

**Media Literacy Introduction**

# Media Literacy: Introduction

## Spark

In today's digital age, we're inundated with content from many types of media, including television, radio, blogs, vlogs, video games, podcasts, social media, and websites created by anyone and everyone. There's an overwhelming amount of content to sift through and evaluate to determine if the information we're taking in is valid and credible.

How do we know what's fact and what's fiction? Sadly, with information coming at us from all directions, it's often challenging to distinguish between the two. That's why media literacy, or the ability to interpret and make sense of information conveyed by the media, is such a critical skill—and it's becoming more and more critical as technology advances.

Social media is pervasive in society, and the challenges it presents for users are arguably as significant as the perks. How do you decide what to read, what to view, where to click, what's worth your time? With the wealth of information available at your fingertips, it's important to choose carefully so you don't spend time trying to interpret what is ultimately misinformation.

It's important to keep in mind that information doesn't have to be wrong to be skewed or biased. And content in any format can be skewed by means of omission. Consider the images people post on social media to give people glimpses of their lives, for example. Most people don't post images of the difficult times in their life; instead, they fill their pages with smiling selfies (touched up with filters, of course) and exciting-looking events, so we only see one side of the picture.

News organizations do the same thing. Writers, editors, producers, and publishers prioritize the information they convey to audiences; they make certain choices about the events they report on, the images they show, and the stories that appear on the front page or top of the news hour. In many cases, those choices reflect a particular viewpoint or bias toward one idea or side of an issue. We often choose the media through which we receive information based on our own perspectives and how closely they match the media's.

## Activity

Choose five examples of media you use frequently; then, for each example, explain why you use it and your criteria for choosing it. Discuss your choices with your Learning Coach.

Three-Column Chart

## Learning Coach Guide

This section will help you guide students through their learning.

## Spark

1. Throughout this unit, your student will read a self-selected work of fiction or nonfiction. Your student will also view and analyze information and messages from different types of media. As they read and examine the texts, they will be asked to analyze and evaluate complex ideas and to write about their observations and conclusions.
2. Tell your student that over the course of this unit, they will consider different types of media and evaluate their purposes, content, and messages. Encourage your student to pay attention to both the explicit and implicit messages and how they are conveyed.
3. Have your student read the Spark section. Ask them where they get most of their news—from television? Radio? Online news sites? Social media sites? Make sure they understand that different sites, networks, newspapers, and so on can cover the same stories but with different slants or biases.
4. Give your student a copy of the 3-column chart and have them respond to the prompts by listing five examples of media they use frequently, explaining how they use each type, and their criteria for selection. Discuss their responses.

# Media Literacy: Introduction

## The Basics of Media Literacy



Source: Musaffar Patel. Shutterstock

In 1992, the Aspen Institute Report of the National Leadership Conference on Media Literacy defined media literacy as “the ability to assess, analyze, evaluate, and create media in a variety of forms.” That definition still holds, but think how much has changed since 1992! Social media wasn’t even around until the early 2000s.



So, Media Literacy Now, an organization that addresses the need to promote media literacy through education and public policy initiatives, expanded that definition to address the complex task of deciphering messages communicated by our media-saturated world. The new definition addresses the ability to master specific skills—among them, identifying inaccurate, or “fake,” news; using multiple sources to verify content; deciphering language and tone; questioning numbers and figures; recognizing bias; and understanding the effects of images to influence thoughts, feelings, and behaviors.

If that sounds like a lot, it is. But these are skills you can learn. While our grandparents had to decipher messages from books and magazines, our task is much more complex. Look at the image at the beginning of this section, for instance. Each of those words denotes an aspect of our digital environment that requires us to stop and evaluate the information we receive. Who created this information, and what message did they *want* to convey? That’s one thing we have to determine. We have to know the creator’s purpose in presenting information, because that determines how they present it and the messages it conveys.

Watch this flipbook to learn more about “fake news” and its effect on our beliefs and behaviors.

Video cannot be displayed on Print Preview

## Question

What are some red flags that alert you to false information in a media presentation?

What, in your opinion, is a content creator's responsibility in terms of making sure the information they share with the world is accurate and credible?

## Learning Coach Guide

This section will help you guide students through their learning.

[View Learning Coach Guide](#)

[Hide Learning Coach Guide](#)

### The Basics of Media Literacy

1. Have your student read the first paragraph. Then, discuss the power of images and the meaning of the idiom "A picture paints a thousand words." How do images convey meaning that written words cannot?
2. Have your student read the second and third paragraphs. If your student is unfamiliar with SEO (search engine optimization), define it as the process of improving the visibility of your site so it appears high on a list of search results. Therefore, the sites that appear first aren't necessarily there because their information is most important, but because someone wanted you to think it was most important and knew how to get it to the top of the list.
3. Ask students for their thoughts on the idea of "fake news." Then, invite them to watch the flipbook to learn more about fake news and how it illustrates the importance of critical viewing of media.
4. Provide your student with a few minutes to respond to the question and discuss their response. Ask your student how much of the

responsibility of accurately interpreting media message falls on the audience and discuss their thoughts.

# Previewing the Unit Text

## Select a Text

Now it's time to select a text that you'll be reading and reviewing in this unit. You have the flexibility to choose whatever genre you like—fiction or nonfiction—so examine the texts for ones that spark your interest. Remember that you'll be analyzing and evaluating media sources in this unit for their accuracy, credibility, and bias, as well as the messages they send, so consider this when you peruse your selections. Print sources are technically a type of media and should be examined in the same way.

As you consider the titles available to you, keep the following strategies in mind.

- Read the first few paragraphs of the book to see if it engages your interest. Do you find the author's style enjoyable to read? Do the first paragraphs spark questions or ideas that make you want to read on?
- Gauge the tone of the language. If the text is nonfiction, is it written to be persuasive or strictly informational?
- Learn a little about the author. Sometimes there's a blurb about the author on the book, but remember—that's marketing content. Look up a brief biography of the author to learn how they're qualified to write about a particular topic.
- Are there images or graphics of any sort in the book? If so, do they intrigue you or add interest to make the content more understandable or enjoyable?

These are some of the things you will evaluate more closely when you examine any information you receive in any format to determine its validity.

## Pace and Prepare Yourself

You will have approximately six days (or a few additional, if you include some weekend reading) to complete your self-selected text. Consider your schedule, and pace

yourself so you can read at a comfortable pace and finish in time to complete the Apply activities that will follow.

Here's one way you might set up a rough reading schedule:

- Examine your selected text. Determine the number of either chapters or pages it contains.
- Divide the number of chapters or pages by the number of available reading days. Count today as one day and your designated Reading Day as two days.
- Your answer will give you a rough idea of how much you should read each day to ensure that you complete the reading before you begin the Apply activities.

Remember to consider your schedule and any other commitments you might have so you can allot a sufficient amount of time to get your reading done without feeling stressed.

- Choose a time to read when you don't have so much on your plate that you can't devote full attention to your reading. Some people focus better in the morning and others at night. Think about what works for you.
- Allow for flexibility. Schedules are important, but sometimes we have to modify them to make it easier to accomplish things.
- Remember that environment plays a huge role in our focus, so be aware of where you focus best and what works for you. Do you focus better at home or somewhere else? Maybe you want to read outside on a nice day or at a coffee shop for a change of pace.
- If you get restless sitting in one place for too long, go for a walk or a run or get a little exercise. Then, come back to your reading refreshed.

In the Apply activities that follow your reading, you will find questions that assess your understanding of both your text and the concept of media literacy. You can prepare for

these activities by thinking about some key questions as you read. After you finish each day's reading, answer these questions in your Reading Log:

- What themes or ideas were mainly conveyed, and how did the author support them?
- What stood out as being particularly surprising and/or of questionable accuracy? If so, where might the information be verified?
- What is the author's perspective on the topic or events in focus?
- How does the author's use of language tone contribute to the message they are conveying to the reader?
- Was media used to clarify ideas? What kind of media was included, and what messages did it convey?

As you consider these questions each day and review the notes you took from the day's reading, examine the notes you took on previous days. Examining the text in this way will help you think critically about any information you consume in any format.

Consult the reading schedule you created and begin reading your selected text. Use the questions above to analyze the first day's reading, and write some short, initial observations in your Reading Log. Remember that as you proceed, you will have daily opportunities to elaborate and expand upon your observations and add to your notes.

## Learning Coach Guide

This section will help you guide students through their learning.

[View Learning Coach Guide](#)

[Hide Learning Coach Guide](#)

### Select a Text

1. Point out the suggestions for selecting a text and discuss them as needed.
2. Discuss how literary texts can convey the sensibilities of authors (through recurring themes and messages, character concerns).  
Discuss whether and how literary texts have just as much ability to mold beliefs and ideas as informational text.
3. Allow your student sufficient time to examine the available text selections and make their choice. As they examine the list, remind them to consult the bulleted suggestions for guidance. Assist them if they ask, but remind them that the selection is their own.

### Pace and Prepare Yourself

1. Discuss the information in this section with your student. Allow them sufficient time to create their schedule.
2. Review the bulleted questions with your student. Explain that as they read their selected text, these questions will help them analyze the information they choose to read/view/listen to.

### Begin Reading



1. Guide your student into reading the first day's text, as indicated in the reading schedule. Make sure that they have their Reading Log available for notetaking. Discuss with your student what they have read. Guide your student through the process of analyzing the reading using the questions in the Pace and Prepare Yourself section. Remind them that this is the procedure they will follow as they evaluate media in different formats and that you will be there to help them through the procedure as needed.

**Media Literacy Reading Day**

# Reading Day

Please use today's lesson to read from the designated text for this unit. Use your reading log to take notes based on the guidance in the unit introduction reading preview. Refer to the pacing guide to plan your reading time during the rest of the unit. In the final lesson of the unit, you will be asked to apply skills learned during the unit to analyze the designated text.

## Mass Media

# Objective and Key Words

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## Objective

In this section, you will identify categories, trends, and themes across multiple sources of mass media.

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## Key Words

- **broadcast media** – media that transmits content mainly through television and radio
  - **digital media** – media that transmits content electronically as data
  - **mass media** – forms of media used to reach large numbers of people
  - **media** – means or vehicle for the communication of content
  - **outdoor media** – media that communicates content to people away from home
  - **print media** – media that uses writing and visual images to communicate
  - **trends** – movement or general directions in which things are developing or changing
-

# Mass Media



Source: FrameStockFootages. Shutterstock

The world and those of us in it have been altered by developments in technology. Consider virtual reality (VR), for example, which uses computers to generate environments that appear and feel real to us. VR can teach a medical student how to perform surgery by enabling practice on a computer-generated heart. It can take us through a guided tour of historical sites or into artists' studios. Through VR, video gamers don't simply play a game—they're transported right into the game as one of its characters.

Experiences like these have become a part of many people's education. We learn from all the media that we regularly encounter. Media is the vehicle through which information is delivered to us. Where most of the information a person learned once came from others at home or in their neighborhood or community—or perhaps from an outside source like a local newspaper—it now comes from such media as television and video, movie screens, websites, vlogs, blogs, video games, and VR to name just a few.

Media whose goal is to reach a large public audience is known as mass media. The concept of mass media originated in the 1920s, when technological developments in printing and distributing newspapers significantly extended the capacity of publishers to reach the masses. Now, mass media can use multiple different vehicles, in multiple variations, to reach that audience.

## Categories of Mass Media

Mass media sources can generally be grouped into four main categories. Consider how often you interact with one or more sources from each category on a daily basis.

- Print media, including books, newspapers, magazines, brochures, catalogues, product packaging
- Broadcast media, including television, radio, cable TV, satellite TV, and radio
- Outdoor media, including billboards, banners, signs, digital or video displays, transit advertising
- Digital media, including websites, social media sites, blogs and vlogs, video games, VR

Categorizing different forms of mass media can be challenging, as many forms straddle more than one category; for example, content you might watch on broadcast TV may also be accessed as streaming video online. But that challenge also opens up a world of options to users: Missed an event televised live? You can still experience it by setting a

digital video recorder to tape the event, accessing it on demand, looking for clips on a video sharing website, or reading about it in a print or online news source. In addition, social media and networking sites can allow you to experience the event from a variety of different perspectives—for good or bad.

Conveyors of information are aware of the connections between and among various forms of media; as a result, most messages are disseminated through multiple channels. Think of a particular product you use often, such as a sports drink, and the number of ways in which the maker of the product might utilize to convey information about it.

## Question

How might a sports drink company use each media category to disseminate information about the product?

Reveal Answer

Hide Answer

Sample answer: The company could use the label, lid, and other packaging to share information with consumers. It could run ads on TV and radio and on billboards. It could include a video on the company's website that shows a famous athlete talking about the benefits of using the drink to stay hydrated.

