

Become a Lightworker: Civic Action Project

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TABLE OF CONTENTSLightworkers Curriculum

Project Overview	4
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Standards• About the Film• About the Team• Materials and Facilities• Resources• Overall Value	
Lesson 1: Environmental + Climate	10
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Lesson Plan• Discovery Activity• Guided Discussion• Local Action Plan	
Lesson 2: Art + Activism	16
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Lesson Plan• Discovery Activity• Guided Discussion• Creative Project	
Lesson 3: Values in Action	22
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Lesson Plan• Discovery Activity• Guided Discussion• Option A: Scenario Response• Option B: Create a Lightworker	
Lesson 4: Political + Civic Engagement	29
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Lesson Plan• Discovery Activity• Guided Discussion• Mock Civic Campaign	

Lesson 5: Authors / Thought Leadership	34
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Lesson Plan• Discovery Activity• Guided Discussion• Op-Ed Writing	
Lesson 6: Public Health + Social Justice	39
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Lesson Plan• Discovery Activity• Guided Discussion• Community Health Audit	
Lesson 7: Museums + Historical + Legacy	44
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Lesson Plan• Discovery Activity• Guided Discussion• Oral History Project•	
Lesson 8: Cultural / Creative	50
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Lesson Plan• Discovery Activity• Guided Discussion• Media Analysis	
Appendix	
Reliable Website Checklist	56
Guest Speaker Letter Template	57
Additional Resources	59

PROJECT OVERVIEW

CURRICULUM AREA:

Standards Alignment

This lesson aligns with the National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS) C3 Framework, particularly in the areas of civic engagement, inquiry, and social responsibility. Students are encouraged to examine real-world issues, evaluate multiple perspectives, and develop informed, actionable responses to challenges within their communities.

Relevant NCSS Themes Include:

- Civic Ideals and Practices
- People, Places, and Environments
- Power, Authority, and Governance
- Global Connections
- Individual Development and Identity
- Cross-Curricular Connections

While rooted in Social Studies standards, this lesson is intentionally designed to be adaptable across multiple subject areas, including:

- Science (Environmental Studies): Exploring climate change, ecosystems, and sustainability solutions
- English Language Arts: Research, argumentative writing, and presentation skills
- Art & Media: Visual storytelling, poster design, and creative expression
- Technology/STEAM: Digital presentation tools, multimedia storytelling, and problem-solving

This flexibility allows educators to tailor the activity to meet the needs of students across grades 9–12 and diverse learning environments, while reinforcing critical thinking, collaboration, and real-world application.

QUOTE:

“Everybody who asks themselves, ‘What can I do?’, will come up with an answer that’s appropriate.” –

Peter Coyote, Author/Actor/Buddhist Priest
Lightworker

TITLE OF PROJECT:

“Become a Lightworker: Civic Action Project”

THE PROJECT

Students are challenged to explore a series of lessons centered on the themes presented in the documentary *Lightworkers*. Each lesson focuses on a different area of civic life, including environmental advocacy, art and activism, public health, civic engagement, and social responsibility. Through these lessons, students will examine how individuals from diverse backgrounds take action to address real-world issues and contribute to their communities.

Within each lesson, students will engage in guided discovery activities, discussion, and written responses that encourage critical thinking and personal reflection. Students will analyze the work of individuals featured in the film, identify the issues they address, and evaluate the impact of their actions. In addition, students will complete meaningful activities such as developing a Local Action Plan, allowing them to apply what they have learned to real issues within their own communities.

At the conclusion of the lesson series, students will reflect on the central question explored throughout the film: *What can we do?* Students will consider their own role in society and identify ways in which they can contribute as informed and engaged citizens.

Students benefit from this lesson series by strengthening their analytical, research, and writing skills while also developing a deeper understanding of civic responsibility. These lessons emphasize real-world connections and encourage students to move beyond passive learning, empowering them to think critically, engage in meaningful discussion, and recognize their ability to create change. Teachers may elect to adapt the lessons for individual or group work and provide opportunities for collaboration and discussion throughout the unit.

STANDARDS

College, Career, and Civic Life (C3) Framework for Social Studies:

D2.Civ.2.6-8 / D2.Civ.2.9-12 – Explain the roles of citizens in influencing public policy

D2.Civ.12.6-8 / D2.Civ.12.9-12 – Assess how laws and policies address public issues

D2.Geo.4.6-8 / D2.Geo.4.9-12 – Analyze how human activity and cultural patterns influence the environment

D4.1.6-8 / D4.1.9-12 – Construct arguments using claims and evidence

D4.6.6-8 / D4.6.9-12 – Use disciplinary and interdisciplinary lenses to understand local, regional, and global problems

Common Core State Standards (English Language Arts):

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.7.1 / RI.9-10.1 – Cite textual evidence to support analysis

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.7.1 / W.9-10.1 – Write arguments supported by evidence

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.7.2 / W.9-10.2 – Write informative/explanatory texts

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.7.1 / SL.9-10.1 – Engage effectively in collaborative discussions

North American Association for Environmental Education (NAAEE) Standards:

- Strand 1: Questioning and Analysis Skills
- Strand 2: Knowledge of Environmental Processes and Systems
- Strand 4: Personal and Civic Responsibility

ABOUT THE FILM

Logline

Thirty-five diverse men and women confront the problem of saving their democracy from fascism.

SYNOPSIS

In *Lightworkers*, director Bobby Roth poses a simple but urgent question: *What can we do?* Through a series of conversations with individuals from diverse backgrounds, the film explores how ordinary people respond to extraordinary challenges. From environmental advocates and artists to civic leaders and community organizers, each voice offers insight into what it means to take action in the face of social and political uncertainty.

Approaching the subject from a socio-historic perspective, Roth examines how individuals become who they are, what drives them to act, and how values such as courage, empathy, and responsibility shape their decisions. The film brings together a wide range of perspectives while maintaining a central focus on civic engagement and personal accountability.

Lightworkers is both a personal journey and a broader reflection on the role individuals play in shaping society. It challenges viewers to consider not only the state of the world, but their place within it, and ultimately asks what it means to stand up, speak out, and contribute to the common good.

