



Messages & Meaning

A Guide to Understanding Media

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Sponsored by the Newspaper Association of America Foundation
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Why Newspaper in Education Week?

Newspaper in Education Week is a project jointly sponsored by the International Reading Association, the National Council for the Social Studies, and the Newspaper Association of America Foundation; it is held each year usually during the first week of March. Newspaper in Education Week involves councils affiliated with the International Reading Association and the National Council for the Social Studies, schools and newspapers across the United States and in other countries throughout the world. By using the newspaper in direct application or extensions of the learning process, the program aims to reinforce a positive and relevant lifetime reading habit. The NIE Week program is designed not to replace but to complement the outstanding work done throughout the year by educators and NIE coordinators in the United States and Canada.

Newspaper in Education Week shows that:

- through the use of the newspaper, students can become better informed and consequently better citizens.
- newspapers demonstrate practical applications of skills and concepts presented in the school curriculum at all levels.
- newspapers update the information contained in textbooks.
- newspapers are fun to read, and fun motivates learning.
- by using the newspaper, teachers have the chance to explore some teaching approaches and resources that they may not have tried previously.

These points provide a solid basic foundation for Newspaper in Education Week. This project is devoted to enhancing the skills and content learned in the classroom through using the newspaper as part of the school's instructional program.

Children do not simply begin to read the newspaper on their own. They need models—parents and teachers who are excited about reading and who share with others what they have read. Parents who are more than a face behind the daily newspaper and teachers who use the newspaper as a means of enhancing the broad scope of learning show children just how important newspapers can be. If the goals of NIE Week are even partially met, the many worlds of the newspaper will open to thousands of students. These youngsters will step into tomorrow more adequately prepared to meet the challenges of our ever-changing society.

The Role of the Newspaper Association of America Foundation in NIE Week

The Newspaper Association of America represents more than 1,500 U. S. and Canadian daily and weekly newspapers, accounting for more than 85 percent of the daily newspaper circulation in the United States as well as considerable circulation in Canada and in other countries around the world. The NAA Foundation is an education foundation that encourages in the broadest and most liberal manner the advancement of freedom of speech and of the press.

America's newspaper people care deeply about children—about their future as citizens and as newspaper readers. Newspaper people know that the business they work in and the society they live in will remain healthy only if today's youngsters learn to read, think and be curious about what's going on in the world around them. More than 700 newspapers across the United States and Canada sponsor Newspaper in Education programs. To find out more about NIE, call your local newspaper.

The NAA Foundation has four objectives:

- to help develop informed and intelligent newspaper readers
- to foster public understanding of a free press
- to advance professionalism in the press
- to enhance minority opportunities in newspapers.

Under the first objective, the NAA Foundation has been methodically building a bold program that is having an impact on youngsters' reading skills. The Newspaper in Education program brings daily newspapers into schools to help teach subjects from grammar to geography, from social studies to science.

The NIE program is a logical marriage of the local school system and the local newspaper—two institutions working together to stimulate youngsters to learn to read and to become lifelong readers.

The Role of the International Reading Association in NIE Week

The International Reading Association is a professional organization of approximately 93,000 members, from all areas of the education community, with programs and networks that are international in scope. The Association's purposes are to improve the quality of reading instruction, to increase the level of literacy, and to encourage a lifetime reading habit. The Association's goal of worldwide literacy goes beyond the fundamental ability and freedom to read to include critical judgment of content and the enjoyment of reading.

It is with these goals in mind that the International Reading Association welcomes the opportunity to cooperate with the Newspaper Association of America Foundation and the National Council for the Social Studies to develop this teacher's guide for newspapers. There is no more practical way to enhance readers' ability for critical thinking than through a medium that so closely affects their daily lives.

The Association applauds efforts such as this Newspaper in Education curriculum guide and encourages its members to enrich their reading instruction by applying it within their own scholastic framework.

The Role of the National Council for the Social Studies in NIE Week

The National Council for the Social Studies is pleased to join with the International Reading Association and the Newspaper Association of America Foundation to sponsor NIE Week.

Social studies teachers rely on newspapers in many ways. Newspapers provide up-to-date information on important news events around the world, such as the struggles facing the new democracies in the former Soviet Union, increasing tension in North Korea and ongoing struggles in Africa. Newspapers can be used to follow an event over time, providing a chance for readers to reflect on personalities and happenings. Although radio and television news tell us that events have occurred, only newspapers allow us to read about them immediately and in depth.

The reading and writing skills so important to a student's education can all be taught using the newspaper. We urge social studies teachers to take advantage of the newspaper as a teaching tool.

Sources of Information about NIE Week

The sponsoring organizations will be pleased to provide more information about Newspaper in Education programs.

International Reading Association
800 Barksdale Road, P.O. Box 8139
Newark, DE 19714-8139, USA
Telephone: 302-731-1600

National Council for the Social Studies
3501 Newark Street N.W.
Washington, DC 20061 USA
Telephone: 202-966-7840

Newspaper Association of America Foundation
The Newspaper Center
11600 Sunrise Valley Drive
Reston, VA 22091, USA
Telephone: 703-648-1000



How to Use *Messages & Meaning*

The information explosion is here. The Information Superhighway is well under construction. In the middle of the last century, news took months to travel from one continent to another. Today, we can follow revolutions or elections in real time anywhere on the globe. Newspapers and magazines, which provide information in manageable portions, are supplemented by electronic databases that can provide a library of information in a matter of seconds. In print and electronic media, the lines between entertainment and information have blurred. Traditionally, editors sort through the mass of news available to select information they see as relevant to their readers. With on-line services and electronic bulletin boards, individuals will be faced with huge amounts of raw information. It will become more important than ever for readers and viewers to be able to process media messages critically.

This curriculum guide serves as an introduction to the forms and issues related to media literacy. The activities are designed for middle school students, but may be adapted for upper elementary or secondary students. A supplement designed for elementary students is included at the end of this guide. The organization of *Messages & Meaning* is outlined below.

Teacher Background Information

These pages contain several articles to provide teachers with information about media and media messages.

“Some Questions About Media Literacy” defines media terms and provides information about the mass media industry.

“How Students Construct Meaning in Media” suggests a model for understanding the interaction of the individual with the text and cultural environment of media messages.

“Newspapers and Media Literacy” introduces five concepts that govern an individual’s understanding of media messages and applies those concepts to newspapers.

“Analysis of Messages & Meaning Activities” lists the instructional activities in the guide and identifies the concepts they address.

“How Well Do You Know News Media?” provides suggestions to teachers for becoming familiar with the media landscape students encounter.

Instructional Activities

Instructional activities are organized around four units: Accessing, Analyzing, Evaluating and Communicating Media Messages. Each activity is identified by the media concept it illustrates. Many of the activities are accompanied by reproducible activity sheets. An additional page “Let’s Talk — Classroom Discussion Topics” describes media issues that information consumers face today.

Additional Teacher Resources

This section provides information about emerging technologies.

“News From Today’s Technologies” describes the many different types of media resources available.

“Evaluating New Technologies” provides a checklist to help teachers make decisions about embracing new technologies in their classrooms.

“Additional Resources” provides a list of additional resources for teachers.

Read, Watch, Listen and Learn — Elementary Activities

The pages in this section were designed for elementary students. The pages may be reproduced as activity sheets for students. Newspapers may want to enlarge the pages and produce them as tabloid-sized student sections.



Some Questions About Media Literacy

1. What is media literacy and why should students learn about it?

Students are subjected to thousands of media messages every day, from newspaper stories, to live television coverage of events, to television commercials, to billboards, to sales posters in the mall. Too often, students accept the messages unquestioningly, without stopping to examine the truth of the content or the motive of the message creator. Some media messages have a positive purpose — news and information about the community, the nation and the world; public service announcements or ads that discourage harmful behavior such as teenage drinking or smoking. Other messages can have a negative influence — commercials or ads that suggest women must be extremely thin to be beautiful or men must drive expensive cars to be popular. Students must be critical consumers of informative and persuasive media messages.

Media literacy is the ability to analyze, augment and influence the active reading or viewing of media so that one can become an effective citizen, make better personal choices and understand society. Media literate individuals can access, analyze, evaluate and generate media messages.

2. What are media?

Media are vehicles that convey messages. Some media, such as newspapers, books and magazines, use text; others, such as television, movies, billboards and fine arts, use visual images; still others, such as radio and performing arts, use music or movement. Most media messages use a combination of forms. Newspapers have text, photographs, illustrations and other graphic elements. Television and movies use still and moving images, sound effects and music.

An individual's personal style sends messages as well. Body language, dress, makeup, hair style, tone of voice and facial expressions convey meaning in face-to-face communications. This curriculum guide will deal only with mass media although students should be aware that there are many ways to send messages.

3. What are mass media?

The term "mass media" refers to those industries in which control of the messages lies in the hands of a small number of individuals. Those messages are then disseminated to large masses of people. Newspapers and magazines are examples of print mass media. Television, radio, videocassettes, video games and on-line computer services are examples of electronic mass media.

