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# DIGITAL MEDIA IN SECONDARY ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS:

A Guide to Technology Integration in the High School ELA Classroom

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# ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

While writing this document, I was constantly faced with the struggle of who to cite for the ideas and content presented within. There are many parts that have links to websites that will give a lot of extra information, but there are also a lot of ideas that seem like my own original thoughts. While many of the suggestions are things that I do in my own class, or ideas I have gotten from other fantastic professionals, they do not belong to me. On the contrary, they have slowly evolved and developed over time and collaboration many other people throughout my career. Whether it was when I was an undergrad, a teacher, a grad student, or simply just a random person, I have learned and been inspired countless times in my short time as a teacher. Because of all these colleagues, professors, principals, superintendents and friends, I have been able to see myself grow more than I ever thought would be possible.

In other words, I created nothing original for this document. Everything in it is the result of someone else's hard work, which in turn inspired me. My hope is that through a document like this, I can also inspire others in a similar fashion.

Back to the original statement, I still do not know who to cite for a lot of these ideas, but I do know that the people who have shared their passion of teaching with me would not mind. That is what teachers do. We share with each other so that we can better share with our students. I hope this document supports you in the way that you need.

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# RATIONALE

As digital media has become ubiquitous in our society, it has become increasingly important for schools to prepare their students for a future where they will be confident and competent in using technology on a daily basis. However, it is clear that this is not an easy task to take on. Simply using devices is not enough, and students and teachers alike must learn how meaningful technology use can lead to deeper levels of understanding, and in turn, a more successful educational experience. With that said, it does not happen overnight. Teachers spend four years, along with multiple internships, to learn how to effectively do their job. Yet, the current expectation seems to be that teachers just implement digital media in their class with little to no training. It truly can be a daunting task, and this document is an attempt to ease that transition. At the end of the day, simply having some ideas to take into the classroom will make the shift a little easier.

The goal of this document is to support secondary English Language Arts teachers in assessing and using technological tools and digital media within their own classes. However, other subject areas can utilize some major cross-curricular elements as well. Throughout the document, one will find some suggestions to use within the classroom, but more importantly some ways to develop skills to analyze technology use within the classroom.

The document is organized as such:

1. Essential Skills for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Education
2. Frameworks for Assessing Technological Integration and Pedagogy
3. Connections to Curriculum
4. Resource Suggestions

The organization is based around a simple idea: in order to bring meaningful technology use into the classroom, one must understand how to implement digital media effectively before trying to do so. This document takes an assumption that most educators are already comfortable with their curricular area, but may not be comfortable with how digital media can enhance it. The hope is that by developing a thorough understanding of the essential skills for 21<sup>st</sup> century education, and different frameworks for assessing ones own practice, an understanding for how technology and curriculum can work hand in hand to enhance an educational experience will begin to develop.



As stated earlier, this document has the primary goal of supporting secondary English Language Arts teachers; therefore, it uses examples from the English Language Arts curriculum as a focus. However, the frameworks and theoretical elements discussed in this document are not strictly connected to ELA alone. An educator of any subject area can read this document and develop skills that will certainly benefit any classroom. In other words, this document addresses ways that a teacher can enhance their own digital media knowledge in order to help their students develop new and profound meaning in all their classes.

# ESSENTIAL SKILLS FOR THE 21ST CENTURY

The updated Digital Citizenship definition - **Digital citizenship is the continuously developing norms of appropriate, responsible, and empowered technology use.**

It is a brand new world of learning, a world where so much of our societal interaction now exists online. As our world becomes more engrained in technology, our responsibility as educators now extends to a world that is outside our physical walls, a world of screens and codes. Schools have always focused on developing responsible citizens. As soon as a student begins kindergarten, they are being assessed not only on specific curricular skills, but also on factors such as coming to class, being prepared and organized, carrying with them a positive attitude and treating others with respect. All of these are transferable traits that lend themselves well to helping students become effective and productive members of society. However, we are now at the next step in that process. Teaching students to navigate digital spaces responsibly is, simply put, a necessary part of developing a relationship with the world around them. In this day and age, teaching someone to be a citizen is left incomplete if digital media is ignored.



It is important not to assume that all those who use technology have the needed skills and understanding to use these devices and applications responsibly. In fact, everything has to be learned somehow. By making digital citizenship a ubiquitous part of the classroom, students will innately develop important and modern skills that will ensure online safety,

digital responsibility, as well discover knowledge and resources in order to succeed as lifetime learners. It will also support them in learning to engage in an online world with accountability and confidence. In this way, we can help to better prepare leaders who will also leave meaningful impacts on the lives of others all around the world.



## NINE ELEMENTS OF DIGITAL CITIZENSHIP

Mike Ribble's nine elements of digital citizenship is a fantastic place to start preparing oneself for implementing digital media within the classroom. It can be beneficial in terms of reflecting on the activities and lessons that will be covered. The nine elements are helpful in understanding the complexity of the digital world in which we live, and how it can apply to the classrooms in which we teach. The nine elements also give educators a roadmap to understand digital citizenship on a deeper level; consequently, teachers will be able to create lessons that incorporate modern literacies in a more meaningful way for their students.