ABOUT THE TEAM

Bobby Roth is an award-winning director, writer, and producer with over four decades of experience in film and television. He studied philosophy and creative writing at UC Berkeley before earning a BA in Cinema from USC and an MFA in Motion Picture Production from UCLA. Over the course of his career, he has directed more than 100 episodes of television, 25 television movies, and 16 feature films, with credits including *Lost*, *Grey's Anatomy*, *Prison Break*, and *The Mentalist*. Roth was a founding member of the Independent Feature Project and the first Co-Chairman of the Directors Guild of America's Independent Feature Committee. His work has been recognized internationally and reflects a long-standing commitment to storytelling that explores the human condition and civic responsibility.

Jesse Kane is an editor and producer with a background in documentary filmmaking and broadcast journalism. Based in the San Francisco Bay Area, he has worked across a range of projects that emphasize character-driven storytelling and real-world impact. His work as an editor focuses on shaping complex narratives into cohesive and emotionally resonant films. Kane has collaborated on numerous independent productions, bringing a strong editorial voice and a commitment to authenticity, structure, and clarity in storytelling.

Monica Valdes is an educator, producer, and founder of the DocMiami International Film Festival. She has taught middle school social studies across a variety of classroom settings, including inclusion, regular, advanced, and honors courses, working with diverse student populations to promote critical thinking and civic engagement. In addition to her work in education, she has curated hundreds of documentary film screenings and partnered with schools, colleges, and community organizations to connect film with learning. Her work focuses on creating meaningful educational experiences that encourage students to engage with real-world issues and understand their role in society.

MATERIALS AND FACILITIES

Students are encouraged to engage actively and thoughtfully in each lesson through discussion, writing, and creative expression. Materials required for this lesson series are minimal and flexible, allowing teachers to adapt activities based on available resources. Students may use notebooks, printed handouts, or digital platforms such as Google Docs, Slides, or other classroom tools to complete assignments and organize their work.

Teachers should provide access to reliable research materials, including classroom texts, library resources, or approved online sources. For discovery activities, students may work independently or collaboratively to explore the work of individuals featured in *Lightworkers*. Creative components may include written responses, visual designs, or multimedia projects depending on classroom preference and available technology.

Assessment should be based on the quality of student responses, depth of analysis, and ability to make real-world connections. Teachers may use the provided rubrics and student handouts to ensure consistent and fair evaluation. These materials also serve as a record of student progress and may be adapted to meet the needs of different classroom settings and grade levels.

Teachers are encouraged to incorporate discussion, collaboration, and reflection throughout the lesson series. No specialized equipment or additional staffing is required, making these lessons accessible for a wide range of classroom environments.

RESOURCES

The documentary *Lightworkers* serves as a primary resource for this lesson series. Teachers may use the film in whole or in part to introduce themes, prompt discussion, and provide real-world examples of individuals taking action within their communities.

Teachers may also incorporate a variety of additional resources to support student learning. When possible, educators are encouraged to utilize school media centers, local libraries,

museums, and virtual databases to introduce students to effective research strategies and access to credible sources.

Field trips may be used to deepen student understanding of the themes explored in the lessons. Visits to local libraries, museums, environmental centers, or national and state parks can provide meaningful, real-world connections to topics such as environmental stewardship, history, and civic engagement.

Students should be guided in the use of online resources and taught how to evaluate the reliability and credibility of information. Teachers may use the provided research and source evaluation handouts to help students distinguish between reliable and unreliable sources and to support the development of critical thinking and media literacy skills.

Additional resources may include multimedia content such as video clips, interviews, and articles related to the individuals and themes presented in *Lightworkers*. Teachers are also encouraged to connect lessons to local issues, community organizations, or guest speakers when possible, helping students make meaningful real-world connections.

OVERALL VALUE

This lesson series uses documentary film and real-world examples to challenge students to develop their analytical, critical thinking, and writing skills while encouraging reflection, discussion, and meaningful engagement. Through the exploration of themes such as environmental responsibility, art and activism, spiritual and ethical communities, civic engagement, public health and social justice, historical legacy, and cultural influence, students are given the opportunity to connect classroom learning to real-life experiences and communities.

These lessons enhance student achievement by promoting inquiry, perspective-taking, and the ability to form and express informed opinions. Students are encouraged to move beyond passive learning and consider their own role in society, strengthening their sense of civic responsibility and awareness. Teachers will find these lessons adaptable and engaging, providing opportunities for students to research, analyze, create, and reflect on the world around them.

The overall experience is designed to be both academically rigorous and personally meaningful, equipping students with the skills necessary for higher education and informed citizenship. By the end of the lesson series, students will not only have gained knowledge, but will also have developed a deeper understanding of how individuals can contribute to positive change within their communities.

LESSON PLAN

Title: Lightworkers: Environmental + Climate

By: Monica Valdes

Subject: Social Studies

Grade Level: 9–12

Objective: Students will be able to:

1. Identify environmental issues impacting local and global communities.
2. Analyze how individuals take action to address environmental challenges.
3. Evaluate the role of civic responsibility in environmental protection.
4. Propose realistic solutions to environmental problems within their own communities.

Standards:

College, Career, and Civic Life (C3) Framework for Social Studies: D2.Civ.2, D2.Civ.12, D2.Geo.4, D4.1, D4.6;

Common Core State Standards (ELA): CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.1, W.1, W.2, SL.1;

North American Association for Environmental Education (NAAEE): Strands 1, 2, and 4.

Equipment and supplies needed:

1. *Lightworkers* film (full or selected clips)
2. Paper or digital devices (Google Docs/Slides)
3. Pencil/pen
4. Projector or screen
5. Student handouts (Discovery Activity, Local Action Plan worksheet)

Anticipatory Set:

The lesson will begin by showing a clip from *Lightworkers* focused on environmental themes. Students will be asked to reflect on what they observe and discuss how individuals in the film are responding to environmental challenges.

Sequence of learning events:

1. Introduce the theme of Environmental + Climate and review key concepts.
2. Distribute the “Meet the Lightworkers” discovery worksheet.
3. Students will work independently or in groups to research the featured individuals and complete the chart.
4. Conduct a class discussion using the provided discussion questions.
5. Introduce the Local Action Plan activity and review expectations.
6. Students will identify an environmental issue in their community and complete the action plan worksheet.

Closure:

The lesson will close with students sharing their Local Action Plans in small groups or as a class. Students will reflect on the question, “*What can we do?*” and discuss how individual actions can contribute to meaningful environmental change.

