



Frequently Asked Questions

<https://newslit.org/faq/>

What is the News Literacy Project?

Founded in 2008, the News Literacy Project (NLP) is a nonpartisan education nonprofit that works with educators, school districts and states to ensure students receive news literacy instruction before they graduate high school, giving them the knowledge and ability to think for themselves and become well-informed, critical thinkers active in civic society.

How was NLP started?

Our organization was [founded in 2008 by Alan C. Miller](#), a Pulitzer Prize-winning investigative reporter, after he visited his daughter's middle school classroom to discuss what journalists do and why it mattered. He saw the value of having journalists share their experience and expertise in America's classrooms and helped launch the field of news literacy.

What is news literacy?

News literacy is the ability to determine the credibility of news and other information and recognize the standards of fact-based, high-quality journalism. It is an essential 21st-century skill, central to any media literacy, digital literacy or civics program.

NLP says it's nonpartisan – but is that really the case?

Yes. We strive to be nonpartisan in everything we do. This value is paramount at NLP and one that our leadership takes seriously. Our goal is to help students learn how to think about news and information – not what to think. When we create resources, we look for examples that reflect a range of viewpoints and political positions and we seek to maintain balance across a range of perspectives. We also strive to work with people who have diverse viewpoints and experiences to serve as board members, host our lessons and serve in advisory roles. This value is also evident in our materials for educators, including our [Framework for Teaching News Literacy](#), a foundational document that guides our resource development.

What programs and services does NLP offer?

We provide educators with free programs, resources and professional development to help them teach news literacy across disciplines and grade levels.

Our browser-based digital learning platform, the [Checkology® virtual classroom](#), empowers educators to teach news literacy to middle and high school students with topical and engaging



lessons. Checkology teaches students how to identify credible information, seek out reliable sources and discern misinformation. Checkology registrants include educators in all 50 states, the District of Columbia and four U.S. territories.

We also help educators build their own knowledge and skills to confidently teach news literacy, offering professional development through webinars and in-person sessions.

Our free weekly newsletter, [The Sift®](#), offers classroom-ready lessons based on a rundown of the latest topics in news literacy – including trends and issues in misinformation, social media, artificial intelligence and journalism. For noneducators, we offer the free weekly newsletter [Get Smart About News](#).

Our annual [National News Literacy Week](#), presented in partnership with The E.W. Scripps Company and USA Today, raises awareness of news literacy as an essential life skill. Throughout the week, we provide educators with resources to use in the classroom and suggest ways for the public to support the movement to teach news literacy.

How is news literacy different from media literacy, information literacy and digital literacy?

News literacy is focused on helping students understand the role that credible information and a free press play in their lives and in a robust democracy.

Media literacy generally refers to a broad discipline that promotes thinking critically about all “media messages” students encounter in their daily lives, including advertisements, news and entertainment, including films, scripted and unscripted television shows, music and video games.

Information literacy is aligned with library sciences and seeks to help students find, evaluate and use information effectively.

Digital literacy aims to teach students how to use information and communications technologies in safe, effective, responsible and ethical ways.

How do we know news literacy education works?

We have made assessing our work a priority since we first started working in classrooms, and the results demonstrate that news literacy education can improve students’ knowledge, attitudes and behaviors. Each school year, we gather pre- and post-unit assessment data from students and educators using our Checkology virtual classroom.

During the 2023-24 school year, after completing Checkology lessons:

- 84% of students identified the more credible of two articles on the same topic from two different sources – a gain of 27 percentage points from pre-assessment.
- 87% of students recognized when a social media post failed to provide credible evidence for a claim – a gain of 18 percentage points from pre-assessment.

- 81% of students recognized the importance of a free press to a healthy democracy – a gain of 14 percentage points from the pre-assessment.

Why is news literacy important now?

Young people have inherited the most complex information landscape in history, and it is our responsibility as their caretakers and educators to ensure they are able to navigate it. A free and independent press and the ability to determine whether information is credible are necessary for the future of a healthy democracy. The quality of information we consume has an impact on every decision we make in our daily lives – from our healthcare to our finances and our personal values. We can't make well-informed decisions about our lives and our governance if we can't agree on a shared set of facts.

Consider these findings from NLP's recent report [*News Literacy in America: A survey of teen information attitudes, habits and skills \(2024\)*](#):

- Nearly half of teens surveyed think the press does more to harm democracy than protect it.
- Eight in 10 teens surveyed reported seeing posts on social media that spread or promote conspiracy theories, and of those, 81% said they are inclined to believe one or more of them.
- The majority of teens struggle to distinguish between different types of information, such as news, advertisement, opinion, and entertainment.

How does NLP engage journalists and news organizations?

Media organizations and journalists are essential partners in our work. More than 30 news organizations across the United States, from local outlets to internationally known print and digital publications, support NLP. They participate in our work in a variety of ways: publicly endorsing our mission, donating services or resources and promoting our major initiatives, such as National News Literacy Week. Individual journalists share their expertise through speaking engagements, as the hosts of Checkology lessons and by joining dozens of fellow journalists as volunteers in our [*Newsroom to Classroom*](#) program.

Does NLP endorse specific news organizations or tell students which ones to trust?

No. We teach students about the characteristics of credibility so that they can evaluate the trustworthiness of information regardless of the source. We aspire to empower young people to judge for themselves what to trust.

Haven't some media figures who publish opinion content been incorporated into NLP's resources or events?

Yes, some journalists who publicly share their opinions as commentators, columnists, editorial cartoonists and editorial board members appear in select NLP resources about opinion journalism and the importance of fact-based civic discourse, and their roles are clearly defined. Such figures have also appeared in events sponsored by NLP, typically on panels that include

both conservative and liberal commentators. Opinion journalists are an important part of our information ecosystem, contributing to civic discourse on current events and the political issues that shape our world.

How does NLP partner with other organizations?

We partner with a variety of organizations that share our values, align their missions with ours and help us reach a wider audience. We also partner with numerous school districts (ranging from New York City, Los Angeles and Chicago to smaller districts in South Carolina, Missouri, Indiana and elsewhere). Other past and current partners include:

- [AARP](#)
- [The National Council for the Social Studies \(NCSS\)](#)
- [The E.W. Scripps Company](#)
- [SAS data management](#)
- [Older Adults Technology Services](#)
- [National Writing Project](#)
- [Metcalf Institute](#)
- Microsoft Flipgrid
- [We The Veterans](#)

Where does NLP get its funding?

Our financial support comes from a mix of corporations, foundations and individual gifts, as well as income we earn from our team members speaking at events or providing professional learning services. For a comprehensive list of NLP's funders and our gift acceptance policy, go to newslit.org/about/supporters/.

Can a funder pay NLP to create a specific resource?

No. Like all organizations, NLP needs revenue to operate – but we are careful and discerning in the funding we accept. Prior to the start of a fiscal year, we decide on the projects and programs we plan to pursue. Prospective funders receive the descriptions and budgets for these offerings, and choose which, if any, they might like to support. Their support does not enable them to make decisions or approve the content, resources and programs we produce.

Does NLP receive public or taxpayer funding?

Currently, NLP does not receive federal government funding, but we do regularly review the grant opportunities posted by the federal government, and if we were a fit for the eligibility criteria, we would consider applying. If we were to receive a federal grant, we would list it on our Supporters page. NLP does provide its educational resources and professional learning workshops to publicly (taxpayer) and privately funded schools across the U.S. at no cost. If a school or school district, public or private, would like us to provide a custom educator training, we do charge a modest fee.