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*As an ELA teacher, can some of your written assignments use social media as a backdrop in order to model what responsible and respectful social sharing looks like? Can you use Instagram to analyze characters in a novel and have students comment on the posts of others?*

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### THE THREE GOALS OF RIBBLE'S NINE ELEMENTS:

- To lead and assist others in building positive digital experiences
- To recognize that our actions have consequences to others
- To participate in a manner for the common good

Ribble's nine elements are typically framed around three major categories. On the ISTE website, the categories are as follows: **Respect**, **Educate**, and **Protect**.

### 1. RESPECT

- a) **Digital access** is about the equitable distribution of technology and online resources. **Note:** This guide does not do a great job of addressing this element, because it varies largely from context to context. Every teacher should assess the level of accessibility they face when employing digital media.
- b) **Digital etiquette** refers to electronic standards of conduct or procedures and has to do with the process of thinking about others when using digital devices. Whether in the classroom or online, being aware of others is an important idea for everyone.
- c) **Digital law** refers to the electronic responsibility for actions and deeds and has to do with the creation of rules and policy that address issues related to the online world.

ELA naturally has some fantastic opportunities to incorporate digital law in your classroom. Think about the inquiry reports, presentations, visual representations that you do in your classroom. Each one is an opportunity to explore the laws that govern the digital world.

ELA Tip: Reading reviews on a product that you want to buy on Amazon is a great way to exemplify the importance of cross-referencing sources. It is a great way to incorporate digital fluency and commerce in one mini-lesson.

## 2. EDUCATE

a) **Digital communication and collaboration** is the electronic exchange of information. All users need to define how they will share their thoughts so that others understand the message.

b) **Digital Fluency** is the process of understanding technology and its use. The better educated or “digitally fluent,” students are, the more likely they are to make good decisions online.

c) **Digital commerce** is the electronic buying and selling of goods and focuses on the tools and safeguards in place to assist those buying, selling, banking, or using money in any way in the digital space.

## 3. PROTECT

- a) **Digital Rights and Responsibility** are those requirements and freedoms extended to everyone in a digital world. This area of Digital Citizenship is about helping students understand that when they are provided opportunities, such as the access to the Internet and use of online products, they need to be diligent in helping others as well.
- b) **Digital Security and Privacy** is the electronic precautions to guarantee safety. Students should have knowledge of how to keep their data safe, as well as how it is being threatened
- c) **Digital Health and Welfare** refers to the physical and psychological well-being in a digital world. Technology provides many opportunities and enjoyment, but knowing how to segment use with the needs of ourselves and others is key to a healthy, balanced life.

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**ELA Suggestion:** ELA asks students to think critically, and to support with research. Choose a position for or against government access to social media and cellphone data, and support that position with reasons and examples.

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[Common Sense Media](#) has a great [lesson plan](#) that looks into the health effects of screen time. An [accompanying video](#) does a great job of asking students to question the information that is given to them. It would work really well in a non-fiction unit that analyzes the validity of sources.

# THE DIGITAL CITIZENSHIP CONTINUUM

## Digital Citizenship Education in Saskatchewan Schools

The Digital Citizenship Education guide was designed as “a roadmap for building appropriate school division policies and school-specific digital citizenship guidelines and procedures.” In it, one can also find tools and resources to help teachers, administrators and parents support digital citizenship education. Within the document, there is a K-12 continuum that is “intended to support professionals as they infuse these concepts and skills into their teaching.”

This continuum can be very helpful in guiding teachers in their focus as they work to implement digital media within their own classrooms. It also gives an idea as to what students might already know at that point in their educational journey.

RESPECT	Digital Etiquette: The electronic standards of conduct or procedure.									
	Essential Questions	Know	Kindergarten to Grade 2		Grades 3 to 5		Grades 6 to 9		Grades 10 to 12	
			Understand	Do	Understand	Do	Understand	Do	Understand	Do
	Are students aware of others when they use technology?  Do students realize how their use of technology affects others?  It is not enough to create rules and policy, we must teach everyone to become responsible digital citizens in this new society.	To stop inappropriate use of technology, rules and regulations are often created or the technology is simply banned.  It is not enough to create rules and policy, we must teach everyone to become responsible digital citizens in this new society.	I understand that...  We must treat others the way we wish to be treated, both in real life and when using technology.  I communicate with actual people both in person and online.	Students will...  Demonstrate that they are aware of others around them when using technology and control the volume of their devices.  Always ask permission before taking photos or videos of others.  Exchange appropriate messages, either online or in person, to recognize that they are communicating with actual people in both instances.	I understand that...  There is a difference between digital and interpersonal communication s and learn how to communicate respectfully.  Sometimes students act like bullies when using technology and there are actions I can take to deal with cyberbullying.	Students will...  Demonstrate appropriate manners by writing clear, respectful messages.  Always ask permission before taking photos or videos of others.  Know who to talk to when they need help to deal with cyberbullying.	I understand that...  Being responsible and respectful is part of being a member of a digital community.  My actions can make me an upstander in the face of cyberbullying.  Many resources are available if I need help dealing with cyberbullying.	Students will...  Communicate appropriately and responsibly online.  Get permission before taking and sharing photos and videos online by stating their intended purpose.  Use actions that make them upstanders in the face of cyberbullying (including flaming, trolling, someone taking their work).	I understand that...  There are risks and responsibilities of creating and carrying out friendships and romantic relationships in the digital world.  There are different expectations about how and when technology is used between friends, at home, at school or at work.	Students will...  Evaluate and discuss case studies and video vignettes that foster building healthy relationships in a digital world including cyberbullying, sexting and homophobia.  Practice communicating appropriately for an intended digital audience and purpose (emoticons, punctuation, SMS language abbreviation, text features).