STUDENT WORKSHEETDISCOVERY ACTIVITY: "Meet the Lightworkers"Theme: Environmental + Climate**Directions:**

You will explore the work of real individuals featured in *Lightworkers*. These individuals are taking action to protect the environment in different ways. Using provided resources (film clips, articles, or teacher materials), research each individual and complete the chart below. Be specific in your responses and use complete sentences when appropriate.

Name	Who are they?	What issue do they focus on?	What actions are they taking?	Why does their work matter?
James Thornton				
Atossa Soltani				
Ed Begley Jr.				
Betty Osceola				
John Quigley				

Follow-Up Questions

1. Which individual stood out to you the most and why?
2. What environmental issue appeared more than once?
3. What do these individuals have in common?

GUIDED DISCUSSION

This activity is designed to introduce students to key individuals and build background knowledge before deeper discussion and analysis. It may be completed independently, in pairs, or as a guided class activity.

Featured Voices:

James Thornton (Environmental Lawyer), Atossa Soltani (Climate Activist), Ed Begley Jr. (Actor & Environmentalist), Betty Osceola (Miccosukee Elder & Advocate), John Quigley (Environmental Leader)

Theme Overview:

This section explores how individuals and communities respond to environmental challenges and advocate for the protection of natural resources.

Vocabulary:

- Climate justice
- Sustainability
- Indigenous knowledge
- Advocacy
- Environmental responsibility

Discussion Questions:

- What responsibility do individuals have toward the environment?
- How do different communities experience climate change differently?
- What role does activism play in environmental protection?

STUDENT WORKSHEET**Create a Local Action Plan**
Theme: Environmental + Climate**Directions:**

You will identify a real environmental issue in your community and develop a realistic plan for change. This activity asks you to think like a Lightworker—someone who recognizes a problem and takes action. Answer all questions in complete sentences.

Step 1: Identify the Problem

What is one environmental issue in your community?

(Examples: pollution, flooding, trash, water quality, loss of green space)

Step 2: Who Does This Affect?

Who is impacted by this issue?

(Be specific: people, neighborhoods, animals, environment)

Step 3: Level of Government

Which level of government is MOST responsible for addressing this issue?

- Local (city, mayor, city council)
- State (governor, state agencies)
- Federal (national government)

Explain your answer:

Step 4: Proposed Solution

What is ONE realistic solution to this problem?

Step 5: Take Action

What is ONE action YOU could take to help address this issue?

(Examples: raise awareness, contact officials, volunteer, educate others)

Step 6: Action Plan Summary

Write a short paragraph explaining your plan.

Include:

- The problem
- Who is affected
- The solution
- Who should be involved

Sample Action Plan

Problem: Flooding in my neighborhood after heavy rain

Who It Affects: Residents and local businesses

Level of Government: Local government

Solution: Improve drainage systems

My Action: Contact city officials and raise awareness

Closing Thought

What can we do?

Even small actions can create change. Being a Lightworker means taking the first step.

LESSON PLAN

Title: Lightworkers: Art + Activism

By: Monica Valdes

Subject: Social Studies

Grade Level: 9–12

Objective: Students will be able to:

1. Identify how art and music are used to communicate messages and influence society.
2. Analyze how artists and activists bring attention to social and political issues.
3. Evaluate the effectiveness of messaging in art and media.
4. Create an original message using creative expression to inspire awareness or change.

Standards:

College, Career, and Civic Life (C3) Framework for Social Studies: D2.Civ.2, D2.Civ.10, D4.1;
Common Core State Standards (ELA): CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.1, W.1, SL.1;

Equipment and supplies needed:

1. *Lightworkers* film (full or selected clips)
2. Paper or digital device
3. Pencil/pen
4. Projector or screen
5. Student handouts (Discovery Activity and Poster/Song Worksheet)
6. Optional art supplies (markers, colored pencils, poster paper)

Anticipatory Set:

The lesson will begin by showing a clip from *Lightworkers* featuring artists and activists. Students will be asked to reflect on what message is being communicated and how art or music can influence people's thoughts and actions.

Sequence of learning events:

1. Introduce the theme of Art + Activism and review key concepts and vocabulary.
2. Distribute the “Meet the Lightworkers” discovery worksheet.
3. Students will work independently or in groups to research the featured individuals and complete the chart.
4. Conduct a class discussion using the provided discussion questions.
5. Introduce the “Create a Protest Poster or Song Concept” activity and review expectations.
6. Students will identify an issue and develop a message.
7. Students will design their poster, song concept, or visual project.
8. Students will complete the written portion explaining their choices.

Closure:

The lesson will close with students sharing their work in small groups or as a class. Students will reflect on how creative expression can be used to communicate ideas and influence others, and respond to the question: *What message will you share?*

STUDENT WORKSHEET

DISCOVERY ACTIVITY: "Meet the Lightworkers"

Theme: Art + Activism

Directions:

You will explore the work of real individuals featured in *Lightworkers*. These individuals use art, music, and creative expression to bring attention to important issues and inspire change. Using provided resources (film clips, articles, or teacher materials), research each individual and complete the chart below. Be specific in your responses and use complete sentences when appropriate.

Student Chart

Name	Who are they?	What issue do they focus on?	What message are they communicating?	Why does their work matter?
Robbie Conal				
Shepard Fairey				
John Quigley				
Tom Morello				
Steven Van Zandt				

Follow-Up Questions

1. Which individual stood out to you the most and why?
2. What issue or message appeared more than once?
3. What do these individuals have in common?

GUIDED DISCUSSION

This activity is designed to introduce students to key individuals and build background knowledge before deeper discussion and analysis. It may be completed independently, in pairs, or as a guided class activity.

Featured Voices:

Robbie Conal – Artist

Shepard Fairey – Artist and Activist

John Quigley – Environmental Artist

Tom Morello – Musician and Activist

Steven Van Zandt – Musician and Activist

Theme Overview:

This section explores how art, music, and visual expression can challenge power, inspire change, and amplify voices.

Vocabulary:

- Protest art
- Freedom of expression
- Cultural influence
- Messaging

Discussion Questions:

1. Can art change people's minds? Why or why not?
2. What makes a message powerful?
3. How do artists influence political or social movements?

STUDENT WORKSHEETCreate a Protest Poster or Song ConceptTheme: Art + Activism**Directions:**

You will design a protest message using art or music to bring attention to an issue you care about.

You may choose to create:

A protest poster

A song concept (lyrics or message idea)

A visual design

This activity asks you to think like a Lightworker—someone who uses their voice and creativity to inspire change.

