

Name _____

Class _____

Know the Context

All information, whether it's a news story, a political speech, or a tweet posted by a friend, exists within a context. Understanding that context helps us see the information itself more clearly—and objectively.

Use this worksheet to analyze the context surrounding a particular information source (an article, video, tweet, etc.) to learn more about what influenced it.

1. Creator

Who is taking responsibility for the information? (Author, company or organization, publisher)

Exploring Further:

Dig deeper and describe what you discover about that person, publication, or company: do they have a certain mission statement or agenda? Are they known to take a certain stance on some issues?

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2. Setting:

Next, examine the larger setting that might have influenced both the creating and shaping of this information. When and where was this published or posted?

When:

Where:

Exploring Further:

Think about both the time and place that create the setting for this information. What biases or beliefs might have been present at the time in relation to the topic/issue? What other recent events might have taken place that could have influenced what the information creator chose to include?

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3. Audience:

Labels don't define a person, but information creators often use demographic categories to find ways to reach their target audience. Look at your information source for clues indicating who the primary audience is, starting with the basics. Those clues could include the topic, language, and images that seem like they're meant to reach some people more than others.

Age Range:	Clues from the Source:

Gender:	Clues from the Source:

Economic Range or Class:	Clues from the Source:

Affiliation (political, religious, etc.):	Clues from the Source:

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Exploring Further:

Taking the above into consideration, expand the portrait of the targeted audience. What might the information creator be assuming about this audience's broader perspective or beliefs, especially in relation to the information source's subject?

4. Purpose:

To gain an initial understanding of your information source's purpose look at its overall format, language, and use of images. What does a preliminary observation tell you about its goal? Does it want to...

...Inform you?

...Sell something to you?

...Persuade you?

...Entertain you?

...Provoke you?

...Document something for you?

Write down what your first observation tells you about the source's goal, and explain what details stand out upon first look that might indicate this goal: