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Engaging in Reading/Viewing: **Exploring the Key Concepts of Media Literacy**

LANGUAGE/ENGLISH: **Grade 7-10**

The *Key Concepts of Media Literacy* act as a conceptual framework for developing an informed and critical understanding of the nature of mass media, the techniques used by them, and the impact of these techniques. They can also be used for the effective construction of media texts for a variety of purposes. The term “text” refers to any form of written, spoken, or media work that communicates meaning to an audience.

Purpose

- Analyze media texts using a *Key Concepts of Media Literacy* framework.
- Make judgements about viewpoints or opinions used in media.

Payoff

Students will:

- develop critical thinking skills.
- develop a framework for reading and thinking critically about important media-related concepts, issues, and ideas.

Tips and Resources

- To *understand messages*, readers ask questions to help them process information, assess the importance and relevance of the information, and apply it in a new context. Analyzing and making judgements is a skill that readers use when reading and critically thinking about a particular text.
- Introduce one or two key concepts at a time allowing students time to process and become comfortable with each.
- The questions posed in the *Key Concepts of Media Literacy* are merely starting points. Students should generate their own questions based on their own interests and background as well as using the *Key Concepts* as a framework for questioning. Through questioning texts, students consolidate the concepts.
- *Key Concepts of Media Literacy* are useful generalizations from experts in the field. They vary in published literature. Key concepts are best developed through students drawing their own tentative conclusions, hypotheses, or generalizations that are tested through further examples. Their generalizations may be different but should be compared.

Further Support

- Encourage students to ask questions about what they are reading or viewing. For example, have students write questions based on a textbook chapter, section, or topic-related resource they have read or viewed.
- Have students identify how they find evidence to answer questions (on the lines/text, among the lines/text, between the lines/text and beyond the lines/text). This helps to draw parallels between reading media and reading strategies with traditional texts.
- To help develop the concepts, work through the examples provided in *Cable in the Classroom*: <http://www.ciconline.com/Enrichment/medialiteracy101/default.htm>, MNET or other media literacy resources.

Engaging in Reading/Viewing: Exploring the Key Concepts of Media Literacy

LANGUAGE/ENGLISH: Grade 7-10

Notes

| What teachers do | What students do |
|--|--|
| <p>Before</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Choose a media text such as a web page, advertisement, news article, or anything of current interest to students. • Create small groups for collaborative work. • Lead a discussion with students about the roles that media play in our lives. The direction of the discussion is dependent on their background with media literacy. You might begin by talking about a current issue that they are aware of, but of which they have no first-hand experience. How did they receive information about the issue? What role did various media play in forming their impression of it? • Ask students to brainstorm questions and ideas about the message and information conveyed about this issue through the media, on charts or sticky notes. They may also sort and classify the questions and ideas. • Determine on which <i>Key Concepts</i> these questions tend to focus. Focus discussion on these first and begin to make the concept explicit for the students. Then introduce another <i>Key Concept</i>. • Introduce one <i>Key Concept</i> through a think-aloud or shared process posing and answering questions based on the <i>Key Concepts Framework</i> or try the activities from http://www.ciconline.com/Enrichment/medialiteracy101/default.htm, MNET or other media literacy resources. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss thoughts about media influence and other issues. • Brainstorm the messages from the media text the teacher supplies. • Observe the teacher modelling or contribute to the shared viewing lesson. |
| <p>During</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distribute another media text for groups to work with, completing appropriate parts of the <i>Key Concept Questions</i> template. • Circulate or work with small groups guiding the discussion and probing for greater depth. • Encourage use of text-to-self/world and text-to-text connections in their responses. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analyze a media text with <i>Key Concept Questions</i> as a guide. • Justify answers in different ways from the text. • Make personal, world, and text connections. |
| <p>After</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have students share responses with other groups. • Debrief the process and help students develop generalizations or conclusions about common observations. These may include portions of the statements in their words from the <i>Key Concepts</i>, key concepts of their own, or other themes. • Use these as an evolving framework to look at other media. • Continue to exercise the process using a variety of texts and forms while introducing the other <i>Key Concepts</i>. As this thinking is applied to new texts, capture generalizations. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share responses with other groups. • Generate generalizations or conclusions about common observations. • Analyse other media using <i>Key Concepts</i> as a framework. |

**Engaging in Reading/Viewing: Exploring the Key
Concepts of Media Literacy**

LANGUAGE/ENGLISH: Grade 7-10

Texts use words, graphics, sounds and images, in print, oral, visual or electronic forms, to present information and ideas.

Key Concepts of Media Literacy

1. All media are constructions

Media present carefully crafted constructions that reflect many decisions and result from many determining factors. Much of our view of reality is based on media messages that have been pre-constructed and have attitudes, interpretations and conclusions already built in. The media, to a great extent, give us our sense of reality. When analyzing a media text consider the following questions: What message is it proposing? How well does it represent reality? How is the message constructed?

2. The media contain beliefs and value messages

Producers of media texts have their own beliefs, values, opinions and biases. These can influence what gets told and how it is told. Producers must choose what will and will not be included in media texts, so there are no neutral or value-free media messages. As these messages are often viewed by great numbers of viewers, they can have great social and political influence. When analyzing a media text consider the following questions: What lifestyles, values, and points of view are represented in this text? Who or what is omitted?

3. Each person interprets messages differently

People who watch the same TV show or visit the same Web site often do not have the same experience or come away with the same impression. Each person can interpret a message differently based on age, culture, life experiences, values and beliefs. When analyzing a media text consider: What meaning do you get from the text? How might others understand it differently? Why?

4. The media have special interests (commercial, ideological, political)

Most media is created for profit. Advertising is generally the biggest source of revenue. Commercials are the most obvious means of generating revenue, although advertising messages take many forms, including product placement, (e.g., paying to have a product prominently displaying in programs or movies), sponsorships, prizes, pop-up ads, and surveys on the Internet, celebrity endorsements or naming a stadium or theatre. Some media are created for specific ideological or political purposes. When analyzing a media text, consider: Who created this and why? Who benefits if the message is accepted? Who may be disadvantaged?

5. Each medium has its own language, style, form, techniques, conventions, and aesthetics

Each medium creates meaning differently using certain vocabulary, techniques and styles. In a movie or TV show, when the picture dissolves, it indicates a passage of time. Hot links and navigation buttons indicate that you can find what is needed on a Web site. A novelist must use certain words to create the setting and characters, while other media use images, text and sound. Over time, we understand what each technique means. We become fluent in the "languages" of different media and can appreciate their aesthetic qualities. When analyzing a media text, consider: What techniques are used and why? How effective are the techniques in supporting the messages or themes of the text?



