

Media Literacy

Teacher Manual



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Introduction

Does what you think, what you believe, how you act, and what you want out of life all come from you? Were you the driving force behind the formation of who you are and what you believe? Without giving it much thought, you might answer this question with a resounding “Yes, of course!” or you might acknowledge the powerful role your parents, family, and friends play in your life. And yet, consider the amount of time we all spend browsing the internet; watching TV, videos, and movies; texting; and listening to music. You might wonder just how much influence these sources of information have. Could it even be said that these media are so pervasive that they play a primary role in shaping who we are? Is there even a *you* in you?

These questions are the first of many compelling questions that your student will encounter in this course. Media literacy is about learning how to critically engage in and make sense of the media we are inundated with nonstop. In addition to introducing students to the history and use of media, this course will help them develop analytical tools that they can use to examine media’s content, intent, context, and subtext. In a media studies context, the word *text* includes not only written words but also visual or audio messages; it includes everything from books, magazines, and newspapers to the TV we watch, to the logos on our clothes, to the songs we hear, and to the pop-ups we see when viewing a YouTube video.

Media literacy is about social activism; it is inherently an activist method of study. When we study media critically, we are compelled to make change within ourselves, within our families and communities, and within the wider world. Understanding this will help you better support your student’s learning in this course as well as the personal growth and development that springs from this meaningful learning.

What to Expect

Throughout the course, students will be working with four key concepts, as outlined in David Buckingham’s *Media Education: Literacy, Learning, and Contemporary Culture* (Polity Press, 2003):

Production: All media texts are consciously manufactured.

Language: All media texts use a combination of languages to communicate meaning. Languages are the codes and conventions familiar to us that help us make sense of media texts.

Representation: Media production involves selecting and combining moments to make stories and create characters. Representation invites us to see the world in particular ways.

Audiences: All media texts are made for an audience. To study the audience is to study our role as media producers and consumers.

You can refer to the student coursebook for more information on these foundational concepts. Students will also be reading select passages from *Media/Society: Industries, Images, and Audiences* by David Croteau and William Hoynes (Sage Publications, 2019).

In each lesson, you will find the following:

An **Assignment Summary** is included at the beginning of each lesson so that you can see all the assignments at a glance. Students are encouraged to check off assignments as they are completed. Assignments are fully explained in the lesson.

The **Lesson Objectives** outline the main goals of the lesson. These can be used to help assess your student's progress and comprehension of the material.

The **Viewing** and **Reading** sections list the films students will watch and outline the reading assignments. You are strongly encouraged to watch the films, either with your student or separately, so that you can engage in a more meaningful analysis of the material. Many of the films introduce and frankly discuss challenging and difficult topics; co-viewing is highly recommended so that your student has someone with whom to discuss the films as well as thoughts, feelings, and questions that arise from the films.

The **Writing Assignments** are designed to help students think deeper about the material and make important connections by applying their knowledge and reasoning skills. Responses may vary from short answers to full-length essays and reports. In the appendix of the student coursebook, you will find writing instructions regarding the different types of assignments. These guidelines can help you assess your student's work.

Activities provide a wide range of hands-on ways to explore the topics in this course. Each lesson includes instructions for one or more activities.

Think About It includes questions for discussion with family and friends. By discussing issues, expressing opinions, and listening to the opinions of others, students will come to a clearer and more in-depth understanding of the topics in each lesson.

A section called **For Enrolled Students** is found at the end of most lessons. This section provides reminders and information for students who are enrolled in Oak Meadow School and are submitting work to their Oak Meadow teacher.

Throughout this course, students will view an extensive array of award-winning films from Kanopy, formerly called the Media Education Foundation (MEF). Whether you are enrolled in Oak Meadow School or have purchased this course independently, the Oak Meadow office will provide a private access link to Kanopy. By clicking on the link and entering your email address, you can request a

password that will give you access to the list of films specifically chosen for this course. Students who are enrolled in Oak Meadow School and using an OM email address will be sent a password immediately; for all others, the password will be sent after a brief verification process.

