

Equity and COVID-19

By Rebecca Coven

Day 1 Observe and Interpret
Lesson Objectives
Objectives: Students will be able to... <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Observe & interpret inequities in COVID-19 vaccine rollout and distribution in Chicago● Identify the central idea and supporting details of an informational text
Warm-up (5 min)
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Ask students: What is your current understanding of the COVID-19 vaccine? What do you already know about it?2. As students share out responses, have students jot down (or share in the chat box) words and phrases that they notice are coming up over and over again. Keep a running list of the common words and phrases that students jot down.3. Once students have finished sharing, take a look at the list of words you gathered. Ask students:<ol style="list-style-type: none">a. What does this tell you about what our current, collective understanding is over the COVID-19 vaccine?b. What information have we all heard over and over again?
Focus text(s) / resource(s) for today's lesson
<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Day 1: Observe & Interpret slides [PDF]● ABC COVID vaccine map● UIC COVID deaths map● Jigsaw readings:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Vaccines in Illinois are Still Largely Going to White Residents○ Half of Chicago Residents to Get COVID-19 Vaccines So Far Are White○ Black and Latino communities are being left behind in the vaccine rollout○ Stark Divide in Illinois COVID-19 Vaccinations by Race, Ethnicity, and Age, New Data Shows○ Illinois' Black, Latinx residents getting fewer COVID-19 vaccines, early data

[shows](#)

- [Collective class slides: vaccine distribution in Chicago](#) (to be completed during jigsaw activity) [[PDF](#)]

Lesson / Activities (40 min)

Establish context: Why is this important?

1. Hook: Look at the two images on slide 8. The image on the left shows which residents of Chicago are getting the COVID vaccine by neighborhood (the darker a zip is shaded, the greater its number of residents who are fully vaccinated. The image on the right shows the number of COVID deaths in Chicago by zip code (the darker a zip is shaded, the greater its number of COVID deaths).
 - a. What do you notice about these two images?
 - b. What do you wonder?
2. Share Chicago's current COVID vaccination rates. It is important to think critically about WHO in Chicago is getting vaccinated.
3. Share that they will soon be eligible to receive the COVID vaccine in Chicago when young people ages 16+ become eligible. Because of this, it is important to learn how to gather information about the vaccine in order to become informed citizens.
4. Review Process for Becoming Critical Readers and why it's important (particularly in this context for working towards vaccine equity).

Observe: What do we notice about vaccine distribution in Chicago?

1. Review what the *Observe* step of the Process for Becoming Critical Readers entails.
 - a. Observe: People/students who come from privileged identities have had the privilege of not noticing (ex. had the privilege to not notice the racism around them because they've benefited from it).
 - i. How do we help them to observe their surroundings and start to notice some of the things that are problematic?
2. Vaccine distribution jigsaw:
 - a. Break students into 5 groups.
 - b. Assign each group one jigsaw reading to do together. The group should read their article identify the following:
 - i. the central ideas
 - ii. supporting details

Students can respond to these questions on poster paper or on one slide of the [collective class slides](#).

Interpret: how do we interpret our observations about vaccine distribution in Chicago? In what ways do we see inequity?

1. Review what the Interpret step of the Process for Becoming Critical Readers entails:

Interpret: Once we make some of these observations, then we go back and do the work to interpret them. Okay so these things exist.

- a. What then does that do to us?
 - b. To our thinking?
2. Share out from jigsaw reading: using the poster or slide they created, have each group briefly share out what they learned from their article.

Closing and Homework (5 mins)

Whole-class discussion

Based on what we just learned from the article we read and the presentations we saw, in what ways do we see inequities in vaccine distribution in Chicago?

Day 2 Question

Lesson Objectives

Objectives:

Students will be able to...

