

Discovering Language Arts Intermediate Media Literacy Teacher's Guide

Grade Level: 6–8

Curriculum Focus: Language Arts

Lesson Duration: 2–3 class periods

Program Description

Advertising Images (4 min.) – Television and film are full of images that are meant to convey an idea or viewpoint. *Evaluating Media* (8 min.) – Keep a critical eye out for many points of view presented in the news, documentaries, advertisements, and other media outlets. *Television Genres* (7 min.) – Game shows, sitcoms, news shows, cartoons, and reality shows are genres of shows on television. *Stereotypes in Media* (5 min.) – Characters in movies and on television are often based on stereotypes or generalizations about a group of people. *Language Choices* (6 min.) – The style of language in a film or

television show reinforces the viewer's understanding of the characters and the story setting. *Images, Sounds, & Symbols* (6 min.) – Images and sound may imply meaning in television and film. *Media Watch* (5 min.) – Many factors can affect a viewer's interpretation of the images presented on television and film. *What's On & Who's Watching* (7 min.) – Most television shows are created with a specific target audience in mind. *Made to Appeal* (5 min.) – Producers have a variety of techniques to make a show appealing to viewers.

Onscreen Questions

- Watch a commercial marketing a health or beauty product. How are the advertisers using the images to sell you this product?
- Find three Web sites about President Kennedy. Evaluate the different points of view presented in each site.
- Think about some TV shows that you have recently watched. Which genre do you watch most often?
- Name a television show that presents stereotypes. How could the characters in the show be presented differently?
- What other movies or shows have you seen that specifically use different word choices and styles to reflect a time period?
- Next time you watch a movie or TV show, take notes on what types of symbols, signs, or sounds are used to convey a message.
- Watch one of your favorite TV shows with a friend and discuss the differences in your interpretations.

- Watch a show on television and think about the target audience. Name some of the common characteristics of this audience.
 - Think about your favorite television show. What techniques does it use to make the show appealing to you?
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Lesson Plan

Student Objectives

- Identify advertising techniques used to sell products.
- Evaluate images used in media advertisements.
- Use knowledge of advertising techniques and media persuasion to envision and market a new product.

Materials

- *Discovering Language Arts: Intermediate Media Literacy* video
- A variety of print advertisements from magazines, newspapers, and other sources
- Poster board, one per student group
- Crayons, markers, or colored pencils
- Scissors
- Glue
- Pencils and erasers

Procedures

1. Talk about media advertisements with your class. Ask students to describe advertisements that they have seen on TV or read that made them want to buy a particular product. What did they like about the advertisement? How did the advertisement make them feel? What kinds of people do they think this product is marketed to? After discussing some advertisements, have students watch *Discovering Language Arts: Intermediate Media Literacy* and pay particular attention to the “Advertising Images” segment to learn how advertisers use images to sell specific products.
2. Then hold a discussion about the images, advertisements, and shows featured in the video. Did the images in “Advertising Images” and in the other segments inspire students to buy the products or watch the TV shows? What gimmicks and techniques are used to sell products? What groups of people were the advertisements and TV programs targeting? What do advertisers and media producers look for in choosing target audiences?



3. Share examples of print advertisements with the class and ask what kinds of things they have in common? What sorts of images appear in these advertisements? Are the product names and uses highlighted and clearly defined? Do the advertisers use any gimmicks to sell their products? Which advertisements are most effective and why? What groups of people might these advertisements be aimed at?
4. Tell the class to imagine that they are in charge of creating new products and marketing them to the public. Divide students into groups of four or five and explain that each group must come up with a new product and an advertisement to market it. Products may range from a fitness or beauty product to a new kind of car, building material, or electronic device. Each group must decide on one product and consider how best to sell it. Some questions to ask are how to market it? What kinds of people would buy it? What images or gimmicks could sell it?
5. Students in each group will work together to create a print advertisement for their product on a piece of poster board. They may use available crayons and colored pencils, as well as collages of images and words from advertisements they have evaluated. The advertisements should be attractive and creative. Remind students to remember what things they noticed when evaluating print advertisements, including placement of product name and gimmicks, and things they found most effective. Tell students not to discuss their products with other groups until the end of the lesson so that their classmates can evaluate their ad campaigns.
6. Give students time in class to work on their advertisements. Then have each group display its advertisement for the class to evaluate and analyze one at a time. Discuss the images and effectiveness of the advertisements and have the groups share techniques they used to sell their products.