(The K-12 continuum from Digital Citizenship Education in Saskatchewan Schools)

Through documents like this, teachers can consider how their pedagogy is or is not meeting the standards of 21<sup>st</sup> century education. A fantastic aspect of the Digital Citizenship Continuum is the fact that it focuses on essential skills that are beneficial to living in the modern world. It does not focus on what a teacher should do, but instead on what an effective 21<sup>st</sup> century citizen should be able to do. Through this, teachers are able to reflect on their own teaching. It is through this reflection of one's own teaching that evolution of pedagogy is possible. The next section will focus on different frameworks to help teachers reflect critically on the tasks that they do in their classrooms.

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# FRAMEWORKS FOR ASSESSING TECHNOLOGICAL INTEGRATION AND PEDAGOGY

More recently as teachers, it seems like we are always discussing the different ways that we use technology in the classroom. The changes in our society over the last few decades have forced us to reevaluate what is important when considering the term citizenship. Part of becoming a global citizen is not only using digital tools, but also understanding how these tools can be used effectively. It involves recognizing and respecting the way that we can connect, and seeking out ways that we might be able to use it for the benefit of all. In this way, it becomes especially important to think about how we use digital media in the classroom. It is not enough to simply use technology in the classroom, but we must be using it to enhance our pedagogy. The [Regina Catholic School Division](#), in their high school [parent resource handbook](#), does a great job of explaining that "In order to effectively and purposefully integrate technology, we need to focus first on learning." The handbook explains that technology should connect to learning in one of the following ways:

- Improve student engagement;
- Encourage active learning;
- Allow for reaching the diverse needs of all learners;
- Allow for more student feedback and assessment for learning;
- Provide opportunities to gather evidence or assessment of learning;
- Allow for student ownership of learning, independence and responsibility;
- Provide opportunities for students to leverage collaborative skills through technology;
- Explore ways in which students can engage in inquiry learning within the context of learning communities.

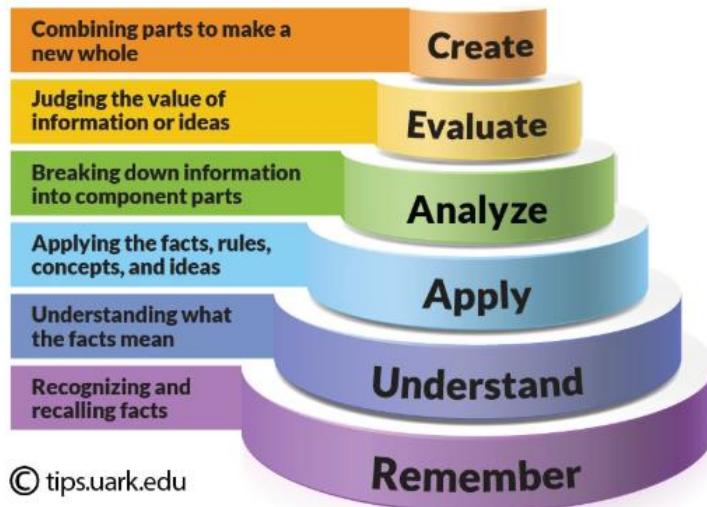
What the handbook does a really good job of is the fact that learning is always at the forefront. In that aspect, every teacher can agree that learning is of great value and definitely worth the effort. If you are going to take the time to learn a new technological tool, you must see the value in it; otherwise, what is the point? When one sees the value in what they are doing, one will take the necessary steps to make it happen. That includes in the classroom, both for teachers and for students. With that in mind, here are a few frameworks that can help evaluate the value of technology use in your own classroom. There are links to all the frameworks. If one of them seems more interesting, it is highly encouraged to look a little deeper into that model.