Supporting Your Student

If you are homeschooling independently, this teacher manual can serve as your support as you guide and evaluate your student's work. In this teacher manual, you will find the full text for all assignments and activities. Teacher manual answers are seen in color. Not every assignment will have a teacher manual answer since many assignments are self-explanatory and the student's response is likely to be fairly straightforward and relatively easy to evaluate. The teacher manual answers often focus on ways you can support your student in exploring this material or what to look for in a student response, rather than providing a correct answer (since there are many possible ways a student might respond). There are reading passages at the beginning of each lesson in the student coursebook that explain and discuss the lesson topic; these reading passages are not included in this teacher manual. If more information is needed about any concept or assignment, you can refer to the textbook or student coursebook.

When a student gets a factual answer wrong, you can share the correct answer and address any underlying misconceptions. The focus should always be on the learning process rather than on a sense of judgment. Several incorrect answers related to a particular concept point to an area the student will benefit from revisiting.

However, you will find that most of the assignments in this course are more open-ended. There are many possible ways a student could respond, and no answer is right or wrong. These assignments require a different type of assessment. In this teacher manual, you will find some tips for assessing student work, but in general, the goal is for students to carefully consider new ideas, and to develop critical thinking, clear reasoning, and strong communication skills. We want students to reflect on and clarify their opinions, and to express their opinions and beliefs with confidence and conviction. It is also important for students to develop techniques for giving critical feedback, engaging in respectful debates, and composing thoughtful rebuttals. These are the skills you will be looking for as you assess your student's work.

For obvious reasons, it is best not to share this teacher manual with your student. Each student is expected to produce original work, and any incidence of plagiarism should be taken very seriously. If you notice a student's answers matching those of the teacher manual word for word, a discussion about plagiarism and the importance of doing original work is necessary. While students in high school are expected to be well aware of academic honesty, any discussion about it should be approached as a learning opportunity. Make sure your student is familiar with when and how to properly attribute sources.

Media literacy is a vital skill for today's global citizens. We wish you and your student a challenging and insightful experience in this course!

Lesson

1

Making Sense of Mass Media

Learning Objectives

- Become familiar with the scope and technology of media
- Explore how mass media affects family life
- Gain a better understanding of the self through media-use analysis

Complete the Media Literacy Pre-Course Survey. You'll find it in the back of this coursebook. You can write directly in the book or copy the survey and fill it out. You'll need to refer to your survey at the end of the course, so if you make a copy to fill out, be sure to keep track of it.

Assignments

Reading

In *Media/Society* (Croteau and Hoynes), read pages 2–14, which includes the following sections:

- Introduction to chapter 1, “Media/Society in a Digital World”
- The Importance of Media
- Models of Communication Media
 - ◆ Interpersonal and “Mass” Communication
 - ◆ Variable Boundaries and Active Users
 - ◆ Communication Today: A First Look
- A Sociology of Media
 - ◆ The Sociological Perspective

ASSIGNMENT SUMMARY

- Fill out the Media Literacy Pre-Course Survey.
- Read pages 2–14 in *Media/Society*.
- View *Remote Control: Children, Media Consumption and the Changing American Family*.
- Identify a real-life example that illustrates the concept of media.
- Give an opinion on the quantity versus quality of media.
- Write about yourself in a one-page freewrite.
- Activity A: Media-Free Zone
- Activity B: Counting on Media

- ◆ Structural Constraint and Human Agency
 - Structure
 - Agency
- ◆ Structure and Agency in the Media

Pay particular attention to the charts, which show important data.

