NCTE 2026 POSITION STATEMENT ON MEDIA EDUCATION

Media Education in the ELA Classroom: Core Concepts

Media education is the study of media with the aim of cultivating media literacy competencies. It is an umbrella for visual, news, information, digital, critical media, and AI literacy, plus youth media production. ELA classrooms are uniquely suited to this work: the same reading, thinking, and communication skills apply *to* Shakespeare as well as the latest viral video.

WHY NOW?

Since NCTE's 2022 statement, three pressures have reshaped the field: concerns about media and adolescent well-being, the rise of generative AI, and the ongoing legacy of disinformation and propaganda.

Still foundational from 2022: empowering voice, increasing relevance through popular culture, and exploring representation and power.

AN EXPANDED DEFINITION OF TEXT

Text is any purposeful meaning-making message (written, spoken, visual, audio, digital, or multimodal) designed for an audience in a particular context and shaped by genre, medium, culture, and power. It includes interactive and networked works and those made with tools like generative AI, where authorship may be individual, collaborative, or human–machine co-produced.

FOUR CONTENT STRANDS FOR ELA CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1 INTERPRETING

Multimodal reading, viewing, and listening

- **Comprehend complex texts:** apply knowledge of language, figurative language, media techniques, and genre to print and nonprint texts.
- **Analyze textual features:** explain how words, images, sound, design, and interactivity work together to build meaning.
- **Evaluate credibility:** weigh expertise, intent, bias, currency, and accuracy; practice lateral reading.
- **Evaluate persuasion:** identify purpose, audience, and rhetorical and computational techniques.
- **Analyze representation & power:** notice stereotypes, interests, and perspectives that are foregrounded or obscured.

Ask: *What does this text feature do for the reader, viewer, or user? Who speaks? Who benefits?*

2 COMPOSING

Writing, speaking, and producing

- **Communicate with purpose:** compose spoken, written, and visual messages to express, inform, entertain, persuade, and argue, choosing techniques that reach a target audience.
- **Communicate with credibility:** support work with evidence from credible sources and citations suited to the form and genre, guided by ethical values and honest public discourse.
- **Learn from journalism and YPAR:** gather, verify, attribute, and correct information; position students as knowledge producers.

Try: *digital storytelling, podcasts, infographics, spoken word poetry, photo essays, bilingual books.*

3 EVALUATING

Media ethics, relationships, and well-being

- **Recognize effects on well-being:** explore how algorithms, persuasive design, and constant connectivity influence mood, sleep, attention, and self-image.
- **Make mindful choices:** use metacognition to balance consuming, engaging, and creating; consider purpose-to-platform fit; curate.
- **Evaluate texts & platforms:** examine how misinformation, harmful narratives, and social comparison affect well-being; practice empathy, respect, and safety online.

Ask: *What am I here to do? Did it help or harm my goal or mood? What emotions did this text evoke?*

4 ANALYZING

Media, technology, and society

- **Follow the attention economy:** learn how platforms profit by activating emotion, collecting data, and treating attention as a commodity.
- **Understand how AI works:** learn how large language models predict answers; decide deliberately when, why, and how to use AI, including when not to.
- **Analyze claims about AI:** use evidence to weigh benefits and risks to cognition, authorship, creative labor, the environment, and equity.

Ask: *Why did this grab me? Is using AI appropriate for this task?*

GETTING STARTED

- **Prioritize with students:** ask which strands matter most to them and weave those into units you already teach.
- **Map your curriculum:** work with your department to see which practices are in place and which need development.
- **Learn together:** join a study group or community of practice to build confidence.
- **Collaborate widely:** talk with students about their media habits, with families about media at home, and with colleagues across disciplines.

Source: National Council of Teachers of English (2026). Position Statement on Media Education. Full statement, research citations, and K–12 teaching resources at ncte.org.