Mass media have a powerful place and serve an important role in a democracy. The public's vision of the world, society and self is shaped by words and images projected by the mass media. The citizenry gets most of its information about the conduct of the public's business from mass media sources.

4. What are some constraints on mass media news organizations?

Many factors affect the messages from mass media sources:

- **Costs:** Gathering, preparing and delivering the news are very expensive propositions. The news industry is both labor- and technology-intensive. Print and electronic news organizations require many reporters to track down stories, conduct interviews, do research and write stories. Newspaper computer systems and presses, especially those of daily newspapers, must be up-to-date and efficient. The two major expenses for a newspaper are newsprint and personnel. Small newspapers spend 15 percent to 20 percent of their total operating expenses on newsprint. Large newspapers have newsprint expenses of 25 percent to 40 percent of their total operating expenses. Labor costs newspapers anywhere from 30 percent to 50 percent of total operating costs. The electronic hardware and mobile broadcasting systems involved in television news require large amounts of money and technical support.

- **Financing:** Currently, advertising provides the primary financial support for news organizations, making up between 75 percent and 90 percent of total revenues. The price for a newspaper ad depends upon the size and the number of copies the newspaper sells each day — its circulation. What the newspaper offers an advertiser is its audience. A large newspaper can deliver more readers to an advertiser, so the cost of placing an ad in that newspaper is more than the same ad would cost in a smaller newspaper. The chart here provides a comparison of advertising prices in newspapers of varying circulation sizes.

Newspaper Circulation Size	1/4 Page Ad 6.5" x 10.5"	Full-Page Ad 13" x 21"
8,000	\$219	\$876
12,000	\$392	\$1,570
32,000	\$650	\$2,602
121,000	\$1,263	\$5,052
493,000	\$9,419	\$37,674
1,450,000	\$14,376	\$57,505

Source: Editor & Publisher Yearbook, 1994. Prices calculated on open inch rate for national advertising.

Circulation, the sale of newspapers, accounts for 10 percent to 35 percent of a newspaper's revenues. Television programming also is dependent upon advertising. Many times, profits made from advertising on entertainment programs help underwrite the costs of producing news programming.

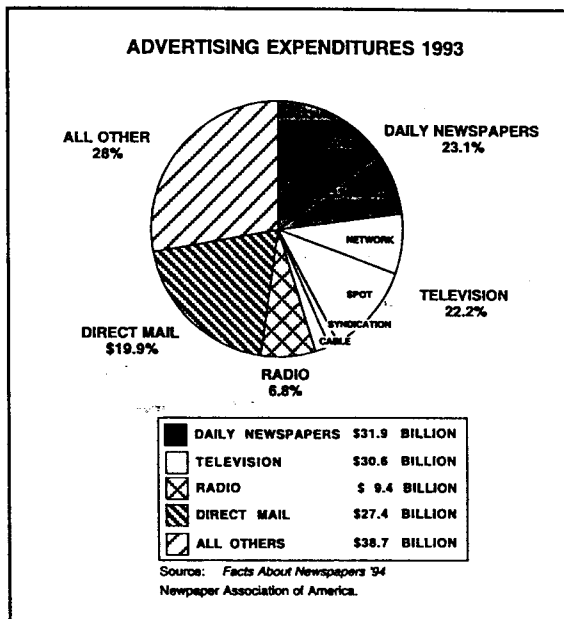
- **Time:** The news industry operates at high speed and on tight deadlines. The staff of an evening newspaper may have as few as five hours to produce that day's copy of the newspaper. Information gathering and writing is conducted under intense pressure. Journalists spend many hours outside their "official" work day covering events. They spend many of their regular hours writing their stories at their desks. The writing-editing-production process is an ongoing one. As stories and pages come together, they are sent to the production department. Pages are changed at the last minute if late-breaking news occurs. Television news has its own time constraints. A typical nightly half-hour news program may consist of 22 minutes of news in which to report the events of the day and 8 minutes of commercials.

- **Control or influence over content:** At one time, newspapers were fiercely partisan; publishers featured stories that promoted their own viewpoints and ideology. Today's mainstream news organizations strive for balance and print news based on a variety of factors such as timeliness, importance, conflict, progress, important personalities, etc. The opinions of the publisher, owner or editor may be featured on the editorial pages of the newspaper. Some editorials reflect the opinion of one individual, the editor-in-chief; however, many reflect the consensus of an editorial committee. In most newspapers, the editors make decisions independently without conferring with the paper's other executives.

Advertising supports both print and electronic media. The chart here illustrates the percentage and dollar amounts of advertising expenditures for different forms of media.

Even though advertising pays many of the bills in media, individual advertisers have less influence than many people believe. In television programming, advertisers sponsor a particular show or event. An advertiser's displeasure with programming content becomes very visible if the advertiser withdraws its sponsorship. Programs with low ratings have a difficult time attracting

individual sponsors. In print media, advertising provides general support for the product. No one advertiser sponsors a particular story or newspaper section, so an advertiser's withdrawal of support is not likely to affect specific coverage of an issue or event. But newspapers and magazines do need to maintain a high circulation to attract advertisers, and increasingly, they need to be able to target their deliveries to particular segments of their subscriber lists in order to satisfy advertisers. Many newspapers produce special sections devoted to one topic, such as new cars, home improvement or weddings, where editorial and advertising content are closely matched. These sections are generally produced by the advertising department of the newspaper and are identified as products of that department. Often these sections use different type and layout styles to differentiate them from regular editorial content.

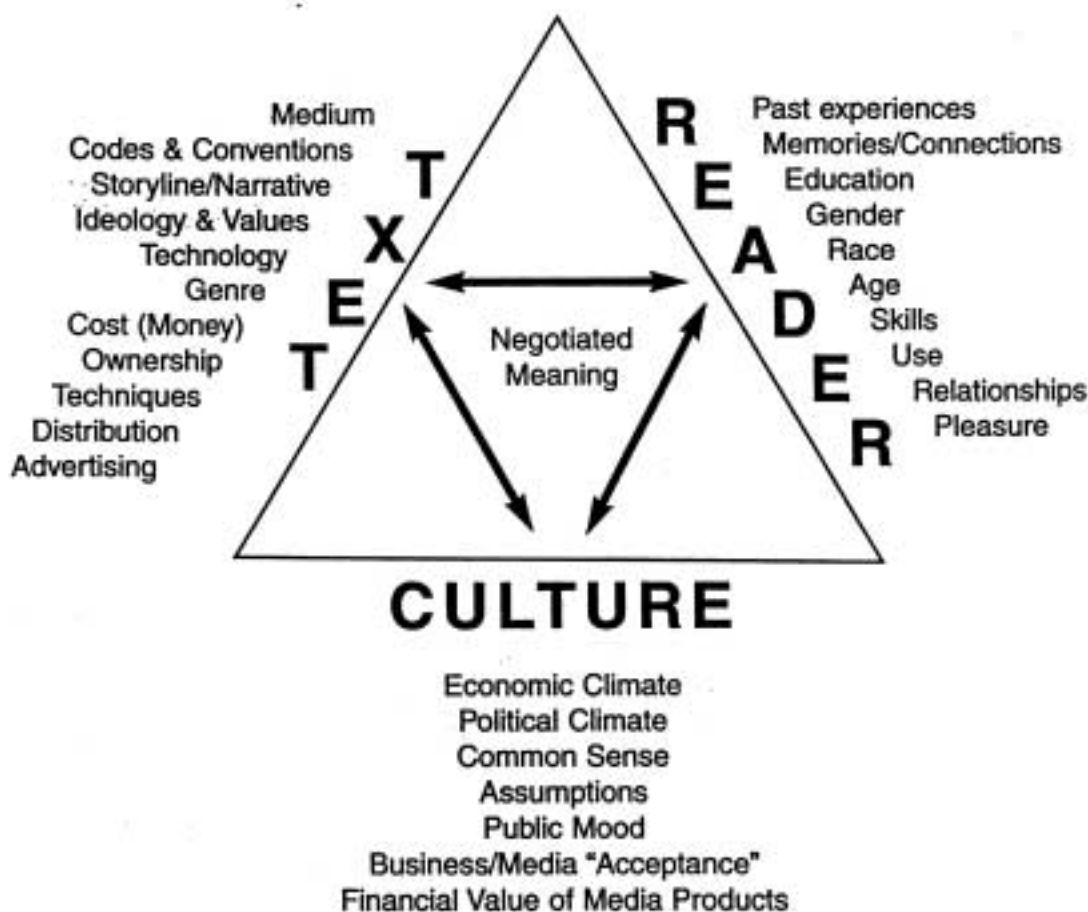


- **Readership and ratings:** The number of individuals who read a newspaper or watch a television program is important because it has a direct effect on the rates organizations charge advertisers. News media deliver information to their customers; they deliver customers to their advertisers. The more readers a newspaper can verify, the more money it can charge advertisers for advertising space. The more viewers a television program can deliver, the more the network can charge advertisers for air time. Newspaper advertising rates change slowly because readership is fairly constant. Television advertising rates vary widely depending upon the ratings of the programs advertisers choose to sponsor.