# Mass Media

## Trends in Mass Media

Since its inception, mass media has undergone significant trends, or movements—and with every trend comes a change in the way information is conveyed. Consider, for example, the introduction of printing—first in eighth century China through the use of wooden blocks, and then with the introduction of Johannes Gutenberg’s printing press in the fifteenth century. Until that point, information had to be handwritten or shared orally; the trend of mass-produced printing greatly expanded information’s reach around the world.

Perhaps no recent trend is more significant than the advent of digital media. Watch the video to learn more about how trends brought about by this form of mass media have changed all our lives.

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## Themes in Mass Media

We analyze novels, movies, art, and music, among other types of expression, to enrich our understanding and appreciation of them. We read their texts for what they have to say to us, as well as how they say it. We can and should do the same for mass media. Indeed, we should be especially analytical about mass media given our nearly constant interactions with it.

Like the newspaper where mass media began and all the way through VR where it currently shines, all mass media is produced by people with perspectives, opinions, and intentions that can be teased out. We can start by looking for themes, or big ideas, in the content the media delivers. We can also look for how the media reinforces those themes. For example, consider the use of humor in many present-day insurance advertisements; you might expect the tone of these ads to be more solemn, given that people associate insurance with sickness, death, or disaster. What might that say about the audience and the advertiser's perspective of it?

To identify and analyze themes in media, we can ask the same questions we do of other texts, such as:

- Where do I see repetition of content or imagery? To what effect?
- What mood pervades the media? What effect does it have?
- What messages, implicit or explicit, am I receiving from the media?

Remember that even factual content, like a football game's final score, or the winner of an art contest, is affected by its context. One media may announce the winner of a major competition in the context of what it will cost the losers. Another may announce the same fact in the context of celebrating the win. Note that your reaction to the news is being affected by the media presenting it.

## Question 1

What is another way that a mass media's presentation of a fact might be affected by its delivery?

Show Answer

Hide Answer

Sample answer: The outcome of a trial might be a fact, but mass media could present that outcome purposely to provoke a reaction in its audience, through dramatic and disturbing sounds and visuals, for example.

## Question 2

Why might it matter what category of mass media one uses to communicate information? Consider the audience the mass media is addressing in your response.

Show Answer

Hide Answer

Sample answer: The type of media matters because different forms of mass media can reach different portions of the public. Print media may target an older, traditional audience, for example, while certain types of digital media are more likely to attract younger people immersed in social media.

# Check-In

Consider what you have learned about mass media as you answer these questions.

## Question 1

Which of the following are true? Choose all that apply.

- a.** Different media can convey the same theme.
- b.** The same media can convey different themes.
- c.** Not all mass media communicate themes.
- d.** All mass media communicate themes.

Show Answer

Hide Answer

- a.** Different media can convey the same theme. **b.** The same media can convey different themes. and **d.** All mass media communicate themes.

## Question 2

What idea or theme might an organization focused on public transportation want to convey to an audience? How might they use a particular media to do so? How might they take advantage of a current trend in media?

Show Answer

Hide Answer

Sample answer: One idea that a company focused on public transportation might want to convey is that carpooling is a way to conserve fuel and protect the environment. The company might share this idea by posting short videos about the benefits of carpooling to social media networks; they might also send emails with tips on how to locate fellow carpoolers in their area. The company might also take advantage of the popularity of ride sharing apps by partnering with a company that offers and promotes this service.

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# Practice

## Activity

Think about how a major trend in mass media has changed the way in which people experience a certain topic or subject—education, music, sports, art, or politics, for example. Then, describe at least two examples of how the trend has affected how you experience a particular topic or subject in comparison with how a previous generation might have done so.

Show Answer

Hide Answer

Sample answer: My grandparents taught me how to appreciate art by taking me to museums and galleries, where we stood at a distance and admired what we saw. Digital media, however, has enabled a profoundly different experience of art for its admirers. Virtual reality, for example, can make a landscape in a painting feel like three-dimensional space surrounding the viewer. Accompanying sound comes from so close and so clearly, it adds significantly to the sensory experience. Some VR plays to other senses as well, including taste and smell. In any case, the experience is something that happens to you. It feels very different from looking at a painting from a few feet away.

The advances in recording and publishing of music brought about by digital media has made different kinds of music from all over the world accessible to individuals almost wherever they are. These advances also make listening to music very physically powerful, as the quality of its sound has improved so dramatically. In both VR and music, digital media can make us feel more in addition to think more.

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## How Did I Do?

Assess your response to the Practice activity by completing this checklist. If necessary, go back and revise your work.

1. \_\_\_\_\_ I responded to each part of the prompt.
  2. \_\_\_\_\_ I analyzed how trends in mass media have affected the ways in which people experience a particular topic.
  3. \_\_\_\_\_ I reviewed two or more examples.
  4. \_\_\_\_\_ I used correct grammar, punctuation, and spelling.
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# Objective and Key Words

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## Objective

In this section, you will evaluate the aural, visual, and written images and other special effects used in mass media for their ability to inform, persuade, and entertain.

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## Key Words

- **aural** – relating to hearing or to the ear
  - **mass media** – forms of media used to reach large numbers of people
-

# Mass Media



Source: Naki Kouyioumtzis. Pearson Education Ltd

## Media Elements and Purpose

A movie preview is intended to give you information about the film's content, entertain you with an action sequence or funny joke, and (assuming the first two purposes were accomplished) convince you to see it. It does so by carefully controlling your experience. The filmmakers edit the footage to produce fast-paced action and offer fragments of images and glimpses of the plot that create suspense. They also play on



your senses. Light, darkness, and color focus your eyes. Manipulations of the volume or introduction of music perk up your ears.

All mass media is created to do some combination of informing, persuading, and entertaining its audience. It achieves these goals both directly and indirectly. For example, media can use written or spoken text to communicate explicit messages. Think of headlines on a news website, words on the screen in a music video, what characters say in a movie, or the content of a narrator's voiceover in a commercial. We can deduce key aspects of the media's messages from these elements.

But words alone don't tell the whole story because media sends additional subtle messages that a tagline or summary of their content can't include. They send these messages through manipulations of the media's aural and visual elements, which affect not only what the audience thinks but what they feel. Soft lighting or the sound of falling water, for example, will evoke emotional reactions for the viewer. Put these in the background of a commercial for toilet paper, and you may well succeed at selling your product—not because you have convinced us of its remarkable gentleness, but because you have made us feel good.

## How Aural Elements Address Purpose

The sounds of a media experience especially engage us because they make us listen. Sounds can trigger emotional responses depending on the moods they evoke. They can also help emphasize what the audience is looking at. Consider how the clarity of sounds can affect your appreciation of what you're listening to, as in music, or how sound effects like a low rumbling throughout a movie scene can affect how you feel. Think about how silence feels to you, especially when interrupted by sudden noise.

Imagine the goal of informing an audience about the idea that living with animals improves our emotional health. A piece of media might use the gentle sounds of farm animals mooing and bleating as comforting background noise, like a lullaby, to convey that message. Alternatively, they could have us listen to a child talking lovingly to a pet. Manipulations of volume could focus us on the sound of a beating heart coming

through the other sounds. These sounds would soothe the audience, opening them up to the messages the media is communicating.

## How Visual Elements Address Purpose

Media also controls the audience's visual experience. Visuals can support the text and its intentions by using imagery to illustrate ideas. Qualities like light, color, and hue can have the same emotional effects as musical qualities. They can trigger associations and feelings, especially when they are active parts of media.

Consider the goal of creating a video meant to persuade people to eat vegetables. Light can be used to focus the audience's attention by spotlighting different vegetables while other foods are cloaked in shadow. Lighting can be slowly brightened throughout the course of the video to leave the audience with the clearest vision of the content. Rich, saturated colors for the vegetables can please our eyes.

## How Written Elements Address Purpose

Written elements, or text, in media can clarify the purpose of the media and otherwise support the content. Anything from words on the screen (“And then they lived happily ever after”) to posters on a set wall (“Peace Now!”) to digitally produced graphs and maps contribute to the media's messages and make it clear whether it is intended to inform, entertain, persuade, or achieve more than one of these purposes at the same time.

Watch this video of a student explaining mass media's purposes and how audiences can evaluate the written, aural, and visual components of a media source to determine how well it meets a particular purpose.

Video cannot be displayed on Print Preview

## Question 1

How could sound be used successfully in a public service announcement to persuade an audience to vote? Consider all that the audience is asked to listen to.

Reveal Answer

Hide Answer

Sample answer: A public service announcement about voting could use the background noise of people arguing about politics to accompany an image of a person entering a voting booth. When they close themselves in, the arguing would quiet down.

## Question 2

How might light or color in a video be used successfully to inform viewers about proper form when running a race?

Reveal Answer

Hide Answer

Sample answer: The video could show a slow-motion view of a runner at the moment the starting signal is heard; light and color could be used to highlight aspects of the runner's form that allow them to get a quick start.

# Check-In

The clip below is from a short video titled “10 Advertising Tricks That Have You Fooled!” As you watch the video, think about how written, audio, and visual elements of a media source can affect messaging and achieve a particular purpose. Then, complete the activities.

Video cannot be displayed on Print Preview

## Advertising Tricks That Have You Fooled Transcript

### Question 1

How does the video use an aural element to affect your response to its content? Evaluate the element's ability to achieve a purpose.

Reveal Answer

Hide Answer

Sample answer: The bouncy, energetic music that plays in the background sets a lighthearted tone that tells the audience that while they are going to learn something about a particular topic (advertising tricks), the material will be presented in a fun and entertaining way.

### Question 2

How does the video use a visual element to affect your response to its content? Evaluate the element's ability to achieve a purpose.

Reveal Answer

Hide Answer

Sample answer: The image of people in Times Square, surrounded by enormous video billboards, flashing lights, and other people illustrates what it feels like to be overwhelmed by the stimulating details of the world around us. The image seems to reinforce the idea that advertising is everywhere and that it's powerful, whether we acknowledge it or not. By conveying this message, the visual element successfully supports the media's intention to inform and persuade audiences.

## Question 3

How does this excerpt use a written element to affect your response to its content? Evaluate the element's ability to achieve a purpose.

Reveal Answer

Hide Answer

Sample answer: Including the logo and printed name of the Journal of Consumer Research on screen lends credibility to the media's message by making it clear that the video is referencing specific studies conducted by experts in the field. This credibility makes the message more persuasive because audiences can trust that it's accurate.

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# Practice

## Activity

Use what you have learned to complete the activity.

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## How Did I Do?

Assess your response to the Practice activity by completing this checklist. If necessary, go back and revise your work.

1. \_\_\_\_\_ I proposed an element from each category to support my media's goal.
  2. \_\_\_\_\_ I described how my media idea might be evaluated for its ability to support one or more purposes.
  3. \_\_\_\_\_ I used correct grammar, punctuation, and spelling.
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# Objective and Key Words

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## Objective

In this section, you will evaluate media sources for relationships between intent and factual content.

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## Key Words

- **mass media** – forms of media used to reach large numbers of people
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# Mass Media

When you really think about it, analyzing content presented in mass media is a lot like analyzing a written text. Authors and media creators both have an intent: to entertain, to inform, or to persuade a particular audience. This is the case for everything from a novel to a newspaper to a TV commercial to a video game or museum website. These various media are determined that we enjoy, learn, or do something, and that intent drives the content that each type of media delivers. One important criteria of analyzing media content, therefore, is determining how closely the content aligns to the specific intent of the media source.

## Question 1

Why is a close alignment to intent so important for the content of a media source? Give an example that supports your reasoning.

Reveal Answer

Sample answer: This alignment is important because content that is not aligned to purpose is normally considered irrelevant; though it might be interesting, it does not serve to advance the content creator's intent. Readers learn this at an early age: A text meant to inform readers about ducks, for example, would not contain content about elephants unless that content was relevant to ducks in some manner.