Viewing

Watch the short film *Remote Control: Children, Media Consumption and the Changing American Family* (Media Education Foundation, 2007). (Follow the instructions in the introduction of this coursebook to access this and other Kanopy/Media Education Foundation films.) This film explores the quantity of media young people and families consume and raises concerns about the content as well. (Film length: 38 minutes)



Think About It

The film *Remote Control: Children, Media Consumption and the Changing American Family* references a 2005 Kaiser Family Foundation study that found young people spend an average of 6 hours and 45 minutes a day with media, 7 days a week (Rideout et al. 2005). By 2010, studies showed that young people spent nearly 11 hours a day with media, which they packed into 7 hours and 45 minutes through media multitasking (using more than one medium at a time) (Rideout et al. 2010). While watching the film *Remote Control*, think about your own media use. How much time do you spend on media per day? Do you media multitask? Does your family? Do an informal poll and ask your friends and family members to estimate how many hours a day they spend with media. Challenge them to actually keep track of their media use for 24 hours—they may be surprised by what they find.

Written Assignments

1. Throughout the course, you will be using media to define media literacy concepts. For this assignment, find a real-life example that illustrates the concept of *media*. The example can be a photograph or drawing, an advertisement, a graphic image, etc., or you can write a description. Make sure the example clearly shows the meaning of the word. Be creative! Feel free to combine media in your example. Cite all your sources (refer to the appendix of this coursebook for details about proper citation).

Make the Connection

Watch the following video clip to get a quick overview of media.

“A Brief History of Media—Dan Gillmor” (YouTube)

www.youtube.com/watch?v=VWOBRKx38fo

There are many assignments in this course that ask students to interact with the material in creative ways. Students who are not used to thinking of themselves as creative or artistic might need some help generating ideas. Sometimes doing a project like this alongside your student will help jump-start ideas and encourage your student to explore new ways of looking at media. This is not the same as doing the project for your student; in fact, the way you view media and the way your student does are likely to be very different! Doing the project side by side, each working on your own interpretation, might lead to interesting conversations.

2. Do you think it is important to monitor the quantity of time spent with media or the quality of the content watched? Is either quantity or quality of concern to you? Why or why not? Explain your answer and give specific examples to support your ideas.

Throughout the course, your student will be asked to give an opinion on a variety of topics. The goal in supporting your student in this work is to provide a safe space for all opinions to be aired. When assessing the work, you will not be judging the student’s opinion but rather how it was expressed. Look for the student to communicate ideas clearly and logically, backing them up with specific examples or sound reasoning.

3. Write about yourself in a one-page freewrite. A freewrite is a writing technique where you write down anything that comes to mind, without worrying about grammar, complete sentences, or anything else. (For more information on how to do a freewrite, see “Prewriting Exercises” in the appendix of this coursebook.) Don’t try to edit or analyze what you are writing; just write about yourself for at least 15 minutes: your age, gender, sexuality, ethnicity/race, community, family, friendships, career goals, interests, hobbies, fears, likes/dislikes, values, politics, dreams, etc.—anything you believe frames or defines who you are. Your writing might take the form of notes, disjointed phrases and words, art, bullet points, poetry, free verse, or an essay. It’s up to you. Set a timer for 15 minutes so you don’t have to keep checking the time. As you explore the question of “Who am I?” you might also ask yourself, “What do I have in common with other people? How are we different from one another?” You will not be judged or graded on the content of your freewrite but rather on your participation in the process of reflecting on your identity.

This is the first of many assignments that you may want to complete at the same time as your student in order to gain a fuller understanding of the material. By experiencing firsthand some of the assignments, you may be better able to respond to, support, and

evaluate your student’s work, which in turn would allow you to more easily identify areas in which your student would benefit from discussion, additional explanation or resources, or further study.

Activities

Complete both of the following activities.

The activities in this course give students a wide variety of ways in which to explore the material. You are encouraged to discuss the activities with your student. If a student feels stuck or needs guidance with a particular activity, discussing the goal (What will it look like in the end?) and the purpose behind the activity (Why am I doing this? What will I get out of this?) can help the student generate new ideas and get moving again. Joining your student in exploring the activities may also inspire more thoughtful and creative work.