Student Resource

**Engaging in Reading/Viewing: Exploring the Key
Concepts of Media Literacy**

LANGUAGE/ENGLISH: Grade 7-10

Questions for Exploring the Key Concepts

1. All media are constructions.
How is this media text constructed? (Consider the key ingredients used – technical and symbolic.)
How effectively does it represent reality?
2. Media contain belief and value messages.
What lifestyles, values, and points of view are represented in this media text? Who or what is missing?
3. Each person interprets messages differently.
What meaning do you get from the media text?
Why might some people take a different meaning from this text?
4. Media have commercial, ideological or political interests.
Who do you think created this and for what purpose?
Who might benefit from the message?
Who might be disadvantaged?
5. Each medium has its own language, style, form, techniques, conventions, and aesthetics.
What techniques are used to construct this text and its message? How effective are they?

Reading/Viewing Different Text Forms: Reading Graphical Texts

LANGUAGE/ENGLISH: Grade 7-10

COSI (Compare, Order, Sort, and Inquire) is an instructional/thinking strategy that helps focus on key elements of related texts to determine patterns, relationships and conventions of the form. It helps to delve deeper into meaning and to understand *how* meaning is constructed through the various elements of the form. Providing students with an approach to reading the different elements of media texts also helps them to become effective readers of traditional literary texts.

Purpose

- Become familiar with the elements and features of a variety of media texts.
- Explore a process for reading media texts, using a range of strategies before, during and after reading.

Payoff

Students will:

- become more efficient at “mining” print media texts for information and meaning.
- practise and apply essential reading strategies to different course-related materials.
- develop skills required in order to “read” more sophisticated texts, including electronic and screen-based texts (film, music videos, etc.)

Tips and Resources

- Many media images include:
 - Design features (e.g., colour, shape, line, placement, balance, and focal point). Design features also include images.
 - Printed word features (e.g., typeface and size of type, bullets, titles, headings, subheadings, italics, labels, and captions).
 - Organizational features (e.g., tables of contents, legends, keys, pronunciation guides, labels, and captions).
 - Organizational patterns (e.g., sequential, categorical, and explanatory).
- Each text uses these elements and features in different ways to effectively present information. Students benefit from exploring the *how* and *why* behind the use of these elements. For example, what are some of the conventions used in print ads for milk, posters for horror films and covers for fashion and beauty magazines? Why are they used this way?
- Reading strategies taught through accessible medium such as graphic media texts can be transferred effectively to reading traditional informational and literary texts.
- Using COSI, students compare, order, and sort media works according to student-determined patterns or generalizations. They speculate or develop questions based on these and develop inquiries to answer the questions or confirm generalizations.
- COSI places the learning, observations and conclusions in the hands of the students. Teachers act as guides and facilitators, helping to deepen understanding in the process (e.g., consider camera placement. What do you notice about how it is used?)
- COSI can be used to highlight elements of the text, production, and audience. The teacher can choose to focus on any or all of these qualities.
- Teachers should encourage comparisons and generalizations about *how* and *why* texts are constructed using the *Key Concepts of Media Literacy* to frame inquiries.



**Reading/Viewing Different Text Forms: Reading
Graphical Texts**

LANGUAGE/ENGLISH: Grade 7-10

Notes

| What teachers do | What students do |
|--|---|
| <p>Before</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bring in or ask students to bring in print ads from a variety of sources. Explain that they will be looking at different print ads to compare them for emergent themes. Organize small groups of 4-6 students. Ask students to individually flip through the ads to find three that capture their attention and remove them from the source. Ask them to select one to share with the group, explaining what it was that caught their attention. Encourage text-to-self/world and text-to-text connections. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Individually flip through the ads to find three that capture their attention and remove them from the source. Select one to share with the group, explaining what it was that caught their attention. |
| <p>During</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Compare the ads to determine any similarities. Facilitate a discussion about the similarities with the class (e.g., images, words, colours, target, technical qualities, position, and fonts). Sort the ads into categories. Compare the ads in each category to generalize about <i>how</i> and <i>why</i> items in a category are similar (e.g., food ads use a lot of close-ups, ads for males tend to use dark or contrasting colours). Encourage students to focus on content of the text, production and audience. Groups explain the rule to the class or guess the rules of other groups. Discuss with the whole class. Order the ads into a sequence according to any rule determined by the group (e.g., realistic...unrealistic, humorous...serious, light...dark). Groups explain the rule to the class or guess the rules of other groups. Encourage generalizations about text and audience. The sequence can also be used to tell a story. Have students tell the narrative that links the ads. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Compare the ads to determine any similarities. Sort the ads into categories. Compare the ads in each category to generalize about <i>how</i> and <i>why</i> items in a category are similar. Explain the rule to the class or guess the rules of other groups. Order the ads into a sequence according to any rule determined by the group. Explain the rule to the class or guess the rules of other groups. Create a sequence to tell a story. Tell the narrative. |
| <p>After</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage questions about similarities of ads and the codes and conventions used in them and <i>why</i> they are used. Groups conduct an inquiry to find more examples of media that fit into their categories and/or research advertising agencies to answer questions or confirm speculations. Report results (e.g., ads for men use dark contrasting colours to convey that their users are supposed to be serious and traditional). Have students seek additional ads or other media. Students also create a media work that fits into the category or sequence, explaining why. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop questions or speculations about conventions used in ads and why they are used. Conduct an inquiry to find more examples of ads or other media and/or research companies or advertising to answer questions or confirm speculations. Create a media work that fits into the category or sequence, and explain why it belongs. Relate the categories to the key concepts for media literacy. |



Reading/Viewing Different Text Forms: **Reading** **Graphical Texts**

LANGUAGE/ENGLISH: Grade 7-10

A GUIDE TO READING VISUAL TEXTS AND ADVERTISEMENTS

A photographer, graphic designer or ad director carefully composes a text, such as a photograph, poster or ad, to convey a message to his or her intended audience. The text is constructed in a particular way and is the result of many conscious decisions. The creator of the text decides what technical elements to use and what content to focus on to create a text that will convey a particular message to the audience that he or she is trying to influence in a certain way. Examine an ad or other print media text for the following components:

PRODUCTION/DESIGN

Composition:

- use of blank space
- arrangement of elements in the picture (what is placed where; the connection between items or objects)
- what is excluded or cropped

Camera Angles and Types of Shots:

- use of various camera angles to convey meaning (low camera angle suggests the subject is powerful)
- use of various shots to convey meaning (close up suggests intimacy)

Lighting and Colour:

- the use of lighting and colour to create a certain kind of mood or atmosphere

Copy:

- the use of specific vocabulary and punctuation

TEXT/MESSAGE

- who or what is represented
- choice of models or actors
- use of stereotypes
- body language; facial expression
- relationship of characters – positions of power, inferiority, etc.
- setting
- what 'story' is being told
- details

AUDIENCE

- target audience – the audience the creator is trying to reach, based on age, gender, race, class etc.
- active audience – various audiences that respond to the text in different ways



Teacher/Student Resource

Reading/Viewing Different Text Forms: **Reading Graphical Texts**

LANGUAGE/ENGLISH: Grade 7-10

Tips for Reading Graphical Texts¹

Before Reading

- Set a purpose for reading. Ask yourself why you are reading this particular text.
- Look over the text to determine what type it is and which elements are used.
- Examine the titles, headings, captions and images. Start with the title. The title tells you what the graphic is about. The captions may also use words and phrases from the text to show how the graphic is related to the information in the written text (e.g., “Figure 1.6”).
- Recall what you already know about the topic or subject.
- Record some questions you might have about the information presented.