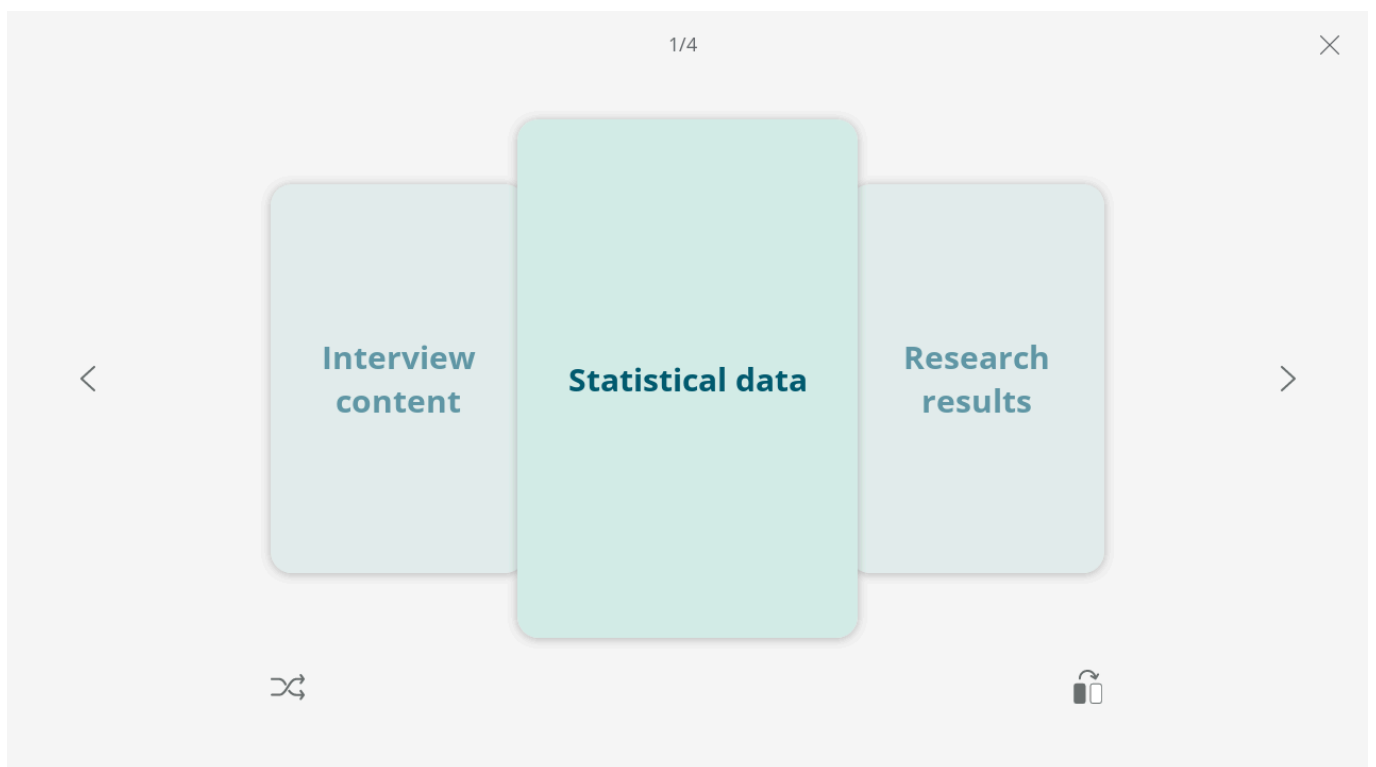
Media sources meant to inform or persuade often use facts to support their intentions, just as informational or argumentative texts support a thesis or claim with factual evidence. Facts appeal to our capacity to reason. As a logical argument can persuade a jury in a court case, a logical argument in media can persuade a consumer to buy or use their products or otherwise embrace their ideas.

By carefully analyzing a media source, we're able to determine the relationship between the source's intent and the factual content the source delivers. That allows us

to evaluate how successfully the media fulfills its intention.

## Facts or “Facts”?

Factual content can come from many places. Use the flashcards to review a few sources for facts that a media source might contain:



## Question 2

Which fact sources presented in the flashcards might be less reliable than others? Explain your reasoning.

Reveal Answer

Sample answer: Eyewitness accounts and interview content are likely less reliable than statistical data and research results because they rely on people's experiences and perspectives, which may be subjective.

## Question 3

Add to the flashcards by identifying another example of a fact source and how it might be derived. What is its potential for being unreliable?

Reveal Answer

Sample answer: One additional fact source might be video footage of a particular event or activity. These are likely to be reliable if it can be verified that the footage has not been manipulated and is an objective portrayal of an event.

One important criteria in an analysis of factual content in media is the degree to which the facts are, well, factual. You've likely heard the term "fake news" used to describe false information that supports a particular version of events. Fact "manipulation," however, is a technique common to advertising and other media sources with the intention to persuade. Creators of media meant to sell products purposely include facts designed to make their product look good and omit those facts that don't.

## Question 4

How might the creators of an automobile commercial include or omit facts to make their product look desirable?

Reveal Answer

Sample answer: Creators of the commercial might include facts about the car's great gas mileage or expansive trunk space; however, statistics such as the frequency of that car getting in an accident will likely be missing unless the number is significantly low.

Even accurate factual content doesn't necessarily help a media source achieve its purpose. Suppose a commercial for a paper towel manufacturer claims that the brand is the best one around. The ad includes details about the bamboo the material is sourced from, the workers who manufacture the goods, and the psychological benefits of their color choices. While those facts may all be accurate, they don't get at the reason most people buy paper towels: to clean up messes.

## Question 5

Explain how this use of statistics is meant to support a brand's intention to sell its juice: "92% of nutritionists surveyed say bottled juice is better for you than canned." Do you think the fact effectively supports the intent of the media? Explain why or why not.

Reveal Answer

Sample answer: The statistics are meant to support the idea that because it is bottled, the juice is good for you, so consumers should purchase it. However, the fact is not as effective as it could be because it's not making a statement about the specific brand of juice, just bottled juice in general.

Savvy media users keep a close eye on factual content in media to better understand how it's being used. They analyze the media source by asking questions:

- What is the purpose for including particular facts?
- How accurate and credible are the facts?
- Does it cite credible sources to support the facts?

- Are important facts missing?
- Are any biased viewpoints presented?

Asking these questions can prevent media users from being improperly influenced by facts that aren't valid or trustworthy.

## Evaluating the Relationship Between Intent and Content

Once you've analyzed the factual content in a media source, you can evaluate how closely it supports the media's intention.

- First, identify the intention.
- Next, locate any factual content and determine its accuracy and relevance to the intention. This includes examining any sources the media cites. If the website or the author of an article you are analyzing is already an expert on the topic, you may not find any sources cited.
- Finally, make a judgment about the strength of the support the factual content provides for the intent.

Consider this advertisement:



Source: Oxford Designers & Illustrators Ltd. Pearson Education Ltd

The ad's clear intention is to sell Slowtan sun cream, specifically to an audience of people who want to stay safe in the sun. It directly states a fact "Slowtan sun cream helps protect against the harmful effects of radiation."

## Question 6

In your opinion, how strong is the relationship between the advertisement's intention and its factual content? How might you change or adjust the advertisement to improve it?

Reveal Answer

Sample answer: The relationship between the advertisement's intention and its factual content seems fairly strong, as the ad presents accurate facts about how the product protects the user. However, different kinds of facts could add different

and stronger support and increase the advertisement's credibility. For example, citing research or providing statistics about the relationship between ultraviolet radiation and skin cancer would strengthen the message that Slowtan keeps you safe. More information about how long Slowtan keeps you safe in the sun would also be helpful to users.



# Check-In

Respond to the questions by using what you have learned about analyzing media.

## Question 1

How could an interview provide factual support for a commercial for surfboards?

Reveal Answer

Hide Answer

Sample answer: Interviews with the surfboard's designer or with a surfer who uses the board could address different subjects, such as the surfboard's physical attributes and how they affect how the boards ride on water.

## Question 2

Suppose a documentary about a famous surfing legend presents step-by-step instructions for how to successfully get up on a board and ride a wave.

What might be the purpose for including this information in the documentary?

How closely does it support the media's intention?

Reveal Answer

Hide Answer

Sample answer: Including this information would make the audience feel like surfing is an activity they might be able to learn; thus, it makes the content more relevant to their own lives. However, given that the purpose of the documentary is likely to inform the audience about the achievements of the subject, the information is not directly connected to the intent. This specific content might be more relevant to the intent if it included information about how the subject learned to surf.

## Question 3

Give two additional examples of factual content that would closely support the intent of the documentary.

Reveal Answer

Hide Answer

Sample answer: Including interviews with others whom the surfer has mentored and statistics that quantify their success in the sport would support the idea that the surfer is worthy of being referred to as a legend.

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## Question 4

Read the following excerpt from a blog post about protecting yourself from ultraviolet rays and then answer the question.

According to the Skin Cancer Foundation, one in five Americans will develop skin cancer by the age of 70. As surfers, we may be at a higher risk due to our increased sun exposure. But with the right precautions, we can continue to enjoy the waves while keeping our skin healthy and safe.

Ride the waves, soak up the good vibes, but don't forget to shield yourself from the sun. Surf safe, stay stoked, and see you out in the water!

Source: "Skin Cancer Facts & Statistics." The Skin Cancer Foundation.

<https://www.skincancer.org/skin-cancer-information/skin-cancer-facts/>

How does including a source from the Skin Cancer Foundation lend credibility to the facts presented?

Reveal Answer:

Hide Answer

Sample answer: The Skin Cancer Foundation is a credible source regarding the statistical chances for developing skin cancer. Citing this source tells the reader that the author is getting their facts from reputable resources on this topic.

## Question 5

Why would an article about ways to protect the ocean on the Nature Conservancy's website not include other sources?

Reveal Answer:

Hide Answer

Sample answer: The Nature Conservancy is a credible source on topics like ways to protect the ocean. Since they are experts in this field they do not need to cite their information.

# Practice

Watch this video about a potential city ban on plastic bags, and then complete the activity.

Video cannot be displayed on Print Preview

## Video: San Francisco May Ban Plastic Bags Transcript

### Activity

Evaluate this media for the relationship between its apparent intent or intents and its use of facts. What different types of facts does it use, and toward what ends? At what point does the media target something other than your logical thinking to support its intent? Be sure to reach a conclusion about how effective you find the clip's use of facts to support its intentions.

#### Reveal Answer

Sample answer: The media's explicit intent is to report on a potential change in law forbidding the use of plastic shopping bags in San Francisco; in addition, there seems to be an implicit intent to inform the audience about the damage caused by plastic to the environment. The first set of facts come from an authority in the field and includes statistics about how many plastic bags the city's stores give out that end up as litter and how much it costs to fix that problem. They also include details about what happens to animals in the ocean. Another authoritative source adds statistics about plastic bags' contributions to global warming. These facts make a strong case for outlawing plastic bags.

The piece aims for a balance of opinions by providing an alternative view: Outlawing plastic bags will result in more waste because when mixed with combustible bags, the latter will become unrecyclable. This idea is also supported by an authority, though as a representative from the California Grocers Association, he might have business rather than the environment in mind. However, some facts like those about turtles that are harmed by pollution in the ocean target our emotions in addition to our intellect to persuade us. The video also uses repeated images of people filling bags in busy, crowded markets. The repetition successfully illustrates the excess involved and creates an anxious tone that I think likely affects many viewers and persuades them of the issue's urgency. Ultimately, I think the media sources has supported its intentions, though I might have looked for a more convincing alternative perspective supported by more clearly relevant facts.

---

## How Did I Do?

Assess your response to the Practice activity by completing this checklist. If necessary, go back and revise your work.

1. \_\_\_\_\_ I responded to each part of the prompt.
  2. \_\_\_\_\_ I evaluated the relationship between intent and use of facts.
  3. \_\_\_\_\_ I analyzed what in addition to facts the media uses to persuade.
  4. \_\_\_\_\_ I used correct grammar, punctuation, and spelling.
-

## Techniques

# Objective and Key Words

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## Objective

In this section, you will analyze how media includes or excludes information from visual messages to achieve a desired result.

---

## Key Words

- **post-processing** – the use of any technique or technology to improve the image captured by a photographer
  - **visual media** – content that incorporates images instead of or in addition to printed words
-

# Techniques

Just about everywhere you look, you can spot visual media using images as well as words to convey messages. Visual media, whether used on television and billboards, in newspapers and magazines, or on social media, have a variety of purposes. The purpose of a TV show might be to entertain people, for example, while the purpose of a billboard is often to advertise a product and convince people to buy it. Television commercials in particular are masterful at persuading people to buy a product. Political campaigns also use visual messaging in order to convince people that one candidate is better than the others.

In some cases, messages conveyed through visual media are accurate and aboveboard. In other cases, the images may have been manipulated in some way to generate a particular feeling or motivate the audience to take a certain action. Critical users of media know how to analyze these messages and the visual media that communicates them to determine whether they are trustworthy and believable.

## How Visual Messages Include and Exclude Information

How do various types of visual media accomplish these goals? The creators of these visual messages think very carefully about what details and information to include in a particular image as well as what to exclude. An assortment of techniques helps them shape the images that we see in order to convey a particular message.

For example, take a look at the image below:





Source: Rolling Stones. Shutterstock

The food in the picture looks perfect: The tomatoes are perfectly red and ripe, the lettuce looks fresh and green, and the meat has char marks on it. The creator of this image clearly had a specific purpose in mind: they wanted people to choose to eat this hamburger, so they made it look as appetizing as they possibly could. Each ingredient that appears in the hamburger image is an ideal representation of that food, and any visual element that might not make the burger look completely perfect is excluded. For example, any brown spots on the lettuce were likely edited out using photo editing software and other digital tools. If the tomato looked a little too pale, these [post-processing](#) touch-ups made it look perfectly red—or a food stylist might have added a little lipstick to it during the photo shoot. In fact, sometimes food stylists even make meat look more appetizing by spraying it with motor oil!

