

AI Algorithms: How Well Do They Know You?

Essential Question: How does artificial intelligence influence what we see online?

In a world filled with more content than we could ever possibly consume, recommendation algorithms have long been a necessary part of the internet. This type of AI helps determine what we see (and don't see) online. But while that can be helpful, these algorithms can have unintended consequences, like creating filter bubbles, perpetuating bias, and undermining our creativity, choices and opportunities. Use this activity to help your learners think critically about how AI is shaping their experiences online in both helpful and harmful ways.



Learners will be able to:

- Learn what recommendation algorithms are.
- Understand how recommendation algorithms are trained and make decisions.
- Reflect on how algorithmic content can shape our online experiences and what we value.



Estimated time: 20 mins.

What You'll Need



Lesson Slides



Handout:



Key Vocabulary

- **Artificial intelligence (AI):** a computer program that can perform tasks that typically require human intelligence.
- **Recommendation algorithm:** a type of artificial intelligence that decides what content to show or curate for someone.

Learn: Social Media Algorithms

20 mins.

1. **Ask:** What usually happens after you finish watching a video on YouTube? Or right when you open TikTok? How are these apps so good at feeding you what you want to see? **(Slide 4)**
2. **Say:** Social media platforms (including YouTube) use **recommendation algorithms**, which are a type of **artificial intelligence (AI)**, to curate content for us. **(Slide 5)**

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Define **artificial intelligence** and **recommendation algorithm**. (Slides 6–7)

3. **Say:** *We're going to watch a video that explains how recommendation algorithms work and how they can influence what we think and do. (Slide 8)*
4. **Show** the "Is the Internet Expanding or Narrowing Our Minds?" video (Slide 9) and have learners complete the **Recommendation Algorithms** handout.

Refer to the **Teacher Version** of the handout to guide the discussion. You can also refer to **Slides 10–15**.

5. **Ask:** *Let's reflect on the tips from the video and your own experiences online. How can you make social media algorithms "work" better for you? (Slide 16)*

Have learners pair-share. Then invite learners to share their responses.

6. **Say:** *Recommendation systems are a type of AI that filters the content and media we consume. This gives them the power to shape our opinions and even the people we connect with. That's why it's important to think critically about what you're seeing (and what you're not) when you go online. (Slide 17)*