

Summary

Students learn how to categorize information by determining its primary purpose and then aligning this purpose with one of six “InfoZones” to help them analyze the credibility of actual examples of information.

Learning Objective

I can use the primary purpose of a piece of information to differentiate between news, opinion, entertainment, advertising, propaganda and raw information.

Background

As the amount of information at our fingertips grows at an unprecedented rate, filtering information is an increasingly essential news literacy skill. The foundational concepts of “InfoZones” help guide students to the vital realization that not all information is created equal and that the credibility of different types of information is often correlated with their purpose. By helping students discover six primary purposes of information, you can help them develop the habit of questioning the purpose of *all* the information they encounter.

Of course, most pieces of information have more than one purpose — a television show that is produced to be entertaining can also be informative, for example, or an advertisement produced to sell a product or service can also entertain — but this lesson helps students understand that almost all the information they encounter has one *primary purpose* that has a significant effect on its credibility.

PREPARATION

What you’ll need:

- Six pieces of chart paper
- One marker for each student
- Six notecards or small pieces of paper
- LCD projector connected to computer with internet
- Copies of the **Own It, Zone It!** graphic organizer
- A timer or timer mobile app (optional)

Directions

1. Prepare a **gallery walk** of six examples as described below. (Note: Your examples can be digital, printed or a blend of both.) Ideally, this can be ready for students when they arrive in your classroom. If you would like to browse ready-made collections of examples, you can find them in the exercises section of NLP’s [Checkology® virtual classroom](#). For example, check out this collection about [school lunches](#) or this collection about [immigration](#).
2. Number the examples in the gallery walk from 1-6.
3. The gallery walk involves posting six examples of information around the classroom — each in the center of a piece of chart paper, which is numbered. (Video-based and digital examples should have a piece of chart paper nearby.)
4. For the **Connection Challenge** portion, prepare six notecards with the following six **InfoZones** written on them: **News, Opinion, Entertainment, Advertising, Propaganda** and **Raw Information**.
5. For the **Own It, Zone It** portion of the lesson, make sure you can access the collections of examples hosted on Checkology (see step No. 1).

CCSS Primary Alignment

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.9-10.6:

Determine an author’s point of view or purpose in a text and analyze how an author uses rhetoric to advance that point of view or purpose.

Word Wall Terms

- News
- Advertising
- Entertainment
- Opinion
- Propaganda
- Raw information

Essential Questions

- Why is it important to know the primary purpose of the information we encounter?
- Does the purpose of a piece of information affect its credibility?
- Do some pieces of information have more than one purpose? Is it still possible to identify a primary, or main, purpose for such examples?

INFOZONES LESSON PLAN

This lesson has three parts, outlined below:

Part One: Gallery Walk

1. As students enter the room, or at the beginning of the period, use your favorite method (verbal count-off, slips of paper, other symbols) to assign students to one of six groups. Give each group a number (1-6) and make sure each student has a marker.
2. Tell students that they will start the period by participating in a gallery walk. They will see six examples of information posted at stations around the room and must quickly write down what they think the primary, or main, purpose is of each. We recommend directing students to keep it simple by using just two words for this, the first of which is “to” (for example, “to sell”).
Note: If you need to first introduce the concept of distinguishing a primary purpose from secondary purposes, you might use an example of something in the room — chairs and bottled water have clear primary purposes and several secondary purposes, for example, as do common items you could bring in, such as a shoebox or baking soda.
3. Students should find the gallery item with their group number on it and begin there. They have just five minutes to complete the walk by quickly reviewing each example, determining what they think its primary purpose is, and writing that purpose clearly on the chart paper using their marker. We recommend using a timer and making this a timed challenge.
4. When time is up, one student from each group will summarize for the class the responses written on the chart paper that corresponds to their group’s number. As those students do so, try to consolidate and redirect the responses to correspond with NLP’s six primary purposes — **to inform, to persuade, to entertain, to sell, to provoke** and **to document** — and quickly reconcile or postpone disagreements or debates about individual examples. As you do this, use a thick marker to write the NLP primary purpose clearly, in large letters, on each piece of chart paper.

Part Two: Connection Challenge

1. Point out that for these information categories to be useful, we need more than just a primary purpose; we need a name so we can refer to them by category. We’ll call these categories “InfoZones”.
2. Now give each group an InfoZone (category) notecard that does not match the purpose of their assigned number (or chart paper example). Give the student groups a set amount of time (e.g., three minutes) to match their notecard to the appropriate gallery example. If another group has already placed a notecard where they think theirs should go, the first group should also place their card there, and it will be discussed afterward. Go!
3. When the allotted time is up, students can take their seats. Briefly discuss each example, highlighting the connection (or lack of connection, if incorrectly placed) between the purpose written on the chart paper and the InfoZone on the notecard. If you encounter an example with two notecards, engage in a quick discussion about which one belongs and which must go elsewhere. Identifying the blank example and chart paper (where one of the two notecards in question belongs) can help expedite this discussion and make the distinctions clear to students.
4. Once all purposes have been matched with an InfoZone, quickly recap the six zones.

Part Three: Own It, Zone It

1. Make sure each student has a copy of the two-sided **Own It, Zone It** graphic organizer.
2. Locate an NLP InfoZone collection (or “exercise”) on Checkology — two such collections are linked in the first step of the directions for this lesson — and project the title element for the class. Tell the students that they will now be evaluating a collection of new examples. Every zone is present in this collection; some zones will appear more than once. Students should have 20 to 30 seconds to zone each example before you reveal the correct answer and move on to the next one.
3. At the end of the collection (or with five minutes left in the class period, whichever comes first), click back through the examples and elicit answers from the students, redirecting incorrect answers and acknowledging correct answers. You might want to have students grade their own graphic organizers as they go, then find out who has the most right before dismissal.



Discussion Matchbox

- Which kind of information do you think is easiest to identify? Which is most difficult? Why?
- How many examples of raw information can you think of? (This could be given to small groups and/or timed.)
- Can you determine the main purpose of all pieces of information? Why or why not?
- What kinds of mistakes or other problems could get a piece of news kicked out of the News zone?
- What other pieces of information could get kicked out of their zones and into another one? How?
- Are any zones missing?

Extended Learning

- Extend the final activity in this lesson by using another copy of the Own It, Zone It! graphic organizer with another InfoZones exercise on Checkology.
- Use an [online generator](#) to create a set of InfoZones bingo cards to use with one of the alternate collections. The winner is the first student who can check off — and explain — five consecutive InfoZones on his or her boards.
- Encourage students to take ownership of their new categorization skills and create their own more comprehensive and detailed system of InfoZones. What is missing from the basic six zones? What further subzones should be added? How can this new system be effectively visualized and conveyed? What positive civic outcomes might result from your system being introduced to others?

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InfoZones

GRAPHIC ORGANIZER

Own it, Zone it!

As you go through the InfoZones collection, decide which zone each example falls into, then explain why you think so. Finally, decide whether you think this particular piece of information has a positive or negative impact on the public and be ready to discuss.

	InfoZone	Explanation	Impact
EXAMPLE 1			+ -
EXAMPLE 2			+ -
EXAMPLE 3			+ -
EXAMPLE 4			+ -
EXAMPLE 5			+ -
EXAMPLE 6			+ -
EXAMPLE 7			+ -

GRAPHIC ORGANIZER



	InfoZone	Explanation	Impact
EXAMPLE 8			+ -
EXAMPLE 9			+ -
EXAMPLE 10			+ -
EXAMPLE 11			+ -
EXAMPLE 12			+ -
EXAMPLE 13			+ -
EXAMPLE 14			+ -
EXAMPLE 15			+ -