The law says that the food in advertisements must be real—but only the actual food being advertised. So this means that if you're looking at an ad for ice cream, the ice cream is real, but the whipped cream on top might actually be shaving cream, which some food stylists use in place of whipped cream because it holds its shape better.

Now, analyze the media images below. They are two versions of the same picture—the one on the left is the original, while the one on the right has been edited using a digital photo manipulation tool.



Source: luanateutzi. Shutterstock

## Question 1

What changes did the content creator make to the “before” version of the photo in order to create the “after” version? Why might they have chosen to make those changes?

## Reveal Answer

Sample answer: The “after” version of the photo is brighter. The woman’s skin looks brighter and her freckles have been removed. The content creator also removed the lines and shadows under her eyes and whitened her teeth. The content creator likely made these changes to show an ideal, perfect version of the woman. It’s possible that they are trying to sell a beauty product and want people to believe that too they can look that perfect if they buy the product.

Just about all of the photos you see in advertisements have been heavily edited. Content creators who manipulate these images have a purpose: They want you to buy their product or take a particular action, so it’s important to convince you that if you do purchase the item in question, you, your food, or any other aspect of your life can be as perfect as the image you are being shown. This is why it is important to do a thorough analysis of the visual media you see.

Consider that the purpose of visual media created by a political candidate is to convince you to vote for that candidate. In order to do this, candidates will include information and details that make them look like the best choice for a potential demographic. For example, people who watch a lot of police dramas on television might be likely to view the police in a positive light. This audience might also be interested in a political candidate who wants to crack down on crime—that’s why a candidate might choose to advertise during a break in a police drama and include video clips in which they share information about how they plan to reduce crime. They might exclude any information that doesn’t support this purpose.

Analyzing what is excluded in visual messages is just as important as analyzing what information is included. The details and information a content creator chooses not to show visually can tell you about their purpose.

## Question 2

What visual content might a content creator include in an advertisement for a political candidate geared toward an audience that supports more funding for the arts? What might they exclude?

Reveal Answer

Sample answer: The creator might show video footage of the candidate speaking in favor of arts education or attending a local arts event. They would choose to exclude any information about the candidate's voting record unless it shows specific funding for arts issues. They might also exclude anything negative the candidate has previously said about the arts.

# Check-In

Use what you have learned about analyzing media to determine how creators of content include and exclude information from visual messages to answer these questions.

## Question 1

Why do the creators of visual advertisements use post-processing?

Reveal Answer

Sample answer: They want the final image to show the public a perfect, idealized version of the thing they're trying to sell. Post-processing in the form of image editing software and other tools and techniques helps them to include only the best aspects of the item and exclude anything that doesn't help their purpose of selling the item.

Need a little extra support?

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## Question 2

How can you analyze visual media in order to find out the particular purpose of a piece of visual media?

Reveal Answer

Sample answer: I can look at what information is included in the visual media and think about what information might be excluded with tools like post-processing and styling. Then, I can ask myself why the content creator might have chosen to include what they included and exclude what they excluded.

Need a little extra support?

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# Practice

Review the imaginary advertisement below carefully, and then use it to complete the activity.



Source: rollingstonesrf. 123rf.com

# Activity

Analyze the visual media above. In a paragraph or two, explain what is included and what might be excluded, as well as what the content creator's purpose might be. Explain how the creator's decisions about what to include and exclude impact the final result.

## Reveal Answer

Sample answer: The ad shows a stack of perfectly cooked pancakes that are uniform in size and color. Although pancakes prepared by a real person are likely to vary in size and color—some may be a little more brown than others—the creator of the image chose to exclude any pancakes that weren't the exact right shade. The content creator also chose to include butter, syrup, and some berries, most likely to give viewers ideas of how to serve the pancakes. The house in the background shows that the pancakes are meant to be made at home—it's not an ad for a restaurant. The inclusion of the clouds is probably meant to give viewers the impression that the pancakes are light and fluffy, like a cloud.

The content creator also chose to include a small picture of the box of pancake mix in the bottom right of the image. I think this was included in order to show viewers what to look for at the grocery store when they are shopping for pancake mix. All of this information makes me think that the purpose of the ad is to convince people to buy this brand of pancake mix. By including only the perfect examples in the picture, the creator succeeds in making the product look more attractive and appealing.

---

## How Did I Do?

Assess your response to the Practice activity by completing this checklist. If necessary, go back and revise your work.

1. \_\_\_\_\_ I responded to each part of the prompt.



2. \_\_\_\_\_ I explained what was included in the ad and how it affected the end result as well as what might be excluded.
  3. \_\_\_\_\_ I explained the purpose of the media image.
  4. \_\_\_\_\_ I used correct grammar, punctuation, and spelling.
-

# Objective and Key Words

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## Objective

In this section, you will analyze how media includes or excludes information from verbal messages to achieve a desired result.

---

## Key Words

- **bias** – the misrepresentation or selective choosing of facts to create an unfair impression
  - **media** – means or vehicle for the communication of content
  - **neutral** – fair and balanced, without favoring any one side over another
  - **sensationalism** – the presentation of information in an overly dramatic way that is designed to shock people into paying attention
  - **spin** – a positive or negative portrayal of facts or events
-

# Techniques

## Analyzing Media Messages



Some media messages are designed to shock people in order to get their attention.

Source: Antonio Guillem. Shutterstock

Consider the information you absorb each day. Much of it is delivered through [media](#). Media accounts allow you to read, hear, and watch current events of all kinds unfold, from those that affect you directly to those that happen on the other side of the world.

Media can be broadcast electronically, as is the case with television and radio; printed, as in newspapers or magazines; or transmitted digitally, often through the internet. Social media is one form of digital media, and it's a significant source of information, whether the content details happenings in local politics or where your cousin ate lunch last Saturday.

Since anyone can post just about anything they want on social media sites, it's easy to see how the information you find there might not be the most reliable. But print and broadcast media are not always reliable either; the truth is that media messages often reflect techniques that allow content creators to include or exclude information based on their purpose and the effect they want to have on readers.

## Analyzing Media Messages

Some media messages present information in a neutral way—they represent the facts fairly and without a lot of sensationalism, or drama. When a media message shows a clear opinion about a topic, that message has bias. The content creator may favor one side over another or may want to persuade the audience to agree with the ideas expressed in the media rather than allowing the audience to make up their own minds. Sometimes this is referred to as putting a positive or negative spin on the message.

As you watch the following video, observe how the two students analyze a piece of media content to draw conclusions about why certain important information is excluded—and how that might impact the message the media source conveys. Pay attention to how they think through the purpose the content creator might have for manipulating what the audience hears and how that action demonstrates bias.

Video cannot be displayed on Print Preview

## Peer Model Video Transcript

Now, answer the questions.

### Question 1

Why did the article only run part of the student's quote?

Reveal Answer

Sample answer: The author of the newsletter had a different opinion on the topic from the student's. The author wanted to persuade their audience that more people were in favor of sweeping the homeless camp than actually were, so they only ran the part of the student's quote that made it sound like they were in favor of the sweep.

### Question 2

How did the questions the students came up with help them decide how the article was biased?

Reveal Answer

Sample answer: By answering the questions, they were able to see that the person who created the article was a member of the homeowner's association, the group that initiated the proposal to sweep the homeless camp.

### Question 3

Think about the fourth question the students in the video posed: “How is the message trying to get your attention?” How could this question help you analyze a verbal media message?

Reveal Answer

Sample answer: If a media message is trying to get your attention by shocking you or appealing to your emotions instead of informing you of the facts in a neutral way, the message could be an example of sensationalism, which is often biased.

# Check-In

Think about what you have learned about media as you complete the activity.

## Activity



# Practice

The article below appeared in a home improvement magazine. Read the article and then use it to complete the activity.

STOP and read this if you don't want to get sick this winter!!!

According to leading experts, the cold, dry air in your home during the winter months can be terrible for your health. Dangerous, disease-causing germs can spread more easily through dried-out nasal passages and sinus cavities. In the winter, many people also suffer from nosebleeds, chapped lips, and dry skin.

Thankfully, there is a solution to this horrible problem. One company, MoistureCo™ makes a top-ranked humidifier that will solve the problem of too-dry air causing health problems for you and your family. With several different sizes and models to choose from, you're sure to find the perfect one for every room in your house.

Prevent illness this winter and buy yours today!

## Activity

Analyze the article above by determining what information is included, what might be excluded, and how this affects the overall result. Then summarize your analysis in a paragraph or two. Make sure to include your conclusions about the author's purpose and whether you think the article is biased or neutral, and explain your reasoning.

Reveal Answer

Sample answer: The article is about how people can prevent illness in the winter months by using humidifiers in their homes. The article includes a lot of negative emotional language like *terrible*, *dangerous*, *suffer*, and *horrible* in order to scare people into fearing the problem of too-dry air. Then it uses words like *thankfully*, *top-ranked*, and *perfect* to put a positive spin on the idea of getting a humidifier. The article mentions “leading experts,” but does not say who these experts are or what their credentials are. It also says that the humidifiers are “top-ranked,” but excludes any more information about who created this ranking or what their standards or criteria were.

The article also includes the brand name of a specific company that makes humidifiers. This, along with the factors explained above, makes me think the article’s purpose is not to inform people about a problem and how to solve it, but to sell people a specific product.

---

## How Did I Do?

Assess your response to the Practice activity by completing this checklist. If necessary, go back and revise your work.

1. \_\_\_\_\_ I responded to the entire prompt.
  2. \_\_\_\_\_ I analyzed details that indicate what information was included and what may have been excluded.
  3. \_\_\_\_\_ I used reasoning to determine the purpose of the article and whether it was biased or neutral.
  4. \_\_\_\_\_ I used correct grammar, spelling, and punctuation.
-

## Culture Transmission

# Objective and Key Word

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## Objective

In this section, you will examine how values and viewpoints are included or excluded and how the media can influence beliefs, behaviors, and interpretations.

---

## Key Words

- **bias** – the misrepresentation or selective choosing of facts to create an unfair impression
  - **culture** – the expressed and shared values, attitudes, beliefs, and practices of a social group, organization, or institution
  - **media** – means or vehicle for the communication of content
  - **values** – principles considered important, worthwhile, or useful
  - **viewpoints** – perspectives
-

# Culture Transmission



Source: FrankHH. Shutterstock

## Media's Viewpoints

Imagine all the decision-making that goes into creating the [media](#) we regularly consume. Everything from advertisements in a magazine, to television commercials, Hollywood movies, music videos, documentaries, podcasts, websites, and virtual reality events are creative products that have been carefully shaped in both form and content. This is true whether the media's content is fact or fiction and whether the media intends to entertain, inform, persuade, or combine intentions. An advertisement to sell vitamins is as purposely developed as a segment of TV news about war. Each form of media will include certain content to achieve its goals, exclude content that

does not specifically do so, and shape that content to control users' reactions to the media.

Behind all this media are people with viewpoints, or perspectives, shaped by their experience and intentions. Someone is making decisions about what stories to tell in movies, what music to make videos for, what actors to feature in those movies and videos. Someone is also making decisions about what news should be covered, when a news story begins and ends, and how to present that news to best inform and, perhaps, impact the audience.

Making these decisions often involves rejecting the alternatives. For every story told in the media, there's another story that could be told—and often, *should* be told—to keep us fully informed, but is not.

## Media's Values

Inevitably, the choices that content creators make reflect not only their viewpoints, but their values. Media's producers bring to our attention what they think should engage us. Their intention is to make the audience value what they value.

Media may express those values in everything from the choice of subject matter to casting. A television show about the impact of crime on people's lives in an impoverished city, for example, reflects different values than a show about the family dynamics of wealthy people outside of that city. Similarly, when producers of a commercial make decisions about the age, gender, ethnicity, social status, attitude, and appearance of the actors hired to sell the product, they are expressing what they think is important.

## Including and Excluding Viewpoints and Values

All these choices involve making decisions not only about what to include but what to exclude. For example, the publisher of a news story might omit an interview reflecting a unique perspective if the interview took the story in a different direction than the

media intended. If a casting choice had the potential to make a statement that a director didn't want to make, they might choose a different actor.

What these sources omit matters because it's chosen as purposely as the content that's included; both reflect the media's values and beliefs, and both are meant to impact the audience's values and beliefs in turn. Given the prevalence of media in our culture and its influence on our beliefs and behaviors, we should therefore put energy into interpreting both what is included and what is excluded.

Watch this video of a student discussing how to identify a viewpoint and look for bias in what a podcast both includes and excludes.

Video cannot be displayed on Print Preview

Peer Model Video Transcript

## Question 1

Suppose an animal shelter is creating a public service announcement (PSA) urging people to adopt a pet rather than purchase one. They want to feature interviews with people who have recently adopted pets. What information might they include to reflect particular values and viewpoints? What values and viewpoints would they likely exclude?

Reveal Answer

Sample answer: The PSA would likely include information about how the new pet owners have benefitted from their experience; for example, an owner might describe how well-behaved their new pet is, how easy the adoption was to complete, or how satisfied they feel about giving an animal a new home. The PSA would likely omit any content suggesting the idea that becoming a pet owner is a negative experience. For example, they might exclude testimony from owners who have had bad experiences with their pets; it would likely also steer clear of any downsides to pet ownership in general, such as the cost of pet care or the effort it takes to care for a pet.

## Question 2

How would excluding those viewpoints likely affect the audience?

Reveal Answer

Sample answer: The audience would have no alternative perspective on the issue of adopting or buying pets, so they would be more likely to embrace the positive message communicated by the happy, satisfied pet owners.



# Check-In

Examine this media item, and then use it to answer these questions.



Source: MITstudio. Shutterstock

## Question 1

Who do you think created this media item and why? What details seem to be intended to attract the attention of the target audience? (Note that the text at

the top right reads, “skin and body balance treatment” and “beauty for women.”)

#### Reveal Answer

Sample answer: The media appears to be an advertisement created by the makers of a brand of perfume for women. The perfume bottle and roses that surround it are pink, a color that some people perceive to be associated with women and femininity. The image is presented in soft, muted tones that some might perceive as contributing to a “female” tone. The text in the upper left corner touts what many might consider positive aspects of the product, noting its ability to bring balance to skin and body and its role as a source of “beauty for woman.”

## Question 2

What information does the media exclude, and to what effect?

#### Reveal Answer

Sample answer: The media does not include details such as the price of the perfume or its ingredients. Leaving out those elements helps the ad define what it values about its product—namely, how the product feels, reinforced by the swaths of silk and scattered rose petals. Mention of price or ingredients would represent a different viewpoint and therefore complicate the issue.

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## Question 3

Why do you think the content creators chose not to include people in the media? What is the effect of that decision?

Reveal Answer

Sample answer: Using a real person would be complicated because the media would want as broad and inclusive an audience as possible to identify with the actor. The exclusion leaves us focused on the experience the imagery suggests.

# Practice

The image below is an advertisement for a university. Consider the content—excluded as well as included—that reflects values and viewpoints and how the media might be influencing particular beliefs, behaviors, and interpretations. Then, complete the activity.



Source: Rawpixel.com. Shutterstock

# Activity

Examine one to three elements included in the media that represent the media's viewpoint and values and one to three others that may have been excluded to do the same, and interpret how they impact the media's message and influence.

## Reveal Answer

Sample answer: The advertisement balances gender and ethnicities by using three women and three men from different backgrounds. These inclusions suggest that the content creator—the university—values diversity in its student body. In addition, all the people in the advertisement are engaged with one another, smiling at one another, with one person resting their arm on another's shoulder. Their body language and facial expressions add up to the message that applying to this university is one way to access a welcoming and diverse community and are likely to influence an audience of prospective students looking for such an opportunity. The image of a school building and the words *admissions* and *study* are the only signs that this ad is about education. There are no books or computers, which suggests that the content creator especially values, and is therefore selling, the community aspect of education.

---

## How Did I Do?

Assess your response to the Practice activity by completing this checklist. If necessary, go back and revise your work.

1. \_\_\_\_\_ I responded to each part of the prompt.
2. \_\_\_\_\_ I identified elements, included and excluded, that represent the media's viewpoint and values.
3. \_\_\_\_\_ I interpreted how those inclusions and exclusions might impact the media's message and influence.
4. \_\_\_\_\_ I used correct grammar, punctuation, and spelling.



# Objective and Key Words

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## Objective

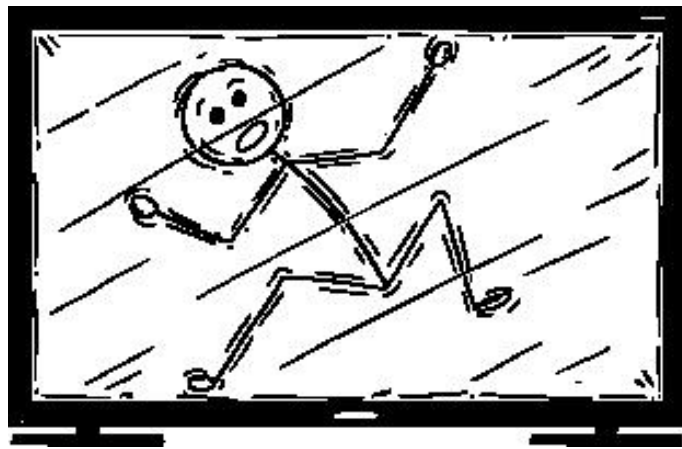
In this section, you will critically analyze information found in any media whose purpose is to persuade culture.

---

## Key Words

- **culture** – the expressed and shared values, attitudes, beliefs, and practices of the members of a group
  - **mass media** – media intended to communicate with a broad audience
  - **media** – vehicles for the communication of content
-

# Culture Transmission



Source: zdeneksasek. 123rf.com

Sometimes walking through this world can feel like being inside a commercial. Different forms of mass media—television and radio, newspapers and magazines, websites and social media, for example—surround us with messages that appear to be intended to influence culture: what we should wear, eat, drive, buy, believe, and do next. Specific media seek to persuade us to embrace the culture they're offering up, whether that culture takes the shape of a tennis-shoe trend or a full-fledged artistic movement.



We learn from media what's out there—not from neutral presentations, however, but instead from carefully developed approaches designed to draw us in. These days, media know their customers well, and what they don't know, they can find out quickly—often through technological means that allow creators of media to engage us by carefully playing to our strengths and weaknesses.

## Question 1

How might a media company use technology to learn more about their customers?

Reveal Answer

Sample answer: A media company can make effective use of social media to gauge their audience; they can include online polls focused on a particular topic, or they can simply read through comments posted to their social media outlets to learn what customers do and don't like. In addition, companies can use cookies and other online technology to track the activity of potential customers.

Whether it's a commercial, print advertisement, public service announcement, or movie preview, media sources use the same persuasive techniques as other genres to draw us in. Take hyperbole, for example: "The best sandwich this side of the Mississippi!" on a billboard will convert some potential diners (particularly if the message is accompanied by an enticing image). Media may repeat a phrase or an image to make a concept echo in the audience's mind or may ask rhetorical questions, like "Who doesn't want to feel like royalty?" to support the sale of jewelry or a luxury car. Other techniques include inclusion, or the use of colloquial language and jargon to make us feel the media is friendly, or one of us.

## Question 2

What is one way a media source might persuade an audience by using inclusion?

Reveal Answer

Sample answer: An infomercial for a vitamin supplement might feature a relatable celebrity or spokesperson sharing their “secret weapon” for looking and feeling their best. The audience has the impression that they are connected to the spokesperson because they are now in on this secret.

## Analyzing Media Information Meant to Persuade

Sometimes media’s persuasive techniques are not as innocuous as they may seem, however. It is especially important that consumers of media analyze a source critically for any manipulation of information to support the media’s claims. Has the media proven anything, or have they gotten you onboard through other strategies?

Watch the flipbook to learn about some of the more calculating ways in which media conveys information intended to persuade their audience.

Video cannot be displayed on Print Preview

## Question 3

What persuasive technique or techniques are being used in this text from an advertisement? “The children who reported side effects said those side effects didn’t make them feel bad.”

Reveal Answer

Sample answer: A selective use of facts is evident, as no information is provided about the number of children who reported side effects or what—and how dangerous—those side effects might be. The information can also be considered anecdotal, as no sources for the claim are noted.

## Question 4

Now, analyze the techniques in this advertisement for a brand of baseball: “Professional ballplayers recommend baseballs with casing like ours. They’ll make you a professional too.” How is it trying to persuade an audience?

Reveal Answer

Sample answer: The message includes manipulated evidence, since the recommendations from professional ballplayers support baseballs with casings “like” the company’s product, but not necessarily the product itself. In addition, it uses hyperbole to make the audience believe that this brand of baseball will magically turn them into professional ballplayers, when in fact that’s clearly not the case.

## Application of Technology

In addition to the many persuasive techniques available to them, media can apply technology to enhance their persuasive powers. Consider, for example, how media can use what the audience sees and hears to persuade us to want or need something we don’t need and didn’t want until they told us we did. Bright lights, sound effects,

flashing banners, let alone mass emails, are all media's use of technology to engage, focus, and sometimes mislead the audience.

## Question 5

Suggest an application of technology you would use to support the baseball commercial ("Professional ballplayers recommend baseballs with casing like ours. They'll make you a professional too.").

Reveal Answer

Sample answer: I would use digital animation to illustrate the making of a baseball, all the stages up to and including the casing being wrapped around the ball.

# Check-In

Consider what you've learned about critically analyzing the techniques used in media to convey information intended to persuade a cultural audience, including the following:

- Inclusion
- Hyperbole
- Rhetorical questions
- Repetition of ideas
- Colloquial language and jargon
- Generalizations
- Anecdotal evidence
- Manipulation of evidence
- Misleading expert opinion
- Selective use of facts

Then complete the activities.

## Activity 1

Suppose that a commercial for waterproof fabric for tents notes that the fabric passed a dozen tests for its capacity to repel water. What persuasive technique might the commercial be employing to persuade customers?

Reveal Answer

Sample answer: The commercial may be manipulating evidence in support of the fabric's capacity to repel water via the selective use of facts. For example, the audience is not told the total number of tests administered or what happened in those other tests.

## Activity 2

How might another persuasive technique be used in the commercial for tent fabric? Why might the media source choose to use that one?

Reveal Answer

Sample answer: The commercial might use anecdotal evidence by asking serious campers who brave all kinds of weather to describe their experiences with the tents. The source might choose this technique because hearing from real users of the equipment would establish the audience's trust.

## Activity 3

Describe two ways the content creators might apply technology to support the commercial's efforts to sell the company's tent fabric and explain why they'd use that technology.

Reveal Answer

Sample answer: The content creators could begin the commercial with exaggerated sounds of a storm all around—perhaps by using surround sound. At some point, the focus would shift to the sound of rain hitting the tent, heard from inside, with the storm now sounding distant. The purpose would be to illustrate how effective the fabric is by making the audience hear (and even feel) its effectiveness.

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# Practice

Use what you have learned about critically analyzing information in media meant to persuade a cultural audience to complete the activity.

## Activity

Choose four persuasive techniques used by media and describe how you would use them to sell a product, promote an event, or build membership in a club. Identify the specific type of media and at least one way you would apply technology to amplify your message. Include in your description an analysis of the effect each information type would have on your audience.

### Reveal Answer

Sample answer: I would create a public service announcement to promote adopting rather than purchasing pets.

- I'd include data about how animals thrive after adoption, but I'd omit data about pet adoptions gone wrong, of which there are plenty examples. These selective facts will help persuade my audience by focusing only on positive responses to adoption.
- I'd use a rhetorical question to make the audience feel part of my team. For example, "Don't we all want love?" Even while this would not address adoption, it puts the audience on my side of the debate.
- I'd note that professional psychiatric organizations support the benefits to mental health of having animals in the home. This would not support why people should adopt rather than buy pets, but it may persuade the inattentive media consumer.
- I'd also use hyperbole, like "Save the animal world: Adopt a pet" to make the audience feel powerful.



- Finally, I'd apply technology to amplify my message by including distressing images of animals in shelters waiting for adoption.

---

## How Did I Do?

Assess your response to the Practice activity by completing this checklist. If necessary, go back and revise your work.

1. \_\_\_\_\_ I described how I might incorporate various techniques into a piece of media so that it conveys information whose messaging is meant to persuade an audience.
  2. \_\_\_\_\_ I analyzed the ways in which each particular persuasive technique would act on the audience and convey a particular message to them.
  3. \_\_\_\_\_ I indicated how I would apply technology in support of disseminating information meant to persuade.
  4. \_\_\_\_\_ I used correct grammar, punctuation, and spelling.
-

# Objective and Key Words

---

## Objective

In this section, you will interpret the changing role of the media over time in forming the public's opinions on issues.

---

## Key Words

- **cultural** – having to do with the expressed and shared values, attitudes, beliefs, and practices of the members of a group
  - **media** – vehicles for the communication of content
-

# Culture Transmission

## Media's Influence

There are and have been many different types of media in America. Consider the audience that each media type can reach.

- Early print media: audiences had to be literate and be able to afford the relatively high cost of newspapers
- Later print media: more affordable but still limited to those who purchased or obtained the physical printed material
- Broadcast media: anyone with a television or radio could access
- Digital media: available to speakers of nearly every language and from all over the world who have access to a computer, smartphone, or other digital device

Clearly, the shift from word of mouth to printed newspapers was a significant step forward in the media's potential to form public opinion on cultural, social, or political issues. The introduction of broadcast media, arguably, was an even more significant step. In addition to text, media could provide visual and audio components to engage the audience. Content creators could talk on camera to everyone, from experts in the field to people on the street. The audience could learn from seeing and hearing from those at the center of important issues. Even seemingly small developments, like broadcast media's ability to convey a tone of voice, built its potential to inform and influence the opinions of the audience.

Digital media have introduced even more tools and reach an ever-broader audience. They make our experience of content an exciting one. Advanced technology means the media can render rich visual and audio experiences. They engage our senses as one way to engage our minds. Digital media lets the audience interact with its content (through everything from online quizzes to virtual reality events), which reinforces what we're learning.



# Analyzing Media's Role in Public Opinion

Media has a profound capacity to inform and influence; we should remember what all media have in common, from the earliest version to the most recent: Media never offers its users just content. The purposeful way in which that content is delivered affects our opinions of it. From a newspaper's layout that emphasizes one story over another to sophisticated sound effects that add drama to a news item, media use the tools available to them to engage and influence us.

At times, that influence is explicit (think commercials and other forms of advertising), but often, it's conveyed in an implicit manner. As media audiences have grown over time, the media's power to sway our opinions by communicating carefully crafted messages has only gotten stronger. That's why, in this era of "fake news" and commentary representing every imaginable viewpoint, it's important for media users to remain savvy and carefully consider the content they take in. Analyzing media in such a manner makes it more likely that you will be able to spot content designed to sway you in a particular manner; recognizing such content and considering opposing viewpoints is the first step toward informed decision-making.

## Question 1

Which advancements in media have resulted in the representation of more perspectives? Choose all that apply.

- a.** bilingual programming on television
- b.** access to international resources
- c.** interactive activities
- d.** advances in video editing techniques

Reveal Answer

- a.** bilingual programming on television
- b.** access to international resources

## Question 2

What distinguishes social media as an influencer of public opinion?

- a.** Its content is neutral.
- b.** Its content is biased.
- c.** Its content is interpreted.
- d.** Its content is created by the public.

Reveal Answer

- d.** Its content is created by the public.

# Check-In

Analyze how different media help form their audience's opinions to answer these questions.

## Question 1

Offer an example of how two types of media can convey what others think.

Choose from print, broadcast, digital, and social media.

Reveal Answer

Sample answer: All media can use text to state directly what other people think, but visual and audio broadcasting and digital media can provide a lot more information by not only reporting what people have said but letting us hear them speak.

However, social media is likely the best media for this, as its content comes directly from those "other people" rather than any intermediaries.

## Question 2

Evidence indicates that the growth of social media has made the public more political. Offer one speculation about why that might be.

Reveal Answer

Sample answer: I think social media educates people about what their fellow humanity really feels and thinks, because the information comes from those people themselves. And I think the more we know about how others feel and think, the more real, even human, they are to us. That makes us more sympathetic to others' suffering, which motivates many of us to act.

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# Practice

Apply what you have learned about the changing role of the media in forming the public's opinions on issues to respond to the activity.

## Activity

Interpret how today's different media could potentially form public opinion about whether a local government should fund a new library. Address at least three media types (from print, broadcast, digital, and social media). How might the media approach have differed 100 years ago?

### Reveal Answer

Sample answer: Today, broadcast media could include footage of children, students, and seniors using the library, while a voiceover provides statistics about who typical library users are and what they gain from the experience. This messaging could help form public opinion through its informative content and the positive feelings the imagery may inspire in the audience. Digital media could engage its audience with interactive activities like online quizzes one can take to learn about how much a new library would cost and who the construction work would provide jobs for. The audience's engagement would make them open to the content. Social media would allow library users to share their firsthand experiences with others. I think this would be especially persuasive, as we tend to trust our peers.

A century ago, the media approach would likely have been limited to print media—perhaps editorials in the local newspaper. Word of mouth would probably have been the primary way of conveying information about the project; as a result, public opinion might have been slow to generate and might reflect an existing opinion on the general topic of libraries.

---

## How Did I Do?



Assess your response to the Practice activity by completing this checklist. If necessary, go back and revise your work.

1. \_\_\_\_\_ I responded to each part of the prompt.
  2. \_\_\_\_\_ I interpreted how different media can form public opinion.
  3. \_\_\_\_\_ I reflected on how the approach to forming public opinion may have changed.
  4. \_\_\_\_\_ I used correct grammar, punctuation, and spelling.
-

## Ethics

# Objective and Key Words

---

## Objective

In this section, you will demonstrate an understanding of ethics in mass communication, describing the characteristics of ethical and unethical behavior.

---

## Key Words

- **ethics** – moral principles that dictate behavior
  - **mass communication** – the imparting of information on a large scale, to a wide range of people
  - **media** – means or vehicle for the communication of content
  - **unethical** – not morally correct
  - **values** – what a person believes to be important in life
-

# Ethics



Source: karen roach. Shutterstock

One characteristic common to humans is a basic sense of what is right and wrong. That perspective frames our ethics, or set of guidelines based on our values which drives our behavior. Ethics are often shared by members of a society—for example, we, as a society, value honesty, so lying and cheating are considered to be unethical behavior. The degree to which behavior is considered ethical versus unethical determines what we as a society deem permissible by law; it's not hard to understand that theft and murder are illegal, for example, because society values everyone's right to be safe.

However, there are some ethical questions whose answers aren't so clear-cut. One area that's full of ethical questions is mass communication and how the media delivers information. In particular, journalists who present the news to the world are often faced with difficult choices about what to say and how to say it.

As you watch the following video, observe how the two students decide what is ethical and what is unethical about an article one student has written. Pay special attention to the sources they consult to determine what standards they need to meet.

Video cannot be displayed on Print Preview

Peer Model Video Transcript

## Question 1

In what way did the student writer misinterpret the First Amendment, and how did that impact their article?

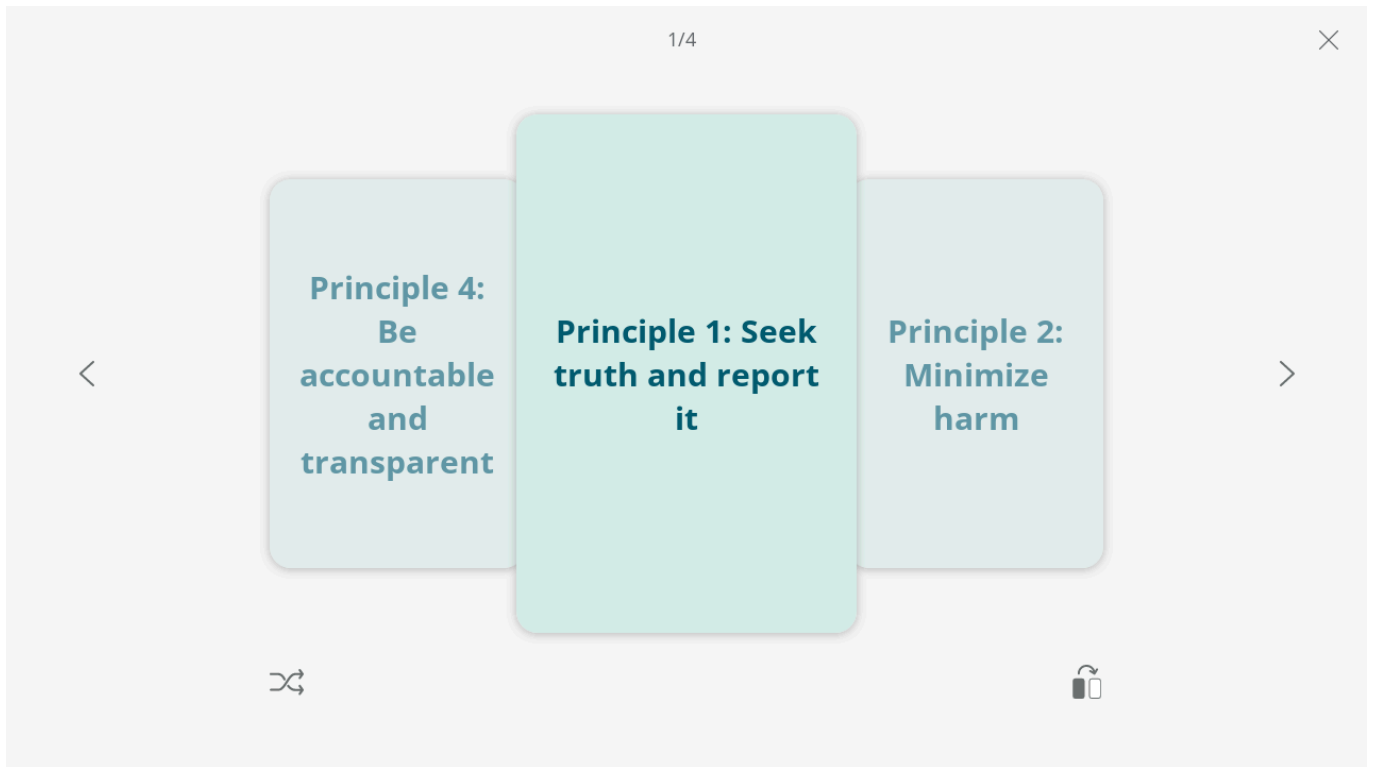
Reveal Answer

Sample answer: The student believed that the First Amendment gave them the right to say pretty much anything they wanted; they did not take into account credibility and journalistic integrity as mandated by the Society of Professional Journalism. As a result, their article could not be considered credible or fair.

## Ethical Journalism

In the video, the students mentioned the Society of Professional Journalists and their four principles of ethical journalism. These principles are important to take note of because they are the standards to which all journalism is held. This means that, in order to decide whether a journalist or other source of mass communication is acting ethically or unethically, their actions must be evaluated against these four principles.

Use the flashcards to review the meanings of the principles the students in the video discussed:



## Question 2

Which principle of ethical journalism did the student violate when they did not reveal that their sister owns a skate shop?

Reveal Answer

Sample answer: They violated the principle of acting independently. The student has a conflict of interest—if they successfully persuade people to agree with their point of view, then their sister stands to benefit. The student should disclose this information.

# Check-In

Think about what you have learned about media ethics as you answer the questions below.

## Question 1

A student journalist is reporting on a local baseball game. The student notices that a local business is a sponsor of one of the teams and believes that the owner of this business treats their workers unfairly. In the article, the student omits any mention of that team's sponsor, even though they note the sponsor of the other team. Is this ethical journalism? Why or why not?

Reveal Answer

Sample answer: This is unethical journalism because the journalist was influenced by their personal feelings and preferences about something unrelated to the story. Instead of "seeking truth and reporting it," as per the first principle of ethical journalism, they are changing their representation of the facts of the situation.

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## Question 2

A student journalist published a story with information that was later invalidated. What should the student do, and why?

Reveal Answer

Sample answer: The student should take responsibility for the error and explain where they got the invalid information. The fourth principle of ethical journalism, "be accountable and transparent," means that all journalists should seek to correct



their mistakes as quickly as possible and to share their sources whenever they can safely do so.

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# Practice

Use what you have learned about ethics in media to complete the activity.

## Activity

Imagine that you're an editor working for a large media company, and you very much prefer one political candidate to the other. You think the opposing candidate would be extremely bad for the country and feel more strongly about this than you have in any other election. Some information comes to light that would be very damaging to your preferred candidate; they could lose votes, and it's already a very close race. You are able to determine that the information was provided by credible sources and is evidence-based.

What is the most ethical thing to do in this situation? Tell whether you would publish the story and explain your reasoning.

### Reveal Answer

Sample answer: Even though I would not want to publish the story, it would be the most ethical thing to do, according to the first principle of ethical journalism: "seek truth and report it." It's important for the public to trust that the media is giving them all the information they need to make informed decisions, especially when they need to decide who to vote for. The information in the story could affect how people choose which candidate to vote for. If the media suppressed the story, they would be acting unethically because they would be helping to create an unfair election.

---

## How Did I Do?

Assess your response to the Practice activity by completing this checklist. If necessary, go back and revise your work.

1. \_\_\_\_\_ I responded to the entire prompt.