Answer all questions carefully and be prepared to explain your work.

Step 1: Identify the Issue

What issue or cause do you care about?

(Examples: climate change, equality, education, violence, human rights)

Step 2: Define Your Message

What message do you want people to understand?

(What do you want people to think, feel, or do?)

Step 3: Choose Your Format

Protest Poster

Song Concept

Visual Design

Explain why you chose this format:

Step 4: Design Your Message

How will you communicate your message?

Include:

- Words or slogans
- Images or symbols
- Tone (serious, hopeful, urgent, etc.)

Describe your design:

Step 5: Explain Your Choices

Why is your message important?

How do your design choices help communicate your message?

Final Product

Create your poster, song concept, or design below or on a separate sheet.

(Attach if needed)

Sample Ideas

Issue: Climate change

Message: "Protect Our Future"

Format: Poster

Design: Image of Earth with cracks and bold lettering

Closing Thought

Art and music can influence how people think and feel.

What message will you share?

LESSON PLAN

Title: Lightworkers: Values in Action

By: Monica Valdes

Subject: Social Studies

Grade Level: 9–12

Objective: Students will be able to:

1. Identify how values influence individual actions.
2. Analyze how different individuals demonstrate character through their choices.
3. Evaluate the role of values such as responsibility, integrity, and service in contributing to society.
4. Apply personal values to real-world situations and decision-making.

Standards:

College, Career, and Civic Life (C3) Framework for Social Studies:

D2.Civ.2, D2.Civ.10, D4.1

Common Core State Standards (ELA):

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.1, W.1, SL.1

Equipment and Supplies Needed:

1. *Lightworkers* film (full or selected clips)
2. Projector or screen
3. Paper or digital device
4. Pencil/pen
5. Student worksheet (Values in Action)

Anticipatory Set:

Students will respond to the prompt:

“What is one value you think is most important in a person? Why?”

Students will write a brief response and share with a partner or the class.

The teacher will introduce the idea that people’s actions are often guided by the values they prioritize.

Sequence of Learning Events:

1. **Introduce Key Concept**
Define “values” and briefly discuss examples such as responsibility, integrity, fairness, and service.
2. **Film Viewing**
Show a clip from *Lightworkers* featuring individuals discussing their beliefs, actions, or responsibilities.

Students will focus on:

- What the individual does
- What value may be guiding their actions

3. Values in Action Activity

Distribute the worksheet.

Students will identify:

- The individual
- Their actions
- The value guiding those actions
- Evidence from the film

This may be completed independently, in pairs, or as a class.

4. Class Discussion

Facilitate a discussion using guiding questions:

- What values appeared most often?
- Did different people demonstrate the same value in different ways?
- Can values influence people to take action? How?
- Can values ever conflict? Explain.

5. Application Activity (*Choose one*)

Option A: Scenario Response

Students are given a real-world situation (e.g., helping others, fairness, community issues).

They will explain:

- What they would do
- What value guides their decision

Option B: Create a Lightworker Profile

Students create a profile that includes:

- An issue they care about
- What action they would take
- The value guiding their action

6. Reflection

Students write a short response:

“How do values influence the choices people make?”

Closure:

Students will share their reflections and discuss how values shape actions in everyday life.

The lesson will conclude with the question:

“What values guide your actions, and how can they help you make a positive impact?”

GUIDED DISCUSSION

Theme: Values in Action

Overview:

This discussion explores how individuals are guided by their values and how those values influence their actions and decisions.

Vocabulary:

- Values
- Integrity
- Responsibility
- Fairness
- Respect
- Service
- Courage

Discussion Questions:

1. What values did you notice most in the film?
2. How do values influence the way people act?
3. Can two people share the same value but act differently? Explain.
4. Why might someone choose to act even when it is difficult?
5. Are some values more important than others? Why or why not?
6. Can values ever conflict? What happens when they do?
7. How do values shape the kind of person someone becomes?
8. What value do you think is most important in today's world? Why?

Extension (Optional):

- How can your own values influence your actions at school or in your community?
- What does it mean to take action based on your values?

STUDENT WORKSHEETDISCOVERY ACTIVITY: "Values in Action"**Directions:**

As you watch the *Lightworkers* clip, focus on what each person does and what they stand for.

Think about:

- What actions are they taking?
- What value is guiding those actions?

Complete the chart below using evidence from the film.

Student Chart

Name	What do they do?	What value is guiding them?	Evidence (What did they say or do that shows this?)
Peter Coyote			
Matt Palevsky			
Rabbi Sharon Brous			
Charley Lang			

Follow-Up Questions

1. Which individual stood out to you the most and why?
2. What values appeared more than once?
3. Did different people demonstrate the same value in different ways? Explain.
4. What do these individuals have in common?

Quick Reflection

What value do you think is most important when taking action to help others or improve a situation? Why?

STUDENT WORKSHEET – OPTION A**Values in Action: Scenario Response****Directions:**

Read the situation below. Think carefully about what you would do and what value would guide your decision. Use complete sentences.

Scenario:

You notice a situation where someone is being treated unfairly, ignored, or needs help. This could be at school, in your community, or online.

1. Describe the situation:

What is happening? Who is involved?

2. What would you do?

Explain your actions clearly.

3. What value is guiding your decision?

(Examples: responsibility, integrity, fairness, respect, kindness, courage)

4. Why is this value important in this situation?

5. What might be challenging about making this choice?

6. What could happen as a result of your actions?

STUDENT WORKSHEET – OPTION B**Create Your Own Lightworker****Directions:**

You will create your own “Lightworker” —someone who takes action based on their values. This can be based on yourself or an imagined person.

1. Name of your Lightworker:

2. What issue or problem do they care about?

(Examples: helping others, fairness, environment, community, bullying, etc.)

3. What action do they take?

What do they actually *do* to make a difference?

4. What value guides their actions?

(Examples: responsibility, integrity, fairness, respect, kindness, courage)

5. Why is this value important to them?

6. What impact do they have on others?

7. What challenges might they face?

Creative Extension (Optional):

Draw your Lightworker OR write a short quote they might say:

LESSON PLAN

Title: Lightworkers: Political + Civic Engagement

Subject: Social Studies

Grade Level: 9–12

Objective: Students will be able to:

1. Identify the roles individuals play in government and civic life.
2. Analyze how citizens and leaders address issues within society.
3. Evaluate the importance of civic participation in a democracy.
4. Develop and communicate solutions to real-world issues through a civic campaign.