Many of these activities have a creative element. All students are encouraged to fully engage in the activities, regardless of whether or not they consider themselves a creative person. These activities are an important part of the course and allow students to express themselves in different ways while demonstrating their awareness of the significance and interrelatedness of key elements of media literacy. Students should never be marked down for “bad” artwork or poetry; rather, their creative work should be evaluated on the basis of sincere effort, self-expression, and awareness of the theme or topic.

Activity A: Media-Free Zone

Challenge yourself to see how long you can go without media. You might find it easier to start by setting a goal of four hours, for instance, or perhaps one day. You might want to challenge yourself further to go as long as possible past your goal. There will be no judgment on how long you can go without media. This exercise is designed to raise your awareness of how prevalent media is in your life. For the purpose of this challenge, media includes intentionally viewing any form of communication or information—books, magazines, newspapers, radio, television, videos, the internet, YouTube, Twitter, Facebook, and any other form of mass communication. A personal letter or email doesn’t count (that’s personal communication), but a blog post or an email sent to dozens of people at once does (mass communication). Of course, you can’t help it if you pass a billboard or if you see a magazine lying open on the table, but that’s not intentional viewing on your part so those instances don’t count. Once you have finished your media-free experiment, write a short reflection. How long did you go without media? What media/medium broke your “fast”? What was the lure, if any?

Activity B: Counting on Media

For 24 hours, document **all** media you are exposed to, both by choice and by happenstance. As with the previous assignment, there is no judgment. Just document your exposure as objectively as possible. What media sources were you exposed to? What was the content? How much of your attention and energy did the media require? How much time did you spend on each type of media? You may find it easiest to create a simple chart to record this data. Afterward, write a brief summary of your exposure and your thoughts about the experiment. Were there any surprises?

Lesson

2

Meta Media: Media's Mirror

Learning Objectives

- Analyze how one medium addresses the content and meaning of another
- Collect and analyze anecdotal data on meta media
- Explore the self and your relationship with media

Assignments

Reading

In *Media/Society*, read pages 67–78, which includes the following sections:

- Changing Patterns of Ownership
 - ◆ Concentration of Ownership
 - Products
 - Platforms
 - Pipes
 - ◆ Conglomeration and Integration

Written Assignments

1. Find a real-life media example of *meta media*. The example can be a blog or video link, photo, advertisement, television show, film, etc., or you can write a description. Make sure the example clearly shows the meaning of the word. Be creative, and feel free to combine media in your example. Cite all your sources (refer to the appendix for details about proper citation).

Meta media refers to any media that references another. For instance, examples of meta media might include a talk show that focuses on interviewing actors who are promoting

ASSIGNMENT SUMMARY

- Read pages 67–78 in *Media/Society*.
- Provide an example of meta media.
- Keep track of instances of one media referencing another.
- Activity: Media
Production of a “Self Map”

upcoming films, a television sitcom that centers around a radio show, or a comedy show that lampoons current events in the news.

2. As you spend time with media this week, make note of any time one medium references another. For example, do TV characters comment on what is in the news? Do newspaper articles make reference to what is reported on TV news, film, or the internet? How many times does an ad or a name-brand product show up in a film? How many times do you see a blog refer to something that appeared in a film, YouTube video, television show, or another blog? Keep a notebook with you throughout the day and jot down all instances that come to your attention. At the end of the week, review your notes and see if you notice a pattern. Does one medium promote or blame another medium? Do certain types of media seem to “get along”? Write a brief summary of your findings, citing specific examples from your data.

If your student’s list is short—either because they have trouble identifying connections between media or because exposure is limited—you can help by noticing meta media references throughout the week and having your student add them to the list.

Activity

Complete the following activity.

Media Production of a “Self Map”

Gather images, mementos, and/or messages that reflect your sense of self, and then gather images, mementos, and/or messages from the media about the concept of self. Using these images, create a collage, diorama, poster, or computer-based slideshow presentation based on the theme “Me and the Media.” Take special note of where there are overlaps between your concept of self and the media’s messages about self. Where are there disconnects? What does this show you about yourself, the media, and the relationship between the two? Make sure to include your responses to these questions either visually or by incorporating explanatory text. Note: The mementos, images, and messages will be cut up, glued, and manipulated, so make sure to copy any originals and use the copy for your project.