Assessment

Use the following three-point rubric to evaluate students' work during this lesson.

- **3 points:** Students identified several advertising techniques used to sell products; carefully and thoughtfully evaluated images used in media advertisements; and created a group advertisement that was creative, attractive, and effective in selling a product to a specific target audience.
- **2 points:** Students identified a few advertising techniques used to sell products; generally evaluated images used in media advertisements; and created a group advertisement that was somewhat creative, attractive, and effective in selling a product to a specific target audience.
- **1 point:** Students identified one or no advertising techniques used to sell products; were unable or unwilling to evaluate images used in media advertisements; and created an incomplete group advertisement or an advertisement that that was neither attractive nor creative and was ineffective in selling a product.

Vocabulary

appeal

Definition: To be attractive or interesting



Context: Most television shows are made to appeal to specific audiences.

characteristic

Definition: A feature that helps to identify, tell apart, or describe recognizably; a distinguishing mark or trait

Context: A target audience is a group of people who share interests or characteristics.

critical

Definition: Characterized by careful, exact evaluation and judgment

Context: A filmmaker may work hard to make a film that looks historically authentic, but a critical viewer can tell if it is realistic.

image

Definition: A reproduction of the form of a person or object, especially a sculptured likeness; a personification of something specified

Context: Knowing how to read images helps us decide for ourselves what to think and how to react.

interpretation

Definition: Something that serves to explain or clarify; critical explanation or analysis

Context: Many factors can affect a person's interpretation of the images seen on TV.

Academic Standards

Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning (McREL)

McREL's Content Knowledge: A Compendium of Standards and Benchmarks for K-12 Education addresses 14 content areas. To view the standards and benchmarks, visit

<http://www.mcrel.org/compendium/browse.asp>

This lesson plan addresses the following national standards:

- Language Arts – Listening and Speaking: Uses listening and speaking strategies for different purposes
- Language Arts – Viewing: Uses viewing skills and strategies to understand and interpret visual media
- Language Arts – Reading: Uses reading skills and strategies to understand and interpret a variety of informational texts
- Language Arts – Media: Understands the characteristics and components of the media



The National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE)

The National Council of Teachers of English and the International Reading Association have developed national standards to provide guidelines for teaching the English language arts. To view the standards online, go to <http://www.ncte.org/about/over/standards/110846.htm>

This lesson plan addresses the following English standards:

- Students adjust their use of spoken, written, and visual language (e.g., conventions, style, vocabulary) to communicate effectively with a variety of audiences and for different purposes.
 - Students use spoken, written and visual language to accomplish their own purposes
 - Students participate as knowledgeable, reflective, creative, and critical members of a variety of literacy communities
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Support Materials

Develop custom worksheets, educational puzzles, online quizzes, and more with the free teaching tools offered on the Discoveryschool.com Web site. Create and print support materials, or save them to a Custom Classroom account for future use. To learn more, visit

- <http://school.discovery.com/teachingtools/teachingtools.html>
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DVD Content

This program is available in an interactive DVD format. The following information and activities are specific to the DVD version.

How To Use the DVD

The DVD starting screen has the following options:

Play Video – This plays the video from start to finish. There are no programmed stops, except by using a remote control. With a computer, depending on the particular software player, a pause button is included with the other video controls.

Video Index – Here the video is divided into sections indicated by video thumbnail icons; brief descriptions are noted for each one. Watching all parts in sequence is similar to watching the video from start to finish. To play a particular segment, press Enter on the remote for TV playback; on a computer, click once to highlight a thumbnail and read the accompanying text description and click again to start the video.



Curriculum Units – These are specially edited video segments pulled from different sections of the video (see below). These nonlinear segments align with key ideas in the unit of instruction. They include onscreen pre- and post-viewing questions, reproduced below in this Teacher's Guide. Total running times for these segments are noted. To play a particular segment, press Enter on the TV remote or click once on the Curriculum Unit title on a computer.