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**Relevant Metaphor:** Let's say your car breaks down. Chances are you will find the time to fix it. You probably have other things to do, but because it is important and relevant to how you get other things done, you see value in getting it fixed

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# BLOOM'S TAXONOMY

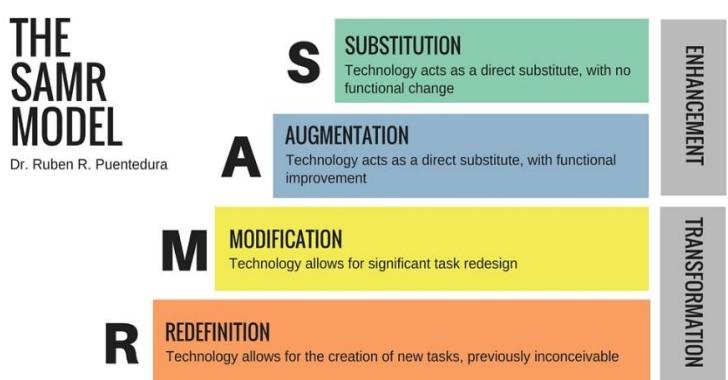


Jessica Shabatura, <https://tips.uark.edu/using-blooms-taxonomy/>

Every teacher has probably seen some sort of variation of this framework. With that said, there will not be a large discussion of the taxonomy in this document. When considering the fact that learning should always be at the forefront of any type of teaching, [Bloom's taxonomy](#) is an important first stepping-stone in the implementation of technology in the classroom. One thing that is sometimes assumed is that deeper technology integration automatically equates to higher level thinking. Simply put: this is not the truth. Understanding how to create tasks that not only incorporate technology, but also meet students at their own personalized levels is one of the most important parts of digital education. At the end of the day, this taxonomy represents the process of learning. Teachers should be using something like this to reflect on their own practice regularly. As a suggestion, it may be beneficial to use Bloom's Taxonomy in tandem with one of the following frameworks.

## SAMR

The [SAMR Model](#) is a framework that categorizes four different degrees of classroom technology integration: **Substitution**, **Augmentation**, **Modification**, and **Redefinition**. Within those four different categories, teachers should note that they are either using technology to transform their teaching by making it something completely different or simply using it to enhance their teaching, usually through functional improvement.



Source

The SAMR model is usually designed as a ladder or a staircase. This can sometimes have teachers think that the bottom of the ladder (Substitution) is a bad place to be. However, the model is probably better envisioned as a spectrum ([you can see it as a lake here](#)). It is important when using the SAMR model to keep in mind that this is simply a reflection tool. Teachers should use this framework to evaluate their level of technology use and its relation to the educational goals of the classroom. If a teacher is always striving for Redefinition, they will likely burn out. In fact, there are many cases where substitution might even be the best choice for a particular lesson. The main idea behind reflection within the SAMR model should be to continuously move across the spectrum, touching on all levels. A benefit of the SAMR model is that it encourages teachers to think about how their own personal lessons can be adjusted, instead of necessarily always creating new content.

When considering how SAMR looks in the ELA classroom, think about the following example using an Inquiry Project as the basis:

- **Substitution:** Because we have Microsoft Word, we are going to use it to type up our reports. We also have PowerPoint so when we present our topic, we will have the presentation in the background
- **Augmentation:** Because we now have the technology available, we will certainly use the internet with search engines and access online databases. This allows for a much more efficient use of our time when searching for information. It also allows for the opportunity to increase efficiency when citing sources and cross-referencing
- **Modification:** While researching, students are also going to be responsible for creating an activity that the other students in class will do during the presentation. Some ideas for modification at this level might be creating a [Kahoot](#) or [Quizizz](#) for their classmates to compete in after the presentation.
- **Redefinition:** During the research phase, students might be expected to attempt to get into contact with an expert on the topic that they are researching. They might even be able to network with a professional from a different country and even video conference this person

## THE RAT MODEL

Similar in language to SAMR, but slightly different in function, [the RAT model](#) focuses on the three themes of **Replacement**, **Amplification** and **Transformation**. Just like the SAMR model, this framework helps you to understand if digital technology is functioning as replacement, amplification, or transformation in educational practice. Where this framework differs is in the way that it approaches the analysis of the specific educational task. Using this framework, educators will systematically assess a specific instance of technology use in terms of three important educational themes: instructional methods, student learning

processes, and curriculum goals. The main goal is to be a self-assessment tool for teachers to increase critical technological decision-making.

Dimensions of Instructional Methods	Dimensions of Student Learning Processes	Dimensions of Curriculum Goals
Teacher's role in instruction	Learning Activity/task	Curricular knowledge or concepts
Interaction with students	Thinking process – mental process	Curricular experiences
Assessment of students	Knowledge Transfer	Curricular processes or procedures
Instructional Preparation	Task milieu (individual, small group, whole-class, others)	
Administrative tasks related to Instruction (e.g., grading)	Student Motivation	
	Student Attitudes	

Educational Themes of The RAT Model, <https://techedges.org/r-a-t-model/>

A huge benefit of the RAT model is that school divisions, schools, or individual teachers can personalize those themes based off the context in which they teach. For example, a teacher in a Learning Resource class might be more inclined to place more importance on the Teacher's role in the instruction. Similarly, a teacher of an Advanced Placement course might not place a large focus on student motivation, as the students might be the type that get motivated regardless of the task.

