

## Liar, Liar Pants on Fire!

Written by mImoment

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In September 2013, a video of what appeared to be a young woman “twerking” upside down on her door, falling down on her living room table and catching fire from nearby candles provoked a sensation on social media. In addition, local news channels around the country carried the video for the opportunity to comment (tongue-in-cheek) about the dangers of twerking. In all, the video attracted nine million views. The video turned out to be an elaborate fake staged by the *Jimmy Kimmel Show*.

*Ask students what they think might be suspect about a viral video.*

**AHA!** Just because this video looks like it was produced at home doesn’t mean that it wasn’t professionally staged or altered.

**Grade Level:** 8-12

**Key Question #2:** What creative techniques attracted my attention?

**Core Concept #2:** Media messages are constructed using a creative language with its own rules

**Materials:** Screen, LCD projector, computer with high-speed Internet connection

**Activity:** The video can be easily found on YouTube, using search words such as “twerking girl catches fire.” It’s about 37 seconds long. Make sure not to load any videos bearing the Jimmy Kimmel logo. If you like, you can ever-so-slightly misdirect students by asking students to share their thoughts about videos on social media that might fall under the heading of “do not attempt at home.” (The woman in the video is a trained stunt woman, by the way).

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Storyful (storyful.com), which curates, licenses and verifies a wide variety of social media and news content, promotes its services with a number of brief case studies. Among them is a study debunking the 'twerking girl on fire' video. The study includes a number of questions posed by staff, as well as a short narrative on the processes used to document the video as a 'certifiable fake.' Make use of these materials as you wish to help students act as detectives searching out the truth about the production of this video. Once you're satisfied with student work and discussion, play the full version in which Jimmy Kimmel appears on screen to extinguish the fire on the woman's yoga pants.

The Five Core Concepts and Five Key Questions of media literacy were developed as part of the Center for Media Literacy's MediaLit Kit™ and Questions/TIPS (Q/TIPS)™ framework. Used with permission, ©2002-2016, Center for Media Literacy, <http://www.medialit.com> .