2. \_\_\_\_\_ I explained what would be the most ethical thing to do and why.
  3. \_\_\_\_\_ I detailed the reasoning that led to my decision.
  4. \_\_\_\_\_ I used correct grammar, spelling, and punctuation.
-

# Objective and Key Words

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## Objective

In this section, you will demonstrate an understanding of copyright, attribution, citation, the principles of fair use, and the different types of Creative Commons licenses.

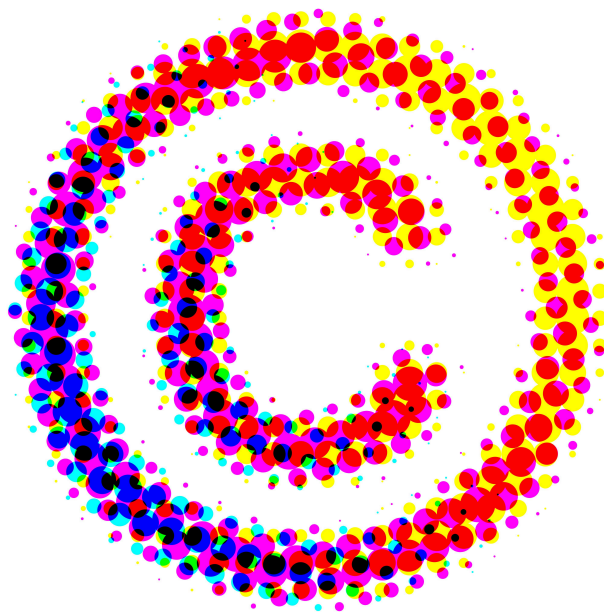
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## Key Words

- **attribution** – identification of the source of paraphrased ideas or direct quotes you include in your own writing
- **citation** – reference to a source used to inform a piece of writing
- **copyright** – the right, under the law, to make copies of, publish, sell, or distribute an image, written work, or music composition
- **Creative Commons** – a nonprofit organization dedicated to helping creators share their work under a variety of different types of licensing that are less strict than copyright
- **fair use** – the right to use a limited amount of copyrighted material in your own work for a valid purpose such as review, parody, or teaching
- **intellectual property** – a person's ideas that are protected by law from other people profiting from them
- **parody** – a work in which a particular author's or content creator's style is imitated to produce a humorous effect
- **plagiarism** – the act of taking words or ideas from a source and passing them off as one's own

- **public domain** – the set of works and ideas owned by the public which can be used and copied by anyone
-

# Ethics



Source: Foto-Ruhrgebiet. Shutterstock

## Copyright

From the research papers you've previously written, you're no doubt familiar with [citations](#), or the documentation of a specific source for ideas you used in your own

work. The reason we reference citations is to avoid stealing other peoples' intellectual property, or the ideas they took the time to express in writing, art, film, or music and share with the world.

Copyright is the right under the law to sell or otherwise distribute an image, written or filmed work, or musical composition. (These things are all the intellectual property of the owner.) If you write a paper and do not cite your sources, then you may be guilty of plagiarism, which happens when you try to claim someone else's work as your own. This is stealing—it's theft of intellectual property. But as long as you use citations to give attribution where necessary, you'll be in the clear.

Copyright is important because it allows the creators of original work to make money from their creations, whether they're movies, print materials, paintings, or pop songs. Without copyright laws, there would be nothing to prevent people from selling copies of these things, depriving their creators of any profits.

## Public Domain

But what if the intellectual property in question—say, a play by William Shakespeare or a poem by Edgar Allan Poe—is so old that its creator has been dead for a long time? These works often end up in the public domain, which means that they're free for anyone to copy or use. Laws differ around the world, but according to United States law, a work is generally eligible for public domain status if its author has been dead for at least 70 years.

It's still important to be cautious when considering works in the public domain. For example, a publisher might compile a book of Shakespeare's sonnets that includes interpretations of various lines. While the sonnet itself is in the public domain, the publisher's interpretations of those lines are not—they are under the publisher's copyright and must be cited if anything specific to that edition is used.

## Fair Use

Copyright restrictions are meant to protect the rights of content creators, but these laws also allow for a bit of flexibility. [Fair use](#) refers to a person's right to include a limited amount of someone else's work as part of their own, if they have a reason that is considered ethically sound. These reasons include review, [parody](#), and teaching purposes. This means that you can include short quotes or sections of someone else's work, but you still have to make sure you include the correct attributions.

Fair use applies to the other kinds of copyrighted material as well: visual, auditory, and written. The principles of fair use tell us the general nature of how the original work can be used, but each case is subjective, and ethical questions often arise. One area in which this sometimes occurs is in music sampling, when a songwriter or musician incorporates a snippet of another artist's work into a song. The musician doing the sampling may claim that they've used a limited amount of a particular piece of music—but the copyright holder might argue that the musician has copied the essence of the melody. As you can imagine, it can be difficult (and costly) to decide which side is more credible in front of a judge.

## Creative Commons

Some content creators generate works that are meant to be shared and used by lots of people. Software engineers, for example, want their intellectual property to be useful to people. A teacher might create a handout or worksheet that helps them explain a concept and then decide to make it available to other educators via the internet. In a case like this, the teacher might not want to charge money for the handout, but they also wouldn't want anyone else to be able to. In a case like these, copyright laws can be too strict—they can prevent people from using the work the way it's meant to be used.

This is why [Creative Commons](#) was founded. Creative Commons is a nonprofit organization that assists people in obtaining different categories of licensing for their intellectual property.. While Creative Commons licenses are less strict than a copyright, they can help you make sure people can use and distribute your work, if you want them to, while also making sure no one profits off of it in an unfair way.



A content creator can choose from many different types of Creative Commons licenses. Read the table below to learn more about them:

**Creative Common Licenses and What They Allow**

License	Description
CC BY	Under this type of license, users of the original work can change and adapt the material and even sell it, as long as they give credit to the work’s original creator.
CC BY-SA	This type of license allows users to change and adapt the material and sell it, as long as they give credit to the work’s original creator; the user must license the new version of the work under this same license.
CC BY-NC	This license allows users to change and adapt the material, but they may not sell it and they must give credit to the work’s original creator.
CC BY-NC-SA	Users may change and adapt the material, but they may not sell it. They must give credit to the original creator and agree to license their new version under this same license.

CC BY-ND	Under this license, users may copy and distribute the material, but they may not change it, and they must give credit to the original creator.
CC BY-NC-SD	This license allows users to copy and distribute the material, but they may not change it or sell it, and they must give credit to the original creator.

## Question

Imagine that you've created an infographic about water use in your town, encouraging people to save water. You share your work with others interested in the issue, but you don't want anyone to be able to profit from it or to change it. What type of Creative Commons license would you choose to obtain? Why?

### Reveal Answer

Sample answer: I would choose a CC BY-NC-SD license because that way, people could copy the infographic and distribute it, but no one would be allowed to change it or sell it. Plus, I would still get credit for my original work.

Understanding the ins and outs of copyright, attribution, fair use, and Creative Commons licensing may seem like it would only be useful in an academic context, but you may end up using this knowledge throughout your life. The internet has made it easier than ever to view and share intellectual property—so understanding how to keep your work safe from theft (and how to keep yourself away from copyright-law-breaking behavior) is essential knowledge.

# Check-In

Think about what you have learned about copyright, fair use, and Creative Commons as you answer the questions below.

## Question 1

Which statement best describes the purpose of fair use?

- a.** Fair use principles can help people get around copyright laws that are too strict.
- b.** If someone's use of a creator's work falls under fair use principles, then the creator may not dispute it.
- c.** Creative Commons licenses allow people to use parts of others' original work with fair use principles.
- d.** If a person has a specific, valid reason for using part of someone else's original work, fair use allows them to do so even if the original work is copyrighted.

Reveal Answer

- d.** If a person has a specific, valid reason for using part of someone else's original work, fair use allows them to do so even if the original work is copyrighted.

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## Question 2

If you use a quote from a copyrighted book in your research paper, you must:

- a.** make sure the book has a Creative Commons license.
- b.** include a note stating that the principles of fair use allow you to use the quote.
- c.** include proper attribution and a citation.
- d.** paraphrase the quote in order to avoid plagiarism.

Reveal Answer

- c.** include proper attribution and a citation.

## Question 3

Why might someone choose to use a traditional copyright instead of a Creative Commons license?

Reveal Answer

Sample answer: If a filmmaker made a documentary, they might want to be the only ones who are able to sell copies of it, whether they choose to sell it or not. They might not want anyone to be able to use parts of their footage in their own documentaries, and they might also want to make sure they get credit for their work if it's used in a fair use case.

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# Practice

Apply what you have learned about copyright, fair use, and Creative Commons to complete the activity.

## Activity

Imagine that your friend has written a piece of code that lets users change the look of the websites they create. It works by allowing users to adapt and customize it to suit the needs of their own website. Your friend wants to put the code under a license but isn't sure whether to use a traditional copyright or a Creative Commons license. Write a paragraph to explain to your friend the differences between traditional copyright and Creative Commons licensing. Advise them about which of the Creative Commons licenses would work best.

### Reveal Answer

Sample answer: I would tell my friend that a traditional copyright might not be the best choice because legal copyrights tightly restrict who can use, copy, modify, distribute, or sell the original work. Since the work in question is a piece of code that other people are meant to adapt, a Creative Commons license would probably work better. I would ask my friend if they wanted to sell their code or give it away for free. In either case, it would be best to choose a CC BY-NC license because they probably don't want other people being able to profit off their work. This type of license allows others to adapt and change the original code, but not to sell it. It also does not require people to license their new work with the same license because that doesn't apply to this situation. It would also require users to give my friend credit for their hard work.

---

## How Did I Do?

Assess your response to the Practice activity by completing this checklist. If necessary, go back and revise your work.

1. \_\_\_\_\_ I responded to the entire prompt.
  2. \_\_\_\_\_ I described the difference between traditional copyright and Creative Commons.
  3. \_\_\_\_\_ I explained which Creative Commons license would work best for the situation and why.
  4. \_\_\_\_\_ I used correct grammar, spelling, and punctuation.
-

# Objective and Key Words

---

## Objective

In this section, you will present, transform, or remix content in an ethical manner.

---

## Key Words

- **copyright** – the right to sell, copy, change, and distribute an original work
  - **Creative Commons** – a nonprofit organization that lets people use six different types of licenses to allow certain types of use of their original work
  - **ethical** – morally good or right
  - **fair use** – the principle that allows certain exceptions to copyright law
  - **generative AI** – a program operated by artificial intelligence that can generate information, images, and/or ideas
  - **public domain** – the body of original work that is not protected by copyright laws
-

# Ethics



Source: rawpixel. 123RF

## Copyright and Fair Use

When you hear the word *publish*, you might think of texts, newspapers and magazines, and other printed materials; however, the truth is that anything made available for others to see, read, hear, or use is considered a “published” work. This includes anything posted on the internet—even social media posts!



To that end, any work someone publishes is subject to [copyright](#) laws. These laws dictate that content creators hold the copyright on their own words, images, and audio recordings. No one else can use them without permission.

Before the internet, copyright laws were not hard to enforce; they applied to a limited number of media categories, including published print materials, movies and TV shows, and music. But now that it's easier than ever for anyone to publish anything they want on the internet, things have become more complicated. People continuously share, use, and transform each other's original work, and much of the time, this is encouraged. In fact, some kinds of work, like certain kinds of computer code, are designed to be shared, used, and modified by many people.

This is why we now have the principle of [fair use](#). At some point, it was decided that traditional copyright laws were too strict, so certain exceptions to copyright were developed. For example, if you want to use part of someone else's work for the purpose of review or critique, news reporting, parody, or education, it's likely to fall under the fair use principle as long as you include proper attribution and citations to make it clear that the work is not your own.

It's important to remember that fair use is a principle and not a law—this means that it can be open to interpretation. If you use a clip of a filmmaker's documentary as part of an educational presentation, the filmmaker may still argue that you need their permission in order to use the clip. Usually, this permission costs money. The whole point of copyright is to make sure that creators can get paid for their original work, so if you use the work in a way that interferes with that, even if you provide appropriate credit, you could end up in trouble—or worse yet, in court.

This also includes content made with [generative AI](#). It is important to inform your audience if you have used AI-generated content. Copying and pasting AI-generated content and calling it your own is plagiarism. Be particularly wary of image generators. Many of these have been created using copywritten artwork without getting permission

from the artists. They can be fun to use but should never be used for profit or to claim as your own.

In order to make sure you're using others' original work in an ethical way, here are four criteria that can help determine whether the work is used fairly or not:

- The purpose and character of the use: As mentioned above, review, parody, news reporting, and education are generally considered fair use.
- The nature of the copyrighted work: Is it designed to be used as a source of information, like an informational text that provides facts you might incorporate into a research paper? This example is more likely to be considered fair use than obtaining content from a novel or a movie.
- The amount of the original work used and its importance to the whole: In general, the less content you “borrow” through fair use principles, the better. But even a tiny excerpt from a novel is problematic if it gives away the ending of the narrative; spoiling the ending in a literary analysis or review could interfere with the sales of the original work, which is unethical.
- The effect on the potential market: If someone else sells or gives away the work, will it affect the amount of money the original creator can make from it?

## Presenting, Transforming, and Remixing Ethically

After considering all the restrictions enacted by copyright law, it might be intimidating to think about ever using anyone else's original work again. But there are lots of times when you must use others' work. For example, when you write a research paper, you must include lots of information from different sources. As long as you cite your sources properly and give proper attribution, there is nothing wrong with using the information you find this way.

Here are some other things to keep in mind when using others' work ethically:

- [Creative Commons](#) is a nonprofit organization that allows creators to license their work with different kinds of licenses that are less strict than copyright, but still protect them from having their work used in ways they don't approve of. If you find a piece of work you want to use in some way, check to see if it has a Creative Commons license and what that particular license permits.
- Anything published by the government is in the [public domain](#), which means you are free to use it any way you want, as long as you include attribution and citations.
- If you find a piece of work you really want to use but it isn't in the public domain and doesn't have a Creative Commons license, try reaching out to the creator to see if they'll grant you permission.

Watch the flipbook to see other examples of how people use the original work of others in an ethical way.

Video cannot be displayed on Print Preview

Other People's Work Transcript

# Check-In

Think about what you have learned about the ethical use of others' original work as you answer the questions.

## Question 1

How does copyright protect creators of original work?

Reveal Answer

Sample answer: Copyright makes it illegal for anyone except the creator to sell, copy, distribute, or share a piece of original work. This is because everyone has the right to make money from the original work they make and it is illegal to interfere with that.

Need a little extra support?

[Get Help Here](#)

## Question 2

How does the principle of fair use affect the ethics of using someone else's original work?

Reveal Answer

Sample answer: The principle of fair use says that there are certain circumstances when it's okay to use others' work without paying them for permission. It makes it ethical to use small parts of copyrighted work for purposes of review, education, news reporting, and parody.

Need a little extra support?

## Question 3

How could you transform an author's short story into something new? How would you do so in an ethical way?

### Reveal Answer

Sample answer: A story could be adapted into a screenplay to make a movie, or it could inspire a painting. In either case, the creator of the new work would have to get permission from the writer before using it, because it would not be ethical to make money off their work without giving them a share of it.

# Practice

Complete the following activity.

## Activity 1

Imagine that you have been assigned to write a research paper on space travel, and you must include visual or multimedia aids. How would you find information, images, videos, and audio clips? How would you use them in an ethical way? How can you use generative AI ethically?

Reveal Answer

Sample answer: First, I would gather facts, quotes, and information from NASA's website as well as sites of other United States government agencies because materials from those sites are normally in the public domain. If I couldn't find enough images or multimedia elements there, I would look in the rest of the public domain and I would search for images and videos that have Creative Commons licenses. To find facts and quotes, I would read books, news articles, and encyclopedias and provide attributions and citations for all of them—even though the books are copyrighted, using them for educational purposes falls under the fair use principle. I would also use generative AI to write an introduction and conclusion paragraph for my research paper, noting AI generated content in each section. If I found an image or video I really wanted to use but it was protected by copyright, I would see if I could get permission from the owner.

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## How Did I Do?

Assess your response to the Practice activity by completing this checklist. If necessary, go back and revise your work.

1. \_\_\_\_\_ I responded to the entire prompt.

2. \_\_\_\_\_ I explained how I would go about finding facts, quotes, information, and multimedia elements to use for my research project.
  3. \_\_\_\_\_ I explained how I would use the information I gathered in an ethical way.
  4. \_\_\_\_\_ I included one way to use generative AI ethically.
  5. \_\_\_\_\_ I used correct grammar, spelling, and punctuation.
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Media Literacy Apply

# Media Literacy: Apply

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## Objective

In this section, you will apply skills learned throughout the unit.

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## Show What You Know

In this unit, you focused on ways to analyze and evaluate multiple sources of media for their ability to inform, persuade, or entertain by implementing these learning goals:

- Identify categories, trends, and themes across multiple sources of mass media
- Evaluate the aural, visual, and written images and other special effects used in mass media for their ability to inform, persuade, and entertain
- Evaluate media sources for relationships between intent and factual content
- Analyze how media includes or excludes information from visual and verbal messages to achieve a desired result as well as how values and viewpoints are included or excluded and how the media can influence beliefs, behaviors, and interpretations
- Critically analyze information found in any media whose purpose is to persuade culture
- Interpret the changing role of the media over time in forming the public's opinions on issues

- Demonstrate an understanding of ethics in mass communication and describe the characteristics of ethical and unethical behavior
- Present, transform, or remix content in an ethical manner, in accordance with the ethics outlined by standards of copyright, attribution, citation, the principles of Fair Use, and of the different types of Creative Commons licenses

Now, you will have an opportunity to show what you have accomplished and apply what you have learned about media literacy, in part to the text you selected at the beginning of the unit. If you haven't already done so, take time now to finish reading the text.

Then, spend a few minutes discussing the text and the author's approach with your Learning Coach, using the suggested talking points below as a guide. Notice that the activities are open-ended—there are no “correct” answers—but they will help you to focus on the text as you get ready to apply the learning goals you have mastered in this unit.

- Tell your Learning Coach what you would say about the book if you wrote a post about it for a blog or social media page. Note specific aspects that you enjoyed or did not enjoy, and explain your reasoning.
- How clear was the author's personal perspective? Discuss aspects of the text that allowed you to interpret it or aspects that were lacking.
- In your opinion, how suitable is the text for adaptation to a different media? If so, which media would be most effective, and how would the text be presented?

Finally, access the text you have read, review your notes, and get ready to answer the questions that follow.

# Media Literacy: Apply

## Show What You Know

Assess your grasp of the learning goals from this unit by completing the activities that follow.

### Question 1

Identify a central idea or theme from the unit text you read. Then, describe how you might convey this theme using two different sources of mass media.

### Question 2

Suppose you want to incorporate an element of the unit text into a video you're creating for your social media page. Describe how you would present, transform, or remix the content from the text and do so ethically, using an understanding of tools such as copyright, attribution and citation, fair use, and Creative Commons licenses.

Watch this 1971 TV commercial and use it to answer the question.

Video cannot be displayed on Print Preview

## Question 3

Analyze the information the commercial conveys. How does it work to persuade viewers? What information might it exclude for a specific reason?

Reveal Answer

Sample answer: The commercial uses several strategies to convince viewers that a free sunroof is a great reason to buy a new car. At the beginning, one customer acknowledges another customer's purchase in an inclusive way, making it sound like everyone wants one: "Hey! You got a sunroof too!" At that point, the second customer uses figurative and descriptive language to convey how the sunroof will change his life for the better, and ends by emphasizing that it's free. The commercial excludes any "fine print" information, such as any costs associated with installing the sunroof, since including that information would make the idea of a "free" sunroof less persuasive.

## Question 4

Identify and explain a trend that is prevalent across multiple categories and sources of mass media.

Reveal Answer

Sample answer: One huge trend in mass media is online retail promotion. As more and more business moves online, retailers are increasingly creating internet-based shopping experiences and turning to websites, blogs, social media, and video sites to promote their products. This has created competition among platforms to develop websites and advertise and sell products in multiple media categories—print, broadcast, and outdoor media as well as digital.

In the mid-20th century, newsreels were as common in movie theaters in the United States as advertisements and previews are to moviegoers today. A newsreel was a short film that presented a news story to movie audiences. The video below shows an example from 1965. Watch the video, and then use it to answer Questions 5 and 6.

Video cannot be displayed on Print Preview

## Universal Newsreel Transcript

### Question 5

Why did the filmmakers create this newsreel? Evaluate the newsreel's use of information, sound, and visual and written images to achieve the creators' purpose or purposes.

#### Reveal Answer

Sample answer: The filmmakers of the newsreel wanted to inform Americans about a water shortage affecting the eastern U.S. and persuade them that action needed to be taken to address the problem. The title of the film, "The Water Crisis," appears in large type at the start of the film, making the danger clear to viewers. The newsreel presents relevant statistical information about the effects of the drought on state reservoirs, demonstrating that the supply levels were dangerously low but that water restrictions put into place were helping to bring the levels closer to capacity. It overlays this information with footage of low reservoirs, dry, parched beaches, and empty fountains, all of which emphasize the need for water conservation. The dramatic background music and the concerned tone of the narrator's voice further serve to convey a cautionary mood.

## Question 6

How might mass media achieve the same purpose today?

Reveal Answer

Sample answer: Today's mass media would have a much wider variety of resources at their disposal to alert audiences about a drought and convince them that water conservation is needed. Local television stations might feature news stories about the drought and run public service ads on TV, while newspapers would include articles with tips for readers about what they can do to conserve water. In addition, social media would play a large role in persuading citizens to address the issue; for example, a local meteorologist might do a live social media appearance to answer questions, or community-based social media groups could communicate information about restrictions and suggestions for conserving water and ask citizens to share their own ideas.

## Question 7

Select the interactive to show what you know about ethical and unethical behavior in mass communication.

### Self-Assess

How did you do? If you feel like you're ready, move on to Try This. If you need more practice, use this chart to review the sections mentioned.



### Self Assess

Activity Missed	Section to Review
1	Mass Media
2	Ethics
3	Techniques, Culture Transmission
4	Mass Media
5	Mass Media
6	Culture Transmission
7	Ethics

# Media Literacy: Apply

## Try This

Use what you have learned in this unit as well as insights you gained from reading your selected text to provide a written response to each of these activities.

### Activity 1

Locate elements in your unit text (or another text you have read) that play a role in marketing the text to the public; for example, the front and back cover images, testimonials from celebrity readers or other prominent authors, excerpts from literary reviews of the text, and so on. Then, in a few paragraphs, analyze how the information conveyed by these elements helps the publisher achieve their desired purpose.

### Activity 2

Consider the text you read for this unit, the ideas or themes conveyed by the author, and the values and viewpoints that these ideas and themes reflect. Then, in an essay of 400 to 500 words, reflect on the ways in which these ideas or themes, values, and viewpoints may have influenced your beliefs, molded your perception, and expanded your view of the world in a particular manner. Use your analysis to evaluate how closely the messages and ideas conveyed reflected the authors' views and served the author's purpose.

Use specific quotations and evidence from the text to support your analysis. Organize your essay clearly and follow the rules of English grammar and punctuation.

### Self-Assess

Use the rubric to decide whether your writing fulfills the standards of ideas/purpose; analysis; organization; comprehension; and grammar, conventions, and spelling.

## Media Literacy Rubric

**Media Literacy Review**

# Unit Review

Today you will review all topics you've learned in this unit and complete a unit online practice. Review the unit introduction and the list of lessons in the course tree to engage with the topics from this unit. Make sure you feel confident about each topic before taking the assessment. If there are any topics that you forget or think you need to practice, go back and review those lessons now.

[View Learning Coach Guide](#)

## Review

Read the information on the page with your student. Guide your student to review the major concepts in each unit by looking at the unit introduction and lessons.

Your student should identify the target concepts where additional practice may be needed before completing the unit's online practice.

# Unit Reflect

Write a reflection about your learning in this unit. Your reflection should be at least five sentences in length. Use the following questions as a guide:

- What topics did you find most interesting in this unit?
- What skills or concepts were hard for you?
- What strategies or activities helped you to better understand a concept?
- What do you think you may need more practice with?
- What questions would you like to ask now that you have a better understanding of what you will find on the assessment?

[View Learning Coach Guide](#)

## Reflect

Guide your student to reflect on how well they've mastered the content in the unit. Have your students use the questions provided as a guide for writing a reflection. Help your student to determine the next steps for review based on the responses given for the questions.

# Study Tips

Once you have taken the unit online practice, use your results to determine if there are any topics that you need to go back and review. You may find the following approach useful while studying:

1. Review your results on lesson practice activities and assessments from throughout the unit.
2. As you review, make a list of the major concepts found in each lesson.
3. Write a summary of these concepts and place a star next to those you feel you have mastered.
4. Review the concepts that may need a bit more practice using strategies such as summarizing, making flash cards to test yourself, writing sentences with key vocabulary, working out problems or activities, or teaching a concept to a friend or family member. If other study methods work better for you, use those instead.
5. As you become more comfortable with each concept, place a star next to it and move on to the next until you are ready to complete the assessment.

[View Learning Coach Guide](#)

## Study Tips

Read the study tips with your student and help identify what will be most helpful in reviewing the content from the unit. If needed, help your student brainstorm additional study tips that better fit their learning preference.

## **23/24 Honors English 11 B - Media Literacy**

### **Media Literacy Unit Test**