We will return to this activity and expand on it later in the course, so make sure to keep it intact. Take a photo of it now to document its original form.

This “Me and the Media” self map will be a recurring theme in the course, and students will return to it repeatedly to update their self map as they learn more about media’s subtle influences. Don’t worry if your student’s self map seems a little thin at this point; that will change as the course progresses. Most students are not used to critically recognizing media messages, so at this point they may have few tools with which to create relevant comparisons between their own self-image and media’s image of self.

Please note: The mementos, images, and messages will be cut up, glued, and manipulated, so students should make copies of anything considered valuable and irreplaceable.

Lesson

3

The Propaganda Machine

Learning Objectives

- Examine the role of propaganda
- Identify how propaganda is used to manipulate media messages
- Compare the power of corporations versus individuals

Assignments

Reading

In *Media/Society*, read pages 85–92, which includes the following sections:

- The Effects of Concentration
 - ◆ Media Control and Political Power
 - ◆ Media Ownership and Content Diversity

This textbook presents many complex ideas. You may find it helpful to read a section more than once or to read one paragraph, and then reread it to make sure you understand it before moving on.

Viewing

Watch *Myth of the Liberal Media* (Media Education Foundation, 1997).

Through careful analysis of the “bottom line” economic interests of mainstream media production, this film defies the assumption that the media are “too liberal.” (Film length: 60 minutes)

Optional Viewing

Peace, Propaganda and the Promised Land: U.S. Media and the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict (Media Education Foundation, 2003). This film compares the United States and international media coverage of the Middle East crisis, highlighting how American political interests can have a powerful influence on media. (Film length: 80 minutes)

ASSIGNMENT SUMMARY

- Read pages 85–92 in *Media/Society*.
- View *Myth of the Liberal Media*.
- Identify a media example of spin.
- Identify how to recognize bias in media.
- Write a persuasive argument regarding media structure versus agency.
- Take a survey, and reflect on the results.
- Activity A: Community Messages
- Activity B: Constructing and Deconstructing Propaganda



Think About It

Think about the role and prevalence of propaganda. How does this make you feel? Do you want to be treated as “one of the masses”? Do you fit into that role? If not, do you feel immune to propaganda? What makes a person more or less susceptible to these types of mass-media messages? Talk to your parents or another older adult (someone who is in a different generation from you) and ask what they think about the role of propaganda and an individual’s susceptibility to it.

Many people feel they are immune to propaganda, although history has proven otherwise. Helping the student identify beliefs and then asking the question “Why do you think that is true?” is one way to encourage a greater awareness.

Written Assignments

1. Find a real-life media example of *spin*. The example can be any form of media, or you can write a description. Make sure the example clearly shows the meaning of the word. Remember to be creative and specific. Cite all your sources.

Many examples of spin can be found in politics as politicians and their aides are often rewording potentially damaging statements or justifying them by attributing different meanings. Other examples of spin can be found in legal matters (lawyers putting a spin on their client’s actions to make them seem less guilty or more victimized), research results (interested parties putting a spin on the results to make them support or refute a particular claim), and news articles (newspapers putting a spin on what happened and displaying bias, particularly in headlines).

Make the Connection

The following article explains how corporations spin a story around their products to attract consumers or influence opinion.

“Storytelling: The Key to Effective Advertising”

www.disruptiveadvertising.com/marketing/storytelling-advertising

2. Considering the effort that goes into producing mass media that influences public opinion, how can we train ourselves to recognize bias? List at least three ways to recognize bias in media and explain how or why each would be effective in helping audiences see through the media message to the motivation behind it.

