Where could we check to see if this information is true?
- What emotions does this post try to trigger?
- Why might someone create and share this kind of post?
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Clickbait News Post

📰 SCHOOL WEEK CUT TO 3 DAYS? 📰

A new law is being discussed that could REDUCE school weeks to just **three days!** Politicians say kids need more rest, and this could happen as soon as next year! Would you support this? COMMENT BELOW! 🏫👶 #LessSchool #MoreFreedom

✅ **True Fact:** Some districts have experimented with 4-day school weeks.

❌ **Misleading:** No law is being passed for a national 3-day school week.

Fake Missing Person Post

😭 MISSING CHILD – SHARE NOW! 😭



📰 URGENT – This 9-year-old boy disappeared yesterday at a park, and his family is desperate to find him! If EVERYONE shares this, we can bring him home! 🙏❤️ #HelpFindHim #ShareForGood

✅ **True Fact:** Missing child cases are real and serious.


❌ **Misleading:** This post might be outdated, fake, or an attempt to spread false information.

Fear-Based Health Post

 *SODA DESTROYS YOUR BONES?!* 





New research shows that drinking just **one soda a week** can make your bones brittle and weak, leading to early fractures! Scientists say soda is as bad as smoking!  
#HealthWarning #NoMoreSoda

 **True Fact:** Excessive soda consumption can have health risks.


 **Misleading:** There's no direct link between drinking one soda a week and brittle bones.

Fake Historical Fact Post

 *DID YOU KNOW?* 

Abraham Lincoln once said, “**The internet is the most powerful tool for truth.**”  
Hard to believe he saw this coming over 150 years ago! SHARE if you love history! 
 #Lincoln #HistoryFacts

 **True Fact:** Lincoln was a historical figure known for his wisdom.

 **Misleading:** The internet didn't exist in Lincoln's time!

2. AQBS in Action - Activity - Instructions continued...

- In pairs or small groups, students will use the AQBS Rule to:
 - Analyze the emotions triggered by the post.
 - Ask questions about the truthfulness of the post (evidence, source, etc.).
 - Decide on the best course of action (share, ignore, or investigate further).
- Share their findings with the class.

Extended Learning

Reflection Activity:

Write a paragraph about a time when you reacted emotionally to a social media post. How could the AQBS Rule have helped you in that situation?

Creative Task:

Create a digital poster or meme explaining the AQBS Rule. Include slogans like “Pause Before You Post” or “Ask Questions, Be Skeptical” along with examples of questions to ask about emotional or suspicious posts.

Home Connection:

Discuss with a family member how they handle emotional responses to social media posts. Share the AQBS Rule with them and ask how they think it could improve their online habits.

Wrap-Up**Media Master Pledge:**

As a class, create a pledge to follow the AQBS Rule. Example statements might include:

- “I will ask questions before reacting to posts that make me emotional.”
- “I will be skeptical of posts without evidence.”
- “I will take time to think before I comment, share, or react online.”

Teacher Note:

Encourage students to practice the AQBS Rule regularly and reflect on how it changes their online interactions. Reinforce that critical thinking and emotional awareness are key to being a responsible digital citizen.

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