



VICTORIAN ASSOCIATION FOR THE TEACHING OF ENGLISH

2025 Idiom Vol 61 No 2 – Call for contributions

Reading sideways: Critical media literacy in the English classroom

Theme

In the contemporary media landscape, increasingly distorted by AI and algorithms and manipulated by political and economic forces, how do we sort what's real and what's fiction? Who or what can we trust? How do we engage with media, [as both consumers and creators](#), in informed, ethical and meaningful ways?

The [News and young Australians in 2023: how children and teens access, perceive and are affected by news media](#) report found that while more than three quarters (78%) of young people reported that they often or sometimes engaged in one or more types of proactive news seeking, only two in five (41%) young people believe they know how to tell real news from fake news (misinformation).

The same survey found that only one in four young people (24%) said they had received a lesson at school in the past year to help them work out if news stories are true and can be trusted.

In our increasingly complex world, and with the sheer volume and speed of information online, critical media literacy is an urgent and important area and skill that we must explore in the English classroom. In order to participate in civil society and to ensure a functioning and healthy democracy, our students require the knowledge and skills to be well-informed, critical thinkers. In the English classroom, rich in the study of texts, we have an opportunity to explore, develop and hone these skills and to present a counter-narrative to the noise.

Vive le FACTS!

We invite your contributions to this edition of Idiom

In responding to the theme, you may like to write about any of the following. Tell us more about:

- Your school's approach to teaching critical media literacy skills. Is it a priority? Why? Why not?
- Initiatives that you and/or your English teaching colleagues have introduced into the English curriculum to help develop students' critical media literacy. What is working well? What has been the response of students, parents, other members of your school community?
- Policies and strategies introduced by schools or faculties to address the use of AI by teachers and students and the impact of these on the teaching and learning of English.
- Current research: the place of media literacy in the English classroom; and the use of AI by teachers and students.
- The learning sequence or unit(s) of work focusing on students' critical media literacy skills. How do these develop across the different levels of secondary English?
- Activities that focus on combatting mis- and dis-information and empowering students to critically read media.
- Ways of assessing the development of students' knowledge and skills in reading, questioning and analysing different forms of media, especially online.
- Cross-curriculum activities that explore opinion vs. facts.
- Your recommendations for resources. What are your go-to materials, websites, organisations for ideas and inspiration, reliable and accurate information, and guidance to support your teaching of critical media literacy?
- Your recommendations for media texts (visual, online, multimodal) that work well in your English curriculum/classroom. How do you use them? How do the students respond?
- A lesson or activity focusing on critical media literacy that has worked particularly well and why.
- The challenges to teaching critical media literacy in the English classroom, for example, the up-coming social media ban, and how you and your team are planning to navigate these.
- Reviews of relevant and useful texts on the topic of critical media literacy (600-800 words).

NB: A note about the title: Reading sideways (or lateral reading) is the practice of verifying what you're reading as you read it. So, rather than going deep down the seamlessly endless rabbit hole, go wide.

We want to hear from you

We welcome a range of submissions for this edition of Idiom.

We would like to hear from English leaders, classroom teachers of English, teacher educators, educational researchers, pre-service and early career English teachers, teachers working in ES roles linked to English classes, and students in your English classes.

We invite different forms of contributing – written articles, academic essays, units of work, lesson sequences, book reviews – that respond to the theme 'Reading sideways: Critical media literacy in the English classroom'.

To discuss your ideas for a possible submission, please email idiom@vate.org.au.

Dates for submission

Abstracts (80-100 words) are due **Monday 22 September** to: idiom@vate.org.au.

Read more [here](#).

Full submissions (1000-2500 words) are due **Monday 20 October** to: idiom@vate.org.au.

General advice about writing and formatting your article for Idiom is available [here](#).