Standards Link – Selecting this option displays a single screen that lists the national academic standards the video addresses.

Teacher Resources – This screen gives the technical support number and Web site address.

Video Index

I. Advertising Images

Learn how to evaluate images used in advertisements that sell products, viewpoints, or ideas.

II. Evaluating Media

Watch clips from a documentary about President Kennedy's assassination and learn why it is important to pay close attention to different points of view.

III. Television Genres

Take a look at three different types of television shows and discuss the elements that make each genre unique.

IV. Stereotypes in Media

Examine some common media stereotypes about Arab-Americans and see how movie portrayals differ from reality.

V. Language Choices

Explore the language in *Pride and Prejudice* and how it reflects the story's characters and time period.

VI. Images, Sounds, and Symbols

Watch a film clip from *The Great Gatsby* and examine the wardrobe, props, music, and other techniques the filmmakers used to tell the story.

VII. Media Watch

Analyze how personal experience, age, and viewing expectations may affect our interpretation of media.

VIII. What's On and Who's Watching

Watch clips from a few television shows and determine the target audience.

IX. Made to Appeal

Watch segments of a reality TV show and learn about the techniques that make this show appealing.



Curriculum Units

1. Analyzing Advertisements

Pre-viewing question

Q: What makes a television advertisement effective?

A: Answers will vary.

Post-viewing question

Q: Has an advertisement caused you to buy a product?

A: Answers will vary.

2. The Critical Viewer

Pre-viewing question

Q: Do you think television news programs are usually accurate and unbiased?

A: Answers will vary.

Post-viewing question

Q: What should you keep in mind while viewing a documentary?

A: Documentaries present a particular point of view and only part of a story even though they are based on nonfiction events and are usually unscripted.

3. Types of TV Shows

Pre-viewing question

Q: What kinds of television shows do you prefer?

A: Answers will vary.

Post-viewing question

Q: Describe the difference between children's shows and reality TV.

A: Children's programs often feature animated characters that do things that are out of the ordinary. Unscripted reality shows feature ordinary people in unusual situations.

4. Stereotypes and Generalizations

Pre-viewing question

Q: What stereotypes have you observed in media?

A: Answers will vary.

Post-viewing question

Q: How has stereotyping of Native Americans in the media changed?

A: In the early days of filmmaking, Native Americans were often depicted as savage and violent. Today they are often portrayed as wise protectors of the environment. The portrayal is more positive, but it remains a stereotype.



5. Language as a Reflection

Pre-viewing question

Q: How might the language in a TV show or movie tell you something about the show's characters?

A: Answers will vary.

Post-viewing question

Q: How might the language in *Pride and Prejudice* change if the story were set in the United States today?

A: Answers will vary.

6. Props, Sound, and Lighting

Pre-viewing question

Q: What do music and lighting add to movies and television?

A: Answers will vary.

Post-viewing question

Q: What elements in *The Great Gatsby* film tell you about its setting?

A: The characters wear costumes from the 1920s; they dance to music from that period; and telephones, cars, and other props reflect that time.

7. Interpreting Images

Pre-viewing question

Q: Do movies and television programs relate to your life in any ways?

A: Answers will vary.

Post-viewing question

Q: What factors can influence a person's interpretation of media?

A: Three factors are personal experience, age, and expectations in viewing.

8. Targeting an Audience

Pre-viewing question

Q: What do you find appealing about your favorite TV show?

A: Answers will vary.

Post-viewing question

Q: What is a target audience?

A: A target audience is a group of people who have common characteristics – such as age or gender – or interests – such as cooking, carpentry, or particular sports.

9. Appealing Production Techniques

Pre-viewing question

Q: Why might reality television be so appealing to viewers?

A: Answers will vary.



Post-viewing question

Q: What techniques in the reality makeover show make it appealing to viewers?

A: The reality show relies on two experts, who provide a sense of trust and useful information and who guide the audience through the scenes. The show's fast editing pace gives the impression that change can happen quickly and easily.