How Students Construct Meaning From Media

Interpreting media messages is an active, constructive process. The Active Viewer Model provides an illustration of the factors that influence an individual's interpretation of media messages. The word "reader" refers to anyone who reads, views or listens to a media message. "Text" refers to print and non-print media. The three elements identified in the model interact when an individual seeks to construct meaning from a media message. "Culture" refers to the environment in which the message occurs.



Reader — Many personal factors influence a reader's reaction to text. An adult may understand political messages better than a child can. Someone who has traveled widely may understand more about international news. An individual who reads for pleasure may approach a new book with enthusiasm; a non-reader would not.

Text — Many text factors affect an individual's ability to understand messages. Some people respond better to visual images than to print. Readers may be more familiar with a particular genre, such as news stories, than with another, such as editorials.

Culture — The environment in which a message is presented has an impact on the reader's understanding. Statements made by a president during a re-election campaign may be viewed more cautiously than statements made between elections. Stories about worker strikes are viewed differently in hard times and good times.



Newspapers and Media Literacy

Five conceptual principles provide a way to understand media. These principles can be applied to all media messages. Here is the way the principles apply to newspapers.

1. All messages are constructions

Media messages are created by individuals. Message creators decide which words or images to use, how to organize them and how to present their completed message to readers or viewers. Each medium serves as a filter for information.

Media messages must be interpreted by each individual who reads, views or hears the message. Individuals who understand the construction process are in a better position to interpret and understand the messages they encounter.

Newspaper application

The newspaper is a carefully constructed media form. The content of news stories is gathered and created by reporters. Reporters go to the scenes of events, interview people and research issues connected with events. They write their stories using conventional formats for news, sports, feature or commentary styles. Photographers try to capture the content, the context and the emotion of events in their photographs. Artists create graphics to add information and interest to stories. Stories and photographs from wire service journalists are sent to newspapers over satellite feeds. Editors make choices about what to put in an issue of the newspaper from the news stories and photographs available from their staffs and from wire services. Editors look for stories that have an impact upon their readers' lives and stories they think will be of interest to readers. Editors use several criteria in selecting what to publish, such as importance, proximity, timeliness, emotion, conflict, suspense and progress.

2. Messages are representations of social reality

Social reality refers to the perceptions about the contemporary world that are shared by individuals — their picture of the world around them. That reality is unique to specific historic time periods and different parts of the world. Newspapers, books, magazines and films of earlier times provide a picture of the social reality of those times and places.

The picture of the world presented by media may or may not be completely accurate. Individuals need to be able to judge the accuracy of the messages.

Newspaper application

The newspaper presents an ongoing record of the community and the world around it. Much newspaper space is devoted to coverage of the actions of government bodies because newspapers play a special role in a democracy. They are the eyes and ears of the people, the watchdog of government. Personal and social issues that dominate society — such as family, health and relationships — are reflected in feature stories and lifestyle sections of the newspaper. Newspapers vary greatly in the reality they reflect. Smaller newspapers carry more stories about local individuals, school news and community events. Larger newspapers, such as those with regional or national circulations, have less community coverage and more stories about state/provincial or national issues.

3. Individuals construct meaning from messages

Individuals do not interpret the same message in the same way. Each individual's understanding is affected by prior knowledge of the subject, prior experience with the structure of the message and consideration of the context in which the message is presented.

Individuals with knowledge, experience and familiarity with many media sources are more likely to interpret media messages accurately.

Newspaper application

Readers bring their own knowledge, experience and preconceptions to the newspaper. Many times, stories about an emotional issue are interpreted completely differently by opposing groups. The same news story about a strike at a factory may be seen as "union bashing" by workers and "anti-management" by owners. Readers' attitudes toward individual newspapers are often affected by whether or not the reader agrees or disagrees with the positions taken by the newspaper on its editorial pages. Readers can express their concerns by writing letters to the editor. Many newspapers have ombudsmen, who respond to readers' concerns.

4. Messages have economic, political, social and aesthetic purposes

People create messages for many reasons. Business messages encourage people to invest or make purchases. Political messages try to persuade voters to support specific issues or candidates. Social messages hope to convince individuals to behave in certain ways. Artists' messages elicit emotional responses from viewers.

Skilled information consumers who are able to recognize the creator's purpose in constructing a message can better understand the context of the message, determine its validity and judge its usefulness in their lives.

Newspaper application

Newspapers contain messages that serve many different purposes. Government officials and community leaders stage public events, hold press briefings and grant interviews to get their ideas and positions in front of citizens. Political columnists and political ads try to build public support for specific positions on issues. Commercial and non-profit organizations have public relations groups that try to enhance their organization's image by providing information to the press. Groups seeking publicity send press releases to newspapers. Newspapers often see these press releases as starting points for possible stories. Newspaper ads are messages paid for by businesses to influence the behavior of consumers.

5. Each form of communication has unique characteristics

Each message medium has its own characteristics, structure and formats. A news story and a play may cover the same event, but the news stories presents information in a concise, straightforward way while a play uses dialogue, scene changes and other dramatic devices.

By recognizing the strengths, weakness and constraints of various media forms, individuals can better interpret media messages.

Newspaper application

Newspapers present information in carefully structured ways so that readers can locate items that match their needs and interests. Newspapers use indexes, section and page heads and consistent formats to present an individual look to their product. News stories are written in an objective manner. Feature stories often have a more informal style. Editorials and commentaries use persuasive writing techniques. Advertising combines visual images and colorful language to attract readers' attention and interest.



Analysis of Messages & Meaning Activities

The activities in Messages & Meaning were designed around the five conceptual principles of media literacy used in this curriculum guide. Many activities fit in more than one category. The chart below lists each activity and identifies the main principle it illustrates.

Units and Activities	All messages are constructions	Messages are representations of social reality	Individuals construct meaning from messages	Messages have economic, social and aesthetic purposes	Each form of communication has unique characteristics
1 - Accessing Media Messages					
Identifying Media Messages				✓	
Where's the Info?	✓				
How Do You Use Media?				✓	
Finding Your Way Through the Newspaper					✓
Functions of Newspaper Messages			✓		
2 - Analyzing Media Messages					
How User-Friendly Are Media?					✓
Good News, Bad News		✓			
Media Images		✓			
Looking at Life		✓			
Comics and Real Life		✓			
Writing Styles in Newspapers					✓
What Influences News Media			✓		
Researching Your Local News Media Market					✓
Interpreting News Photos		✓			
Where Should the Story Go?	✓				
How Does It Look?	✓				
Comparing Media Sources	✓				
Newspapers and Television					✓
Newspaper Ads and Television Commercials				✓	
3 - Evaluating Media Messages					
Modifying Your Position			✓		
What Is It Saying?				✓	
Values in Advertising				✓	
Critic's Corner			✓		
4 - Communicating Media Messages					
Choose Your Audience	✓				
Tell the Story	✓				
Communicating Through Typefaces	✓				
You're the Cartoonist	✓				



How Well Do You Know News Media?

What is your comfort level with various news media? Do you claim never to watch television, or to watch only PBS or other educational programming? Then you need to become more familiar with the wide range of media your students are encountering every day. Try a news immersion week before you begin a media unit with students. Here are some suggestions. You may want to incorporate some of these resources and activities in your classroom study of media.

Newspapers

1. Read through a copy of your local newspaper carefully each day for a week. Notice the design of the pages, the placement of the stories and the text cues — section heads, page heads, indexes and features that appear in the same place each day. Look at the classified ads and the placement of display ads in different sections.
2. Read through several copies of a nationally circulated newspaper. Compare the content and sections with your local newspaper. Compare the advertising in each.
3. Look at one copy of your local newspaper. Compare its contents with the content of a local television news program and a network news program on the same day.

Television

4. Watch or tape and review a week's worth of network news programming. Review the major networks' evening news programs (ABC, CBS, NBC, CNN, PBS, FOX). Sample the morning news shows and weekend news interview programs, such as *Meet the Press*, *Face the Nation*, and *This Week with David Brinkley*.
5. Watch a week's worth of local television news programs. Note the amount of time given to hard news and the amount given to feature segments.
6. Watch a news tabloid show, such as *Hard Copy* or *Inside Edition*. Compare tabloid and network coverage of the same news event.
7. Watch part of a television "infomercial," a 30- to 60-minute commercial presented as if it were a regular television show. Infomercials frequently look like talk shows or demonstration programs.

Cable Television

8. Watch C-SPAN several times throughout the week. Try to watch "Journalists' Roundtable" or another segment where print reporters discuss a specific topic.
9. Watch CNN's "Reliable Sources," a weekly half-hour program dedicated to critical analysis of electronic and print news reporting over the past week.
10. Watch MTV several times. View the "Week in Rock" segment, which is usually broadcast several times on the weekend. Note any national issues covered in the news program. Examine the content and designs of commercials on MTV. Watch for Public Service Announcements (PSAs). Watch the last 30 minutes of the "Top 20 Countdown" to get a sense of the groups and issues that are popular with students.

Magazines

11. Examine and compare two or more weekly news magazines. Compare content in them for the same week.

Radio

12. Listen to a news program on the radio. Compare the contents with the contents of your daily newspaper.

Computer On-Line Services

13. Scan the news resources available on a computer on-line service. What newspapers are available on the service? Select a current issue in the news and do a search to find the different kinds of resources available for that subject.



1 ♦ Accessing Media Messages

How students access media messages

Students are bombarded with thousands of media messages a day. In many cases, students react to the messages without thinking about them. In order to use media effectively to make personal, social, political and economic decisions, students must be aware of media forms so they can recognize and evaluate the messages they encounter. Accessing messages requires students to find and understand information. Students need to become familiar with an array of information sources such as newspapers, magazines, reference books, television, radio and computer on-line services. Then they must determine which source will give them the information they need for specific tasks. They also must know how to determine what information is relevant to their task and what is not.

Identifying Media Messages

Students are encouraged to think about what is or is not a media message with the "Identifying Media" Messages activity sheet.

Principle: Messages have economic, social and aesthetic purposes.

1. Ask students to define the term "media." List their responses on the board. Tell them their next activity is to find different kinds of media messages. Have students complete the activity sheet "Identifying Media Messages."
2. Conduct a quick class poll by having students raise their hands to indicate whether they answered yes or no to each example in #1. Then explain that all the examples are media messages. Even a body decoration, such as a nose ring or a tattoo, can send a message, using the body as the medium.
3. Go through the list again with students and ask them to identify the purpose for each message — it is to inform, persuade, advertise or entertain. Allow them to suggest other purposes as well.

Where's the Info?

Students identify the different places they have looked to locate specific information for their daily lives with the "Where's the Info?" activity sheet.

Principle: All messages are constructions.

1. Have students complete the activity sheet "Where's the Info?" individually.
2. Have students meet in small groups to compare their responses. What have they learned? What kinds of information can be found in several locations? What kinds can be found primarily in one source?
3. Discuss their responses to #2 and #3 on the activity sheet as a class.

How Do You Use Media?

Students identify their use of various media sources with the "How Do You Use Media?" activity sheet.

Principle: Messages have economic, social and aesthetic purposes.

1. Ask students to discuss the different media sources they use in one week.
2. Have students complete the activity sheet "How Do You Use Media?" individually. Have students compare their resources.

Finding Your Way Through the Newspaper

Students recognize the graphic and design cues they can use to locate information easily in the newspaper.

Principle: Each form of communication has unique characteristics.

1. Present students with a newspaper scavenger hunt — a list of specific items to locate in the newspaper to be done individually or in teams. The person/group who is the first to locate all the items could be awarded prizes. Select items from the list below, or add some of your own.

the score at a sporting event

a country in Europe

the price for a share of IBM stock

a national news story

a comic strip with two characters

the price for a food item

a movie playing at a local theatre

a number that can be divided evenly by 3

a letter to the editor

a story about a local individual

the weather on the East Coast

an ad for a piece of clothing

2. After students have completed the scavenger hunt, ask them to identify any newspaper elements they used, such as the index, to help them locate the items.
3. Have students list on the board the newspaper elements designed to help readers find information quickly. Several examples are listed below. Be sure students include all the cues specific to their local newspaper.

Indexes

Newspapers usually have a general index on page one or two; most classified ad sections have a separate index; some individual sections may have an index.

Section heads

Many newspapers have a separate section head at the top of the first page of a section; the head lists the title of the section and special features, such as the comics or movies, that appear in that section.

Page heads

Some newspaper put a line at the top of each page indicating the type of news on they page, such as local news, science or commentary.

"Anchored" features

Newspapers usually "anchor" certain features; that is, they always place them in the same place in the paper. The weather map, for example, may be anchored on the back page, or the editorial page may always be on page 2 of the second section.

4. Have students practice locating specific information using the graphic and organizational cues in their newspaper.

Functions of Newspaper Messages

Students identify items in the newspaper that inform, persuade and entertain, using the "Functions of Newspaper Messages" activity sheet.

Principle: Individuals construct meaning from messages.

1. Ask several students to identify parts of the newspaper. Write the responses on the board. Then have the class identify the function of the writing used in these different elements. For example, a news story gives information about an event, but a political column on the same topic tries to persuade readers to accept the writer's point of view.
2. Have students complete the "Functions of Newspaper Messages" activity sheet as individuals or in small groups.
3. Have students compare their responses. Did any of them interpret the same piece of writing in different ways? For example, a movie review provides information about the film, but it also uses persuasive writing to encourage or discourage readers from seeing the film. How many pieces served more than one purpose? What criteria did individual students use to categorize the pieces as they did?



Identifying Media Messages

1. Which of the following are media messages directed to you or others? Check "yes" if you think the item is a media message, "no" if you do not.

	Yes	No
a. A newspaper story about the president	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. The "Top Ten Countdown" of rock records on the radio.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. A traffic sign	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. A television commercial for laundry detergent.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e. A billboard promoting a local bank	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f. A photograph of a model wearing Lee's jeans in a clothing store.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
g. An editorial in the newspaper	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
h. An announcement of an upcoming concert on a poster at a grocery store	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
i. The "EXIT" sign in a school.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
j. A movie preview before the feature at a theatre	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
k. A t-shirt from an amusement park	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
l. A class play in a high school	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
m. Pictures of elves and cookies on the outside of a bag of cookies.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
n. A nose ring on a teenager	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

2. Write an example of an idea or information you would like to communicate to others.

3. What would be the best way to communicate that information to other students in your class?

Name _____

Date _____



Where's the Info?

There are many sources of information available to us. Some sources are more efficient than others, depending upon what we want to find out. Look at the items below. Put a "1" in the column that shows the first place you would look to find the information. Put a "2" in the column that shows another place you would look.

	Newspaper	Magazine	Television	Radio	Computer service	Other
Tomorrow's weather						
The top 20 rock songs of the week						
The time a movie starts at a local theater						
The best price on a CD player						
The newest releases from a music group						
The latest stock prices						
The latest traffic conditions						
A review of the important news of the week						
The complete text of a speech by the president						
A review of a new movie						
The opinions of a citizen about a local issue						



How Do You Use Media?

1. How often do you use media?

How many times a week do you turn to different media sources? Rate each media listed below using the scale below. Color in the bar following each medium to indicate your level of use.

- 5 Every day
- 4 Almost every day
- 3 Several times a week
- 2 About once a week
- 1 Less than once a week

	1	2	3	4	5
Newspaper					
Magazine					
Television					
Radio					
Computer services					
Other					

2. How do you use media sources?

Think of the different ways you use information sources. Write an example of how you use each of the following media to get information you need.

Newspaper _____

Magazine _____

Television _____

Radio _____

Computer service _____

3. Name an information source you would like to learn about. Tell why you would like to know more about the source.



Functions of Newspaper Messages

News stories, feature stories, editorials, columns, ads — the different parts of the newspaper have different purposes. They may provide information, be persuasive or entertain. Look through the newspapers to find examples of these different functions. List your findings on the chart below. Compare your findings with classmates .

	Article/Item	Page	Why did you put it in this category?
INFORM			
PERSUADE			
ENTERTAIN			



2 ♦ Analyzing Media Messages

How students analyze news

Analyzing media requires students to apply knowledge of form, structure and context to media messages. Students interpret messages by using literary concepts such as audience, point of view, genre, character, plot, theme, mood, setting, etc. They also use their knowledge of the historical, social, political and economic contexts of the message. Students use comprehension strategies such as comparing and contrasting, determining fact and opinion, sequencing clarity and identifying cause and effect.

How User-Friendly Are Media?

Elementary students examine the cost, convenience and accessibility of various types of media with the “How User-Friendly Are Media?” activity sheet.

Principle: Each form of communication has unique characteristics.

1. Ask students to think about the different kinds of media available to them. Conduct a class poll. How many students have newspapers in their home? Magazines? Television?, etc. Tell students that they are going to compare these kinds of media.
2. Put students in small groups to complete the activity sheet “How User-Friendly Are Media?.” They will mark their responses on the semantic feature analysis grid on the sheet. You may have to help students determine their own guidelines for what is expensive or inexpensive.
3. Share the results of student responses as a class.

Good News, Bad News

Students research the question “Does the media emphasize bad news?”

Principle: Messages are representations of social reality.

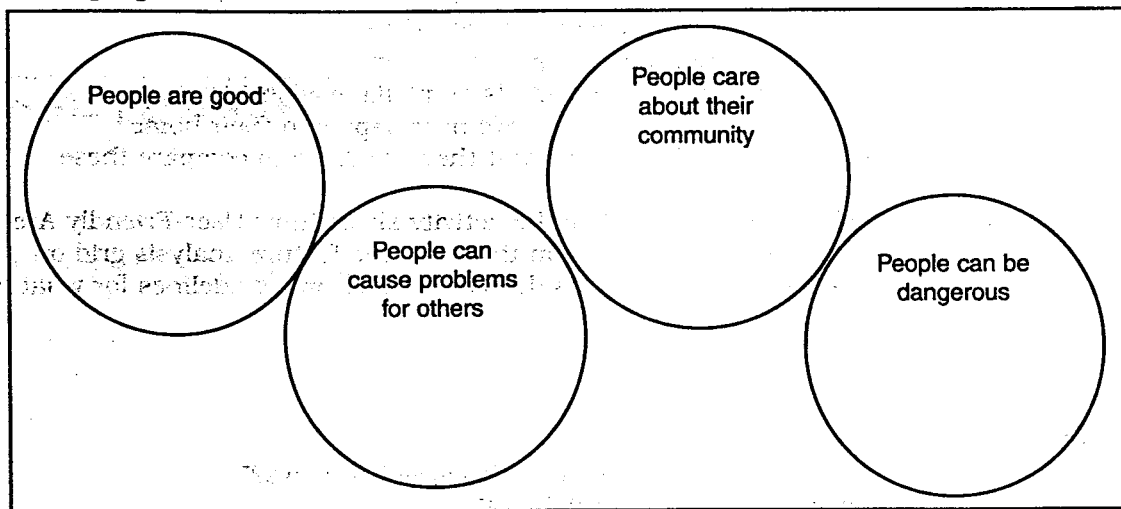
1. Ask students to volunteer their opinion about the news they read in newspapers or see on television. Is it mainly good news or bad news? Let students share their ideas. Tell students they are going to conduct a research study to find the answer.
2. Separate the class into seven groups — one group for each day of the week. Explain that each group will go through the newspaper on its day and count the number of good news stories and the number of bad news stories. (You may want to have older students measure the stories with a ruler and calculate the number of column inches for each type of news). You may add a “neutral” category for those items that do not appear to fit a “good” or “bad” news category.
3. Assign students to watch a local news program and a network news program for their day. Have them count the stories and classify them as good news or bad news. As an alternative, you may want to videotape a nightly local news program and a network news program and have students review the videotape during the school day.
3. What did the students find? Were there some stories that could be classified as good or bad depending upon an individual's point of view? Was there a difference in the number of stories covered each day in newspapers and television? Was there a difference in the kind of news stories covered? Have students discuss their findings as a class.

Media Images

Students identify the picture of society they perceive from various media sources.

Principle: Messages are representations of social reality.

1. Create a bulletin board display of large circles. Label each circle with one of the following statements or statements of your own choosing.
 - People are good
 - People care about their community
 - People can be dangerous
 - People can cause problems for others
2. Have students collect examples from the media that illustrate the statements and post them in the appropriate circle. For newspapers or magazines, have students post the story and headline in the circle. Use colored cards for other media sources. Use one color for television; have students write the name of the program that matches the statement. If students want to use an example from a television news program, have them write the topic of the story on the card, not just the name of the news program. Use different colors for radio, movies or other sources.



Looking at Life

Students examine the way different media portray society with the "Looking at Life" activity sheet.

Principle: Messages are representations of social reality.

1. Ask students to list words they would use to describe society today — is society compassionate? dangerous? greedy? Discuss their responses, especially those that may conflict. Ask students to think about how they developed their ideas and to name the sources for their views (personal experience, television, movies, newspapers, etc.).
2. Explain to students that different media may give them inconsistent or opposing messages about life. Have students complete the "Looking at Life" worksheet in pairs or small groups.
3. Discuss student responses as a class.

Comics and Real Life

Students evaluate the content of comic strips and relate it to their perceptions of the world.

Principle: Messages are representations of social reality.

1. Begin a class discussion by asking students to talk about their favorite comic strips. Why do they like those strips?
2. Ask students work in pairs or small groups to look at the comic strips in their newspaper. Have them classify the strips into two categories: strips that show a "truth" about life as the students perceive it, and strips that do not reflect reality as the students know it.

3. Have students share their responses. Have students discuss how comic strips represent reality in various areas, such as race, gender roles, class or occupation. Allow students to suggest topics for comparison.
4. Have students create a comic strip or write a description of a comic strip that would reflect their daily lives.

Writing Styles in Newspapers

Students examine the same topic as it is presented in a variety of newspaper genres with the "Writing Styles in Newspapers" activity sheet.

Principle: Each form of communication has unique characteristics.

1. Ask students to name the different kinds of writing they can identify in the newspaper, such as news stories, feature stories, editorials, columns, editorial cartoons and comic strips. Explain that a very popular or controversial topic often appears in many forms in the newspaper.
2. Have students work in pairs or small groups to complete activity sheet "Writing Styles in Newspapers." Students may have to collect different newspapers over several days to locate the forms listed on the sheet. Students may want to compare local, regional and national newspapers.
3. Have students discuss their findings in class. Which genres provided the most factual information? Which had a definite point of view? Did they agree with any of the points of view presented? Why or why not?

What Influences Media Messages?

Students analyze the forces that act upon news events and relate that information to media messages with the "What Influences News Events?" activity sheet.

Principle: Individuals construct meaning from messages.

1. Select a news event from the newspaper. Ask students to volunteer what they already know about the story.
2. Have students consider what they know about the history leading up to the event, the political and social environment in which the event takes place and the economic factors that may have influenced the event. Explain that the students' prior knowledge about these areas has affected their ability to understand the media coverage of the event.
3. Have students complete the "What Influences News Events?" in pairs or small groups.
4. Have students discuss in class the predictions they have made about the news story they studied. Have them identify the various factors that led them to their predictions.

Researching Your Local News Media Market

Secondary students research the cost and scope of news resources in their local community with the "Researching Your Local Media Market" activity sheet.

Principle: Each form of communication has unique characteristics.

1. Have students identify the different kinds of media that exist in their community. List them on the board.
2. Separate the four media areas identified on the activity sheet and assign each one to a group of students. Give students a week to research their media. If there are several newspapers or television stations in your area, assign one group of students to each one. Students may use reference materials or speak to individuals at the news organization.
NOTE: Have only one student contact an individual at each of the media sources. At the newspaper, have students ask for the Newspaper in Education department or the Community Relations department. Have students ask for the Community Relations departments at other sites.
3. Have each group report back to the class. Compile the information on a bulletin board. Have students identify what they see as the strengths and limitations of each of the media sources they have studied.

Interpreting News Photos

Students examine news photos and compare the photos with accompanying text.

Principle: Messages are representations of social reality.

1. Clip photographs and their accompanying news stories from the newspaper. Cut the photos and news stories apart.
2. Give pictures to pairs or small groups of students. Ask the students to write about the picture. Have them share their interpretations of the photos with the class.
3. Have students read the news stories that go with the photos.
 - How did the interpretations change?
 - Does the print narrow or expand the interpretation?
 - Does the language of the story and the emotional impact of the photo have an impact on the understanding of the story?

Where Should the Story Go?

Students decide where news stories should be placed in the newspaper.

Principle: All messages are constructions.

1. Tape a 30-minute newscast. Play it for students. Have them list the stories reported.
2. Have students work in small groups to determine where they would place the same stories in a newspaper. What sections? Where on the page?
3. Have students look at a copy of the day's newspaper. How does their story placement compare with the placement in the actual newspaper?

How Does It Look?

Students compare the graphics and visual presentation of news and television programming over time.

Principle: All messages are constructions.

1. Collect copies of newspaper pages from 10, 15 and more years ago. (Your local library may have back issues of your local newspaper on microfilm.) Ask students to compare the format, style and content of the newspapers. Examine page designs, headlines, advertisements, typefaces (the style of the letters used), cutlines (the captions under photographs), etc.
 - What has changed? Why do you think the change(s) occurred?
 - What has stayed the same? Why do you think no change(s) occurred?
2. Collect videotapes of television programs from earlier years. Have students compare the programs to current shows. Look at the commercials as well.
 - What has changed? Why do you think the change(s) occurred?
 - What has stayed the same? Why do you think no change(s) occurred?
3. Ask students to interview parents or local television and radio producers, newspaper editors and reporters to find out about changes in each medium and why those changes have occurred.

Comparing Media Sources

Students compare story content and length in different news sources.

Principle: All messages are constructions.

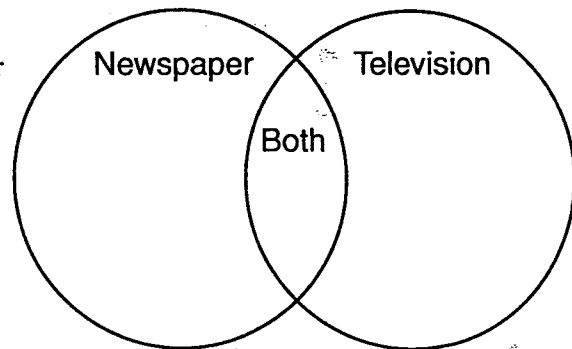
1. Tape a 30-minute newscast. Have students examine the coverage of the stories with coverage of the same stories in a newspaper, coverage in a weekly news magazine such as *Time* or *Newsweek*, and, if available, the information from a computer on-line service.
2. Have students compare the information found in each medium in terms of context, purpose, believability and pleasure. Ask them to name the elements that affected their opinions.

Newspapers and Television

Students identify relevant information in newspaper stories and compare newspaper and television coverage of that story with the "Let's Compare Newspaper and Television News Stories" activity sheet.

Principle: Each form of communication has unique characteristics.

1. Select a news story from the newspaper. Have students read the story. As they do, have them underline interesting words, key phrases that helped them understand the story, and unknown vocabulary.
2. Have students discuss their interpretation of the story in pairs or small groups. Each student should explain why or how he or she understands the article as he or she does. Did students have the same words and phrases underlined?
3. Have the pairs share their findings. With the whole class, discuss what would account for their different interpretations. (For example, one student might not have any knowledge about the topic, while another had an extensive interest in it and had read other articles. Or, the article may have appealed more to one gender than the other.)
4. Ask students to watch television news for a report about the same story they read in the newspaper. Have them compare the way the two different media covered the story by recording their findings on the activity sheet "Comparing Newspapers and Television News Stories."
5. Ask students to consider what they get from television that they don't get from the newspaper and vice versa. Have students work in pairs to develop a list of what readers and viewers get from each medium. What is specific to each medium? What things are the same?
6. Discuss students' lists as a class. Place the information on a Venn diagram for comparison individually, in pairs, or as a whole class.



Newspaper Ads and Television Commercials

Students compare the advertising shown during a television news program with newspaper ads.

Principle: Messages have economic, social and aesthetic purposes.

1. Ask students to make a list of the products advertised during a 30-minute newscast. Then have them look at the ads in the newspaper. Have them compare the products advertised.
 - Are some of the products the same?
 - Are there different products advertised in each place?
 - Why would an advertiser choose a newspaper to advertise a product? Why would the advertiser choose a television newscast?
 - What are the advantages and disadvantages of each medium?
2. Have students count and compare the number of different products advertised in the newspaper and television news program.



Name _____

Date _____

How User-Friendly Are Media?

There are many different ways to locate information you might need for school work or for your own personal information. Look at the list of media sources across the top of the chart below. Then look at the questions on the left side of the chart. Put a plus sign (+) under the media source if the statement is true for that media. If the statement is not true for the media source, put a negative sign (-). Share your answers with other classmates.

	Newspaper	Magazine	Television	Cable TV	Radio	Computer Service
It is easy to locate specific information in this resource.						
The information you need is available at your convenience (anytime, day or night).						
This resource is portable — you can take it with you to different locations.						
The hardware for this resource is inexpensive.						
The services for this resource are inexpensive.						
It is easy to save and retrieve information from this resource.						
This resource is updated very frequently.						
Almost everyone has access to this resource.						
Almost everyone can afford this resource.						
This resource can be entertaining.						



Looking at Life

1. Media are limited in the amount of information they can provide consumers at any given time. However, much of what we understand about life comes from the images presented by media.

Pretend you are visiting this country after living on an isolated mountain top for your entire life. What would your perception of life in this country be if any one of the media forms below were your sole source of information?

Information source	Your perception
Front page of a newspaper	
Situation comedy on network television	
Rap or heavy metal music video on television	
Action-adventure movie	
Women's magazine	
Talk radio program	
Computer bulletin board	

2. What aspects of life as you know it are NOT represented in mass media today?

3. Why do you think these areas are not presented in print or electronic media?



Writing Styles in the Newspaper

The newspaper contains many different sections with a variety of writing styles. Editorials have a different structure and purpose from news stories. Editorial cartoons and comic strips both use drawings, but they are different in other ways.

Select a topic in the news. Follow the topic over several days. Collect news stories, editorials or opinion columns, editorial cartoons and comic strips that deal with your topic. Examine and compare the different formats. Write your observations in the boxes below.

Topic _____

NEWS STORY

Headline:

Facts:

EDITORIAL

Headline:

Facts:

Point of view of writer:

EDITORIAL CARTOON

Caption:

Facts:

Point of view of writer:

COMIC STRIP

Title of strip:

Facts:

Point of view of writer:

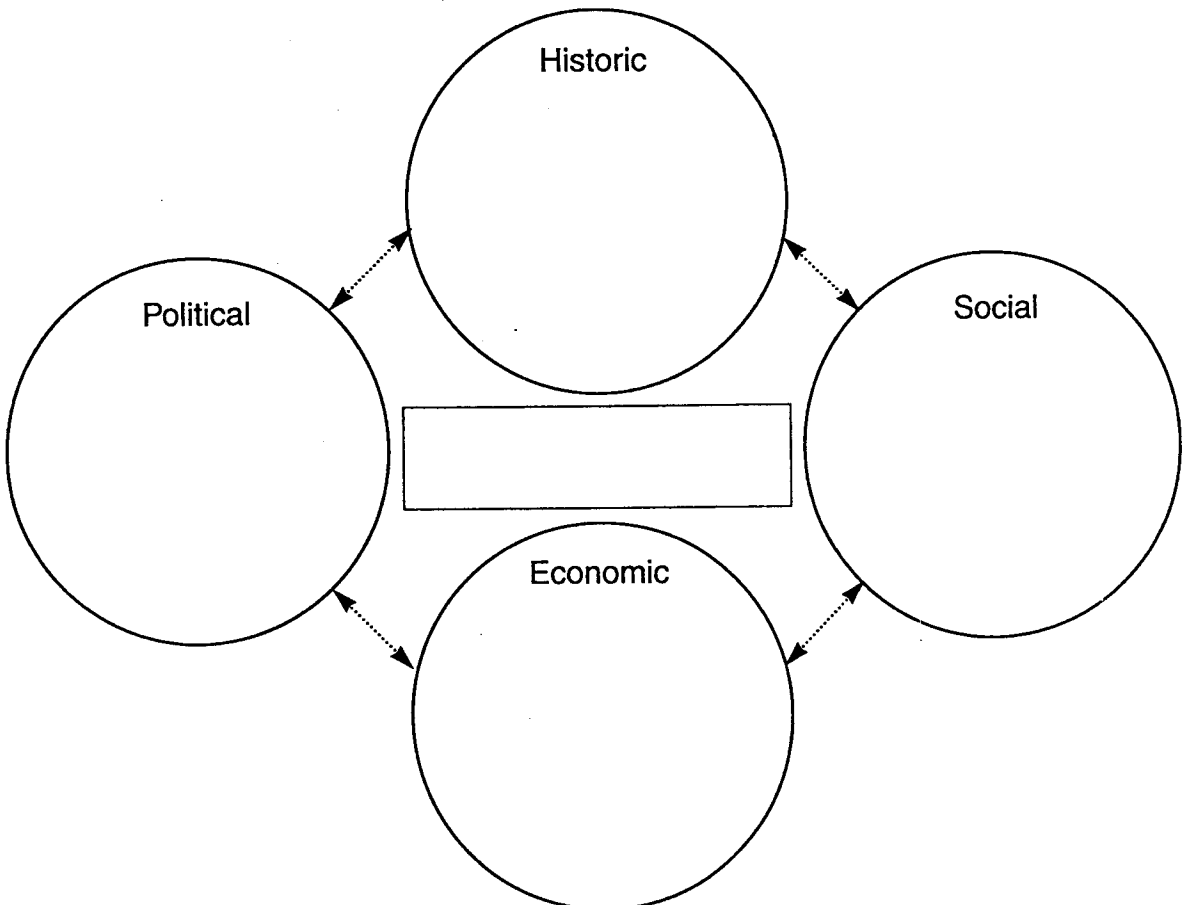


What Influences News Events?

1. Events in the world do not just happen. There are many factors that affect the actions of individuals and governments. Select and read a national or international news story in the newspaper.

1. What is the topic of the story? _____
2. What do you already know about the situation? Write a brief summary of your understanding of the subject.

3. Think about the different kinds of influences that led to the current situation. Write the topic in the center of the diagram below; then write about the influences in the circles.



II. What do you think will happen next in this situation? Write headlines for stories about this situation in one week, one month and one year in the future.

One week: _____

One month: _____

One year: _____

III. Explain why you think this series of events will occur:

Name _____

Date _____



Researching Your Local Media Market

Use the table below to compile research your class collects about the various media resources in your community. The media market is related to the size of the community it serves.

What is the population of your community? _____

	Newspapers	Local Television Non-Cable/Cable	Radio	Computer Services
How many people are engaged in gathering, writing and presenting the news?				
What geographic area is covered by this source for local or regional news?				
How many people are reached by the news produced by the source?				
How much does it cost to purchase any initial hardware needed for this information?				
How much does it cost to receive the services of this product for one month?				
How often is the news updated in this source?				
What additional information services does this source provide? What is the cost of additional services?				
Who owns this business?				

Name _____

Date _____



Let's Compare Newspaper and Television News Stories

Complete the chart below comparing newspaper and television coverage of the same story. Be specific about how each medium presented the information.

	Newspaper	Television
Point of view		
Amount of space or time allotted to the story		
Sources quoted		
List details included: who, what, where, when, why, how		
Why do you think the editor/producer decided to include this story?		
What was your general impression of the piece?		



3 ♦ Evaluating Media Messages

How students evaluate media messages

Evaluating media messages requires students to make judgments about the veracity, quality and relevance of messages. They are expected to relate messages to their own experiences and to make personal evaluations of the quality of a message's content and form. Evaluation of these messages encourages students to reflect on personal values, engage in critical thinking and be informed decision-makers. Students also must learn to consider the aesthetic appeal and value of media messages.

Modifying Your Position

Students evaluate information on a topic of interest to them and determine if their positions have changed. Students organize their thinking on the "Modifying Your Position" activity sheet.

Principle: Individuals construct meaning from messages.

1. Ask students to identify current issues in the news about which they have strong opinions. List responses on a board.
2. Have students work individually and select one of the suggested topics to investigate in the newspaper. Have them locate a news story and an opinion piece, such as an editorial, opinion column or letter to the editor about the topic, then read the newspaper pieces and record their responses on the "Modifying Your Position" activity sheet.
3. Let students share their responses with others who selected the same topic. Ask the class to generalize: How much new information did they learn? How have their opinions changed, even if only slightly? Where can they look to find more information on the subject?
4. As a follow up, have students watch television programs that have their individually selected issues as topics. Many current issues are discussed on Sunday morning news programs, daily morning news programs or on evening talk shows such as *Crossfire*. Have them record the same kind of information from the television programs: information, opinions, and their reactions to new information or ideas.

What Is It Saying?

Students examine the elements of an ad.

Principle: Messages have economic, social and aesthetic purposes.

1. Ask students to describe some of their favorite commercials. Have them try to identify what it is that appeals to them in the commercials. Ask students to identify a print ad they have noticed or like. (Note: Be prepared with several print ads from the newspaper and magazines to show students if they cannot suggest any. Have them select one of the examples you present.)
2. Explain that advertisers have several key points in mind when they create an ad:
 - Attention — the ad does something to attract the reader's/viewer's attention
 - Interest — the ad develops reader/viewer interest in the product by using art, information or language
 - Desire — the ad tries to create a desire for the product by providing appealing features or emphasizing positive qualities of the product
 - Act — the ad encourages the reader/viewer to make the purchase
3. Show students a print ad and have them identify the four elements. Then have students work in pairs or small groups to complete the "Advertising Messages" activity sheet. They will have to agree on a commercial they have seen or you may want to videotape several commercials and let students select one for the activity.
4. Have students discuss their findings with the whole class.

Values in Advertising

Students examine values presented in advertising.

Principle: Messages have economic, social and aesthetic purposes.

1. Videotape several 30-second commercials that punctuate popular television programming. Commercials of special significance might be those aired during blockbuster programs such as the Super Bowl, the NCAA championships or the Academy Awards. Supplement the television commercials with full-page advertisements from newspapers and magazines.
2. Show students the television and print ads. Have students examine the language used in the ads. Ask them to identify the lifestyle or value projected by the ads. What behaviors and attitudes are made to appear desirable in the commercials and ads?
3. Have students compare their personal values with the values being promoted in the ads. Have students brainstorm ways they can be active viewers so they can accurately evaluate media messages.

Critic's Corner

Students compare a reviewer's opinion of a television program with their individual opinions of the same program.

Principle: Individuals construct meaning from messages.

1. Ask students to find a review of a television program in the newspaper. Then have students watch the program and decide if they agree or disagree with the review.
2. Ask students to write their opinions and justify why they agree or disagree. Have students discuss reviews in class.
3. Ask students to explain what they do when they read conflicting reviews from different critics. How do they decide whether or not to watch a program?

Name _____

Date _____



Modifying Your Position

We all have opinions on some issues. Those opinions are always subject to change. We may modify the stand we take on an issue as we get more information about the subject. Some of the changes may be great. Other changes may reflect small shifts in our thinking. Examine a news story and an opinion piece about an issue that concerns you. How does your thinking change as you gather additional information?

What is your issue? _____

News Story	Editorial, Column or Letter to the Editor
List facts presented:	List arguments presented:
What new information did you learn?	What new ideas did you find?
How has your opinion been affected by this information?	

Name _____

Date _____



What Is It Saying?

Select a newspaper ad and a television commercial. Try to find ads for similar products. Compare the messages of the two by filling in the chart below. Share your findings with your classmates.

	Newspaper Ad	Television Commercial
Name of the product		
What is used to get your attention?		
What is used to make you interested in the product?		
What is used to make you want to own the product?		
What is used to make you want to buy the product very soon?		
Would you buy this product? Why or why not?		



4 ♦ Communicating Media Messages

How students communicate messages

Communicating media messages requires students to write, speak or create images for different purposes. Students must be familiar with the processes of brainstorming, planning, composing and revising. They must know how to use various technologies and how to select the appropriate form and structure for their message.

Choose Your Audience

Students create different versions of the same message to meet the needs of different audiences.

Principle: All messages are constructions.

1. Have students select a special event that will take place at the school, such as a field day, a holiday celebration, an academic competition or anything else that generates a lot of student interest. Have them list all the pertinent facts about the event.
2. Assign students to groups of three or four. Tell each group that they have to design a message directed to a specific audience. Assign each group its audience — a news story for other students; a letter to go home to parents; a news release for the newspaper, a newspaper ad; a television commercial or a television or radio talk show. Some students may write their message; others may choose to act out the message or put it to music.
3. Have students share their creations with the class.

Tell the Story

Students create a news story based on a set of criteria used by editors when selecting a story for publication.

Principle: All messages are constructions

1. Explain to students that editors select stories on the basis of one or more criteria. The following criteria are among those used by editors. Discuss each with students. Show students examples from a copy of the newspaper.
 - Importance . . . Is the news important to the lives and well-being of readers?
 - Timeliness . . . Did events happen that are of interest to readers right now?
 - Proximity . . . Did the events occur near the readers?
 - Uniqueness . . . Are the events unusual?
 - Prominence . . . Are well-known people involved in the news?
 - Suspense . . . Is the outcome of the event still unknown?
 - Conflict Are individuals or groups of individuals opposing each other?
 - Emotions . . . Do the events involve feelings such as love, hate, fear, horror or pity?
 - Progress Is the news about advantages in an area such as science or technology?
2. Have students brainstorm for story ideas in small groups. After the brainstorming session, all students will individually select ideas that they can use to write a news story of importance to their school or community. Have students identify any criteria met by their stories.
3. Have students suggest reasons editors need to be selective when choosing stories to be published in the newspaper. Explain that editors have limited space for stories and they must consider the interests and needs of their readers when they decide what to print.
4. Have students share their news events with the class. Explain that television producers also need to select stories for their channel's news programs. They, too, have to limit their stories in order to meet time restrictions.
5. Have students prepare to share their stories with the class on your "classroom news channel." Have students rewrite their stories so that each could be read in a 30 second segment on a television news program. Explain that they may need to make the story shorter so it can fit in the time slot, but to be careful to keep the most important facts.
6. Have students discuss the differences between writing a story for the newspaper and for a news program.

Communicating Through Fonts

Students select fonts to convey specific messages for a variety of purposes with the “Fun With Fonts” activity sheet.

Principle: All messages are constructions.

1. Explain to students that artistic elements such as fonts—the style of letters used—send a message to consumers. A script font may imply elegance or expense. A thick font may imply strength or security. Show students several examples of different products — a children’s book, a cereal box, a CD cover. Have them pay attention to the fonts used for the names of the items. How does the font reflect the content or image of the item? Have students look through the newspaper to find and discuss different fonts used in ads.
2. Tell students that they will pretend to be graphic artists making decisions about the fonts for different products. Have them complete the “Fun With Fonts” activity sheet in pairs or small groups.
3. Have students compare their selections for #1 on the activity sheet. Let them discuss why they may not have agreed on the fonts they selected for the same item. Have students share the logos they developed. You may want to post the logos on a bulletin board.

You’re the Cartoonist

Students translate ideas into comic strips.

Principle: All messages are constructions.

1. Discuss a current school or community issue with students. What are people saying? What are they doing?
2. Have students draw a three- or four-panel comic strip presenting information about an issue in your school or community. Display the comic strips around the classroom.



Fun with Fonts

1. When print is the medium for a message, the person doing the communication must think of more than just words. The look of the message also conveys information to the reader. One way to give your message a distinctive look is through the font, or the style of letters, you use. Look at the samples of fonts below. Select one for each of the purposes listed below. You may use any font as often as you like.

FONTS

Bookman

COPPERPLATE

Freestyle

Kabel

Tiffany

Zapf Chancery

Lubalin Graph

Tekton

A bank

A diet book

A pet store

A movie about vampires

An invitation to a graduation

A business card for a rock musician

A poster for a concert of classical music

A logo for a football team

2. Look at the fonts used on several items around your home — a cereal box, a CD cover, a frozen food, an electronic appliance. How are the fonts different?

3. Pretend you are starting a music group. It could be classical, country, rap, rock — anything you like. Select a name for your group and design a font for the group's logo. Draw the logo below or on the back of this page.



Let's Talk — Classroom Discussion Topics

There are many issues related to media content and presentation. Here are some suggested discussion topics.

Who Can Access the News?

There is much discussion in the news industry today of the electronic newspaper — a product delivered over telephone wires, cable or satellite — that is received by a computer in your home or office. What kind of people will benefit from this type of delivery system? What type of costs would be involved? In what ways is this system convenient? In what ways is it inconvenient? How would you use such a system?

News Just For You!

In the not too distant future, your newspaper may be delivered electronically — over your television or cable line into a computer — and it will be just the news you want. You can request only local news and sports. You might choose entertainment news and weather. What are the advantages of having your newspaper tailored to your individual desires? What are the disadvantages?

Media and Our World View

CNN introduced us to 24-hour news. We can follow events in real time anywhere on the globe. Technology allows networks to broadcast from distant points like Bosnia and Rwanda. How has this instant access to news broadened our understanding of the world and global issues? How has this same media limited our understanding of other cultures? How can we be sure we get an accurate picture of world events?

Good Ads or Bad?

Many people see advertising only in a bad light — as a vehicle that makes people do things they don't really want to do or buy things they don't really want or need. Can an ad really convince you to purchase something you don't really care about? If you have no interest in camping, for example, could an ad persuade you to buy a tent? Or do ads try to convince you to select one brand over another for a purchase you are going to make anyway?

Tabloids Takeover

At one time, titillating accounts of celebrity activities were found in a few newspaper tabloids. Today, "tabloid journalism" is apparent even in reputable newspapers and news programs. How has the proliferation of television tabloid shows such as "Hard Copy" and "Inside Edition" influenced the way network news divisions cover and present the news? Are celebrities and sensation news events pushing out coverage of serious issues? Why?

Are there positive kinds of advertising? What about ads that encourage people to vote or to recycle? How do you determine if an ad is "in the public's interest?"

\$ Checkbook Journalism \$

Reader interest in celebrities and sensationalism has led to fierce competition between print and electronic news organizations. Some tabloid newspapers and television shows pay individuals for their stories, whether those individuals are celebrities themselves or are connected to a sensational story. Witnesses and jury members in high profile court cases are pursued with offers of cash for their stories. Domestic staff and business associates of celebrities accept money to give their stories. Mainstream newspapers and television news divisions do not pay for stories. How does this practice of "checkbook journalism" affect the accuracy of news coverage? How does checkbook journalism affect the judicial system? How does it affect the reputation of legitimate newspapers and news programs? What are the First Amendment rights of individuals who sell their stories?

Life Without Advertising

Advertising is often portrayed as a negative force in media. Is that true? Imagine your life without any advertising of any kind. No more interruptions in your favorite television show. No distracting billboards along the highway. No pictures of food or clothing interspersed with your daily news. No sample perfumes falling out of your magazine. No pesky direct mail pieces in your mailbox. What strategies will you have to use to get the information previously provided by advertising? How will you learn about new products? How will you know when your favorite music group is appearing in your area? How will you learn about political candidates? What will you do to get comparative information on a CD player or camera? How will you know which department store carries the clothing you need? How will you know which grocery store has the best prices on soft drinks this week? What will you do to get the information you need to make purchasing decisions?

Photo Makeover

Today, many news photos are prepared on computer screens. Photos from news services are sent directly to newspapers over satellite and are captured on computers, which digitize the images. Local news photographers scan their photos into the computer. Once digitized, a photo can be electronically altered and the change is virtually undetectable. The computer allows the photographer to improve the photo by enhancing the color or altering the contrast, for example. However, the process also allows the photographer to alter the content of the photo. Unacceptable words or images can be removed from a t-shirt or sign in a photo. An individual can be moved from one photograph and placed in another. What guidelines should govern the altering of photographs? At what point should the reader/viewer be informed that a photo has been altered? Who should be held accountable for photos?

Checking Licenses on the Information Superhighway

You can find the people who put together your local newspaper. Their names are on the masthead of the paper. You know the political orientation of the people putting together a newspaper because they express their views on their editorial pages. You can find the people who produce local television and radio programs. Their names are shown or announced at the end of the program. Who is driving on the Information Superhighway? Many individuals post information on electronic bulletin boards. Many organizations promote their ideas on the electronic highway. How do you know the people who publish on the electronic systems? How are they identified? How can you verify their political orientation; the accuracy of their statements? What will you have to do to be an informed consumer of information delivered over computer networks?



News From Today's Technologies

Using technology today

News is available from a variety of resources today. Newspapers, network television and radio news have been joined by satellite dishes, cable TV, telephone services and computer on-line services. Many news organizations use several different vehicles to make information available to their clients.

Newspapers

Print newspapers change with the times. Newspapers routinely use computer graphics and art to enhance their product. Many newspapers print editions that are tailored to match specific zones in their overall circulation area. Newspapers are offering telephone information services, usually at no charge, to customers. Customers can call a newspaper telephone line to receive weather, sports and soap opera updates; household and gardening tips; movie, television and album reviews; homework hotlines and much more. Many newspapers use their telephone services to elicit readers' responses to current issues and to conduct reader polls. More than 600 newspapers offer at least one voice information service. Specifically, more than:

- 150 offer free-call voice services, of which about 80% are supported by advertising
- 215 provide voice mailboxes for personal ads
- 75 offer voice-enhanced classified advertising features
- 500 provide 900-number information services, usually through a media syndicate
- 140 daily newspapers provide on-line access to full-text databases of their newspapers
- 25 offer fax services.

Cable Television

Some cable television systems provide special broadcasts for schools. In some cases the news is transmitted at off-peak hours and is recorded by the school for later use. In other cases, news is transmitted in real time during classroom hours. These resources generally require a computer link-up to receive instructional plans, television monitors and VCRs. CNN, for example, offers a cable-delivered news program free of charge to middle and secondary schools. The programs are broadcast at 3:45 a.m./ET. Daily supplemental materials are sent via modem through different E-Mail networks to teachers who download and print them. Schools must sign a fee license agreement with their local cable company. There is a cost of several hundred dollars per school year for the on-line curriculum guide subscription. MTV offers teacher support materials through its Community of the Future program. A 24-minute commercial-free program is broadcast at 4 a.m./ET on Sunday mornings. Teacher materials are available free through MTV's "Cable in the Classroom" program.

Computer On-Line Services

Computer on-line services provide electronic databases and other information services that can be accessed through a classroom computer and modem. On-line services generally provide a wide array of resources such as databases of reference materials, electronic bulletin boards where students can leave messages for other users in different parts of the country or world and "chat rooms" where students can communicate via computer with a live person in real time. Consumer on-line systems charge a monthly fee of about \$10 to \$30. At the end of 1993, there were close to four million subscribers. The largest on-line services in 1993 were Prodigy Information Services, with 2 million members; Compuserve Inc., with 1.7 million subscribers; and America Online Inc., with 900,000 members.

Industry experts report that there are currently 60 million personal computer users, a number they expect to increase.

An increasing number of newspapers are making their contents and resources available to readers through on-line services. Many public affairs programs on television make transcripts of their programs available through on-line services. These services generally require computers, modems and sufficient telephone and electrical lines to accommodate the hardware used.

Internet

Internet is a large network of computer networks and databases. It is a network of 2.2 million host computers accessed by 25 million individuals. Internet began as a service to link government computers. Later, it expanded to include university systems. A loose collection of services and bulletin boards, the Internet was difficult to learn and for many years was the domain of dedicated computer hackers. In recent years, with the development of user-friendly software and commercial on-line services, the Internet has become accessible to the general public. Internet is what people have in mind when they talk about the Information Superhighway. Today, Internet connects educational and commercial users throughout the world. Many on-line services provide their users with access to Internet as one of their services.



Evaluating New Technologies

New technologies often offer exciting promise and possibilities. Sometimes, those promises go beyond expectations and sometimes they are not realized. Schools will want to proceed with care in deciding which of the new technologies match the needs of teachers and students. The following checklist suggests some issues to consider in reviewing new technologies.

- | | Yes | No |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Is the product/service in use today?..... | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. If it is a new product/service, has it been piloted? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Has it been piloted in a situation similar to yours? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Is documentation about pilot programs readily available? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. Will the product/service replace or expand existing resources? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4. Will major start-up expenses be required for the product/service? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Will hardware purchases have to be made? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Estimated cost of new purchases: _____ | | |
| Will additional electrical or telephone upgrades have to be made in classrooms? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Estimated cost of upgrades: _____ | | |
| 5. What will be the accessibility level of the product/service: | | |
| Will it be available only through a district center? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| A building center? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| In every classroom? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 6. Can more than one student access the product/service at the same time? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 7. Can the product/service be used in a variety of instructional settings — whole class, small group and individual? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 8. Is there a way to monitor or limit student access if necessary? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| (Some on-line companies provide adults-only services as part of their offerings.) | | |
| 9. What is the source of information on the product/service: | | |
| Who is preparing and providing the news being received? | | |
| _____ | | |
| What is the source of databases? How is information from special interest groups identified? | | |
| _____ | | |
| How is information from commercial sources identified? | | |
| _____ | | |
| 10. How much time is the school district willing to devote to teacher training so the product/service can be used effectively in the classroom? | | |
| _____ | | |
| _____ | | |



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