



Cut Through the Hype

New episodes every
other Wednesday

PBS DIGITAL STUDIOS KQED

Above the Noise Classroom Discussion Guide

Above the Noise is a YouTube series for middle- and high-school students that dives deep into the big questions behind issues affecting students' daily lives. Episodes take on complex subject matter with facts and research to help young viewers draw informed conclusions, while inspiring media literacy and civic engagement. *Above the Noise* focuses on data and science literacy, but the series takes on issues that are just as relevant in English and social studies classrooms.

I. Choose an *Above the Noise* Episode

Look at the episode list on the *Above the Noise* [YouTube channel](#) and the accompanying resources on the [KQED Education website](#).

II. View and Discuss

As a class or in small groups, have students watch the *Above the Noise* episode. True to YouTube style, the narration can move quickly, so plan to watch more than once. You can also stop and start the video as needed and use the closed-caption function.

Before Watching the Video

Gauge what students already know about the topic. If you want to provide a brief overview, you can find more resources in the episode's blog post on [KQED Education](#).

Start by asking students the following questions:

- What do you already know about this topic?
- How well do you think you understand this topic? Is what you know based on your own reading, word of mouth or from scanning headlines on social media?
- What questions do you have about this topic? What do you want to know more about?

While Watching

Stop the video to check for understanding and point out the media literacy aspects of the episode.

These questions apply to almost all videos:

- What issue does this episode discuss?
- What is the "hype" around this topic or issue?
- What does the data or other evidence tell us about this issue?
- How does the host analyze the data? What kind of research or information is presented?
- Are the sources used in the episode credible? How do you know?
- Do you think graphics are used effectively in this episode? How do they add or detract from your understanding of the topic?
- What other production choices (color, sound effects, etc.) did you notice while watching the episode? How did they add or detract from the topic?

Students can use the printable [viewing notes handout](#) to take notes on while watching an episode.

After Watching

Use the following questions to help students share their thoughts and internalize the media literacy strategies from the episode.

- Have your views on the topic changed? If so, how?
- Did the evidence provided in the episode help to change or refine your views? Explain.
- How would you respond to the “call to action” question at the end of the episode? (Give your students time to respond in the comments section of the YouTube page or on the episode page on [KQED Education](#).)
- What did you learn about analyzing evidence from this episode that you can use when reading about other controversial topics or doing your own research?
- What is another aspect of this issue that you think should be studied further? What would your research question be?
- How might someone else look at the evidence presented in the video differently than you do?
- What questions do you still have about the topic? What is unclear?

If you and your students want to explore the issue further, you can review the research behind each episode and find links to further reading on the [Above the Noise collection page](#).

Standards Alignment

This discussion guide aligns to the following standards. Individual *Above the Noise* episodes may align to other standards, depending on the episode’s topic.

Common Core State Standards

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.R.2	Determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas.
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.R.7	Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse media and formats, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words.
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.R.8	Delineate and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, including the validity of the reasoning as well as the relevance and sufficiency of the evidence.
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.R.9	Analyze how two or more texts address similar themes or topics in order to build knowledge or to compare the approaches the authors take.
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.SL.3	Evaluate a speaker's point of view, reasoning, and use of evidence and rhetoric.

Next Generation Science Standards

The *Above the Noise* series was developed to model critical thinking about current issues. By delving into the science and background research of the issue presented in each episode, we ask students to engage in science and engineering practices--to look beyond the headlines, ask questions, evaluate the data and make conclusions. While this guide does not cover individual episodes, you will find videos that align more specifically to Disciplinary Core Ideas and Crosscutting Concepts within the NGSS.

NGSS Science and Engineering Practice 8	Obtaining, Evaluation and Communicating Information Scientists and engineers must be able to communicate clearly and persuasively the ideas and methods they generate. Critiquing and communicating ideas individually and in groups is a critical professional activity.
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C3 Framework

D2.Civ.13.6-8	Analyze the purposes, implementation, and consequences of public policies in multiple settings.
D3.2.6-8	Evaluate the credibility of a source by determining its relevance and intended use.