During Reading

- Read all the labels and examine how they are related to the graphic. Each label has a purpose.
- The most important labels may be in capital letters, bold type, or a larger font.
- Follow the arrows and lines. They may be used to show movement or direction, or connect to the things they name.
- Look for the use of colour or symbols to emphasize important words and information. Some graphical texts have a legend or a key to explain the meaning of specific symbols and colours.
- Study the image carefully. See if you recognize the details in the image. Read the text near the picture to find an explanation of the information in the graphic. Use the figure number or title and key words to find and read the related information in the written text.
- Identify the relationships among the visuals and information presented.

After Reading

- Interpret the information conveyed in any of the graphics (e.g., diagrams, charts, graphs, maps). Ask yourself why this information might be important.
- Rephrase the information orally or in writing. Imagine that you are explaining the graphic to someone who has not read it.
- Create your own graphical text (e.g., graph, map, diagram, table, flow chart) to represent the important information.

Questions for deconstructing media images:

1. What is the overall message being conveyed? How do the design, text message, and audience work to create that message? Who benefits if this message is accepted? Who loses?
2. What is the text telling us we should do? Why?
3. Does the text appeal to our emotions in any way? Does the text appeal to our fears, needs or desires? Explain.
4. What solution to our needs, fears or desires is the text offering? Why is this solution offered? Is this solution realistic?
5. What views of happiness or success are conveyed by this text? Are these believable? Explain.

¹ From Think Literacy (2003), p.86

Engaging in Reading/Viewing: Reading Between the Lines (Predictions)

LANGUAGE/ENGLISH: Grade 7-10

Masking is a strategy to focus on prediction. Portions of text are masked or covered and gradually uncovered. The strategy allows students to focus on isolated portions of the text while inferring or predicting how those parts integrate with the text as a whole. Useful for any text, it is especially instructive with media such as print ads, video, websites and textbooks. Students focus on the patterns and relationships between juxtaposed elements to create a deeper understanding of the message and *how* the message is created.

Purpose

- Draw meaning from text – through explicit details and implicit clues.
- Connect prior knowledge and experiences to the text in order to make educated guesses about what is happening, may have happened, or will happen in the future.

Payoff

Students will:

- develop greater awareness that texts can be understood on more than one level.
- become capable and confident in comprehending the subtle meanings in texts.

Tips and Resources

- Proficient readers make predictions based on prior knowledge as they encounter text, and confirm or revise these predictions as they read to uncover more information.
- Viewing involves similar thought processes. When practiced with viewing, these processes more readily transfer to reading of traditional materials. To develop predictions it is important to pause while uncovering the text, to explicitly make and revise predictions, and compare predictions with others until it becomes an automatic process.
- To help make these skills transferable, during a read-aloud or shared viewing, stop at various points in the text to ask students to make and revise predictions.
- Help students understand how predictions are important to making meaning in reading and viewing by providing opportunities for them to reflect on how they confirm or revise their predictions.

Further Support

- Masking can be done with video, playing only the sound or turning the sound off, and/or playing short clips in the correct or a different order, with time to predict what will happen next. Divide the class into different groups who are given different portions of the text. Students compare, connect their different perspectives and justify predictions.
- To help transfer prediction skills to traditional texts, choose excerpts, meaningful quotes, headings, captions or other text features and ask students to predict the connections and relationships among pieces, then read to confirm or revise.
- When students design masking activities for others, they make important decisions about what to mask, what to reveal, and in what order.
- Extend this activity into production by asking students to use the same ad and change elements (words, image, context, audience, product) to provide a different message. Discuss the new message and *how* that meaning is created.



Engaging in Reading/Viewing: Reading Between the Lines (Predictions)

LANGUAGE/ENGLISH: Grade 7-10

Notes

| What teachers do | What students do |
|--|--|
| <p>Before</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Choose a print ad for the class or a group. Mask or cover portions of the text, and/or image. Provide copies of the <i>Masking Template</i> and sticky notes. Explain to students that understanding involves making predictions based on experience, then confirming or revising those predictions as more experiences unfold. Readers/viewers understand text through the same process. Good predictions are based on evidence but are not necessarily “correct”. Brainstorm times when and how they have made and revised predictions. Distribute the <i>Masking Template</i>. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Listen to instructions. Brainstorm times when and how you have made and revised predictions e.g., sports, movie, test results, action with peers. |
| <p>During</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Show the masked ad to students. Ask students to predict the words, images, context (e.g., where the ad might appear), target audience, product, etc. What is the intended message? Instruct students to discuss what might be revealed and record their predictions on sticky notes. These notes can be placed in the appropriate area on the template. Most importantly, encourage students to find evidence from the text to support their predictions. Direct a large group discussion about predictions from smaller groups. Uncover another section, while students revise or confirm their predictions giving reasons based on evidence from the text. They can remove their sticky notes and add new ones. Continue to unmask the ad while students revise or confirm predictions. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In pairs or small groups, discuss and complete the <i>Masking Template</i> based on a masked ad. Support predictions with evidence from the ad. Share responses with larger group. Revise or confirm predictions giving reasons based on evidence from the text. |
| <p>After</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Looking back at their notes, direct discussion about how predictions changed based on new information. You may want to collect and refer to discarded notes. Repeat the process using other ads. Encourage students to use prediction during future reading/viewing experiences. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discuss how predictions changed based on new information. Extend the activity using other ads and/or other texts. Apply prediction and revision strategies while reading and viewing other materials. |



Engaging in Reading/Viewing: Reading Between the Lines (Predictions)

LANGUAGE/ENGLISH: Grade 7-10

Masking Template

| Text | Purpose | Meaning |
|--|--|---|
| <p>Visuals <i>What visuals are included?</i></p> <p>Actual: Low angle shot of an elevator button panel with almost all of the buttons pressed.</p> | <p>Product <i>What product is promoted?</i></p> <p>Predicted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Career Centre • Technology Company • Fitness PSA <p>Actual: Chicken Noodle Soup</p> | <p>Intended Message <i>What do the producers want you to think?</i></p> <p>All kids like chicken noodle soup and always will.</p> <p>Buy it for your kids.</p> <p>Buy it for you, because you never outgrow it.</p> <p>When they are out of control count on soothing soup to calm them and you!</p> |
| <p>Words <i>What words are used in the message?</i></p> <p>Predicted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are faster ways to get to the top. • Always reaching higher. • Take the stairs! <p>Actual: Kids never get tired of what they love (<i>i.e.</i>, pushing all of the elevator buttons).</p> | <p>Context <i>Where might it appear?</i></p> <p>Predicted: Women's lifestyle magazine</p> <p>Actual: Parenting magazine</p> | <p>Extended Message <i>What other messages might also be included?</i></p> <p>It's okay to give into your passions.</p> <p>Kids are naturally mischievous (e.g., pushing all of the elevator buttons when they get the chance).</p> |
| | <p>Audience <i>Who is it intended for?</i></p> <p>Predicted: Mothers with young kids</p> <p>Adults</p> | |