Standards:

College, Career, and Civic Life (C3) Framework for Social Studies: D2.Civ.2, D2.Civ.7, D2.Civ.10, D4.1;

Common Core State Standards (ELA): CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.1, W.1, SL.1;

Equipment and supplies needed:

1. *Lightworkers* film (full or selected clips)
2. Paper or digital device
3. Pencil/pen
4. Projector or screen
5. Student handouts (Discovery Activity and Mock Civic Campaign Worksheet)

Anticipatory Set:

The lesson will begin by showing a clip from *Lightworkers* featuring individuals involved in government, activism, or civic engagement. Students will be asked to reflect on how individuals participate in shaping society and why their roles matter.

Sequence of learning events:

1. Introduce the theme of Political + Civic Engagement and review key vocabulary.
2. Distribute the “Meet the Lightworkers” discovery worksheet.
3. Students will work independently or in groups to research the featured individuals and complete the chart.
4. Conduct a class discussion using the provided discussion questions.
5. Introduce the concept of civic participation and the role of citizens in a democracy.
6. Distribute the Mock Civic Campaign worksheet and review expectations.
7. Students will identify an issue, develop a message, and propose a solution.
8. Students will create and complete their campaign plan.

Closure:

The lesson will close with students sharing their campaign ideas in small groups or as a class. Students will reflect on the importance of participation in a democracy and respond to the question: *How can your voice make a difference?*

STUDENT WORKSHEETDISCOVERY ACTIVITY: "Meet the Lightworkers"Theme: Political + Civic Engagement**Directions:**

You will explore the work of real individuals featured in *Lightworkers*. These individuals participate in government, advocacy, and civic life in different ways. Using provided resources (film clips, articles, or teacher materials), research each individual and complete the chart below. Be specific in your responses and use complete sentences when appropriate.

Student Chart

Name	Who are they?	What role do they play in government or society?	What issue(s) do they focus on?	Why does their work matter?
Jamie Raskin				
Jim Himes				
Adam Smith				
Annie Kuster				
Adam Kinzinger				
David Hogg				
Carmen Perez-Jordan				

Follow-Up Questions

1. Which individual stood out to you the most and why?
2. What issues or concerns appeared more than once?
3. What do these individuals have in common?

GUIDED DISCUSSION

This activity is designed to introduce students to key individuals and build background knowledge before deeper discussion and analysis. It may be completed independently, in pairs, or as a guided class activity.

Featured Voices:

Jamie Raskin – Member of Congress
Jim Himes – Member of Congress
Adam Smith – Member of Congress
Annie Kuster – Member of Congress
Adam Kinzinger – Former Member of Congress
David Hogg – Activist
Carmen Perez-Jordan – Civil Rights Leader

Theme Overview:

This section focuses on democracy, civic duty, and how individuals participate in shaping government.

Vocabulary:

Democracy
Civic participation
Voting
Accountability

Discussion Questions:

- What does it mean to be an active citizen?
- Why is voting important?
- How can young people influence change?

STUDENT WORKSHEET

Mock Civic Campaign

Theme: Political + Civic Engagement

Directions:

You will create a civic campaign focused on an issue you care about. Your goal is to inform others, propose a solution, and encourage action. This activity asks you to think like a **Lightworker**, someone who uses their voice to create change. Answer all questions carefully and be prepared to present your ideas.

Step 1: Identify the Issue

What issue or problem do you want to focus on?

(Examples: education, environment, safety, equality, community needs)

Step 2: Why Does It Matter?

Why is this issue important? Who is affected?

Step 3: Campaign Message

What is your main message?

(Create a slogan or short statement)

Step 4: Proposed Solution

What is one realistic solution to this problem?

Step 5: Target Audience

Who are you trying to reach with your campaign?

Step 6: How Will You Communicate Your Message?

Choose one or more:

- Poster
- Speech
- Social media campaign
- Video
- Other: _____

Explain your choice:

Step 7: Campaign Plan Summary

Write a short paragraph explaining your campaign.

Include:

- The issue
- Your message
- Your solution
- Who you are trying to reach
- How you will communicate your ideas

Optional Presentation

Be prepared to present your campaign to the class.

Closing Thought

Democracy depends on participation.

How can your voice make a difference?

LESSON PLAN

Title: Lightworkers: Authors / Thought Leadership

By: Monica Valdes

Subject: Social Studies

Grade Level: 9–12

Objective: Students will be able to:

1. Identify how writers and thinkers influence public understanding of important issues.
2. Analyze how ideas and perspectives shape opinions and society.
3. Evaluate the importance of considering multiple perspectives.
4. Develop and communicate their own ideas through structured opinion writing.

Standards:

College, Career, and Civic Life (C3) Framework for Social Studies: D2.Civ.2, D2.Civ.10, D4.1;

Common Core State Standards (ELA): CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.1, W.1, W.2, SL.1;

Equipment and supplies needed:

1. *Lightworkers* film (full or selected clips)
2. Paper or digital device
3. Pencil/pen
4. Projector or screen
5. Student handouts (Discovery Activity and Op-Ed Worksheet)

Anticipatory Set:

The lesson will begin by showing a clip from *Lightworkers* featuring individuals discussing ideas and perspectives. Students will be asked to reflect on how words and ideas can influence the way people think and understand the world.

Sequence of learning events:

1. Introduce the theme of Authors / Thought Leadership and review key vocabulary.
2. Distribute the “Meet the Lightworkers” discovery worksheet.
3. Students will work independently or in groups to research the featured individuals and complete the chart.
4. Conduct a class discussion using the provided discussion questions.
5. Introduce the concept of opinion writing and the role of evidence in supporting ideas.
6. Distribute the Op-Ed worksheet and review expectations.
7. Students will identify an issue, develop a claim, and gather supporting evidence.
8. Students will write their Op-Ed using the structured format provided.

Closure:

The lesson will close with students sharing their Op-Ed responses in small groups or as a class. Students will reflect on how writing can influence others and respond to the question: *What message do you want your voice to communicate?*

STUDENT WORKSHEET

DISCOVERY ACTIVITY: "Meet the Lightworkers"

Theme: Authors / Thought Leadership

Directions:

You will explore the work of real individuals featured in *Lightworkers*. These individuals use writing, ideas, and analysis to influence how people think about important issues.

Using provided resources (film clips, articles, or teacher materials), research each individual and complete the chart below.

Be specific in your responses and use complete sentences when appropriate.

Student Chart

Name	Who are they?	What ideas or issues do they focus on?	How do they communicate their ideas?	Why does their work matter?
David Brooks				
Richard Wolff				
Robert Hubbell				

Follow-Up Questions

1. Which individual stood out to you the most and why?
2. What ideas or perspectives appeared more than once?
3. What do these individuals have in common?

GUIDED DISCUSSION

This activity is designed to introduce students to key individuals and build background knowledge before deeper discussion and analysis. It may be completed independently, in pairs, or as a guided class activity.

Featured Voices:

David Brooks – Author

Richard Wolff – Economist

Robert Hubbell – Writer

Theme Overview:

This section explores how ideas, writing, and analysis shape public understanding and influence society.

Vocabulary:

Perspective

Critical thinking

Narrative

Public discourse

Discussion Questions:

- How do ideas influence society?
- Why is it important to consider multiple perspectives?

STUDENT WORKSHEET**Write an Op-Ed**
Theme: Authors / Thought Leadership**Directions:**

You will write a short opinion piece (Op-Ed) about an issue that matters to you. Your goal is to clearly express your opinion and support it with evidence and reasoning.

This activity asks you to think like a **Lightworker**, someone who uses ideas and writing to influence others. Answer each step carefully and use complete sentences.

Step 1: Identify the Issue

What issue or topic will you write about?

(Examples: environment, education, equality, public safety, community issues)

Step 2: Your Claim (Opinion)

What is your opinion about this issue?

Step 3: Evidence and Examples

List at least **two pieces of evidence or examples** to support your opinion:

1. _____
2. _____

Step 4: Consider Another Perspective

What is another point of view on this issue?

How would you respond to this perspective?

Step 5: Plan Your Writing

What is your main message or idea?

STUDENT WORKSHEET

DISCOVERY ACTIVITY: "Meet the Lightworkers"

Theme: Public Health + Social Justice

Directions:

You will explore the work of real individuals featured in *Lightworkers*. These individuals work to improve health outcomes and advocate for justice, particularly in underserved communities. Using provided resources (film clips, articles, or teacher materials), research each individual and complete the chart below. Be specific in your responses and use complete sentences when appropriate.

Student Chart

Name	Who are they?	What issue do they focus on?	What actions are they taking?	Why does their work matter?
Phill Wilson				
Dr. Monica Soni				
Jennefer Russo				
Debora Benchoam				

Follow-Up Questions

1. Which individual stood out to you the most and why?
2. What health or social issues appeared more than once?
3. What do these individuals have in common?

LESSON PLAN

Title: Lightworkers: Public Health + Social Justice

By: Monica Valdes

Subject: Social Studies

Grade Level: 9–12

Objective: Students will be able to:

1. Identify how health and social justice issues impact communities.
2. Analyze factors that influence access to healthcare and health outcomes.
3. Evaluate the concept of health equity and its importance in society.
4. Propose realistic solutions to improve access to healthcare in their community.

Standards:

College, Career, and Civic Life (C3) Framework for Social Studies: D2.Civ.2, D2.Geo.4, D4.1, D4.6;
Common Core State Standards (ELA): CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.1, W.1, W.2, SL.1;

Equipment and supplies needed:

1. *Lightworkers* film (full or selected clips)
2. Paper or digital device
3. Pencil/pen
4. Projector or screen
5. Student handouts (Guided Discussion and Community Health Audit Worksheet)

Anticipatory Set:

The lesson will begin by showing a clip from *Lightworkers* featuring individuals discussing healthcare, inequality, and social justice. Students will be asked to reflect on how access to resources can affect people's lives.

Sequence of learning events:

1. Introduce the theme of Public Health + Social Justice and review key vocabulary.
2. Present the featured voices and discuss their roles in addressing health and justice issues.
3. Conduct a guided class discussion using the provided discussion questions.
4. Introduce the concept of health equity and factors that influence access to care.
5. Distribute the Community Health Audit worksheet and review expectations.
6. Students will identify health resources in their community and evaluate access.
7. Students will analyze gaps or inequalities and consider causes.
8. Students will propose solutions and identify personal actions they can take.

Closure:

The lesson will close with students sharing their findings and proposed solutions. Students will reflect on the connection between health and justice and respond to the question: *How can understanding your community help create change?*

GUIDED DISCUSSION

This activity is designed to introduce students to key individuals and build background knowledge before deeper discussion and analysis. It may be completed independently, in pairs, or as a guided class activity.

Featured Voices:

Phill Wilson – HIV/AIDS Activist

Dr. Monica Soni – Public Health Leader

Jennefer Russo – Healthcare Advocate

Debora Benchoam – Human Rights Attorney and Survivor

Theme Overview:

This section examines how health and justice intersect, particularly in underserved communities.

Vocabulary:

Health equity

Access to care

Social determinants of health

Discussion Questions:

1. What makes healthcare equitable?
2. How does inequality affect health outcomes?

STUDENT WORKSHEET

Community Health Audit Theme: Public Health + Social Justice

Directions:

You will examine health resources in your community and evaluate how accessible they are to different groups of people. This activity asks you to think like a **Lightworker**, someone who recognizes inequalities and works toward solutions.

Answer all questions in complete sentences.

Step 1: Identify Health Resources

List at least **three health resources** available in your community.

(Examples: hospitals, clinics, mental health services, community health centers)

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Step 2: Access to Resources

Who has access to these resources?

(Consider: location, cost, transportation, insurance, language, etc.)

Step 3: Identify Gaps or Inequalities

Are there any groups of people who may not have equal access to these resources? Explain.

Step 4: Causes of Inequality

Why do these gaps or inequalities exist?

Step 5: Proposed Solutions

What is one realistic way to improve access to health resources in your community?

Step 6: Take Action

What is one action YOU could take to help improve health outcomes in your community?

Step 7: Reflection

Why is access to healthcare important for a community?

Closing Thought

Health and justice are connected.

How can understanding your community help create change?

LESSON PLAN

Title: Lightworkers: Museums + Historical + Legacy

Subject: Social Studies

Grade Level: 9–12

Objective: Students will be able to:

1. Understand the importance of preserving history through personal narratives.
2. Analyze how individual experiences contribute to historical understanding.
3. Develop interview and communication skills through an oral history project.
4. Reflect on how personal stories shape our understanding of the past and present.

