How to Read This Book

If you are familiar with media literacy, this book is for you. And if you are not familiar with media literacy, this book is for you. Here is why.

News Literacy Now: How to "Read" the News is about a new approach to building critical thinking skills for news literacy. Based on the intersection of media literacy, news literacy and web literacy skills, this hybrid strategy adapts the media literacy framework developed by the Center for Media Literacy (CML) to analyze the nature of news and the practice of journalism, apply lateral reading and other fact-checking strategies to verify information, and empower responsible participation in democracy in the ever-changing digital media ecosystem.

The CML framework uses five core concepts and corresponding key questions to analyze media messages. The five concepts focus on authorship, format, content, purpose, and audience. Each core concept and key question is adapted for news messaging and additional questions about the news process guide the analysis. For example, the media literacy core concept about authorship states: "All media messages are constructed." Adapting it for news, it is reworded: "All news stories are constructed." Key questions specifically probe the news-gathering process to identify who wrote the news story, explain how news reporters differ from investigative, feature, and opinion writers, and distinguish between professional journalists and others who generate news such as citizen journalists,

bloggers, pundits, news-writing bots and chatbots. (All references to CML's Core Concepts, Key Questions and Keywords are used with permission of the Center for Media Literacy, www.Medialit.org.)

Whether you consider yourself media literate and want to apply the core concepts specifically to news, or a newbie to media and news literacy who needs a primer in how to "read" the news, this book will help you think like a journalist and apply standards to judge the credibility and reliability of information and the trustworthiness of news sources. It is written in an inquiry-based style from the news consumers' perspective, asking and answering questions to think critically about our personal news experiences and provide a context to understand the news process and journalism practices.

The book begins by posing the dilemma we find ourselves facing as news consumers and informed citizens: challenged by a news credibility crisis, how do we know what is real or fake? How do we find trustworthy news sources in a media environment that intermixes real news, misinformation, and disinformation? The first chapter raises questions that we all should consider about our personal news habits and how our biases can trap us in filter bubbles and encircle us in echo chambers.

The second chapter explains why news literacy matters, that most people are not very news literate, and what we need to know to become news literate. This chapter reviews relevant news literacy research and pedagogy to provide a context for understanding how educators are rethinking news literacy strategies. It also explains CML's evidence-based method of inquiry used in developing the news media literacy framework that organizes the structure of this book.

The next five chapters apply CML's five core concepts to news and the practice of journalism one concept at a time. Each chapter focuses on a different core concept and provides guiding questions to deconstruct news stories, the news-gathering process, and the role news audience's play in the changing news media ecosystem. The chapters close with a section entitled "Ask the Right Questions" that illustrates the media-news literacy connection, summarizes key takeaways, and poses questions to probe deeper into the concept explained in the chapter.

The last chapter of the book digs deeper into strategies to help navigate the news media ecosystem in a post-truth culture and become the most news literate consumers we can be. It explains how to search like a fact-checker using lateral reading and other techniques to investigate the source, evaluate the evidence and verify the claims, and suggests ways to talk to someone who believes disinformation. Following this chapter, there are some final words about the need for news media literacy, and a few resources to help identify different types of

misinformation and disinformation and learn more about media and news literacy programs, research, and organizations to continue to develop your skills.

A word about definitions. The term misinformation typically is used as a catchall to refer to both misinformation and disinformation. In this book, I differentiate between different types of information based on whether the intent is to inform, mislead or harm. *Misinformation* refers to unintentional reporting errors that will be corrected by a news outlet, whereas *disinformation* is false information that is intentionally created to mislead and cause harm. When people share information that they do not realize is false and misleading, it is *misinformation* and not disinformation because their intention is to inform and not to mislead or harm. *Malinformation*, another type of intentionally harmful information, refers to publicly disclosing private information to deliberately inflict harm on a person, group, company or institution. Also note that at times the terms misinformation, disinformation and malinformation are shortened to mis/dis/malinformation or simply mis/disinformation.