- Question why inequities exist in COVID-19 vaccine rollout and distribution in Chicago
- Identify the central idea and supporting details of an informational text

Warm-up (5 min)

1. Yesterday we learned about where inequities show up in Chicago's vaccine distribution (remind students of some of the inequities we discussed). What questions did yesterday's readings raise for you?
2. Have students answer on a jamboard (or post-its on a poster if you're in-person). This jamboard or poster will become your "Wonder Wall" and should live in a public and accessible place (such as Google Classroom or the classroom wall) so that students can

access it at any time throughout the unit to add questions as they come up.

Educator note: Here are examples of our class [jamboards](#).

Focus text(s) / resource(s) for today's lesson

- [Day 2: Question slides](#) [PDF]
- Jigsaw readings (different reasons that vaccine distribution is inequitable):
 - [In Tuskegee, Painful History Shadows Efforts to Vaccinate African Americans](#) (racism & abuse of power leads to vaccine skepticism)
 - [The Best Evidence for How to Overcome COVID Vaccine Fears](#) (vaccine hesitancy)
 - [Language Barriers Are Leaving Non-English Speakers Behind in the Vaccine Rollout](#) (language barriers)
 - [Black Chicagoans Struggle to Get Access To the COVID-19 Vaccine](#) (lack of access)
 - [How One Chicago Zip Code Got 500 Times More Vaccine Doses Than Another](#) (inequitable distribution of doses/lack of access)
- [Collective class slides: inequities in vaccine distribution](#) (to be completed during jigsaw activity) [PDF]

Lesson / Activities (40 min)

Question

Today we will attempt to answer students' questions from the Wonder Wall in order to examine why inequities exist in COVID-19 vaccine rollout and distribution in Chicago.

1. Review what the Question step of the Process for Becoming Critical Readers entails.
 - a. Question: This takes it beyond the single text and puts it more in context. How did it get to be this way? Pull the view larger in order to look at a more systems level and look at how our conditions throughout history have brought us to the point where these problematic texts or these problematic truths exist. This allows space for inquiry because students are developing the questions. The work then follows those questions.
2. Inequities in vaccine distribution jigsaw
 - a. Break students into 5 groups.
 - b. Assign each group one jigsaw reading to do together from the following list:
 - [In Tuskegee, Painful History Shadows Efforts to Vaccinate African Americans](#) (racism & abuse of power leads to vaccine skepticism)
 - [The Best Evidence for How to Overcome COVID Vaccine Fears](#) (vaccine

- hesitancy)
 - [Language Barriers Are Leaving Non-English Speakers Behind in the Vaccine Rollout](#) (language barriers)
 - [Black Chicagoans Struggle to Get Access To the COVID-19 Vaccine](#) (lack of access)
 - [How One Chicago Zip Code Got 500 Times More Vaccine Doses Than Another](#) (inequitable distribution of doses/lack of access)
- c. The group should read their article and complete the following tasks on poster paper or on one slide of the [collective class slides](#):
 - i. identify the central idea
 - ii. take notes on any information they learn about why inequities exist in vaccine distribution
- d. Share out: Each group will present their post or slide in order to share what they learned from their article.

Closing
(5 min)

- Whole-class discussion**
1. Pull up the jamboard from the beginning of class with students' questions.
 2. Ask students, based on the articles we read and the presentations we watched today, which of these questions can we begin to answer?
 3. Prompt students to answer some of the questions using evidence from today's readings.

Day 3
Looking At Our Own Biases

Lesson Objectives

- Objectives:**
Students will be able to...
- Understand what biases are and how they impact us when we conduct research

Warm-up
(5 min)

Have students complete the [How Do YOU Feel About the COVID-19 Vaccine ? survey](#)

(responses are anonymous!)

Focus text(s) / resource(s) for today's lesson

- [Day 3: Looking At Our Own Biases slides \[PDF\]](#)
- [How Do YOU Feel About the COVID-19 Vaccine? Survey](#)
- [Looking Critically at Our Own Biases Before Research worksheet](#)

Lesson / Activities (40 min)

What is bias?

1. Play the video on slide 7 for students.
2. Stop at 1:10 and ask:
 - a. Can you guess the rule?
 - b. Explain your thinking.
3. Play the video to the end. Why do people have trouble guessing the rule?
4. Define "bias" for students using slide 8.