## TPACK THEORY

TPACK stands for Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge and it helps to explain the set of knowledge that teachers need to teach their students a subject, teach effectively, and use technology. The framework suggests that in order to teach with technology effectively, one must have a strong sense of both content knowledge and pedagogical knowledge, as well as a strong grasp of technological tools. Through this framework, educators should be trying to design lessons that contain overlap with all of those skills.

Simply put, if you have a strong knowledge base about ELA, but you lack pedagogical skills, you will not be a strong teacher, and your students may struggle to make connections with the content. This is

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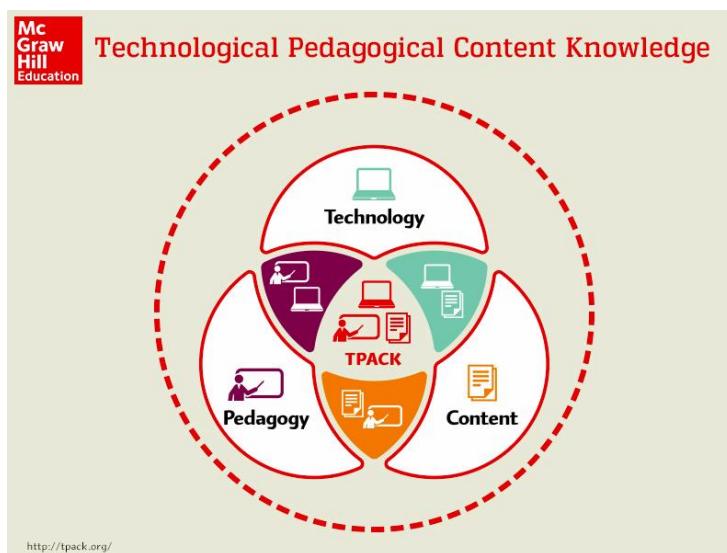
*In ELA: Simply showing a YouTube video (technology) about the Great Depression might help students understand Of Mice and Men (content), but thoughtful follow up activities (pedagogy) will enhance even more*

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also true when adding technology to the classroom. Therefore, lessons should be planned thinking about three things:

- a) What content do we want our students to learn?
- b) What pedagogical processes will support our students best?
- c) In what way can technology enhance this lesson?

This framework is largely based around the idea that keeping technology separated from the content (eg. just using technology for technology's sake) negatively affects the pedagogical and the content aspects of the classroom. In contrast, when teachers thoughtfully design activities that integrate technology in ways that are specific to the content and pedagogy, the integration helps students to learn more effectively.



## CHOOSE WHAT WORKS FOR YOU...

All of these frameworks are designed to help teachers reflect on the things they are doing in the classroom in order to better support their students using digital media. Not one of the frameworks is any better than the others. Instead, just like it is important to let our students discover the opportunities that work well for them, it is highly suggested to choose one of the frameworks that pairs well with your own educational philosophy. Whichever framework you value most will be the most beneficial in supporting you on your own journey.

# CONNECTIONS TO ELA CURRICULUM

At this point, the connections between content and digital media should be making a little more sense. Of course, it is necessary to be comfortable and confident in your teaching in order to reach your students at a deeper level. With that said, depending on where you are at as a teacher, an important skill to develop is the ability to relinquish some control. In order to mature into strong digital citizens, students must have the ability to explore different tools and the ability to experiment with them on their own. However, having a strong knowledge base will be beneficial in gaining confidence to relinquish that control. This section of the document is designed to support teachers with practical examples of how to implement different levels of digital citizenship within your ELA class. The hope is that these examples will help instill a sense of self-assurance for educators at the beginning of their digital media journey.

The connections to curriculum in this document are designed with two main principles in mind. First of all, they are designed around curricular outcomes, as they outline the necessary content that a teacher must cover. Secondly, they are designed to address one or more of the nine elements of digital citizenship. In this way, the goal of these connections is to show how technology can support and not govern the content of the class. These connections were not designed with any specific framework in mind, and in fact, it can be very helpful to apply all the different frameworks to the suggestions in order to reflect on the effectiveness of each individual suggestion. In this way, you are able to develop your own evaluating skills when it comes to the activities that you do within your own classroom.

It is definitely noteworthy to mention that these are simply suggestions, and, obviously, each individual teacher will have individual circumstances. The connections in the section are designed to be purposefully easy to adapt. In that way, teachers can assess the level of their own students, the accessibility of devices, the school based contexts, etc. before implementing any of the ideas in this section.

**Non-ELA Teachers:** While this document focuses its energies towards secondary ELA, other subject areas may use this document. Find some pieces that you feel connect to your course, and adapt as necessary

**Pep Talk for Starting the Digital Media Journey:** The first step in successful tech integration is recognizing that your teaching will probably change, at least a bit. That's okay. When you began teaching you went through an internship where you developed a set of brand new skills. This is similar. Keep in mind that every lesson is not going to go well. Just like when you first started teaching, there are going to be a few moments where you think that it is not going to work. The biggest suggestion as you start integrating technology in your classroom is to treat it like you did your internship: with open-mindedness and an understand that the more you do this, the better you will get. We all started teaching with the hope that we can help develop responsible global citizens. Celebrate the fact that you are continuing to do this, instead of focusing on how difficult it might be. Here we go!