Bias can be a tricky concept to grasp. It is natural to assume that if something is published, it must be true on some level. To help students with bias, it can be useful to discuss fact versus opinion. This is also a good place to ask how something is known, which can lead to analysis of language and word choice (thereby revealing a possible agenda).

3. Argue one side of the debate about the balance of power between media *structure* and *agency*. Who controls the production and distribution of media? How much choice and control do audiences have? If you believe in the *structure* side of the debate, you believe institutions and corporations have more power than individuals; if you believe in the *agency* side of the debate, you believe individuals have more power than institutions and corporations. If only 6 companies control 90 percent of what you watch, read, listen to, or play, how much control do you have over this information?

Choose one side and write a persuasive argument in a one-page essay. (Read “Elements of Good Writing” and “The Writing Process” in the appendix for tips on creating a strong essay.) This is a tough question! There aren’t any right or wrong answers. As you learn more, continue to keep this question in mind. We’ll revisit it over the course of the semester.

In this persuasive essay, look for a well-reasoned argument that is presented in an organized manner. The student should state a clear opinion, choosing one side rather than stating ways in which both sides are correct.

4. Before reading further, answer the following questions.
 - Based on the following choices, what is your favorite color?
Red, Orange, Yellow, Green, Blue, Purple
 - Which of the following do you feel is the most important personality trait?
Honesty, Intelligence, Humor, Integrity, Kindness

Stop and write down your answers, and then read on.

Neuroscientists have recently linked intelligence with color preference. Specifically, people with higher IQs tend to like the color red and people who score lower on IQ tests tend to like the color purple. IQs correlated to the rest of the colors of the rainbow in a sequential order (those who liked orange had the second highest IQ scores, yellow the third highest, and so on). Neuroscientists are not sure how this translates to human behavior, but evidence correlates, in separate quantitative analyses aggregated together, that those who like red also believe honesty is the most important personality trait. Through surveys such as the one you just took, scientists plan to continue to gather data to determine how color preferences correlate with personality attributes and how these choices translate to behavior.

When taking the test, perhaps you felt on the fence about one or both of your answers. If you could take the test again, would your answers change? Why? Give your response in a few sentences.

This assignment is addressed again in the reading passage at the beginning of the next lesson (found in the student coursebook. You may want to read ahead, but if you do, please do not share the information with your student.

Activities

Complete both of the following activities.

Activity A: Community Messages

Explore your community and find at least one example of a text that shares pertinent information and one example of a text that operates as propaganda. For instance, you might find texts about traffic, food, patriotism, the environment, or consumption. If possible, capture these texts via takeaways, such as pamphlets (if available), or document them with photographs or videos.

Students are likely to easily find informational texts but may have a harder time identifying propaganda. Bumper stickers are often a great source of humorous slogans that are propaganda at the same time. Here are a few examples:

Reading Is Sexy

Love Animals, Don't Eat Them

If Guns Are Outlawed, Can We Use Swords?

Renewable Energy Is Homeland Security

Activity B: Constructing and Deconstructing Propaganda

Using the information gathered in the previous activity, turn the informational piece into a tool of propaganda, and turn the propaganda into a piece of information. Consider the following:

- What is needed to make/unmake propaganda?
- How can your message reach an audience?
- What meanings are you making through your language?

Your project can take the form of a physical or an electronic creation. Include an informal reflection paper that answers the above questions. Please be creative in your construction!

Lesson

4

Ideology: Media's Idea of What We Should Think

Learning Objectives

- Explore the development and influence of ideology
- Investigate how media adapt to a specific target audience
- Analyze the story behind media messages

Assignments

Reading

In *Media/Society*, read pages 190–195, which includes the following sections:

- Introduction to chapter 6, “Media and Ideology”
- What Is Ideology?
 - ◆ Ideology and the “Real” World
 - ◆ Dominant Ideology versus Cultural Contradictions
 - ◆ The “Culture War” Battles of Ideology
 - ◆ Ideology as Normalization

Written Assignments

1. Find a real-life example of the media literacy concept of *audience*. Show how this concept is expressed in media. Cite all your sources.