Defining confirmation bias

1. Play the video from Facing History linked on slide 9.
2. Ask students:
 - a. What is confirmation bias and how does it work?
 - b. What strategies did you learn in the "Can You Solve This?" activity that could help offset our tendencies toward confirmation bias? (Instead of trying to prove a hypothesis or belief, look for explanations or facts that disprove it.)
3. Explain how confirmation bias is a type of bias and why it's important for us to understand what confirmation bias is.

Confirmation bias is the idea that our brains naturally seek out information that confirms what we already believe to be true.

Looking at our own biases before research.

Yesterday we learned that one of the factors contributing to inequities in vaccine distribution is vaccine hesitancy or skepticism. There is a lot of information out there about the COVID-19 vaccine. Some of it is true, but some of it is not true. We are going to spend time gathering reliable information from multiple perspectives about the vaccine so that we can eventually form informed opinions about the vaccine. But first today we are going to begin by discussing

what we already know about the COVID-19 vaccine.

1. Review how to complete page 1 of the [Looking Critically At Our Own Biases Before Research worksheet](#).
2. Give students time to complete page 1 of the worksheet.
3. Have students share out responses and add to the table on slide 17.
4. Also add the questions students want to find the answers to to the Wonder Wall.
Educator note: here [are examples](#) of our class jamboards.
5. Review how to complete page 2 of the Looking Critically At Our Own Biases Before Research worksheet. It will help to model/share your own examples.
6. Give students time to complete page 2.

Closing
(5 min)

Share out

What will you work to do in order to research responsibly and gain a complete and accurate understanding of the COVID-19 vaccine from multiple perspectives?

Day 4

Seek Additional Texts & Information - Fake News

Lesson Objectives

Lesson Objectives:

Students will be able to..

- Evaluate digital information
- Develop media literacy skills in order to make meaning from the overwhelming amount of information available to them

Warm-up
(5 min)

Group Discussion

Have you ever been duped by a fake news story or accidentally shared information that turned out to be false? If so, what was the story?

Focus text(s) / resource(s) for today's lesson

- [Day 4: Fake News slides \[PDF\]](#)
- [The Earthquake and Aftershock worksheet](#)
- [Study: Most Students Cannot Distinguish Fake and Real News](#), *Wall Street Journal*
- [Assessing Digital Media About the COVID-19 Vaccine homework](#)
- Extension: [Fake News Self Assessment](#) from *Fact vs. Fiction*
- Extension reading: [Health Workers Are Going Viral on TikTok for Debunking COVID-19 Myths](#)

Lesson / Activities (40 min)

Where do we get our news from?

1. Review the Seek Additional Texts & Information step of the Process for Becoming Critical Readers entails. We will begin this step today by first becoming critical consumers of media and information.
 - a. Seek Additional Texts & Information: Once students have their questions, we can seek out additional texts and information to help widen their perspective and knowledge.
2. Take a look at our responses to the survey from yesterday about where we have learned most of the information we know about the vaccine.
 - a. What do you notice?

Educator note: It is likely that overwhelmingly students get their information from digital sources, and particularly social media.

3. Tell students: We live in an era of information overabundance. What does this mean?
 - a. This demands that we be more discerning. Instead of accepting information at face value, we should always ask this important question: who's behind the information?
 - b. We need to be able to discern fact from fiction in a world where creating viral content is the first goal and getting the facts right comes second. This is especially true when it comes to gathering information about the COVID-19 vaccine.

How technology has changed news consumption.