Standards:

College, Career, and Civic Life (C3) Framework for Social Studies: D2.His.1, D2.His.3, D2.His.14, D4.1;

Common Core State Standards (ELA): CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.1, W.2, SL.1;

Equipment and supplies needed:

1. Lightworkers film (full or selected clips)
2. Paper or digital device
3. Pencil/pen
4. Projector or screen
5. Recording device (optional)
6. Student handouts (Discovery Activity and Oral History Project worksheet)

Anticipatory Set:

The lesson will begin by showing a clip from Lightworkers featuring individuals sharing personal experiences. Students will be asked to reflect on how personal stories help us better understand history and the present.

Sequence of learning events:

1. Introduce the theme of Museums + Historical + Legacy and review key concepts.
2. Distribute the “Meet the Lightworkers” discovery worksheet.
3. Students will work independently or in groups to research the featured individuals and complete the chart.
4. Conduct a class discussion using the provided discussion questions.
5. Discuss the importance of oral history and preserving personal stories.
6. Distribute the Oral History Project worksheet and review expectations.
7. Students will identify a person to interview and prepare questions.
8. Students will conduct the interview outside of class and record responses.
9. Students will complete the reflection portion of the assignment.

Closure:

The lesson will close with students sharing key insights from their interviews in small groups or as a class. Students will reflect on how personal stories contribute to a broader understanding of history and respond to the question: What stories should be remembered and why?

STUDENT WORKSHEET

DISCOVERY ACTIVITY: "Meet the Lightworkers"

Theme: Museums + Historical + Legacy

Directions:

You will explore the work of real individuals featured in *Lightworkers*. These individuals help preserve history, share personal experiences, and contribute to our understanding of the past. Using provided resources (film clips, articles, or teacher materials), research each individual and complete the chart below.

Be specific in your responses and use complete sentences when appropriate.

Student Chart

Name	Who are they?	What experience or history do they represent?	What actions are they taking?	Why does their work matter?
June Berk				
Peggy				
Preacely				
Betty				
Osceola				

Follow-Up Questions

1. Which individual stood out to you the most and why?
2. What themes or historical experiences appeared more than once?
3. What do these individuals have in common?

GUIDED DISCUSSION

This activity is designed to introduce students to key individuals and build background knowledge before deeper discussion and analysis. It may be completed independently, in pairs, or as a guided class activity.

Featured Voices:

June Berk – Internment Camp Survivor

Peggy Preacely – Freedom Rider

Betty Osceola – Miccosukee Elder and Advocate

Theme Overview:

This section focuses on memory, history, and how stories shape our understanding of the present.

Key Concepts:

Historical memory

Legacy

Storytelling

Discussion Questions:

- Why is it important to preserve history?
- How do personal stories shape national narratives?

STUDENT WORKSHEET

Oral History Project Theme: Museums + Historical + Legacy

Directions:

You will interview a family member or community member to learn about their experiences and perspectives.

This activity will help you understand how personal stories contribute to history.

Step 1: Identify Your Interviewee

Who will you interview?

(Name and relationship)

Step 2: Prepare Your Questions

Use the questions below or create your own.

Sample Oral History Questions:

1. Can you describe an important experience or event from your life?
2. What challenges have you faced, and how did you overcome them?
3. What changes have you seen in your community over time?
4. What values or beliefs have guided your decisions?
5. What advice would you give to younger generations?

Step 3: Record Responses

Take notes or record your interview.

(Attach notes if needed)

Step 4: Reflection

What did you learn from this interview?

How does this person's story connect to history or larger events?

Why is it important to preserve personal stories?

Closing Thought

History is not just events—it is people's experiences.

What stories should be remembered and why?

LESSON PLAN

Title: Lightworkers: Cultural / Creative

Subject: Social Studies

Grade Level: 9–12

Objective: Students will be able to:

1. Identify how media, entertainment, and public figures communicate ideas to broad audiences.
2. Analyze how messages are presented through different forms of media.
3. Evaluate the influence of public figures and media on culture and awareness.
4. Reflect on the responsibility that comes with having a public voice or platform.

Standards:

College, Career, and Civic Life (C3) Framework for Social Studies: D2.Civ.2, D2.Civ.10, D4.1;

Common Core State Standards (ELA): CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.1, W.1, SL.1;

Equipment and supplies needed:

1. *Lightworkers* film (full or selected clips)
2. Access to media examples (film clips, TV segments, advertisements, or social media posts)
3. Paper or digital device
4. Pencil/pen
5. Projector or screen
6. Student handouts (Discovery Activity and Media Analysis worksheet)

Anticipatory Set:

The lesson will begin by showing a clip from *Lightworkers* or another short media example. Students will be asked to identify the message being communicated and discuss how media and public figures can influence the way people think and feel.

Sequence of learning events:

1. Introduce the theme of Cultural / Creative influence and review key vocabulary.
2. Distribute the “Meet the Lightworkers” discovery worksheet.
3. Students will work independently or in groups to research the featured individuals and complete the chart.
4. Conduct a class discussion using the provided discussion questions.
5. Introduce the concept of media influence and public voice.
6. Distribute the Media Analysis worksheet and review expectations.
7. Students will select a piece of media and analyze the message being communicated.
8. Students will reflect on audience, purpose, influence, and responsibility.

Closure:

The lesson will close with students sharing their media analyses in small groups or as a class. Students will reflect on how media shapes public understanding and respond to the question:
How can you think critically about the messages you receive?

STUDENT WORKSHEET

DISCOVERY ACTIVITY: "Meet the Lightworkers"

Theme: Cultural / Creative

Directions:

You will explore the work of real individuals featured in *Lightworkers*. These individuals use media, entertainment, and public platforms to influence culture and raise awareness about important issues. Using provided resources (film clips, articles, or teacher materials), research each individual and complete the chart below. Be specific in your responses and use complete sentences when appropriate.

Student Chart

Name	Who are they?	What platform or medium do they use?	What message or ideas do they communicate?	Why does their work matter?
Henry Winkler				
Wendie Malick				
Lee Grant				
Keith Olbermann				
Louis Abramson				

Follow-Up Questions

1. Which individual stood out to you the most and why?
2. What messages or themes appeared more than once?
3. What do these individuals have in common?