Audience refers to the specific group of people for whom media is created or intended to influence. For instance, there may be many types of people who see dog food ads and commercials, but the intended audience is dog owners.

2. Think of something you believe is normal, natural, or common sense—something that forms part of your own personal ideology—and ask yourself *why*? Can you trace the lineage of that belief? For example, you might think it is normal for people to display the nation's flag or you

ASSIGNMENT SUMMARY

- Read pages 190–195 in *Media/Society*.
- Identify a real-life example of the media literacy concept of audience.
- Trace the lineage of a personal belief.
- Tell the media story behind an element of the dominant ideology.
- List reasons a corporation might hide its identity.
- Activity: Tracking Media Back to the Source

might think it is normal for people not to display the flag. You might think it is common sense for people to speak up when they see an injustice or you might think it is common sense to keep quiet. Identify one such conviction and explain how you think it came to be part of your belief system. Indicate whether you feel this belief is reflected in the dominant ideology of your community and the dominant ideology of the national culture.

Look for a response that digs into the roots of a particular belief. This may mean the student identifies several sources or traces one source to another that is the foundation of the first. For instance, a student might identify the source of a belief as their parents, then trace a line from their parents to their grandparents, and then go further back to the culture of their country of origin. If your student identifies one source (say, their church or the U.S. Constitution), encourage them to look deeper. Where did the belief originate before that source embraced it? Using logical conjecture (students aren't expected to do hard research for this), encourage the student to trace it back as far as possible.

3. Choose one main ideological concept that is prevalent in your culture (on a local or national level) and tell the story behind it, as presented by the media. Once you've examined and summarized the story, list any contradictions you see between the media story and your own experience in real life. For instance, consider recycling. How is recycling portrayed in your community? Look around at the wording on the recycling trucks, the symbols marking recycled products or recycling receptacles, and the availability and ease of recycling. The story behind the ideology might be "Recycling is fun and easy, and all the coolest people and places do it." A contradiction might be evident if there are fewer recycling opportunities in the poorer neighborhoods, leading to less recycling and more litter.

Because ideology is a tricky concept, students may need help parsing out the data they encounter. It can be especially helpful to ask why something is the way it is and tease out the lineage of a belief. Ideology is not easy, and if students struggle with this section, that is okay. The work is in the effort of beginning to understand how ideology operates. This will become more clear as the course progresses.

4. Media conglomerates often hide their identity behind smaller, more consumer-friendly companies. List five reasons that a large corporation might want to do this, and identify one real-life example for each of your reasons. You will need to do some research for this assignment. For instance, you might trace an eco-friendly household cleaner back to a conglomerate that owns a major tobacco company, and you'd show how this example fits into one of the reasons you've listed.

Students may struggle to find the information they need for this assignment. Serious digging may be required! If this information is difficult to find, discuss why this is the case. Why do companies want to hide their identities, and what laws make it easy for them to do so? Students may have strong opinions about the ethics behind this practice and have ideas for ways they would like to see the laws changed to encourage greater transparency in corporate ownership.



Think About It

As you continue to learn more about media, here are some questions to keep in mind. You don't have to write down your answers, but spend some time thinking about them.

- Consider the production of media

Who makes media texts? Who does what and how do they work together? Think about job titles here, such as writer, director, producer, or sponsor. Who does what job? This can be hard to figure out because media professionals want us to focus on the content, not the people behind the scenes (or their goals and motivations). Our challenge here is to make an effort to make sense of what's happening "behind the scenes."

- Consider the language of media

How do language conventions and codes operate in different types of media texts? How are songs different from poems? How is movie dialogue different from TV dialogue? Each medium uses its own language to help convey meaning. This invites us to look more closely at the different ways language is used in each medium.

- Consider how segments of media are combined in a single message for more impact

How is meaning conveyed through the combination or sequencing of images, sounds, or words? This invites us to look at the order of a text. Why was it told in this order? Why was the decision made to use these particular images, sounds, and/or words? Could another order work? How would that change the impact or the experience?