Another main goal of this section was to clearly identify spots in the curriculum that can easily incorporate digital media and citizenship. While some of Ribble's nine elements have connections that may be blatantly obvious, the goal is to show how a course like ELA is an ideal course to help develop well-rounded digital citizens. Each suggestion is also designed to allow teacher to only slightly modify activities that they already do (unless, you want to go all in).

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## 1. UNDERSTANDING COPYRIGHT

In any class, it is important to ensure that students are becoming educated on the different ways that they might be breaking the law. While ELA teachers tend to do a great job at teaching how to cite work for research papers, including bibliographies and works cited pages, it often does not carry over to other elements such as photos for presentations. It is probably worthwhile to do an assignment early in the semester that touches on copyright law on the internet. Obviously, this is a huge and complicated concept, so it might be advisable to just get the basic ideas out of it. The main thing that students should understand is that they should assume they are using things without permission unless they specifically know they have permission.

Here is a video to use: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZbJmQSuNcQ4>

**Digital Citizenship Connections:** Digital Law, Digital Fluency, Digital Rights and Responsibility

**Curricular Connections:** CC A10.1, CC B10.1, CC20.1, CC A30.1, CC B30.1

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**Pro Tip:** While going over this concept, you might want to show some students examples of websites that have a license to use whatever image you want. [Adobe Spark](#), [Pixabay](#), or [Pexels](#) are all good examples.

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## 2. USE THE INTERNET

This one might sound obvious, but using the internet is a skill that needs to be developed. Many students (and adults, for that matter) struggle with efficiency when they are using search engines. In the classroom, the internet can serve a great function of developing connections and helping students to see the relevance of what they are doing to the world around them.

Keep in mind that the more they use any tool, the better they will get at it. The internet is no different. Teachers tend to think of Google and search engines just as tools for research projects. But every day we use it to just find simple answers – students should develop skills in this sense as well. Instead of just using the internet when researching for a project, try to think about ways that you can use search engines in a regular lesson. The internet is ubiquitous everywhere else, so why not your classroom?

Here are a few solid resources with some good tips for search engines:

<https://www.lifehack.org/articles/technology/20-tips-use-google-search-efficiently.html>

<https://www.scholastic.com/teachers/articles/teaching-content/welcoming-internet-your-classroom/>

#### A FEW IDEAS TO NORMALIZE SEARCH ENGINES IN YOUR CLASSROOM

- Instead of assigning poems or stories, have students search for their own online
- Search for news stories or articles that make connections to the text that you are studying
- Compare and contrast similar items from different websites
- Have a procedure developed that encourages students to stop at any moment to do a search to increase understanding (questions about definitions, setting, author, etc.)
- “Find the Answer Fridays” – Spend 10 minutes at the start of class on Fridays to have a quick little competition where students search for answers

When using search engines in a classroom on a regular basis, you also are regularly given the opportunity to teach your students effectively about evaluating their sources, and the importance of cross-referencing ideas. This suggestion is not as specific as others; the hope is that once the internet is normalized in your classroom, you will find ways to connect it to curriculum on a daily basis.

**Digital Citizenship Connections:** all of them, depending how you use it

**Curricular Connections:** most of them, depending how you use it

There are also some issues that arise when using the internet in your classroom. You need to consider the data being collected by certain companies, privacy issues with students and certain websites, or something like the accessibility of devices. This topic also leads into the next one...

### 3. DEBATE AN ELEMENT OF DIGITAL CITIZENSHIP

Debates are a great way to get students to think about two sides of a topic. This is a suggestion that allows you to incorporate some elements of digital citizenship while not needing to have a lot of technology in your own classroom. By identifying some topics to debate related to digital citizenship, teachers can have their students think critically about global issues.

A topic like this could be done both in groups or individually, depending on how it is framed. Perhaps, instead of a group debate, the task could be to write a persuasive piece, or to create a multimedia presentation to defend their own personal point of view about the topic. There are many opportunities to adjust this suggestion to the level and needs of your own students.

Here are some ideas for topics to debate with some examples of questions:

- **Digital commerce** (Is online shopping better or worse for our society?)
- **Digital law** (Should all material uploaded to the internet be free to use?)
- **Digital privacy** (Should companies be allowed to collect data on their users?)
- **Digital rights and responsibilities** (Should people be held accountable in real life for things that happen online?)
- **Social Media** (Should there be higher age restrictions for social media use?)

**ELA Idea:** Create a class channel on YouTube, and have your class create visual presentations in groups. That way you can compile several different points of view about several different topics to do with Digital Citizenship all in one easy to access location

**Digital Citizenship Connections:** all of them, depending how you use it

**Curricular Connections:** CR A10.1, CC A10.3, CR B10.2, CC B10.2, CC 20.4, CC A30.3 CC B30.2

## 4. NOVEL STUDIES

While novel studies tend to avoid technology use, novel studies have a lot of potential for incorporating digital literacy at many different levels. Technology has enabled ELA teachers to do a lot more than they once could with studies like this, and not just for accommodations such as audio books. There are so many opportunities these days for students to use multiple different tools to show their understanding of a novel. The novel study section is separated into two separate versions of ways to do novel studies that incorporate different levels of digital citizenship.