Student Resource

Engaging in Reading/Viewing: Reading Between the Lines (Predictions)

LANGUAGE/ENGLISH: Grade 7-10

Masking Template

| Text | Purpose | Meaning |
|--|--|---|
| <p>Visuals <i>What visuals are included?</i></p> | <p>Product <i>What product is promoted?</i></p> | <p>Intended Message <i>What do the producers want you to think?</i></p> |
| <p>Words <i>What words are used in the message?</i></p> | <p>Context <i>Where might it appear?</i></p> | <p>Extended Message <i>What other messages might also be included?</i></p> |
| | <p>Audience <i>Who is it intended for?</i></p> | |



Developing and Organizing Ideas: Planning a Public Service Announcement

LANGUAGE/ENGLISH: Grade 7-10

This lesson will provide students with the opportunity to explore an important concept for media literacy: all texts are *constructions*. Through the activities and instructions included here, students will make decisions regarding the various codes and conventions, or technical ingredients, that go into the production of a media text. They will make these decisions as part of an activity that requires them to create a storyboard for a public announcement. This activity generates many interesting possibilities for reading and writing about the media. Students need to carefully consider *what* it is they want to say, *who* they want to influence and *how* they are going to do this. They are required to create a storyboard for a public service announcement (PSA) for a specific audience, whom they hope will react to the message in the way that they intended.

Purpose

- Develop a message about a social issue that they believe is important for a particular audience and decide on the point of view they wish to present.
- Identify the various components that go into the creation of a storyboard for a PSA.
- Develop technical ideas that will complement the story/message they are conveying.
- Adapt these ideas for an intended audience.
- Adapt and edit a script for a storyboard format.

Payoff

Students will:

- develop literacy skills tied to understanding how meaning can be constructed in a media text through the use of a variety of production techniques (e.g., camera angles, types of shots, editing; sound).
- develop literacy skills tied to the development of their message, including establishing point of view, using clear and concise language, etc.

Tips and Resources

- The public service announcement is preferable over a television commercial—it allows students to focus on issues or ideas that are important to them, rather than products to sell.
- Set limits on the technical components of the PSA to be sure that it is manageable for students – i.e., number of shots, types of effects, etc.
- Information on paper is best reinforced if students have video equipment with which they can try types of shots, transitions, camera angles etc., even if they do not actually produce the PSA, but just complete a storyboard for it.
- For further suggestions regarding student productions, see the following: Hone, Rick and Flynn, Liz. *Video in Focus: A Guide to Shooting and Producing Video*. Prentice Hall Ginn Canada, 1995.
- Consider using the Media Literacy package from the Concerned Children's Advertisers which contains sample public service announcements for young audiences: www.cca-canadian.com



Developing and Organizing Ideas: Planning a Public Service Announcement

LANGUAGE/ENGLISH: Grade 7-10

| What teachers do | What students do |
|---|---|
| <p>Before</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Brainstorm with students a list of possible social issues to use as the basis for their PSA. Walk through the sheet on camera shots and angles with students. Show students examples of these shots and angles from magazine photographs (still images), or television commercials (use the pause button to examine each shot closely). Discuss the effect of various shots and angles on viewers. Discuss the effect and use of various audio components in television PSAs. Examine the message and the technical components of one of the PSAs from Concerned Children’s Advertisers (CCA). Students can “deconstruct” a PSA from the CCA, by completing a storyboard for it based on their viewing. They will need to view the PSA more than once, and the teacher will have to pause the PSA on each frame for the students to document on their storyboard what they are seeing and hearing. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete several activities (identified under ‘What Teachers Do’) where they examine the use and effects of various camera shots and angles, as well as the audio component of a television commercial or PSA. Deconstruct an existing PSA in order to identify the various technical components that have been used to create a particular message. Individually, or in small groups, brainstorm ideas for a 30 second public service announcement, considering the issues that have been discussed and the audience they are trying to reach. Complete an outline for the PSA, including a statement of: the concept; technical and creative strategies; the audience. Develop a script for their message, including notes on location. Develop a list of possible technical strategies that would complement their message (e.g., camera angles, types of shots, use of graphics, music). |
| <p>During</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Check with each student/ group to make sure that they are following the outline they have developed. Check with students to be sure that all components of the storyboard are being completed. Ask questions re: choice of camera angle, etc. – Does it enhance or take away from the message? Remind students of strategies appropriate for their target audience. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Edit their script for the storyboard format, dividing their script according to the frames for the storyboard. Decide on the meaning they want to convey through each frame—then decide on which camera shots and angles will convey that meaning. Decide on the transition between each frame (i.e., how they will ‘get out of’ each frame). Decide on other audio components (e.g., voice, sound effects, music) that will reinforce meaning. |
| <p>After</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review storyboards with the students and recommend changes where necessary. Provide opportunities for peer feedback. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review the storyboard to make sure it conveys the intended message and that the message is clear. Check to see that all technical components are used effectively. Prepare to present the storyboard to the class with explanations for each decision. Transfer the storyboard frames onto 8.5 x 11 papers or onto an overhead transparency for easy visibility. |

Notes



Developing and Organizing Ideas: **Planning a Public Service Announcement**

LANGUAGE/ENGLISH: Grade 7-10

Film Camera Technology

TYPES OF SHOTS

| Abbreviation | Meaning | Description | Effect |
|--------------|-------------------|---------------------------|----------------------------------|
| ECU | extreme close up | eye/face | aggression; discomfort |
| CU | close up | head/ head & shoulders | reaction; intimacy 2-3 people |
| MS | medium shot | to waist | 2-3 people |
| MLS | medium long shot | full body | normal view |
| LS | long shot | room | normal view |
| ELS | extreme long shot | house | establishing setting |
| ES | establishing shot | city | establishing locale |

CAMERA ANGLES

LOW ANGLE – camera is looking up – subject looks large - creates the impression of power

NORMAL OR STRAIGHT ANGLE – camera is looking from eye-level at the subject – subject looks even, or equal to, viewer feels equal to, and may even identify with, subject

HIGH ANGLE – camera is looking down – subject appears small - creates the impression of weakness

FILM TERMS

FRAME – a single still picture or image

SHOT – the images that are filmed from the time the camera starts to the time it stops, with no cuts

SEQUENCE – a series of shots on the same subject

CUT – stop one shot; abruptly start second; create the impression of different places, same time

FADE OUT/IN – go to black; go from black to picture; suggests passage of time, change of place

PAN – camera moves from left-to-right or right-to-left across scene from one subject to another; can be used to create suspense

ZOOM – camera moves in (tight) or out (wide)

TILT - camera moves vertically, up or down

Adapted from *Mass Media and Popular Culture Resource Binder*. Toronto: Harcourt Brace & Company Canada Ltd.



