Some journalists have recently taken it upon themselves to seek a more balanced male/female citing of experts when reporting on important subjects in the news. According to Who Makes the News? (GMMP 2015), women are quoted as experts or spokespersons only 20% of the time. This has gone relatively unnoticed for decades due to a scarcity of women in certain fields, but now with more and more women in science and technology, there are many female voices to include in the coverage.

Read three news reports on science or technology and identify the quoted experts.

AHA! Journalists choose who they quote as experts!

Key Question #1: Who created this message?
Core Concept #1: Media messages are constructed.
Key Question #3: How might different people understand this message differently?
Core Concept #3: Different people experience the same message differently.
Key Question #4: What values, lifestyles and points of view are represented in, or omitted from this message?
Core Concept #4: Media have embedded values and points of view.

Materials: Access to articles online and/or printed, pens or highlighters to tally names within the articles. Read this opinion piece to help prepare and explain the activity. https://www.nytimes.com/2018/05/13/opinion/women-sexism-journalism-conferences.html

Activity: Ask your students to read three different articles in science or technology (i.e. artificial intelligence, neuroscience, robotics, space exploration...). Students can read printed articles, or read online using a tally sheet. Circle or tally the expert quotes and share with the class.

What were the results? Are the results surprising? Why or why not? If the class discovered that one gender was quoted far more often, does it matter? Why or why not? What can be done about it? Who chooses what's included or omitted? Use the Key Questions/Core Concepts in your discussion.
The Five Core Concepts and Five Key Questions of media literacy were developed as part of the Center for Media Literacy’s MediaLit KitTM and Questions/TIPS (Q/TIPS)TM framework. Used with permission, © 2002-2018, Center for Media Literacy.