### A. INDEPENDENT NOVEL STUDIES

Independent novel studies allow students to work through a novel of their choosing, at their own pace. It also allows them to decide how they want to study a novel and allows them to take control of their own learning.

#### SOME SUGGESTIONS FOR INCORPORATING DIGITAL LITERACY IN INDEPENDENT NOVEL STUDIES

- Have students research for a novel that they want to do (<https://www.readbrightly.com/>)
- Have them create a live blog or social media feed so that they can track their own progress as they read their novel. This also allows other students to comment on the blogs of others
- Allow students to choose how they want to present their knowledge of the novel (you might even have them choose which outcomes/indicators they will be assessed on)
- Have a maximum of 3-4 tasks throughout the novel that students have to complete. This allows them to enjoy the reading without too much stress of getting the tasks done.

## B. DIGITAL LIT CIRCLES

Literature circles allow students to incorporate another level of digital citizenship: communication and collaboration. It can be very similar to the independent study, but it asks students to work with others in collaboration on the tasks. In this way, as a teacher you can decide how much online collaboration will take place. Maybe your students will set up a digital workspace ([Office 365](#) or [Google Drive](#)) or maybe they will prefer to work together at the same table.

### SOME SUGGESTIONS FOR TASKS THAT INCORPORATE DIGITAL MEDIA

- Create an infographic ([Piktochart](#), [Adobe Spark](#), [Canva](#)) related to setting, characters, plot, symbolism, etc.
- Make a quotation poster
- Real World Connector (see below for example)
- Final creative representation (could be a movie, a podcast, a newspaper, etc.)

### **Real World Connector Assignment** (from my ELA A30 course)

One extremely important reason why we read books is to learn more about the world. This task asks you to connect what you are reading to a situation from the world in which you live. How does the novel shed new light on a situation that you know of from the world? What are some aspects from our world of today that might have influenced the author while writing this text?

This assignment involved two parts:

**1. Finding a real-world event that is linked to your novel.** Search the internet and find two things: a news article that relates to your book and an informational video that relates to your book (sometimes you might find a page that has a news article and video at the same time). You will include a link to the website that has the story, and the link to the video.

**2. Explain how you think the novel relates to the two things that you found.** This does not have to be a formal paragraph, but it should definitely include an in-depth response to the artifacts that you found. Some things to consider writing about are:

- How your view about that topic has been affected by the novel
- Some ways that the events in your novel relate to the modern world
- How the book might have been a response to the situation you found
- Why you think this book is important for people to expand their knowledge about the topic.

Remember that you don't have to just search for a random connection with no starting point. Think about the connections that you can make to this novel. Let that be a starting point for you (ex. If your book takes place during the Great Depression, you can use what you already know about that time to guide your search.)

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**Digital Idea:** If you are feeling bold, it could be a cool idea to connect with a colleague from another school and set up a literature circle with their class, using video conferencing. In this way, you can develop an even wider range of perspectives in studying these novels.

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**Digital Citizenship Connections:** Digital Communication and Collaboration, Digital Fluency, Digital Etiquette

**Curricular Connections:** CR A10.1, CR A10.4, CR B10.1, CR B10.2, CR 20.1, CR 20.4, CR A30.4, CR B30.4

## 5. USE SOCIAL MEDIA

A huge element of ELA education is to instill a sense of social responsibility in students and prepare them to be responsible global citizens. Part of this is to learn how to act online. For this reason, it becomes important to actually acknowledge the fact that social media is a part of our world, and it is not leaving. There can be some issues with creating your own class group on Facebook, or something similar to that. However, educators should not be afraid of doing an activity such as opening up [Twitter](#) and exploring topics. In fact, you do not even need a Twitter account to search Twitter and see the posts of others. Even if your students do not use Twitter, there are still many connections from that platform to other social media platforms. One may even use it to teach students how to create a responsible online persona

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**ELA Tip:** Use Twitter to search a topic and put together a collection of Tweets about the same topic. As a class, critically analyze them to see if there are some traits that help us to identify whether a post is trustworthy. This leads to an important lesson about [how to find truth in a post-truth world](#). You might pick a few posts that you wish to comment to as class. In this way, you can work with your students in creating some guidelines for responsible social media posting.

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Social media comes with many positives, and many negatives. These conversations and discussions are important to have with students. This might even give you a fantastic opportunity to do a short unit about Media Bias and Fake News. This is an important skill to develop in a world where it can be hard to critically analyze whether or not a source is reliable.

**SUGGESTION: TRY CREATING FAKE POSTS FROM A CHARACTER IN A SHORT STORY THAT YOU STUDIED, USING THE GUIDELINES FOR APPROPRIATE POSTING. THEN HAVE OTHER CHARACTERS COMMENT ON THE POSTS. IT MIGHT BE A FUN WAY OF DOING SOME CHARACTER ANALYSIS.**

If you are uncomfortable using a social media platform in your classroom, there are still some fantastic ways to teach respectful and responsible digital etiquette. There are several apps, such as [Padlet](#), where a teacher can create a classroom forum that simulates a social media platform. In this space, educators can collaborate on what it means to be a respectful digital citizen.