1. Ask students: how has technology changed news consumption?
2. Share statistics about where people get their news from and what information they trust (slide 12).
3. Tell students that today's news travels faster than before. News feeds on social media and push notifications sent directly to our phones make news consumption something we have to opt *out* of, rather than opt into.
4. Define citizen journalism (the collection, circulation, and analysis of news and information by anyone with a mobile device).
5. Explain that citizen journalism leads to the general public often knowing about the news *before* the people in the news business do. Ask students for examples of this. Examples include:
 - a. 2012 mass shooting at the Aurora Movie Theater
 - b. 2017 terrorist attack at Ariana Grande concert
6. Ask students what this quote means:

“First person accounts shared on social media as news events happen are the new primary sources of our time. But like all first person accounts, they represent only a single view of what are often complex situations.”

7. Tell students: Journalists are trained to put these stories in context as part of a greater whole. But often that analysis, which takes time to build, isn't as emotionally compelling as a series of live tweets from someone watching the event unfold. Additionally, journalists are trained in evaluating news with an ethical lens; people without that training may not have the same relationship with “the truth” or covering news stories.

Fake news

1. In an analysis of news stories *Tweeted*, a team from MIT, found that on average, “it took the truth about six times as long as falsehood to reach 1,500 people” (Fox, 2018). Ask students: Why do “fake news” stories often spread faster on the internet than legitimate ones do?
2. Play this [WSJ video](#) for students about distinguishing real from fake news.
3. Either individually or with 1-2 classmates, have students read [The Earthquake and Aftershock](#). They should then answer the following reflection questions:
 - a. Is this fake news? Why or why not?
 - b. Is there a difference between getting the facts wrong and being intentionally deceptive?
 - c. Why do so many people fall for stories that turn out to be false? Why do so many people fall for intentionally false stories that have been created specifically to fool us?

4. Share out answers to reflection questions.
5. Tell students that fake news works because it appeals to how our brains are wired. We are naturally pulled towards stories that confirm our biases and tug at our heartstrings.
6. Share some tactics used to create fake news to give readers what they want (slide 20).
7. Ask students how they can see each of the tactics used in Frida's story?
 - a. The name Frida is one that many people around the world are familiar with because of Frida Kahlo. If we have a connection to the painter and her art, even better, because our brains naturally link the name Frida to something we know and trust.
 - b. A lot of what trended with the #frida story was true. An earthquake *did* occur in Mexico. The school *did* collapse. There *were* reports of children trapped in the rubble. The military was using a search and rescue dog named *Frida* to help dig through the devastation.
 - c. The #frida narrative is a prime example of legitimate news stories citing citizen journalism without enough verification. What may have started with individuals at the scene unintentionally spreading false stories was soon legitimized by legitimate news outlets *and* government agencies that repeated the reports.
 - d. The more reports "from the scene," the more credibility the story seems to have, and this story was rife with first-hand accounts that turned out to be fabricated.
 - e. Even though the notion of a child being buried beneath the rubble of a collapsed building is horrifying, we want it to be true - because we hope for a happy ending.
8. Explain to students how confirmation bias and implicit bias impact why we believe some false information and dismiss others (slide 21).
9. Share this example: Darren and Jennifer are coffee aficionados who start (and often end) their days with a mug in hand. Given this bias, both are prone to believe studies claiming the health benefits of coffee, while putting less stock in those that highlight the risks. By being aware of their bias in this area, however, they can use that knowledge to be more critical consumers of information around the topic.

Informed social media consumption

1. Share strategies that creators of false news stories use to help their work spread (slide 23).
2. Practice identifying real vs. fake news about the COVID-19 vaccine that students might see on their mobile device.
 - a. Show students an example of media about the vaccine on slide 24. Model how you would answer the questions in order to assess whether it is fake or legitimate.
 - b. Show students an example of media about the vaccine on slide 25. As a class, answer the questions in order to assess whether it is fake or legitimate.
 - c. *Extension:* have students complete the [Fake News Self Assessment](#) to practice

identifying fake news stories that they might see on their mobile device.

Homework (5 min)

Students should complete [Assessing Digital Media About the COVID-19 Vaccine](#). They will:

- Assess one more example of media about the vaccine
- Find and assess their own example of digital media about the COVID vaccine.