Student/Teacher Resource

**Developing and Organizing Ideas: Planning a Public
Service Announcement**

LANGUAGE/ENGLISH: Grade 7-10

STORYBOARD TEMPLATE

PSA Title: _____

Class: _____

Group: _____

SKETCH OF SHOT

Shot No: _____

Shot Description: (Location/Action) _____

Camera Angle: (Low/Normal/High) _____

Type of Shot: (Close-Up, Long Shot etc.) _____

Camera Movement: (None/Pan/Zoom/Tilt) _____

Audio: (Music, Sound Effects, Dialogue, Narration, Live Sound)

Writing/Producing For a Purpose: **Producing a Public Service Announcement**

LANGUAGE/ENGLISH: Grade 7-10

This lesson provides students with the opportunity to explore the following key concepts: all media are constructions; every media text has its own codes and conventions; messages and values are contained in every media text; audiences negotiate meaning. Through the assignment included here, students will make decisions regarding production techniques, and the message and the audience for a media text. They will make these decisions as part of an activity that requires them to create a public service announcement for an intended audience.

Purpose

- Involve students in the actual production of a public service announcement.
- Identify and complete the various stages of the production process.

Payoff

Students will:

- develop an increased awareness of social issues.
- recognize the various jobs and stages that are part of a media production.
- have a primary experience that demonstrates that all media texts are constructions.
- recognize the constructed nature of televised commercials and PSAs.
- assume individual responsibilities in their production role.
- work cooperatively and effectively with their peers as members of a production team.
- develop technical sophistication required in order to undertake more complex productions.

Tips and Resources

- PSA can be quite simple technically, using only a camcorder and in-camera editing—editing the shots afterward can be done if there is access to the equipment, but it is not necessary.
- Limit the number of shots required for the PSA to ensure that the project is manageable.
- It is important for students to hold several “production meetings” throughout the process during which they track and record the progress and development of their ideas and set objectives for the next phase.
- It is at the production meeting that each student assumes responsibility for at least one aspect of the production.

Further Supports

Goodman, Steve. *Teaching Youth Media: A Critical Guide to Literacy, Video Production and Social Change*. Teacher’s College Press, 2003.

Duncan, Barry. *Mass Media and Popular Culture, Resource Binder*. Toronto: Harcourt Canada, 1996.



**Writing/Producing For a Purpose: Producing a
Public Service Announcement**

LANGUAGE/ENGLISH: Grade 7-10

| What teachers do | What students do |
|--|---|
| <p>Before</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review the various production roles and responsibilities with students. • Review the various production stages that need to be completed. • Reserve equipment if necessary (e.g., camcorders). • Reserve dates and locations in the school (if outside of classroom) for the day of shooting. • Walk through the checklist for production with the students. • Emphasize the need to stick to their plan and follow their storyboard. • Establish a timeline for the production schedule. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determine the production roles and responsibilities for each student. • Review the various production stages that need to be completed. • Establish a timeline for the project. • Complete the checklist for production. |
| <p>During</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check in on each group as a ‘troubleshooter’ or ‘facilitator’ during the day of production. • Remind students to observe timelines/ deadlines established for each stage of the process. • Remind groups of their overall concept and proposal as needed. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follow the storyboard during their production period. • Be sure to edit in-camera as the production proceeds. • Follow all timelines as previously established. • Review the checklist for production to be sure all stages have been completed. |
| <p>After</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • View footage shot with each group. • Compare this to the storyboard and concept the group outlined previously. • Working with the students, develop a list of strengths and areas for improvement. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review the video shot. • Evaluate how clearly/effectively the footage communicates the central idea for the PSA. • Evaluate how closely the storyboard was followed. • Highlight the strengths and weaknesses of the PSA. |

Notes



Writing/Producing For a Purpose: **Producing a Public Service Announcement**

LANGUAGE/ENGLISH: Grade 7-10

Campaign for a Public Relations Agency

You and your group members have your own Advertising/PR agency. Your advertising agency must develop its own original plan for a public service announcement (PSA) for an important social or cultural issue. Your outline for the PSA must be submitted to the director of the organization for approval. This is a collaborative project, so you will need to assign equal responsibilities to members of your agency. Be sure to consider carefully *who* you want to influence and *how*. Your message should be directed to a specific audience, whom you hope, will react to your message in the way that you wish.

OUTLINE FOR THE PSA

Concept:

- Objectives: determined by you and meant to satisfy the goals of the client and explain the purpose or function of the campaign.

Strategies:

Creative – an explanation of your ideas where you describe how the objectives can be met;
 Technical – what media can be produced, and in what way, to meet the client's objectives.

Audience: Who is your target audience? Who do you need to reach? Provide a detailed description of your audience (e.g., age, gender, race, class, nationality, how familiar they are with this form of media).

Text: Overall message of the campaign which must be tied to objectives and the creative strategy noted above (e.g., point of view, story line, images of men and women, language, costumes, behaviour of characters).

Production: Outline for what needs to be produced (see **A** below). This must be tied to your technical strategy. Consider locations, camera work, sound, voice over, special effects, graphics, animation etc.

Industry/Business Component: Explain and defend choices as to where and when you would telecast your PSA.

Outline for a Television PSA – must include elements of advertisements on television:

- slogan/jingle
- specific appeals and claims
- script which includes appropriate setting, props and costuming
- storyboard which includes appropriate video and audio directions



**Writing/Producing For a Purpose: Producing a
Public Service Announcement**

LANGUAGE/ENGLISH: Grade 7-10

CHECKLIST FOR PRE-PRODUCTION

- ___ Form group
- ___ Identify situation or scene to be portrayed
- ___ Choose director, camera operator, talent
- ___ Check that required locations are available
- ___ Check that required props are available
- ___ Check storyboard for logic, continuity, appropriate angles, suitability of backgrounds etc. and revise as necessary
- ___ Walk through storyboard one shot at a time, ensuring that each shot on storyboard is possible as planned. Revise storyboard as necessary.
- ___ Determine responsibility for bringing each required prop, wardrobe item, soundtrack etc.
- ___ See that location is available at the time you expect to shoot. Book in advance if necessary.