At this point in the course, your student is probably beginning to look at media with a much more critical eye. It will help your student immensely to analyze media aloud, talking it over and sharing ideas with friends and family. You can demonstrate this behavior yourself by critiquing films and books, adding your own commentary to news reports and newspaper articles, stating your opinion about what a commercial or ad is trying to convey, who it is targeting, and how effective it is, etc. Hearing your thoughts will help your student clarify and communicate their own ideas.

Activity

Complete the following activity.

Tracking Media Back to the Source

Choose one media text (a song, book, TV show, movie, etc.) and trace its ownership. Who wrote it? Who directed and/or produced it? Who else might be involved in the production and distribution of the text? For what company? Is that company owned by another company? Can you trace the text back to any of the six conglomerates mentioned in the media consolidation infographic shown in lesson 3?

Don't worry if you can't answer all these questions. Sometimes it is in the corporation's best interest to keep the ownership hidden. Just do your best to follow the trail.

Students need not worry if they can't answer all these questions. Sometimes it is in the corporation's best interest to keep the ownership hidden. However, students should document what they cannot learn and think about why that information might be hidden.

Lesson

5

Media's Coming of Age

Learning Objectives

- Become familiar with the history of mass media
- Demonstrate how mass media creates an influential message
- Experiment with how media technologies affect the message

Assignments

Reading

In *Media/Society*, read pages 36–38:

- From Print to the Internet
 - ◆ The Print Medium

Also read pages 45–59, which includes the following sections:

- ◆ Film and Video
- ◆ Radio Broadcasting
- ◆ Television
 - Television and Daily Life
 - Cable Television
- ◆ The Internet
 - Creating the Internet
 - The Internet Grows Up
 - Some Characteristics of the Internet Era

ASSIGNMENT SUMMARY

- Read pages 36–38 and 45–59 in *Media/Society*.
- List media technologies and explain how each impacts the end product.
- Develop media messages using varied technology based on the purpose.
- Activity: Message Makeover



Think About It

Think about who you are as a learner: Are you a visual learner? A physical learner (you need to be physically involved in order to learn)? An auditory learner? What kind of learning do media tend to capitalize on? Think about how an individual's learning style might make them more or less susceptible to influence by different types of media.

Written Assignments

1. List as many technologies you can think of that are used to produce and distribute media texts. Once your list is complete, choose three different technologies and explain how each makes a difference in the form and impact of the end product. Does the technology affect our interpretation of the media, and if so, how?

Some students may struggle with this, especially if they are very familiar with the technology chosen. (Familiarity can make it harder to look at things objectively, preventing students from considering its full impact.) Conversation can be a powerful tool in helping students become aware of how different technologies affect the way media messages are absorbed.

2. Pretend you are in charge of developing media messages for the following concepts/products and audiences. Explain which technology you will choose to deliver each media message and why. You can choose more than one technology; for instance, you might use a video ad that also has a song and a data chart. Make sure to explain why you included each medium and what effect you think it will have on your audience.
 - a. new and improved iPod marketed to college students
 - b. political message trying to convince voters to approve an upcoming ballot measure regarding additional money for parks and natural preserves
 - c. information on a new medication for patients with heart disease

This assignment is intended to help students explore the relationship between audience and medium. Look for students to focus on the specific needs, lifestyle, and interests of the target audience when choosing what media to use.

Activity

Complete the following activity.

Message Makeover

Take a message from social media (Facebook, Twitter, Tumblr, Vimeo, YouTube, etc.) and rework the message for three of the media technologies learned about this week. For example, how would a tweet

be expressed in newspaper form? How would it become a radio broadcast? How does the message have to change to fit its medium? Create three alternate media messages (all based on the same initial message from social media), and then write a one-page explanation of how altering the message for each medium changed it. Do you feel the message benefited from a certain medium or was rendered less effective by it? Why?