Day 5 Seek Additional Texts & Information - Lateral Reading

Lesson Objectives

Objectives:

Students will be able to

- Use lateral reading in order to think critically about who's behind information that they find online
- Engage in inquiry in order to learn more about the COVID-19 vaccine

Warm-up (5 min)

Class Discussion

When doing your homework last night, what (reliable) information did you learn about the COVID-19 vaccine?

Focus text(s) / resource(s) for today's lesson

- [Day 5: Lateral Reading slides \[PDF\]](#)
- [Sample lateral reading script](#)
- [Lateral Reading Guiding Questions worksheet](#)

Lesson / Activities (40 min)

Note: This lesson is adapted from Stanford Education's Civic Online Reasoning Curriculum ([link](#)).

Notes: Ahead of this lesson, compile questions that students wrote on Days 2 (about inequity in vaccine distribution) and 3 (about the vaccine specifically) into one document.

Model lateral reading.

1. Remind students that we are on the Seek Additional Texts & Information step of the Process for Becoming Critical Readers.
2. Tell students: When we come across online information, the first question we should ask is “Who is behind the information?” Our goal in asking this question is to decide if we trust the source to provide information on the topic at hand. Today, we’re going to learn a strategy for investigating who is behind the information.
3. Show students the TikTok about the COVID-19 vaccine that we looked at yesterday. Model an evaluation of the tweet using the lateral reading strategy (project what you’re doing online as you do it). Here’s a [sample script](#).
4. Debrief by asking students:
 - a. What did you notice me doing while I modeled?
 - b. Why was it important for me to look beyond TikTok itself to find out about the organization?
 - c. How did my eventual evaluation of the TikTok compare to your evaluation from yesterday’s class? What was similar? What was different?
 - d. Why is lateral reading necessary for finding out more about who is behind information?
5. Remind students: Reliability isn’t a clear cut decision, so you can’t rely on features like a URL or appearance to tell you definitively that something is or isn’t reliable. Instead, we want to learn as much as possible about who is behind the website or post—particularly their perspective and authority—to decide how reliable we think they are on a particular topic.
6. In pairs, students will practice with lateral reading in order to seek additional texts and information about the COVID-19 vaccine.
 - a. Pairs should pick one question to research the answer to from the pre-compiled list of questions students previously asked about the COVID-19 vaccine.
 - b. Pairs should find two sources to help them answer their question (can be from a Google search, social media, YouTube, etc.). For each source they should use the Lateral Reading Guiding Questions worksheet to evaluate the source.
 - c. Pairs should read and take notes on their sources (if a source isn’t reliable they should find a more reliable one to take notes on) in order to answer their question.

Homework
(5 min)

If pairs didn't finish the Lateral Reading Guiding Questions worksheet, they should finish it for homework. Pairs should be prepared to share out tomorrow what they learned from their research.

Day 6 Synthesize & Revise Thinking
Lesson Objectives
Objectives: Students will be able to <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Synthesize the new information they've learned about the COVID-19 vaccine and revise their thinking about the vaccine • Make an informed decision about whether they would get the COVID-19 vaccine
Warm-up (5 min)
Group Discussion What is lateral reading and why is it a powerful way to investigate who is behind information online?
Focus text(s) / resource(s) for today's lesson
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Day 6: Synthesize & Revise Thinking slides [PDF] • Reflection: COVID-19 Vaccine Research worksheet • How Do YOU Feel About the COVID-19 Vaccine? post-survey
Lesson / Activities (40 min)
Synthesize information about the COVID-19 vaccine. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Review what the Synthesize & Revise Thinking step of the Process for Becoming Critical Readers entails. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Synthesize & Revise Thinking: Synthesize new information after looking at new texts. Revise what they're thinking. Compare how they used to think to how they

think now.

- b. We will synthesize what we've learned about the COVID-19 vaccine by sharing what we learned during our research yesterday.
2. Put students in groups of six (three pairs per group). Each group should use their notes from yesterday in order to share out what they learned about the COVID-19 vaccine.
 3. Come back together as a whole class and give students the opportunity to share out any interesting information they learned either through their own research or by listening to what their classmates share.