CHECKLIST FOR PRODUCTION

- ___ Shoot. Make sure there is a 10 second pre-roll; “overlap” shots for continuity
- ___ Review material shot
- ___ Book edit time (if necessary)



Small Group Discussions: **Examining Multiple Perspectives of an Advertisement**

LANGUAGE/ENGLISH: Grade 7-10

Oral language skills play an important role in a student's learning in media studies. Any media text becomes a potential source of oral language development when students speak and listen for a purpose, and provides a learning environment that challenges them to extend their language, thinking and learning abilities beyond the text to real life situations. The term "text" refers to any form of written, spoken, or media work that communicates meaning to an audience. These texts might include newspaper and magazine advertisements, television commercials, public service announcements, billboards or posters, for example. The following strategy encourages students to use their speaking and listening skills to engage in a critical analysis of a media text. Students explore the fact that all media are constructions and are the result of many determining factors and reflect many decisions. The media construct versions of reality that have attitudes, interpretations and conclusions built in. Students become aware that while media texts convey messages and values, each person responds to a media text in his or her own way based on age, culture, life experience, etc.

Purpose

- To encourage the active participation of all students in a structured small group discussion.
- To learn and use effective speaking and listening skills to understand and explore the ideas and concepts in a media text.
- To use critical thinking skills to analyze the perspectives represented in or missing from a text.

Payoff

Students will:

- engage in meaningful discussion to express and clarify thoughts, feelings and opinions.
- actively engage in the analysis of a media text and make connections between the text and their own experiences.
- develop critical literacy and inquiry skills to recognize bias, omission and multiple perspectives.
- apply higher-order thinking skills to deepen understanding and to deconstruct the author/creator's intent and message of a media text.
- understand the techniques and practices used to influence the reader/viewer (e.g., word choice, features of text, use of music).

Tips and Resources

- **Mind and Alternative Mind Portraits** (see the student resource page)) is a technique to help students examine two different perspectives from a text. In media studies students are invited to represent a person that appears in the text and another person who may be silenced or missing from the text. Alternative perspectives may also be created or imagined by the reader or viewer and represented from the audience's point of view. The completed Mind and Alternative minds Portraits are shared with peers and used as a starting point for a small group discussion. Additional strategies for examining alternative perspectives can be found in *McLaughlin, Maureen. (2004) Critical Literacy. Toronto, Ontario. Scholastic.*

Further Support

- To facilitate positive discussion, see Student/Teacher Resource, *Speaking out in Discussion Etiquette* on page 179 in *Think Literacy: Cross-Curricular Approaches, Grades 7-12.*



Small Group Discussions: Examining Multiple Perspectives of an Advertisement

LANGUAGE/ENGLISH: Grade 7-10

| What teachers do | What students do |
|--|---|
| <p>Before</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Choose a media text for students to examine (e.g., magazine, television advertisement, poster). Engage students' thinking by activating background knowledge of the text form and its features and by exploring personal connections to the issue. Set a purpose for viewing or reading the text by explaining the importance of examining multiple perspectives in understanding others' beliefs, values and points of view. Demonstrate this thinking by examining a few magazine ads or textbook photographs and discuss the focus in the ad or photo and who is not shown or represented, but who is or could be connected to what is being portrayed. Remind students that examining multiple perspectives help us better understand other people and their beliefs and values. Read, view and discuss the advertisement. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contribute to discussion on the topic or issue from the media text being examined (e.g., the message being conveyed, who or what is the focus of the ad, picture). |
| <p>During</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hand out the Mind and Alternative Mind Portraits sheet and instruct students to fill this in as they view and read the text a second time. Ask the students to think about 2 different ways the advertisement could be interpreted by different audiences. Divide the class into groups of 5. Hand out the student resource Focus Questions for Discussion Groups and assign one question per group. Ask the students to discuss their questions and record their answers. These questions are meant to encourage students to think about the different ways that meaning can be created in an ad, and the different ways that audiences might interpret a message. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Read, listen to or view text and use the Mind and Alternative Mind Portraits sheet to document ideas about how the ad/text could be interpreted. Select two different perspectives to analyze. Sketch the silhouettes of two heads (or use the template included here). In the first silhouette, represent the first person's perspective by writing words, drawing sketches or creating collages. Repeat with the second silhouette and create an alternative perspective and share with a partner and then in small groups. View, listen to, or read the text for a third time. Discuss the question assigned. |
| <p>After</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ask students to individually complete an evaluation of their group discussion. Facilitate a final class discussion based on the following question; 'How did the strategy of <i>Alternative Perspectives</i> help you read/view this media text from a new perspective? ' | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete 3-2-1 Plus 1 Reflection and participate in the class discussion. |

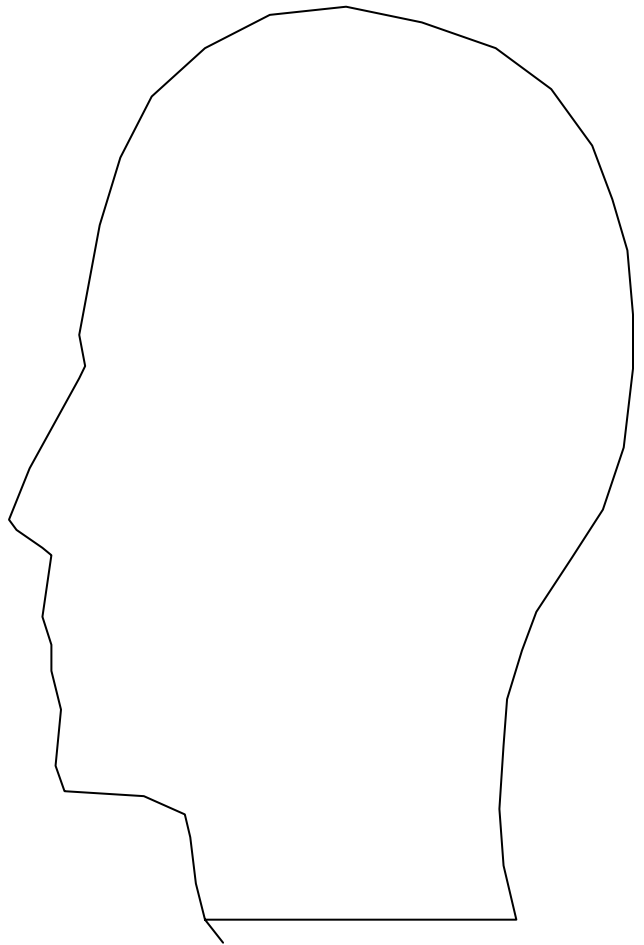
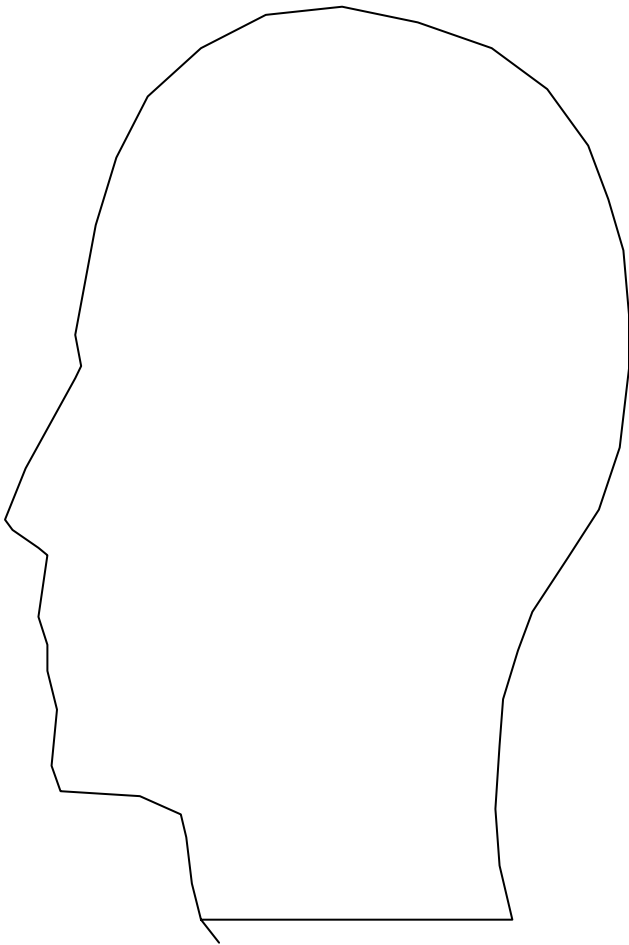
Notes