GUIDED DISCUSSION

This activity is designed to introduce students to key individuals and build background knowledge before deeper discussion and analysis. It may be completed independently, in pairs, or as a guided class activity.

Featured Voices:

Henry Winkler – Actor

Wendie Malick – Actor

Lee Grant – Actor and Director

Keith Olbermann – Broadcaster and Commentator

Louis Abramson – Creative Producer

Theme Overview:

This section explores how media, entertainment, and public figures influence culture and awareness.

Vocabulary:

Media influence

Public voice

Cultural impact

Discussion Questions:

- How do public figures shape conversations?
- What responsibility comes with influence?

LIGHTWORKERS WORKSHEET

Media Analysis

Theme: Cultural / Creative (Broad Reach)

Directions:

You will analyze a piece of media to understand how messages are communicated and how they influence audiences. This activity asks you to think like a **Lightworker**, someone who observes, questions, and reflects on the messages that shape our world.

Answer all questions in complete sentences.

Step 1: Identify the Media

What piece of media are you analyzing?

(Examples: film, TV show, video clip, advertisement, social media post)

Title/Name of Media: _____

Step 2: Describe the Message

What message is being communicated?

Step 3: How Is the Message Presented?

How does the creator communicate this message?

(Consider: visuals, words, tone, music, symbols, or style)

Step 4: Audience and Purpose

Who is the intended audience?

What is the purpose of this message?

(Inform, persuade, entertain, raise awareness, etc.)

Step 5: Influence on the Audience

How might this media influence the way people think, feel, or act?

Step 6: Reflection

Do you think this message is effective? Why or why not?

What responsibility do creators and public figures have when sharing messages?

Closing Thought

Media shapes the way we see the world.

How can you think critically about the messages you receive?

RELIABLE WEBSITE CHECKLIST

TITLE: _____ URL: _____

What is the Site About?			
You knew right away what the website was about	Y	N	Don't know
You knew exactly who the target audience was.	Y	N	Don't Know
			TIP: Read the "about Us" or "Author Bio" sections.
Who wrote this?			
Author's name is clearly provided.	Y	N	Don't know
Author has a bio.	Y	N	Don't know
Author seems qualified to write about topic.	Y	N	Don't know
Website sponsor is clearly provided. (ex. School, University, Organization etc.)	Y	N	Don't know
Contact information is available in order to ask questions if needed.	Y	N	Don't know
			TIP: Look for other information written by the author on other websites or publications such as books, newspapers, etc.
Is this website a quality site?			
Is the article trying to influence your opinion?	Y	N	Don't know
Does advertising on site influence content? (ex. An advertisement to purchase a brand of soap which the article says is wonderful)	Y	N	Don't know
Spelling and grammar are correct.	Y	N	Don't know
Purpose of site is clear. (ex. Personal site, business site etc.)	Y	N	Don't know
Website is well organized and easy to understand.	Y	N	Don't know
Website is complete. (ex. Not "under construction")	Y	N	Don't know
			TIP: Authors may use great facts to get persuade you to think like them.
Is this site updated regularly?			
Date last revised present.	Y	N	Don't know
Content updated frequently.	Y	N	Don't know
Links to other sites current.	Y	N	Don't know
			TIP: Stay away from undated material.
TOTALS:			
	16-14 "Y's" = Great Site 13-10 "Y's" = Average Site Under 10 "Y's" = Poor Site	FINAL TIP: Make sure to verify information using primary or secondary sources.	

LETTER TO POTENTIAL GUEST SPEAKER

(Use Your School Letterhead)

[Insert Date]

<<First Name>> <<Last Name>>

<<Organization / Title>>

<<Address>>

<<City, State, Zip Code>>

Dear Sir or Madam, *(or Dear <<Last Name>>, if known)*

Our Social Studies classes are currently engaged in a unit inspired by the documentary *Lightworkers*, which explores themes such as civic engagement, environmental responsibility, public health, cultural influence, and the role of individuals in creating positive change within their communities.

As part of this unit, students are examining how professionals and community members contribute to these areas through their work and personal experiences. We are writing to invite you to visit our class as a guest speaker to share your knowledge and insights with our students. Your experience in <<field/area of expertise>> would provide a valuable real-world connection to the topics we are studying. We believe that hearing directly from someone actively engaged in this work will deepen students' understanding and inspire them to think critically about their own role in society.

The visit could include a brief presentation about your work, followed by a question-and-answer session with students. We are happy to accommodate your schedule and can arrange either an in-person or virtual visit.

We sincerely hope you will consider this opportunity to support student learning and engagement. Your time and perspective would make a meaningful impact on our students.

Thank you in advance for your consideration.

Sincerely,

<<Your Name>>

<<Your Title>>

<<School Name>>

<<School Contact Information>>

“People who live with purpose, guided by compassion and a sense of responsibility to others, are who I call Lightworkers.”

~Bobby Roth

RESOURCES

Primary Film Resource

Lightworkers Documentary

Official Website: <https://lightworkersdoc.com>

General Research and Reference

- Library of Congress – <https://www.loc.gov/rr/>
- Smithsonian Institution – <https://www.si.edu>
- National Archives – <https://www.archives.gov>
- Fact Monster – <https://www.factmonster.com/yearbyyear>

Civic Engagement and Government

- USA.gov – <https://www.usa.gov>
- Congress.gov – <https://www.congress.gov>
- iCivics – <https://www.icivics.org>

Environmental and Climate Resources

- National Geographic – <https://www.nationalgeographic.com>
- Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) – <https://www.epa.gov>
- NASA Climate – <https://climate.nasa.gov>

Public Health and Social Justice

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) – <https://www.cdc.gov>
- World Health Organization (WHO) – <https://www.who.int>
- Kaiser Family Foundation – <https://www.kff.org>

Media, Art, and Cultural Influence

- PBS LearningMedia – <https://www.pbslearningmedia.org>
- Smithsonian Learning Lab – <https://learninglab.si.edu>
- The New York Times Learning Network – <https://www.nytimes.com/section/learning>

Biographical and Current Information

- Biography.com – <https://www.biography.com>
- NPR – <https://www.npr.org>
- BBC News – <https://www.bbc.com/news>

School and Library Resources

- School Media Centers
- Local Public Libraries
- Approved Online Databases provided by school district

Research Tips

- Verify information using multiple sources
- Evaluate credibility using the Reliable Website Checklist
- Use both primary and secondary sources when possible