Revise thinking

Students will reflect on what they've learned throughout the research process and revise their thinking about the vaccine.

1. Independently, students should complete [Part 1 of Reflection: COVID-19 Vaccine Research worksheet](#).
 - a. After doing your own research and listening to your classmates' research, what do you NOW understand about the COVID-19 vaccine that you did not understand before?
 - b. What information have you gained?
2. Have students share out their responses to Part 1. As their classmates share out, students should do Question 3 on the worksheet (notice the words and phrases that come up over and over again and write down these commonly used words and phrases).
3. Show students the list of common words and phrases from Day 1 of this unit. They should use this to answer Questions 4 & 5 on the worksheet.
4. Tell students to review the list of words that they gathered for Question 3. Have them compare it to the list we started with at the beginning of the unit. Students should answer the following questions:
 - a. What does this tell you about what our new collective understanding is of the COVID-19 vaccine?
 - b. What new information have we gained?
 - c. What information was previously being left out?
 - d. How has our understanding changed?
 - e. Why might this information have been missing for us before?
 - f. Why might this information have been left out?
 - g. Who benefits from us not knowing this information?
 - h. Who is being harmed by us not knowing this information?
5. Share out and discuss responses to Questions 4 & 5.

Closing and Homework

(5 min)

Have students take the [How Do YOU Feel About the COVID-19 Vaccine post-survey](#) to evaluate whether their opinions about the vaccine have changed.

Days 7-9
Educate & Advocate

Lesson Objectives

Objectives:

Students will be able to

- Help others make informed decisions about the COVID-19 vaccine
- Take action in order to work towards equity in vaccine distribution in Chicago

Warm-up
(5 min)

Group Discussion

Think about a time when someone convinced you to do something. How did they do it?

Focus text(s) / resource(s) for today's lesson

- [Day 7: Educate & Advocate slides \[PDF\]](#)
- [How Promotoras de Salud Are Fighting Vaccine Conspiracies in Chicago's Latino Communities](#), Maria Inès Zamudio, *WBEZ Chicago*
 - *Extension article: [Community Organizers Lead the Charge to Get Residents Vaccinated](#)*, Erica Gunderson, *WTTW News*
- [Performance Task Overview](#)

Lesson / Activities
(40 min)

Educator Note: Ahead of this lesson, make sure you have compiled a document that has all the reliable sources about the COVID-19 vaccine that students found in Days 4 and 5.

Working Towards Equity

Now that we have learned about inequity in COVID-19 vaccine distribution in Chicago and we have become more informed citizens about the COVID-19 vaccine ourselves, it's time for us to help reduce these inequities.

1. Ask students to remind us what some of the factors are that are causing inequities in vaccine distribution in Chicago.
2. Ask students: what needs to be changed in order to work towards equity in vaccine distribution? As students share ideas, write them down on the board/slide.
3. As a class, read [How Promotoras de Salud Are Fighting Vaccine Conspiracies in Chicago's Latino Communities](#) in order to see examples of how Chicagoans are fighting for equity in vaccine distribution. Discuss:
 - a. What factors that cause inequities are promotoras de salud fighting?
 - b. How are promotoras de salud working towards equity in vaccine distribution?

Educate & Advocate

1. Review instructions for the [performance task](#).
 - a. Students will use the notes they already took during their research, as well as the compiled list of reliable sources about the COVID-19 vaccine that the class made, as research to support their performance task.
2. Allow students to choose the Vaccine Ambassador or Vaccine Advocacy option.
3. Provide time for students to work. The length of time you give for this performance task will depend on your students.

Closing and Homework (if any) (5 min)

Gallery Walk

1. When students have completed the performance task, have a "gallery walk" day in which students share their work.
2. Support students and create opportunities for them to share their educational materials with authentic audiences (posting online, going into other classes, etc.) and enact their action plans.

Extension: Have a class debate: should school districts mandate COVID vaccination among students? Among staff?