Small Group Discussions: Examining Multiple Perspectives of an Advertisement

LANGUAGE/ENGLISH: Grade 7-10

Mind and Alternative Mind Portraits





Student Resource

Small Group Discussions: Examining Multiple Perspectives of an Advertisement

LANGUAGE/ENGLISH: Grade 7-10

**Focus Questions
For Discussion Groups****Group 1:**

Who is in this advertisement? Who is missing? Whose point of view is represented here? Whose is missing?

Group 2:

What is the message in this advertisement? How do the unique features of this ad/text influence its impact and message (e.g., the use of various images or fonts in print media, the use of sound and video in television, the use of design elements in a website)? If you changed any of these features, in what way could it change the meaning of the ad? Consider changing some of the graphic elements (e.g., the caption for a photograph). What new meaning is created as a result?

Group 3:

Who is the target audience for this advertisement? Why do you think this? What evidence can you find to support your answer? Does this ad make sense? What prior knowledge is needed for the audience to understand this advertisement? In what different ways might people understand this advertisement?

Group 4:

Who is the creator or producer of this advertisement? What does the creator or producer of this advertisement want the intended audience to think? How do you know this? What elements of the ad support your response? What strategies (technical and/or symbolic) are used to influence the audience in this way? What alternative meanings might someone make from this ad?

Group 5:

What would an alternative advertisement look like? What other perspectives might be included? How would this new advertisement change the way I think?



Small Group Discussions: Examining Multiple Perspectives of an Advertisement

LANGUAGE/ENGLISH: Grade 7-10

3-2-1 Plus 1

Reflection Strategy

List **three** aspects of this media text that you find enjoyable.

List **two** ways in which you supported your group members.

List **one** question that you still have about this media text.

Plus

List **one** media text where this strategy of *Examining Multiple Perspectives* might help younger students understand it.

List **three** aspects of this media text that you find enjoyable.

List **two** ways in which you supported your group members.

List **one** question that you still have about this media text.

Plus

List **one** media text where this strategy of *Examining Multiple Perspectives* might help younger students understand it.





Small Group Discussions: Evaluating the Effectiveness of Media Messages

LANGUAGE/ENGLISH: Grade 7-10

The following strategy encourages students to use their speaking and listening skills to engage in a critical analysis of media messages and evaluate how effectively these messages are reaching an intended audience. Students will be asked to compare and contrast a set of related media messages to evaluate their effectiveness. Students will further extend their listening skills by adapting the message from the print ad into an advertisement or public service announcement for a radio broadcast.

Purpose

- To encourage the active participation of all students in a structured small group discussion.
- To learn and use effective speaking and listening skills to understand and explore the ideas and concepts in a media text.
- To use critical thinking skills to analyse messages from print advertising.
- To use critical thinking skills to produce a PSA for a radio broadcast.

Payoff

Students will:

- engage in meaningful discussion to express and clarify thoughts, feelings and opinions.
- actively engage in an analysis of a media text by making connections to their own experiences.
- develop critical literacy and inquiry skills to evaluate a series of media texts.
- apply higher-order thinking skills to deepen understanding and to deconstruct the author/creator's intent and message of a media text.
- understand the techniques and practices used to influence the reader/viewer (e.g., word choice, graphic elements of a text, use of music).

Tips and Resources

- The Tobacco Warning Labels are from Health Canada and are available at http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/index_e.html
- For additional information, teaching ideas and strategies for producing Radio Ads please refer to Booth et al. *Media Sense 6*. Toronto, Ontario. Meadowbrook Press.
- **NOTE: The activities for analysing the tobacco warning labels can be used for analysing actual cigarette ads. Students can analyse how these ads are constructed, the techniques that are used to appeal to viewers and who is being targeted by them. This is an important extension activity as companies are increasingly targeting young people whom they hope will begin smoking as older smokers quit. See the resource *A Guide to Reading Visual Texts and Advertisements* in this document for further support.**

Further Support

- To facilitate positive discussion, see Student/Teacher Resource, *Speaking out in Discussion Etiquette* on page 179 in *Think Literacy: Cross-Curricular Approaches, Grades 7-12*.



Small Group Discussions: Evaluating the Effectiveness of Media Messages

LANGUAGE/ENGLISH: Grade 7-10

| What teachers do | What students do |
|---|--|
| <p>Before</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Choose a series of related media texts to examine and discuss as a class. The set of tobacco warning labels on the Student Resource page is an example that could be used. Engage students' thinking by activating background knowledge of the tobacco warning labels and their personal connections to the issue. Discuss who produced these labels and for what purpose. See the resource <i>A Guide to Reading Visual Texts and Advertisements</i> for elements of the ads to examine closely. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What do you like or dislike about these warning labels? How would your friends and family react to these? Who might be frightened by these images? Who do you think is the target audience for each of these? How might these warning labels influence the audience? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contribute to a discussion by making connections and responding to the discussion prompts. |
| <p>During</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hand out the Compare and Contrast diagram and instruct students to use the Venn diagram to compare the two different tobacco-warning labels. Discuss with students some of the codes and conventions or key ingredients that might be compared (use of written text, language, photographs, graphs, etc.) Have students refer to <i>A Guide to Reading Visual Texts and Advertisements</i>. Organize students into small groups to evaluate the effectiveness of the tobacco warning labels. Monitor groups to guide and clarify their thinking. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete the Compare and Contrast diagram on the student resource page and share in small groups. Work in small groups to select and defend their choice by placing these on a continuum of most to least effective warning labels. Groups share their choices with the rest of the class. |
| <p>After</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hand out copies of the student resource page Producing a Public Service Announcement for the Radio. Facilitate a class discussion on how these media messages could be communicated through a public service announcement for the radio. Have students listen to a radio broadcast for examples of PSAs and commercials, making notes on what they are hearing (e.g., use of vocabulary, tone of voice, sound effects, type of information being conveyed). Students should produce a rough draft of their script for the PSA, as outlined in the Student Resource, and rehearse several times before recording. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students reflect on their learning using the questions on the resource page to guide their thinking. |

