



# Media Literacy for Parents

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## Media Literacy 101: Questions You Might Ask

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# Questions You Might Ask

How should you talk to your teen about social media?



What's the best way to learn more about how they use social media while also engaging in important conversations about any concerns you may have?

We know how necessary it is to have an open dialogue with teens about their online activity, but sometimes, getting started can feel intimidating or even impossible.

To get the ball rolling, we recommend using a question and inquiry approach that, when used regularly, encourages social media users to be curious about what they experience online instead of just protective or fearful. Use the questions below as a guide to consider not only the media messages your teen might encounter but also to help them reflect on their individual behaviors and habits. We recommend asking these types of questions together, allowing adults and teens to reflect in collaboration. Or, take a moment to ask yourself these questions before engaging with your teen. Remember, we can all use more practice in being media literate!



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# Talk It Out

Before you start asking the questions below, think about what outcome you're hoping for with your teen.

- Do you want to better understand their social media use?
- Do you want to discuss how media messages might be impacting them?
- Do you want to help them assess any concerns related to their social media experiences?

Consider your outcome, and then use the questions below to get started. As you consider what else you might ask, be sure to frame the questions in ways that are curious instead of accusatory. **“How” questions or other open-ended frames can keep your discussion from feeling like an inquisition.**

## Questions about social media use:

- What are my favorite ways to connect with others on social media?
- How will I decide with whom I want to interact with on social media?
- How will I decide what messages are worth sharing or reposting?
- How will I recognize if my own behavior or someone else's behavior online isn't healthy?
- What different actions could I take in response to various media messages?
- How does my social media use expose me to a variety of ideas and messages?

# Talk It Out

## Questions to help assess social media experiences:

- How do I feel about my time spent on social media?
- How does spending time on social media positively and negatively impact the rest of my day?
- How can I make my social media experiences more positive?
- How do my experiences on social media impact what I think I know about the world, and how I view people and issues?
- How do my experiences on social media impact what I value and believe?

## Questions about the impact of media messages:

- How much do I know about the techniques and tactics different media messages use to make me think a certain way?
- How do different media messages try to activate my emotions?
- How do these emotions affect my interpretations of messages?
- Why are different media messages made, and how will I determine the intent of a message?
- How do I know which messages are accurate?
- What should I do if a message seeks to harm me or others in some way?

# Action Steps



While these questions make for an excellent starting point, don't feel like you have to ask all of them, **all the time**. Becoming media literate and developing healthy discussion habits with your teen around their media use is an ongoing process, and it helps to be patient. No doubt, you'll have your own questions to add to this list.



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