**Digital Citizenship Connections:** Digital Fluency, Digital Etiquette, Digital Communication and Collaboration, Digital Rights and Responsibility

**Curricular Connections:** CR A10.4, CR B10.2, CR 20.4, CR B30.2

## 6. VIDEO CONFERENCE

One on the most intriguing and beneficial ways that technology has benefitted our world is the connections that we are now able to make. At the end of the day, teachers are not always the full content expert that they wish they always were. However, there is a new solution for this: video conferencing. Our world is full of people who are willing to [Skype](#) or [FaceTime](#) into a classroom in order to interact with students. This can help reach students on multiple levels. It can provide some context before reading a novel. It can provide deeper understanding during a unit. In all honesty, sometimes just a new face can do wonders for helping students see things in a different perspective. The beauty of video conferencing is that you could do it with your whole class, in smaller groups, or as individual students. It all depends how you are planning on using it and what you and your students are comfortable with. If this intimidates you, it might be prudent to just start with a guest lecturer first, then move on from there.

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### **Some suggestions for video conferencing:**

- Q&A with an author or poet
- Creative writing performance
- Connect with another classroom (conduct an interview or debate)
- Mystery Skype
- Tour a location
- Digital Book Clubs

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In the same lens, if a person is not available to conference in, there is still the option of listening to other experts in [TED Talks](#) or on Podcasts. However, actually having the person visible in your classroom increases student engagement. Especially when you consider the fact that the students have the opportunity to ask questions right to the individual.

There is also the concept of doing a [Mystery Skype](#). Originally started as two classrooms connecting and trying to discern the location of the other classroom, it is an engaging way of connecting and communicating using a video conferencing tool. However, if you have a willing participant, it is also possible to do it as a game where you can have your students work in teams to be the first to deduce the answer to almost any question.

**Digital Citizenship Connections:** Digital Fluency, Digital Etiquette, Digital Communication and Collaboration

**Curricular Connections:** Connect with a guest based on the outcome

## 7. WRITING ASSIGNMENTS/ESSAYS

Of course, with ELA comes the fact that there are several writing requirements that must be achieved over the course of the semester. A challenge that ELA teachers could give themselves is to pick one new assignment each year and use that as the focus for integrating digital literacy into the assignment. Once again, this should not require creating

a full brand new assignment. Instead, it should require the teacher to reflect on some ways that their writing assignments can be adapted to a more modern lens where students can practice some of their digital literacy skills.

CC A10.4 - Compose and Create a Review – could these reviews take the form of a classroom blog page that allows for comments from classmates?

CC 20.4 – Compose and Create an Essay of Explanation – could this essay be accompanied with an infographic to support the message of the essay? Could the essay be turned into an instructional video?

CC B30.4 – Compose and Create a Position Paper – could this “paper” take the form of a website with multiple different pages that includes hyperlinks to other websites and meaningful images to support the message and the meaning?

It is through little changes like this that even the most traditional of tasks in an ELA class can move toward a classroom with effective and meaningful technology integration. Once again, it is important to choose a framework that works for you in order to assess the activities that you will choose for your classroom.

**Digital Citizenship Connections:** Digital Fluency, Digital Etiquette, Digital Communication and Collaboration

**Curricular Connections:** Compose and Create Outcomes

## 8. BALANCE

One thing that is worth stressing is that your classroom should only take on as much technology integration as you and your students are ready for. Remember that integrating digital media alone is not going to enhance understanding for students. It is only through a deep understanding of yourself and your students that you will know how much is too much. There are times when putting the computers and phones away will be necessary. The more time you spend working with digital media and the more literate you become with the tools, the easier it will be to recognize when it is time to unplug. Just like anything else, this understanding takes time and practice.

**Digital Citizenship Connections:** Digital Health and Welfare

## ENDLESS OPPORTUNITIES

This guide was meant to support you with some suggestions for starting off. Once you exhaust all the aspects of this guide, do a quick online search to find new ideas. No matter when you search, there will always be a website like [this one](#) to get your brain-juices flowing!

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# RESOURCE SUGGESTIONS

As stated earlier, while this document was written by me, it was developed over many years by many people. Unfortunately, while so many people have helped me become the teacher I am today, the specific citations for most of these people have disappeared into my subconscious. However, here are some of the resources that have certainly helped me over the last few years that I actually can identify:

Print:

[Educated by Design](#) by Michael Cohen

[Social LEADia](#) by Jennifer Casa-Todd

[Ditch That Textbook](#) by Matt Miller

[Innovate Inside the Box](#) and [The Innovator's Mindset](#) by George Couros

Web:

[Dig Cit Commit](#)

[ISTE Standards](#)

[Common Sense Education](#)

[Media Smarts](#)