Notes



Small Group Discussions: Evaluating the Effectiveness of Media Messages

LANGUAGE/ENGLISH: Grade 7-10

TOBACCO WARNING LABELS

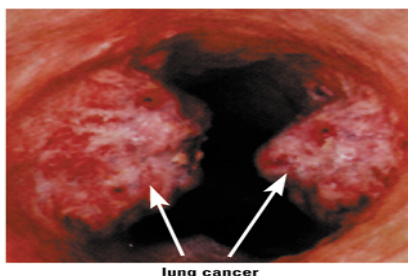




Small Group Discussions: Evaluating the Effectiveness of Media Messages

LANGUAGE/ENGLISH: Grade 7-10

TOBACCO WARNING LABELS



WARNING
CIGARETTES CAUSE LUNG CANCER

85% of lung cancers are caused by smoking. 80% of lung cancer victims die within 3 years.

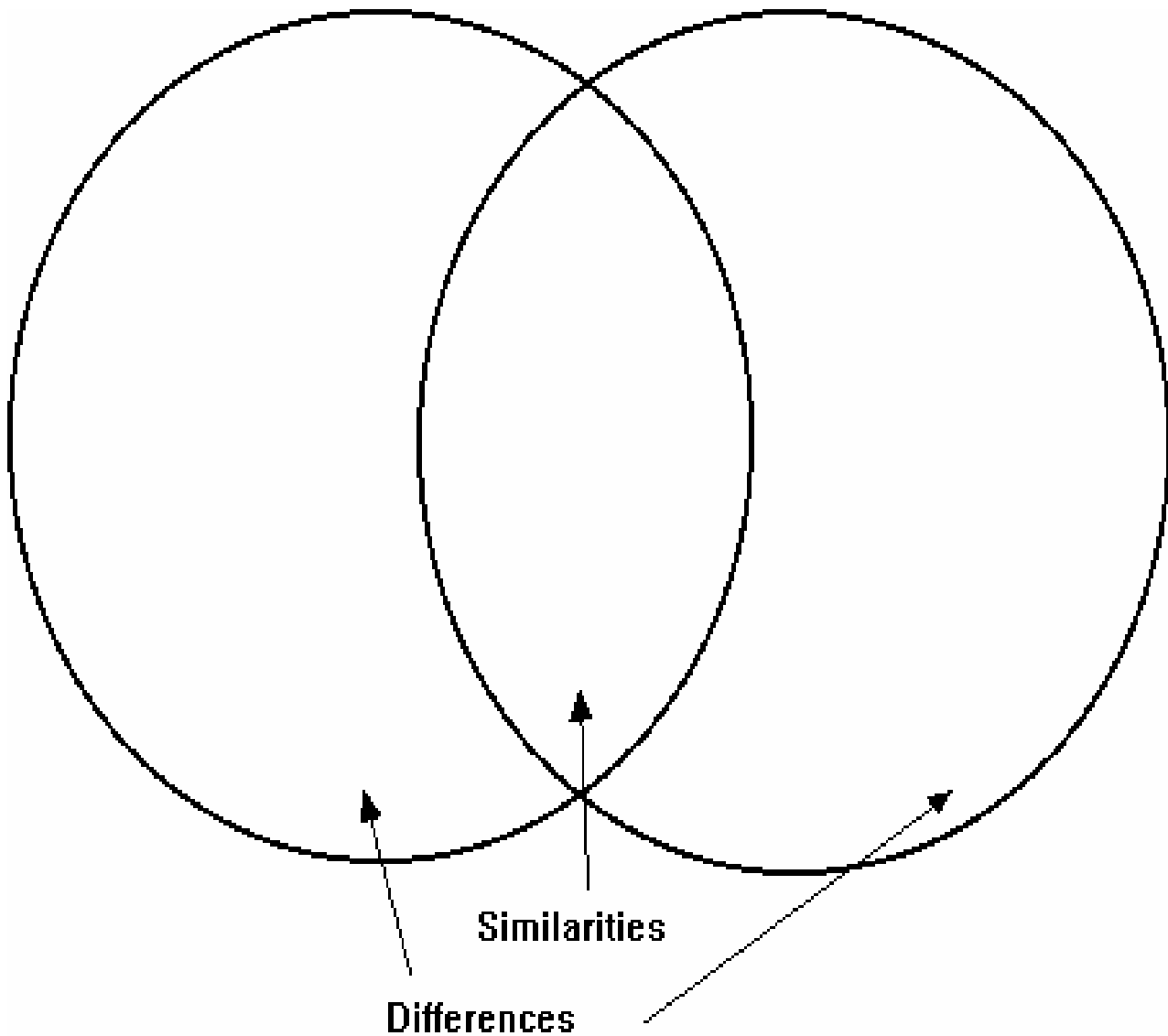
Health Canada



Small Group Discussions: *Evaluating the Effectiveness of Media Messages*

LANGUAGE/ENGLISH: Grade 7-10

**Compare and Contrast
Using a
Venn Diagram**





Small Group Discussions: **Evaluating the Effectiveness of Media Messages**

LANGUAGE/ENGLISH: Grade 7-10

Producing a Public Service Announcement For the Radio

Your group must decide on a public service message that could be effectively communicated through a radio broadcast. As a group you must work together to produce a 15 second audio recording of your broadcast.

1. Decide on a target audience. On what local radio station would you like your public service announcement to be heard? Why?
2. Brainstorm your ideas on chart paper. Include suggestions for appealing to a specific audience by deciding on the overall effect of the announcement. Do you want the announcement to be informational? Humorous? Do you want the listener to be fearful?
3. Write a rough draft of the script for the narration, paying close attention to the vocabulary used. Indicate the places where you will use sound effects and music. What kind of narration would be most effective? Who in your group will do this? Who will provide other necessary voices?
4. Decide how you can produce the desired sound effects and who will be responsible for this.
5. Rehearse your radio broadcast several times.
6. Record and play your public service announcement for the rest of the class.

Reflection

1. *What techniques were most effective?*
2. *What was the most difficult part in the production of this media text?*
3. *What could be done differently next time?*